GUIDE TO THE FF52 NUPE FILE

[The Nupe file consists of nine sources, four of them by the late Siegfried Frederick Nadel, a prominent British social anthropologist. The main source, A Black Byzantium (1: Nadel), is mainly focused on political and economic organization, with attention to urban-rural relationships and differences. A second major source by Nadel (2: Nadel) deals with religion and other aspects of culture having functional relationships to religion. 3: Forde is an analytic survey of Nupe culture, part of the Ethnographic Survey of Africa, and contains materials from all sources known to Forde at the time (1955).

4: Temple is a section from a handbook by a governmental official, containing information from documents otherwise inaccessible. 5: Nadel is a description of the political organization of the Kede, one of the constituent units of the Nupe state, which has many aberrant features. 6: Annonymous is a well-illustrated, brief account of the various crafts still existing in Bida, the capital of Nupe. 7: Nicholson describes the detailed procedure of making pottery. 8: Walker is a brief study of cast metal figures and Nupe legendary history. 9: Nadel describes the functions and historical development of the institution of royal executioner.

In general, this file is adequate in material pertaining to religion, and political and economic organization. It is particularly deficient in the categories relating to material culture, and also in those relating to human biology, language, and behavioral processes. Nupe society and culture are not homogeneous, and numerous religious and other acculturative influences are at work.

Several marking decisions were made for this file: information on the Mallam schools has been place in category 874; information on the ticiži, the "Titled Ones," the office nobility of the Nupe state, has been placed

in category 565; information on the Mallams, combination jurists and Mohammedan scholars, has been placed in category 875; information on the bara-ship, the sacrifice of individual freedom for the sake of political protection by a patron, has been placed in category 566; information on the barber-doctor guild has been placed in categories 759 and 305; information on the renting and leasing of land by baras has been placed in 425 as well as 566 and 427. The file was processed between 1958 and 1963.]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER II

CULTURE, TRIBE, SOCIETY

000 THE description of environment is concerned with a solid, easily defined, almost self-evident reality. A description of the general demographic and cultural constellation deals with the fluid entity of groups and systems of unity, the mere circumscription of which involves already theoretical definitions and classifications. These definitions and classifications must be based on facts which only the full analysis of the society can establish. This chapter will thus have to anticipate certain results of the general description which forms the main body of this book. It will not attempt to anticipate the descriptions themselves. Its aim is only to sketch in a background, to stake out a field of demographic and cultural facts by which is bounded that social reality with which this book is dealing.

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

101 Let me draw a tribal map of the part of Nigeria where Nupe country lies: in the north the neighbours of the Nupe are Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; in north-east and east lies Gbari country; in the south, on the river, the country of the Kakanda; and west of the river, Yagba (a section of the Yoruba) and Ilorin Yoruba; and in the north-west, finally, the people of Borgu and Bussa. Colonies of Nupe, small sections, split off from the main body of the tribe, are scattered all over Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of them, a group of about 15,000 people who call themselves Bassa, or Bassa Nge, lives near the confluence of Niger and Benue. They appear to have emigrated from the mother country about a hundred years ago, before the Fulani conquest; they settled first on the right bank of the Niger, on the hills of what is to-day Lokoja, and moved later, when the new town of Lokoja was founded by the Niger Company, to the left bank where they are living to-day.

The Nupe are known as *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*) among the Hausa, as *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*) among the Gbari of Kuta, and as *Anupeyi* and *Anufawhei* among the Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari; the Yoruba know them as *Takpa* and the Kakanda as *Anupecwayi*. The Nupe call themselves *Nupeci* or, in the plural, *Nupeciši*, their language *Nupe*, and their country *kin Nupe*, Land of Nupe. No special word for 'tribe' exists in Nupe; the Nupe speak of *za Nupe*, Nupe man, Nupe peoples.

619 This book is concerned with the culture of the people that calls itself Nupe. But what does 'people' mean here? What is the social reality to which the term Nupe people or Nupe tribe refers? The three meanings of *Nupe*, people, language, and country, do not coincide. Disregarding the split-off sections we may say that the Nupe tribe inhabits, roughly, the same territory. But it is not, and never was, 'one country' in the sense of a group united politically, or by facts of close contact and 'common life', thus marked off from other, similar areas or groups. Of

THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

105 The Nupe, speaking a number of related dialects, number about 360,000, and consist of the inhabitants of Bida Emirate, Niger Province, together with several politically separate sections. They do not form a territorially united group and, although every Nupe should extend hospitality to his fellow-tribesmen, they are not characterized by close internal cohesion. There is considerable variety of custom among the various "sub-tribes." Outstanding common features are: the cycle of myths of the culture-hero Tsoede, the observation of the *gunnu* ritual, belief in the supreme sky-god Soko, and the general structure of political ranks, age-sets, kinship system, and marriage rules.[1]

NOMENCLATURE

● 101 The Nupe call themselves *Nupeciłi* or *Nupenciłi* (sing. *Nupeci* or *Nupenci*), their language *Nupe* or *Exi Nupe*, and their country *Kin Nupe* ("the land of Nupe"). But Nupe in Zugurma and, generally speaking, north of the Kaduna River, also call themselves *Agabi*.[2] They are known by neighbouring tribes by the following names:[3]

By the Hausa: *Ba Nupe* or *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*).
,, ,, Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
,, ,, Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari: *Ampeyi* or *Nife*.
,, ,, Akanda (Yoruba): *Anupecwayi*.
,, ,, Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
,, ,, Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
,, ,, Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
,, ,, Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie
167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafiagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 24. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organization more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.
[2] Mathews, 1926.
[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 282 and index.
[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abewa by Hausa speakers.

[pp. 1-16 Non-existent]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

131 167 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[5]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

701 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 634 [167] Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciži): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciži* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiži* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoži* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Bazumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endorigi, Ela, Difa, Gbaradozi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

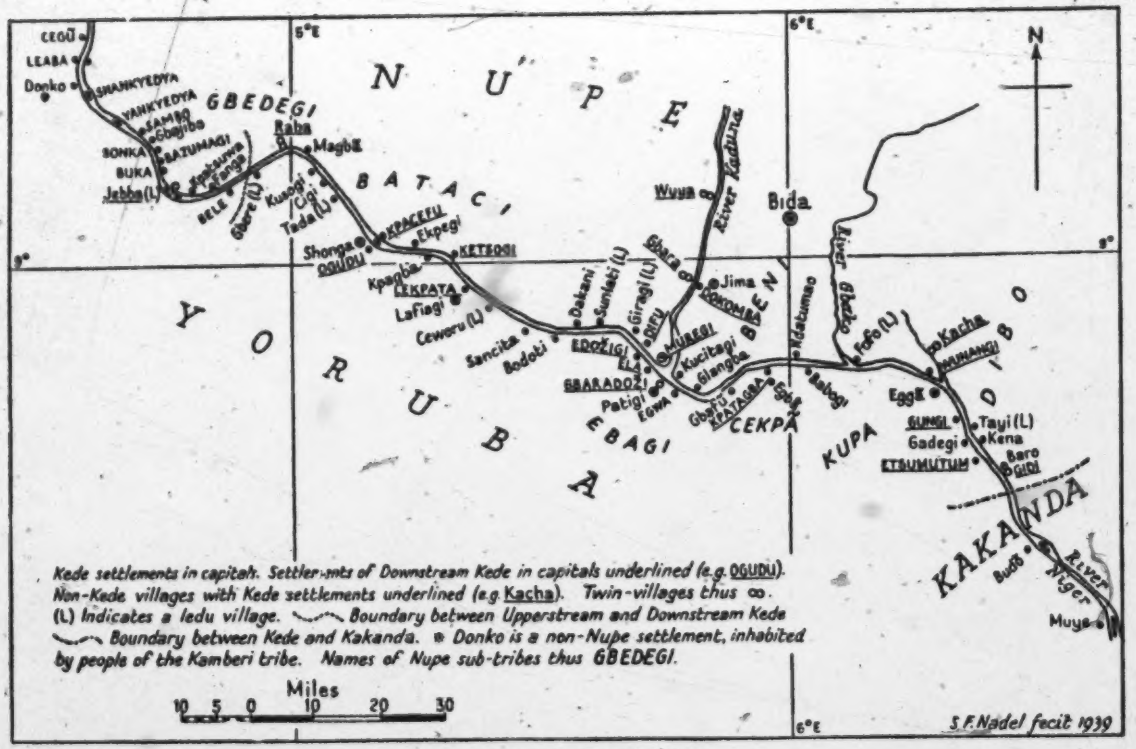
NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
171 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[101] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

5. Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede



THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

[p. 164]

63
101
131

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

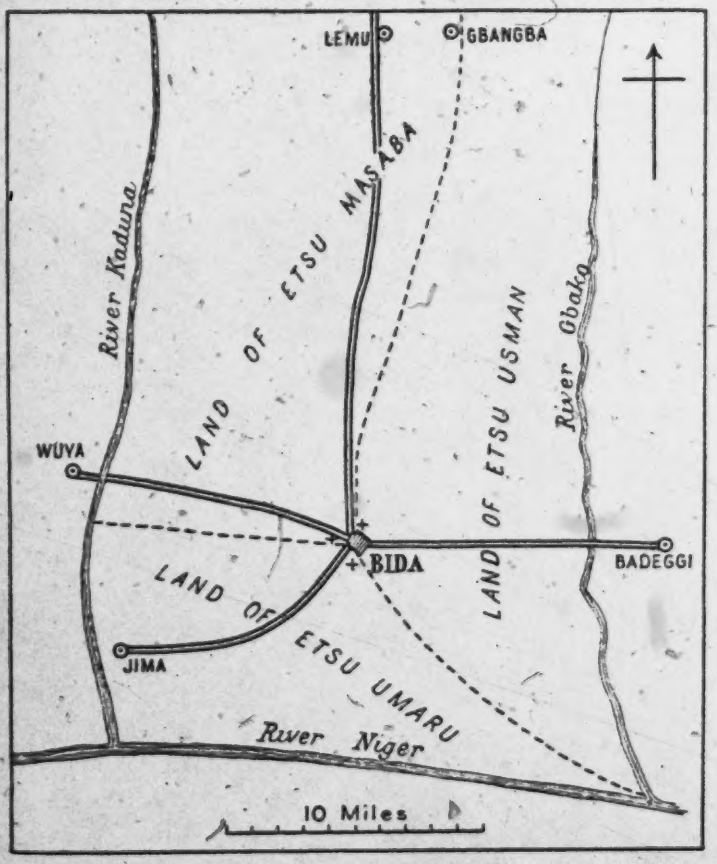
[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Masaba from Rabá, and the king had to seek refuge in Ilorin. Umar Bahaushe, for some time undisputed master of Nupe, attempted to make himself *Etsu* Nupe. All Fulani rallied against him, Usman Zaki and 175

SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE DIVISION OF ROYAL LAND



+..... Royal Estates *(esozi)*

Umaru Majigi returned from Gwandu, their self-chosen place of exile, and joined forces with Masaba against the usurper. For three years the Bornu general drove the Fulani armies before him and beat them in battle after battle. At last the luck turned. The Fulani army under Umaru, son of Majigi, fleeing from the usurper's army across the Kaduna river, found protection in the walled town of Bida. With the arrival of Masaba's troops from the south, and with the assistance of

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNITY: VILLAGE AND TOWN

621 THE description of 'areas of common life' must start with the description of the external arrangement, that is, forms of settlement. ~~The Nupe live in large villages or towns.~~ They have only one word for both, *eži*, thus defining the essentially identical nature of the two forms of settlement. There exists another Nupe word, *tunga* or *kangi*, which is applied to very small settlements. But this name refers not so much to the size as to the different sociological nature of the settlement; for the *tunga*, unlike the *eži*, does not represent an independent local unit but a 'daughter-settlement', a 'colony' of a village or town.

621 The size of the *eži* varies considerably. Nupe Emirate counts three ~~villages with a population of over~~ or near a thousand: Doko with 800
361 inhabitants; Mokwa with 2,000; and Kutigi with 3,000. But there exist also smaller 'towns', villages the population of which had been reduced by emigration and which may be, in size, hardly bigger than a large *tunga*. The local arrangement of the Nupe village, large or small, is nearly always the same: clusters of compounds scattered comfortably over an area, each 'cluster' consisting of a number of walled compounds, 'houses' in native terminology, and forming what the Nupe call an *efu*, or ward. These village wards are separated by stretches of open land, spacious cultivated fields, studded with clumps of trees. More rarely the *efu* stand close together and are separated only by narrow thoroughfares between the walls of neighbouring compounds. This latter arrangement is typical of many riverside villages where, in narrow space, house presses upon house and compound upon compound. Each *efu* has its own name, derived either from a topographical peculiarity, e.g. Takogi, [103] meaning 'the one below', or Kpacinefu, 'the river bank *efu*', or from a sociological feature, namely, the rank or profession of the people living in the *efu*, e.g. *efu* Žitsu, '*efu* of the chief', or *efu* Tswata, '*efu* of the blacksmiths', and so forth; or, finally, the name of the *efu* may refer to the origin of its inhabitants, betraying them as immigrants from another village or tribe, e.g. Yafu (abbr. for Eyagi-fu), 'Yoruba *efu*', or *efu* Daži, '*efu* of (the people of) Daži'.

The Núpe *eži* with its scattered *efu* clusters is encircled by a large town wall, or more correctly, used to be encircled by a town wall. It exists no longer, but its ruins can still be seen in many places, and all the people insist that formerly all 'towns' were protected by such walls. These crumbled ruins of the old town wall provide us with a piece of important historical evidence, which tells us, I think, why the Nupe have chosen just this type of settlement, in large populous 'towns', and not, for example, settlement in loosely linked, scattered homesteads; it allows us to grasp at least one of the motives behind this social development: the dangers of war.[1] Large villages represent in a country of

[1] The other motive is economic and is entailed in the organization of the Nupe system of production and exchange. (See p. 366.)

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

MAN

A MONTHLY RECORD OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE

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XXXV, 143-160 SEPTEMBER, 1935

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa : West. Nadel.

The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria. *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

With Plate I-J.

131 143

Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggã in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sũlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ẹgbã Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edẹpi*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

104 A minor technical point, in conclusion. In the orthography of vernacular words I have used the phonetic script generally accepted to-day by students of African languages, which, in the case of Nupe, contains only two not very common symbols: ~ for nasalized vowels, and *ẓ* for the fricative sound (like *s* in 'lesion'). I have not distinguished open and closed *e* and *o* vowels since this distinction is not of great importance in Nupe. And, for the sake of simplicity, I have not marked tones, although Nupe is a pure tone language; or rather, I have reduced the symbols for the five tones of Nupe (low, medium, high, rising, and falling tone) to a single accent (′) indicating the relative higher tone—a mark which the reader unfamiliar with tone languages can interpret as accent indicating stress. In words where no accents are marked, the different syllables are of equal tone or stress. I have marked the low tone only in the case of the negation, which consists of the suffix *a* pronounced on the low tone (*à*). In the spelling of geographical names I have kept largely to the spelling used in official maps (e.g. Kacha instead of Kaca). Only where the official spelling is at variance with the correct pronunciation have I corrected the spelling (e.g. Gbako river for Bako river, Eggã for Eggan, &c.).

There remains the last task of Introductions—acknowledgements. The first acknowledgements are due to my teachers and friends, to whom I owe most of my scientific equipment, the late Professors Malinowski and Seligman; to the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, as whose research fellow I went to the field and whose subsidy rendered the publication of this book possible; and to the Government of Nigeria and to the many officers with whom my work has brought me into contact for the generous help in many forms which they extended to me throughout my stay in Nigeria. I am greatly indebted to Professor Radcliffe-Brown for many fruitful suggestions and criticisms. I owe special gratitude to Sir Gordon Lethem, Governor of the Leeward Islands, late Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria, who first drew my attention to the Nupe tribe, and to the Rev. Dr. G. P. Bargery, who initiated me into the secrets of Hausa and the world of Nigeria. Mr. T. E. Alvarez of the Church Missionary Society in Bida and Rev. Ira W. Sherk of the United Sudan Mission in Mokwa have been most kind friends and helpers to the new-comer in a country of which they had lifelong knowledge. Last but not least I owe deep gratitude to all my native friends without whose freely given help my work would not have succeeded: *Etsu* Ndayako, the Emir of Bida; Mallam Aliyu, the Headmaster of Bida Middle School, who was my teacher in Nupe and my first guide through Bida life; Mallam Ndayako, whom I was proud to call my friend; old Ndakotsu, who is dead now, and who was so close a friend of mine that the Bida people knew me as the *nasara* Ndakotsu—Ndakotsu's European; and many others whose words and opinions are quoted in these pages.

104

Nupe—Note on Orthography

The symbols employed by Nadel (1942) have generally been followed in this section: ŋ = nasalization of preceding vowel; ž = s in lesion; ′ indicates the high tone and usually the stressed syllable in a word.

[p. 1vi]

THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

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" " Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
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" " Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
" " Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
" " Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
" " Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie
167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafiagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 24. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organization more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.

[2] Mathews, 1930.

[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 282 and index.

[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abewa by Hausa speakers.

[pp. 1-16 Non-existent]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

General

105 Most of the Nupe participate in a complex exchange-economy. Before the introduction of British money, cowrie shells were used as currency and are still used at funerals, and in reckoning marriage and other traditional payments.

The trans-Kaduna area and the country north of Bida (e.g., in Lemu), where land is fertile and plentiful, is the most prosperous. Wealth is greater where the household has a large labour unit or where a craft is practised in addition to farm work. Bida town exhibits greater extremes of poverty and wealth than the rest of the country but outstanding differences are not between individuals, but between groups, for example, urban and rural populations. It is said to be unusual to see badly-clothed men, women, or children, and under-nourishment is rare.

The traditional political offices are no longer inseparably linked with wealth, though high social status still attaches to them. Members of the *élite* can maintain their prestige fairly cheaply, as symbols of status (glazed turban or silver sword) are either heirlooms or not costly; the inherited house shows status even if in disrepair; polygyny is facilitated by the low marriage payment for " marriage in the family ";[1] travelling can be sustained by claiming hospitality from relatives.[2]

Agriculture[3]

241 Nupe farming shows considerable technical knowledge and little magic or ritual is associated with it. Shifting cultivation is practised but plots are worked for 3–4 years (Doko), 4–5 years (Mokwa), and 6–7 years (Kutigi) before they are allowed to lie fallow for from 4 to 15 years. Rotation of crops is not generally practised, though Line reported it from the area round Jima, where three years of groundnuts were followed by two of guinea-corn. Intercropping is practised and two or three crops are often grown together. The size of a plot worked by one man is usually 2–2½ acres.

A large heavy hoe (*zuku*) is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, and a small hoe (*dugba*) for weeding and lighter work. A long bush knife (*gada*), nowadays of European manufacture, is used for cutting grain stalks and digging out yams.

Farms are cleared and burnt during the dry season. First-year cultivation after clearing is in mounds; those made for yams are 2–3 ft. high, 4–5 ft. apart, and in rows 6 ft. apart. Subsequent cultivation is in ridges 1 ft. high and 3 ft. apart. Groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and some vegetables are planted in this way. Marsh cultivation is carried out in small areas of 4–6 parallel ridges. Around Doko (Beni sub-tribe) manure is obtained from the cattle of nomad Fulani, who are invited to camp on fallow plots during the dry season.

184 In the area west of the Kaduna River the chief cash crop is groundnuts, and
241 cotton also grows well there. The staple food crops are millet, sorghum, yams, and, to a lesser extent, rice. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes are less important. The most profitable commercial crops are rice, groundnuts, cotton, and shea-nut. There is a poorer range of crops round Bida town owing to the scarcity of land; fewer yams are grown there than elsewhere and there is no bulrush millet.

In the Nupe areas of Ilorin Emirate yams are not regarded as a Nupe crop but close contact with Yoruba farmers is said to have improved the Nupe methods of cultivation. In Share[4] each farmer has two farms, one for grain and the other for

[1] See below, p. 43.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 339–65; Line, 1947.
[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–14, 237–8; Line, 1947.
[4] Anon. 1934–5.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralized political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *ndádumo*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361]
Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [487]
were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (Africa, VIII, 3).

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Identification

The Nupe, who embrace the Beni (Bini), Batachi, Kede (Kyedye), Nupe Zam, Ebagi, Ebe (Abewa), Gbedye, Kupa (Gupa), Cakpang, Kusopa, Benu, Dibo (Ganagana, Zitako), Gwagba, and Kakanda (Akanda, Hyapa), belong to the Nupe branch of the Kwa sub-family of the Niger-Congo linguistic stock, along with the Gbari, Idoma, Igala, Igbira, and Nge. They number about 360, 000 (Forde, 1955) on 17, 000 square miles. They are definitely Negroid in physical type, though the upper classes are mixed with Fulani. The Nupe state goes back to about 1400, judging from traditional genealogies, and reached its apex between 1760 and 1795. It was infiltrated by nomadic and town Fulani, then conquered by the Fulani and attached to the emirate of Gwandu around 1820. Meek says that Ibn Batuta reported Nupe as a powerful kingdom in 1352.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with shifting hoe cultivation, fallowing, and some crop rotation, irrigation, and use of animal manure. The staple crops are millet (bulrush millet and "late" millet) and sorghum, followed by yams and maize. Groundnuts, beans, sweet potatoes, and rice are also moderately important, and some gourds, pumpkins, melons, onions, red peppers, red sorrel, bananas, cotton, manioc (introduced in 1910), sugarcane, mangoes (recent), hemp (recent), and henna (recent) are also grown. Cattle of a dwarf humped variety were formerly fairly numerous, then came a shift to a zebu type tended by slaves and Fulani, and finally practical abandonment since the abolition of slavery. Butter and milk are not used. Numerous goats, dogs, and chickens (eggs not eaten) are kept, as well as a fair number of sheep, some horses and pigeons, and a few donkeys, but no pigs. Fishing is important in riverain regions, and there is much gathering of shea, kola, and oil-palm nuts, but hunting is of little consequence. Trade is important, and there are regular markets.

Sex Division of Labor

Men gather palm and kola nuts, but women gather shea nuts and other wild products. Men tend livestock and do most of the agricultural work, though women may assist in harvesting, especially with root crops. Women do most of the market trading.

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Property

Cowries were formerly used as currency. Basically, land is owned collectively by the headman in heritable but inalienable usufruct to men only. Such rights may be leased for life or for indefinite periods for a down payment plus a fixed rent. There is also hereditary tenancy on a share-crop basis and the ceding of absolute rights to lands gained by conquest or appropriation in return for political services; these two types of tenure are the basis for the feudal political organization.

Land is inherited by the next younger Br, then ElSo (both classificatory and own), along with headship in the extended family. Personal property is divided among ElSo, younger sons, full brothers, and daughters in decreasing proportions.

Social Stratification

Slavery and debt slavery (pawning) were formerly common, and the slave trade flourished. Slave status was hereditary in the female line; the child of a slave father and free Mo was free, one by a free father and slave Mo was a slave (but could be redeemed by the Fa). Social classes are well developed: royalty, nobility (with considerable gradation in titles), freemen (of various occupations and levels of wealth), and slaves. Interclass mobility is possible by marrying into a higher class or status level; in such cases the children take the status of the higher-ranking parent. There are guilds of smiths, weavers, glassmakers, and other craft skills.

Marriage

A substantial bride-price in money (formerly c. 12,000 cowries) is customary except in the upper classes, where it is low to foster class endogamy. It is provided by the extended family head for an ElSo; younger sons must provide their own, with assistance from relatives. Temple but not Nadel mentions periodic premarital bride-service in addition to the bride-price. A woman can formally marry another woman in the role of a female husband.

Polygyny is general and preferred. A survey of 2 villages showed 68 men with one wife, 96 with two, and 35 with three or more. The first wife is chief wife, and each co-wife has her own hut. Secondary marriages are preferred with ElBrWi, allowed with FaWi and MoBrWi, forbidden with YoBrWi.

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Family

The normal residential unit is a patrilocal extended family, occupying a compound within which smaller patri-families, polygynous families, or nuclear families form distinct sections. If a compound is crowded, a part of the family may split off to establish a new compound, which for a time is part of the old "house" but eventually becomes independent. The extended family has a patriarchal head.

Residence

Patrilocality prevails. As boys approach puberty they move into a separate hut in the patri-family compound. Temple but not Nadel reports that the first-born child always goes to live with its grandfather as soon as weaned.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy is reported for the Dibo and Kupa, local agamy for the Nupe in general.

Fulani-Nupe of the upper class, following Moslem usage, favor parallel cousin marriage, which is strictly forbidden in other classes. Cross-cousin marriage is inferentially permitted by all Nupe.

The male core of a patrilocal extended family, together with their sisters, form a patri-lineage. The lineage is not exogamous, at least in the upper classes. There is a vague feeling that the residents of a village are patrilineally related and form an indefinite sort of patri-sib. The three royal lineages are also incipient patri-sibs.

Kinship Terminology (Koelle)

Fa, FaElBr--nda, ada (Kakanda). Mo--nna, onyi (K). So, BrSo--egi, ozi (K). Da--egi isaki. ElBr, ElSi, FaElBrCh--yaya, nugudsi, odsoku (K). YoBr, YoSi, FaYoBrCh--goasuma, owuri (K). Wi--isagi, anye (K).

GrFa--ndako, ohikua (K). GrMo--nnako, onkua (K). FaYoBr--"little Fa." Nadel says the kinship system is in general of the generation type.

Settlement Pattern

The Nupe live in settled communities, of which only two exceed 1,000 population. A settlement consists of a cluster of walled patri-family compounds or "wards" separated from each other by open land or cultivated fields. Only rarely, especially on river banks, are the

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compounds or hamlets grouped into compact villages with narrow thoroughfares between them; these were formerly often walled. Dwellings are round with mud (sometimes grass) walls and conical thatched roofs.

Community Organization

The local community is a sort of indefinite agamous patri-clan. There are functional age-grades. Boys are circumcised at 6-7, but clitoridectomy is reported only for the Kakanda.

Local Government

Each village is governed by a headman and a council of elders consisting of the heads of the component patri-families. Of these, two or three of outstanding prestige form an executive council, which makes most decisions. Succession to these offices is by promotion in some regions (the senior elder becoming headman, etc.) and by heredity in others (by the YoBr or ElSo who succeeds to the headship of the patri-family in which the office is vested).

State

The Nupe have a monarchical feudal state ruled by a paramount chief or king. Succession rotates among three royal patri-lineages. The king is assisted by titled court officials, by provincial governors and district chiefs, and by personal attendants. He rules directly from the capital district of Bida and the provinces of Beni and Kede. The outlying districts are semi-independent and are governed by feudal governors appointed by the king from among his relatives, courtiers, and favorites. They collect tribute from local headmen, provide for the ruler, his court, and the army, and are liable for military service.

Warfare

There are wars of conquest and civil wars over disputed succession.

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Forde, D. The Nupe. Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence, ed. D. Forde, pp. 17-52. London, 1955. (A good secondary summary).

Meek, C. K. The Northern Tribes of Nigeria. 2 vols. London, 1925. (A few items).

105

Nadel, S.F. The Kede. African Political Systems, ed. M. Forte, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, pp. 165-195. London, 1940. (Good on government).

_____. A Black Byzantium. London, 1942. (A good general monograph but unsatisfactory on social organization).

Temple, O. Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, ed. C. L. Temple, pp. 319-335. 2nd ed. Lagos, 1922. (Has a modest amount of information).

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Identification

The Nge (Basange, Bassa-Nge) belong to the Nupe branch of the Kwa sub-family of the Niger-Congo linguistic stock. They are an offshoot of the Nupe who fled to escape Fulani conquest. They numbered 19, 200 in 1931. They are basically pagan, but are gradually accepting Islam today.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, presumably similar to the Nupe.

Marriage

Connived abduction is practiced.

Community Organization

Clitoridectomy is customary.

Local Government

There are village headmen.

Warfare

Headhunting was formerly practiced, but not cannibalism.

Bibliography

Meek, C. K. The Northern Tribes of Nigeria. 2 vols. London, 1925. (A very few items).

41:Nadel P,E-5 (1934-1936) 1937
FF62 Yoruba FF62
Nupe FF52

The present study can only claim to be a first attempt in field experiments of this kind, carried out under conditions which did not allow a more extensive investigation. Yet the question could be raised how far the evidence obtained in experiments which were carried out on so small a scale and in so special a setting can be considered significant and representative of the culture at large. In order to secure a representative group I selected for my experimental subjects students who came from a great many different places in Nupe and Yoruba respectively. The two experimental groups were matched as closely as possible with regard to age, school standard and the surroundings from which they came. In Nupe I was able to work with larger groups: with 60 boys of the age of 12–18 who were taken from every school form, i.e. who had been students of the Middle School for periods varying from 1 to 5 years. Now, as I shall show later, the experiments admit to a certain extent of statistical interpretation, i.e. the responses to certain essential features in the story or the pictures can be classified and treated quantitatively. This statistical evidence allows us to gauge the extent to which the 20 Yoruba subjects can be considered a significant and representative sample. I found that the means for the various responses calculated for the small group correspond very closely to the means arrived at for the large group; in other words, there exist no unequally distributed marked individual differences which would invalidate the results obtained among the small group. Since school standard and age do not correspond very closely in Nigerian schools, the statistical evidence can moreover be used to check independently the influence of age and educational standard. As regards the age factor, we find a slight rise in the appreciation of factors of reasoning and emotional facts corresponding to age; a fairly unchanged appreciation of situational facts; and a fall in the appreciation of moral ideas from the age of 13–15. More important for this investigation is the educational factor; here the statistical evidence proves conclusively that the difference in educational standard has no influence on the psychological responses and attitudes examined in these experiments.

III. THE CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Before going into details I must say a few words about the two cultures and the nature of their diversity. The two groups speak different languages which, however, belong to the same linguistic group (of so-called *Sudanic* languages). Their economic system and their general social organization are similar. Yet other aspects of their culture, aspects which may be held to express more specifically psychological trends or tendencies,[1] reveal a fundamental difference. The religion of the Yoruba is characterized by an elaborate and rationalized hierarchical system of deities, each of which has its specific, specialized duty and function. The Nupe have no such system; their religious beliefs centre round a concept of magic of the 'mana' type, i.e. vague, abstract, impersonal power. In the rich, highly developed realistic art of the Yoruba the main *motif* of pictures, plastics and wooden images is the human figure; religious and mythical emblems of this kind play an important part in their life. Again,

[1] See my article on "The Typological Approach to Culture"(4).

41:Nadel P,E-5 (1934-1936) 1937
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Nupe FF52

the Nupe have nothing of the sort, their art is imageless, they have but crude wall paintings, and their strength lies in ornamental, decorative art. Also the Yoruba have a strong sense for pantomime and drama, for which again there is no parallel among the Nupe.

IV. The story experiment

The story was read to the students at 8 a.m., i.e. during their first class. At noon they were asked to relate the story for the first time (each boy by himself) and after one week for the second time. Each time the leader of the experiment wrote down the story as it was told. The story (in free translation) runs as follows:

> Long, long ago there were a man and his wife. They had two children, sons. When these sons had grown up, they saw a beautiful girl. They both made friends with her, and loved her very much. They loved her with one heart. But the girl did not love the elder brother, she only loved the younger. Thereupon the elder brother went to the younger and told him to give up the girl. He said: "I am the one to marry the girl for I am your elder brother." Thus he spoke. But the younger refused. They quarrelled a great deal till the elder brother became furious. When the night fell he went to the hut where the younger brother was sleeping and killed him with his sword, he killed him with one stroke. When the people heard the news they said: "He did an evil deed, God will revenge it." But the girl cried, she cried for twenty days and her heart was full of pain. When she had finished crying she left and went to another place. Nobody saw her again.

The responses which the contents and structure of the story evoke in the experimental subjects can be analysed under four or five different headings: There are points in the story which stress emotional reaction; points which bear on moral ideas; and points which appeal more specifically to reasoning, i.e. crucial points in the logical progress of the narrative. The text also contains certain set phrases and formulae; and, finally, a number of situational or circumstantial details. Obviously, these different categories in which the features of the narrative can be grouped must overlap to a certain extent. But it is just this overlapping, the application of different and even divergent aspects of interpretation to the same features, which will reveal to us most strikingly the different psychological attitudes with which the two groups approach the data presented in the narrative.

(1) *Set phrases and formulae*

The beginning and the end of the narrative, and one or two other phrases, represent more or less fixed formulae typical of all such stories. These phrases were in most cases repeated literally, both by Nupe and

1: Nadel, Siegfried Frederick. A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria. London: Published for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures by the Oxford University Press, 1942.

Pp. xvi, 420; 16 plates; tables and charts; 5 maps, 2 end maps.

Yale: BK16 94

[This volume is the major source on Nupe culture. It is focused on political and economic organization, revealing in particular the reciprocal relations between these and the religious and legal systems.

The political organization is described in terms of the contemporary relations between the quasi-feudal state and the various ethnic groups and economic classes in the total community. Particular attention is paid to urban-rural relationships and differences. Political organization is also explained historically as the outcome of earlier tribal structures, the Fulani conquest, and new economic and political forces under British rule.

In the discussion of economic organization, Nadel introduces records of actual time and labor involved in production, detailed descriptions of selling methods, and the amount of profit and how it is spent. An important

1: Nadel, Siegfried Frederick.

chapter discusses the interrelationships of standards of living, cultural requirements, wealth, status and prestige.

While this is a very complete monograph insofar as sociopolitical and economic organization are concerned, data on human biology, material culture, language and warfare are largely absent. A discussion of religion was reserved for a later volume (2: Nadel). At the time of his death in 1956, Nadel was Professor of Anthropology at the Australian National University. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1936
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1958

111 FF52 Nupe

2: Nadel, Siegfried Frederick. Nupe Religion. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954.

Pp. x, 288; 16 plates.

Yale Divinity School: OG26 N124n

[This source is primarily a functional study of the religious life of the Nupe. The theology of the group is discussed thoroughly, then the ceremonial life proper, including rites of passage. Medical and mental therapy are next described, and finally witchcraft and the measures against it are treated. This material is handled without reference to Islam, in order to clarify the aboriginal situation. The final chapters take up the Islamization of Nupe, as well as the practice of the religion within the tribe, and deal with the effects of other religions on Nupe. A section is also included on divination. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1936
Analyst: James R. Leary

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist-5
Processed in 1958

111 FF52 Nupe

3: Forde, Daryll. The Nupe. In Daryll Forde, ed., Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence. Ethnographic Survey of Africa. Western Africa, Part 10, pp. 17-52. London: International African Institute, 1955.

Yale: Nkd74 Et3 III. 10

[This is a summary sketch of Nupe culture by a British social anthropologist, dealing with materials published as late as 1952. Sections include: tribal and sub-tribal groupings and demography; traditions of origin and history; language; physical environment; main features of economy; social organization and political system; cultural features and the life cycle; and religious beliefs and cults. Main reliance is placed upon the works of Nadel. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 4
Processed in 1958

4: Temple, O. Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria Compiled from Official Reports. Second edition, edited by C. L. Temple. Lagos, Nigeria: The C. M. S. Bookshop, 1922.

Pp. iv, 578.

Yale: Nkd82 919tb

[Only pp. 319-335, dealing with the Nupe, have been processed for the FF52 Nupe file.]

[The material in this source was compiled from reports, assessment reports, annual and monthly reports, official letters, etc., which were kept at the Secretariat and the Provincial Headquarters of the Colony of Nigeria. The material is not presented in synthetic form, the various items of information available being brief and irregular in quality. Included is information on war, law, population, the Mallams, the position of women, and the various subgroups within the Nupe state. The compilation was stopped in October 1916. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Government Official-4
Processed in 1958

5: Nadel, Siegfried Frederick. The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria. In Meyer Fortes and Edward Evans Evans-Pritchard, eds., African Political Systems, pp. 164-195. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1940.

1 map

Yale: Nkd18 940f

[This is a study of the political organization of the Kede, a completely Mohammedanized section of the Nupe tribe living on the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. Their economic pursuits and general social life center around the rivers on which they live - thus their social and cultural life, as well as their political organization, present features which are absent in the rest of Nupe. Among the topics discussed are: demography; history and settlement pattern; political organization; social stratification; economic organization; and the evolution of the Kede state, all of which are discussed from a functional standpoint. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1936
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1958

6: Anonymous. Crafts of Bida. Nigeria Magazine, No. 49, pp. 138-147. Lagos: Government of Nigeria, 1956.

Yale: Bk16A B85 A45 48-51

[This source is a brief, well-illustrated popular account of the glass-working and brass-smithing crafts of Bida, the capital of Nupe. Some indications are given of the effects of changing modern conditions. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Unknown - 4
Processed in 1958

7: Nicholson, W.E. Bida (Nupe) Pottery. Man, Vol. 34, pp. 71-73. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute, 1934.

Yale: Nk10 /M31 v. 34-35

[This article describes the detailed procedure of a potter in Bida, Niger Province, and includes data on workers, varieties, preparation of the clay, building of the pot, its decoration, coloring and sale. It is a brief note of special interest, but based on personal observation and well reported--Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Unknown-5
Processed in 1961

8: Walker, S.W. Gabi Figures and Edegi, First King of the Nupe. Man, vol. 34, pp. 169-172 and 1 plate. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute, 1934.

Yale: Nk10 + M31 v. 34-35

[This report describes several cast metal figures observed by the author in the Middle Niger region, and presents a legendary history of the first king of the Nupe which may explain the origin of the figures. In addition, there is a note on chains similar to those mentioned in the same legend which were used as a device for the execution of criminals. This article, illustrated with photographs and drawings, refers to other writings which might well be consulted for further treatment of the same subject. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1933
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Government Official-5
Processed in 1961

9: Nadel, Siegfried F. The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria. Man, Vol. 35, no. 143, pp. 129-132 plus one plate. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1935.

Yale: Nk10 +M31 v. 34-35.

[This is an original work describing the functions and historical development of the institution of royal executioner. The article explains the presence in modern times of the sacred chains, once used as an executionary device, in a number of specific Nupe villages. There is a discussion of the role of the executioner, traditions relating to the office, and concepts of crime and justice as interpreted by the author. Nadel was well acquainted with the Nupe and is considered the foremost authority on their culture.--Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1935
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist-5
Processed in 1961

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4 plates; 1 map

Yale: Bk2 10 8

[The materials contained in this source have been fully covered in Nadel's A Black Byzantium (1: Nadel, this File). Therefore, this source has not been processed for the Nupe file. --Analyst]

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181 discover the effectiveness of such autonomous psychological tendencies. The specific *ethos* of Nupe culture may indeed embody such an 'alternative solution'. But the extent to which this is true, the extent to which the autonomous psychological forces limit or qualify the effectiveness of historical and environmental factors (which we must regard as sufficient to explain the evolution of the social structure as such), can only be ascertained on the basis of comparative studies of similar, class-organized, societies. This is, once more, outside the scope of the present investigation.

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY

113 THE following list comprises the works of early travellers and writers on Nigeria and Nupe, arranged in chronological order, some of whose data were invaluable for the historical descriptions and reconstructions of this book.

IBN BATUTA (1353), describing the various countries on the Niger (which he knew as the Nile), mentions one called *Youfi* or *Noufi*, south of Mouli (Muri?), as 'one of the most important countries of the Sudan', and its 'sovereign as one of the greatest kings of the area'. 'No white man [Arab?] enters *Youfi*, for the negroes there would kill him as soon as he arrived.' These remarks have been interpreted by some authors as referring to Nupe, or Nouffie as it was called by certain early travellers. But it is very doubtful whether this can be true. Ibn Batuta gives the same name *Noufi* also to a certain tribe in East Africa, some 'six weeks' march' from the sea. Moreover, *Leo Africanus* (1520) makes no mention of Nupe.

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MAN

A MONTHLY RECORD OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE

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XXXIV, 160-200 NOVEMBER, 1934

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Nigeria. With Plate L. Walker.

Gabi Figures and Bdagi, First King of the Nupé. *By S. W. Walker, District Officer, Ilorin Emirate, Nigeria.*

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In MAN, 1931, 261, Sir H. R. Palmer published an account of certain "representations "of deities cast in metal . . . in the region round Jebba and Rába on the Middle Niger." I have recently had an opportunity of seeing these figures, and a fuller account of them may be of interest. For ease of reference the same numbers will be used as in Sir H. R. Palmer's article.

2. The two Jebba figures (Plate M 1, 2, 3) are well known and stand almost unprotected in the midst of the village on Jebba island, close by a dilapidated hut, alleged to be consecrated to their worship. The photographs accompanying the above-mentioned article are clear, and no further description is here necessary other than certain observations which a comparison with the other figures evokes.

3. The other photographs (Plate M 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) show four of seven figures at Tada, a small Nupé fishing village on the high bank of a backwater of the Niger, some 25 miles east of Jebba and some five north of Shonga. They are kept in a round hut and, unlike the Jebba figures, are carefully tended. They are taken out and scoured every Friday, and the floor is thickly spread with clean white river sand.

4. The most noticeable figure is one of dark bronze, 3 feet 8 inches high, bearing a general resemblance to the male figure at Jebba, both in technique, decorative treatment and conventional form. Its head dress consists of what appears to be a tight-fitting helmet, from which hang five coils reaching to the waist. To the front and rear of the helmet are attached medallions which bear the device illustrated in fig. 9, consisting of a horned and mustachioed face, surrounded by an interlacing design. Each medallion is surmounted by a crest behind which are models of birds as in fig. 10. The close-fitting gown reaches below the knees and is richly decorated with designs in low relief as in figs. 11 and 12. Round the neck hang a tasselled stole, a necklace and a chain bearing another medallion as in fig. 13. The design on the latter consists of a ramlike head surrounded by three birds which suggest the lesser hornbill.

5. Though the similarity of this figure to the male figure at Jebba is obvious, the differences are interesting. The quilted attire of the Jebba figure, with its dagger in front and quiver slung at the back, indicates a warrior in the act of drawing a bow, while the rich and perhaps magic ornamentation of the Tada figure may conceivably suggest a king, priest or civil official. The helmet of the former, like that of the latter, bears a medallion, but smaller, and decorated with the figure of a long-beaked bird similar to fig. 11. The top of the helmet is covered by what is now a tangled mass of bronze wire or 'shavings,' which, like the coils of the Tada figure, might be thought representations of hair, were it not for the fact that they appear attached to the cap or helmet.

6. Another of the dark bronze figures is of an elephant of somewhat slender body and long legs. It has a ridge along the back and is 2 feet high (Plate L, fig. 15).

7. The two remaining figures of dark bronze (Plate M 5) are of ostriches, 4 feet 4 inches and 3 feet 6 inches high respectively. Each has a curious plate on the back suggestive of a tortoise shell, only flatter.

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FOREWORD

By Lord Lugard

THIS exhaustive treatise on one of the most important communities in Nigeria owes its inception to the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York, which placed a large sum at the disposal of the International Institute for the Study of African Languages and Cultures. Fellowships were instituted to enable specially trained students to undertake scientific research into the social organization of a selected unit of African society, the factors of social cohesion which operate to prevent its disintegration by contact with European civilization, the openings for co-operation, and the tendencies towards new groupings. Others were specially concerned with linguistic studies.

Dr. Nadel, of the University of Vienna, was one of the original Fellows, and he selected the Nupe of the middle Niger for his field of research. He brought to his task not only a thorough mastery of the technique of scientific investigation, but an original mind, and a sympathy with and understanding of the African, which won the confidence and friendship without which scientific qualifications can effect little.

His exceptional talents as a linguist enabled him not only to converse, at first in the *lingua franca* (Hausa), but in less than six months to acquire, and speak with fluency the very difficult 'tone' language of the Nupe. Many an English reader of this book may even envy his command of idiomatic English. The Nupe seem to have regarded him as an unusual phenomenon and conferred upon him a high title of tribal rank.

As an 'Anthropologist' he is concerned at the outset to explain that the term—whether 'functional', 'practical', or 'applied'—is ill adapted to the research he had undertaken. But surely the study of 'a native society in all its complexity', and the factors which had affected its social evolution are better described as 'Sociology' than as 'Anthropology'—which is defined as 'the study of man as an animal'? A clear understanding on the other hand of the connotation of the term 'Culture' as used by a highly qualified sociologist is essential to the appreciation of his work.

> 'Culture (he says) varies with environment and . . . expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. . . . It is not a sum total of discrete traits (but) . . . a conscious unity created by and embodied in a common group life (by) . . . the people who form the group, . . . specific to it and only to it irrespective of variations within, or similarities with groups outside, the tribal boundaries.' (pp. 14–15.)

The distinctive individuality of the 'tribe' depends in turn on the presumption that it is a 'group possessing more or less the same culture' and language.

The 'social and economic complexity' of the Nupe State as it exists

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121 in the study of these historical cultures is equally barred. Very few historical records exist, and they are hardly informative from the sociological point of view. [312] The people of Nupe have not yet risen to the stage of education producing written records and accounts of important events or institutions. With the exception of a few educated Mohammedan scholars whose co-operation I was able to enlist in the recording of folk-lore and historical traditions, I have been unable to use a single literate informant, for example, to keep diaries of important events, or to handle questionnaires. Lastly, the most essential evidence in the study of complex societies, namely statistics, scarcely exists. The statistics in this book were, with few exceptions, compiled single-handed and on a scale of the inadequacy of which no one can be more aware than the author. [126]

121 I have described elsewhere the technique of inquiry which I applied, and need say nothing on that point here.[1] But it is necessary to describe 114 the general plan of research I pursued, for it illustrates the methods by which I attempted to circumvent some of the difficulties just mentioned. I spent two years in the field, in the course of two expeditions in 1934 and 1935–6. From the outset I was confronted with the problem how to cover, in intensive study, the vast area inhabited by the Nupe people. The political configuration forbade the selection of one section to the disregard of others. The widespread political system had clearly to be studied at different points, in its centre as well as on its periphery. Moreover, a short preliminary survey already revealed the existence of considerable cultural differences within the tribe. The further my studies proceeded the more manifest became the significance of these differences as variations of a common pattern, the study of which was essential to the understanding of the forces that moulded the culture of the people. The investigation thus became perforce a comparative study within the framework of one tribe and one culture. At a certain stage of my investigation I even had to go outside this framework and devote some study to neighbouring groups—the Kakanda, Gbari, and Bassa—which, closely akin to the Nupe and partly their fellow citizens in the Nupe kingdom, might throw light on certain aspects of Nupe culture.

The main problem was to discover representative sections and centres for the study of this widely spread social system and its varying culture. I will not speak of the difficulties which I encountered in this task, helped as I was only by records and information which soon proved superficial and inexact. In the first six or seven months I was reduced almost to the method of trial and error: a very short stay in a new place would have been useless even merely to discover whether or not this place might prove a useful centre; and once I decided on a long stay the time was gone and could not be recovered even if the place turned out to be less profitable than I had expected. Let me admit that this did indeed happen in two villages (Mokwa and Sakpe) which I had made my centres upon the advice of various informants and which, as I discovered later, were not as significant or essential as certain other places would have been. However, certain general facts about the culture and the

[1] See 'The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, chapter xiii, 1939.

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people could be obtained there as well as anywhere, and on my second expedition I could to some extent correct the mistakes of the first. On the other hand, I was unable to study one or two villages (e.g. Yeti, in the oil-palm area, and Kutiwengi, where an interesting variety of a certain religious cult is reported to exist), partly because I had discovered their significance too late, and partly because my time did not allow the inclusion of further centres and communities.

The main centres on which I based my investigation were: Bida town, with its surrounding belt of hamlets and small villages; the large villages of Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, and Mokwa, in the west; and finally Jebba Island on the Niger, which commands an important stretch of the river area. Each of these centres I visited several times. The repeated periods of study enabled me to check my material and to remedy oversights; often they led to the discovery of new points of view which only emerged from the comparison of the cultural variations typical of different areas and local communities. In addition I stayed for shorter periods in certain other communities in order to study a specific question or to collect certain comparative evidence. Thus, for example, I paid several short visits to the village Lemu, twenty miles north of Bida, because a new commercial crop had been adopted that year by the people of Lemu; and once I spent two weeks in Patigi (a quite uninteresting visit, by the way), because there the last descendants of the old dynasty of Nupe kings hold court.

Bida, the large capital of the country, required the longest time. Here also I began my studies of the Nupe language with the help of the English- and Hausa-speaking teachers of Bida Middle School. During these first months I carried out my anthropological work through the medium of Hausa, which I had studied before going to the field, and which is widely understood among the people of Bida, but from the fifth or sixth month of my stay I used Nupe exclusively. During the first expedition I spent altogether six months in Bida and the Bida area, in the course of three visits; three months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits; and one month each in Mokwa, Agaie, and Jebba Island. During the second expedition I spent five months in Bida, in the course of two visits, two months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits, three months, in one visit, in Jebba and on the river, and two months on travels to the neighbouring area of Gbari country and to Ilorin, Ibadan, and Lokoja, where I made a special study of the large Nupe colonies in these towns.

The difficulty of discovering in this large and complex culture representative areas and group sections, and of distinguishing them from others whose cultural life must be regarded as a variation of the main pattern, arises in a different form with regard to documentation. The problem here is how to prove with scientific exactitude the typical or non-typical nature of cultural facts and events, and how to present them convincingly as representative or as in some degree deviating from the norm. The distinction between typical and non-typical facts is primarily a question of frequency, and the ideal method of documentation would be one in which all descriptions and analyses were backed by statistical evidence. For obvious reasons such a method of documentation is rarely

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*754 182 other societies, differently organized, different factors might prove relevant (for example, among the Navaho, the smallness of the group, envy of wealth, and irregular, autocratic leadership).[1] But might it not be that the whole belief in witchcraft (of any kind) is similarly a variant, one of several possibilities of canalizing anxieties and tensions, which would once more depend upon something in the make-up of cultures? It must be so, since there exist societies (if few in number) which are without this kind of belief even though they are not without conflicts or tensions. And it must be so also for another reason.

Granted that suppressed hatreds, unresolved conflicts, and the like occur in most (or all) societies, they could surely be offered adequate relief by means other than beliefs in witchcraft. The hatreds and the persecution of aliens; licensed occasional outbursts of hectic excitement; or the licensed aggression of war or of sectional combats, are familiar instances; all three also occur in Nupe. It may of course be that they offer insufficient relief, or themselves add further anxieties or tensions. But there is no way of measuring the potential of these different chances of relief; we cannot compare them and say 'each can only do so much', as we might say of the lack of vitamins in one kind of food that it must be made good by their presence in another. If the incidence of neuroses and other psychopathological derangements is an index of unrelieved mental tensions, then the reliefs just mentioned are indeed 'not enough' in Nupe; but they are not enough even combined with witchcraft beliefs. However this may be, witchcraft beliefs exist *although* there are these other possibilities of relieving tensions; which is true not only of Nupe but of most societies in the world. We must conclude that they have a *raison d'être* of their own, apart from that implied in the psychological mechanism of projection, displacement, and the rest: which *raison d'être*, as I have suggested, must lie in 'something in the make-up of cultures' (of most cultures).

*754 182 ● 114 In a paper written many years ago I attempted to formulate that reason. As I now know, I was wrong; my attempt was vitiated, above all, by the fact that I had considered Nupe witchcraft in isolation from the rest of the religious system. But since my error too is instructive I may be allowed to repeat here the main argument.[2] I argued that religious faith, if it clings naïvely to the promises of religion—of guidance as to how to act; of supernatural or divine protection if that guidance is followed; and of some ultimately just and benevolent order of things—must on occasion face failure. For only too often are these promises belied, by

[1] Op. cit., pp. 174, 177, 178–9.
[2] See *Africa*, vol. VIII, pp. 444–5.

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disease, sudden death, misfortune, injustice, that is, by the evil things in the world. Thus in all religions there are attempts to justify or resolve, or to dismiss as merely apparent, this contradiction of promise and fulfilment. The attempts vary in philosophical refinement. The religious doctrine may, in the vein of stoic philosophy, explain the presence of evil as a foil for the visibility of the good; or it can make the evil things, like the sufferings of Job, a touchstone of faith; or it may lay their cause into the imperfection of man, so that his sins (willed or not, actual or intended) are behind the apparent failures of divine providence. Or finally, and more crudely, the religion may contain a loophole within itself, admitting a province where evil is simply allowed to reign. The devil of naïve belief is one embodiment of this loophole-idea; the witch another.

It is true that the belief in the evil actions of witches bears only upon a narrow variety of that abstract 'evil in the world' meant by philosophers or theologians. Even so, the 'loophole' remains. Let us remember also that the belief in witches safeguards itself from being 'found out' and proved or refuted by empirical means; in embracing this incontrovertible belief, then, religious faith itself is safeguarded from being found illusory and refuted by reality. Speaking practically, the acceptance of witchcraft (or of the devil) saves the believer from false hopes or disillusion; speaking philosophically, the acceptance of an ultimate X within the divinely ordered universe saves that order. Admitting that there is a province where the believed-in guidance and protection do not fully reach, we save the belief in laws to guide us and in that promise of protection. Witchcraft, in brief, is a chapter in apologetics, albeit crudely written.

So far my original conclusions (somewhat paraphrased). Now though they are, I believe, correct for other systems of religious belief, they do not seem to apply to Nupe religion. Granting that beliefs in witchcraft can save faith in a divine order of the universe, in Nupe religion, there is nothing of the kind to save; if in other societies or cultures there must be the admission of that ultimate X to account for, or explain away, the failure of religious guidance and promise of protection, in Nupe, this guidance and promise have never been offered. Nupe religion, as we know, admits accidents at every step; it promises only fallible guidance and protection; the observances or ethical rules it upholds are not meant to be counted upon against the many evils which are also in the world—malevolent spirits, diseases, uncontrollable misfortune. Indeed, the deity himself has put them in the world and suffers them to exist, being unconcerned with the fate of his creation. Why, then, should there be this further, special

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assumption of the evil of witchcraft? The problem which it might serve to solve simply does not exist.

Yet there remains another problem, requiring a kindred solution. With the admission of accident, with the conception of an unpredictable and amoral universe, the problem of the presence of evil is solved intellectually or, at least, argued away on the intellectual plane. But this solution leaves an emotional gap. For I hold that there is a deeply seated desire for certainty, which demands satisfaction of an essentially emotional kind, that is, the awareness that the world is not only certain, but concerned with *you*—your fate, your happiness. And where this demand is refused (as in Nupe) anxieties and frustrations must again arise and press for some ab-reaction and solution. But now those other outlets which might relieve the pent-up tension, through random acts of aggression or some explosive catharsis, would prove inadequate; they would take care of the symptoms but not of the conflicts from which these spring. Nor can the disturbance of the longed-for certainty be overcome save by discovering the disturber; the vague dissatisfaction with an abstract state of affairs must be capable of crystallizing into the accusations of concrete agents. Above all, there must be the chance of practical action, so that the people aware of the threat also have the satisfaction of dealing with it. In other words, precisely because you know that the world around you holds out no promise of certainty nor any supreme design, you conjure up an arch-enemy with whom at least you can reckon, on whom you can vent fears and hatreds, and over whom you may hope to triumph, be it Satan or the witch.

The witch is, perhaps, less of an arch-enemy, since only some of the evils of the world can be laid at her doorstep. Yet the conjured-up picture of human beings who are unaccountably evil and unaccountably cause death and disease does take care of a portion of the uncertainty in the world. Now, we previously said that the admission of a province of life where the benevolent design of the universe does not reach saves the faith in that universe: this clearly does not apply. We must now say—the admission of a province of life where malevolent forces can be defined (and attacked), makes it possible to bear a universe devoid of such design. To be sure, this is no longer our 'loophole' theory; but it is as it were its photographic negative, or the same mathematical formula with all pluses changed into minus signs. Crudely speaking, you may have a God of Justice and Mercy, naïvely conceived, and devils or witches in the background; or you may have an Idle God, remotely in the background, but at least devils or witches to grapple with.

That the notion of witchcraft may arise from such opposed con-

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

619 on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved
634 over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

[567] *Konu* (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá (" Gbari slaves "): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe " proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Bafa* in the [114] 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

161 Demographic Data

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

162 1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda ..	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge ..	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op cit., p. 20
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, " A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for " Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

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universal scale of mental characteristics or abilities. The present investigation is in no way concerned with measuring or rating psychological reactions and characteristics. It is devoted to a qualitative analysis, more precisely: a qualitative comparative analysis, of the higher mental processes—perception, memory and thinking processes—of two primitive peoples. Its primary aim is to discover 'typical' psychological traits among groups of different culture, in other words, to study by means of a psychological experiment what Professor Bartlett calls the "preferred, persistent tendencies of groups" (3), p. 255).

Y N 114

During two anthropological expeditions to West Africa (Northern Nigeria) I had made some effort to combine anthropological work with experimental psychological studies. I had been working for some time among two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe. These, living side by side, in the same material environment, under the same general conditions and at the same stage of civilization, yet present a picture of two entirely different, almost antagonistic cultures. This seemed an ideal situation for an investigation on the lines of such 'racial' or culture-psychology. Thus I carried out the same series of experiments among both groups, and I shall describe in the following pages some of the results of this comparative study.

II. The experiments

Y N 125

I propose to describe two sets of experiments which correspond very closely to the type of experiment used by Bartlett, namely experiments on *Description* and *Repeated Reproduction* of pictures and stories (3), p. 45 *et seq.*). The pictures were photographs of objects or scenes with which the experimental subjects were all familiar. Some of them were enlargements of my own photographs taken in the country, and some were taken from the *Illustrated London News* and other illustrated papers. The story which was used I composed myself. It was modelled on a native folk-tale of a type fairly common both among Nupe and Yoruba, but with a view to bringing out certain psychological test facts. The experiments were, for practical reasons, carried out in schools, namely in the Government Middle Schools in which teaching is done by native teachers and to a large extent in the vernacular. The two series which I am describing here were done with 20 students from each community, of the age of 15–18. All experiments were done in the vernacular; among the Nupe I myself carried out the experiments, as I was speaking the language fluently; among the other group, the Yoruba, I trained two teachers to carry out the experiments for me.

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THE *ETSU* NUPE

[facing p. i]

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A BLACK BYZANTIUM

THE KINGDOM OF NUPE IN NIGERIA

BY

S. F. NADEL, Ph.D.
Government Anthropologist
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan

WITH A FOREWORD BY
THE RIGHT HON. LORD LUGARD
G.C.M.G., D.S.O., O.B.E.
Formerly Governor General of Nigeria

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1942

[p. i]

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TO
MY WIFE
WHOSE BOOK THIS IS
AS MUCH AS MINE

[p. ii]

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD
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FOREWORD

By LORD LUGARD

THIS exhaustive treatise on one of the most important communities in Nigeria owes its inception to the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York, which placed a large sum at the disposal of the International Institute for the Study of African Languages and Cultures. Fellowships were instituted to enable specially trained students to undertake scientific research into the social organization of a selected unit of African society, the factors of social cohesion which operate to prevent its disintegration by contact with European civilization, the openings for co-operation, and the tendencies towards new groupings. Others were specially concerned with linguistic studies.

Dr. Nadel, of the University of Vienna, was one of the original Fellows, and he selected the Nupe of the middle Niger for his field of research. He brought to his task not only a thorough mastery of the technique of scientific investigation, but an original mind, and a sympathy with and understanding of the African, which won the confidence and friendship without which scientific qualifications can effect little.

His exceptional talents as a linguist enabled him not only to converse, at first in the *lingua franca* (Hausa), but in less than six months to acquire, and speak with fluency the very difficult 'tone' language of the Nupe. Many an English reader of this book may even envy his command of idiomatic English. The Nupe seem to have regarded him as an unusual phenomenon and conferred upon him a high title of tribal rank.

As an 'Anthropologist' he is concerned at the outset to explain that the term—whether 'functional', 'practical', or 'applied'—is ill adapted to the research he had undertaken. But surely the study of 'a native society in all its complexity', and the factors which had affected its social evolution are better described as 'Sociology' than as 'Anthropology'—which is defined as 'the study of man as an animal'? A clear understanding on the other hand of the connotation of the term 'Culture' as used by a highly qualified sociologist is essential to the appreciation of his work.

> 'Culture (he says) varies with environment and . . . expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. . . . It is not a sum total of discrete traits (but) . . . a conscious unity created by and embodied in a common group life (by) . . . the people who form the group, . . . specific to it and only to it irrespective of variations within, or similarities with groups outside, the tribal boundaries.' (pp. 14–15.)

The distinctive individuality of the 'tribe' depends in turn on the presumption that it is a 'group possessing more or less the same culture' and language.

The 'social and economic complexity' of the Nupe State as it exists

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to-day is epitomized in the comparison he has chosen as the title for his book. Affiliations with neighbouring tribes, migrations to found new settlements, and above all the influence of foreign rulers have introduced modifications, but without radical change in the traditional culture. The complete absence of any written records, and the reticence of the people until complete confidence had been established, accentuate the difficulty of elucidating the origin of the tribe before and up to the death of Tsoede, the mythical founder of the kingdom. From the end of the sixteenth century, however, the history can claim comparative accuracy. Comparison of the Nupe language with those of neighbouring tribes is complicated by the existence of five distinct dialects.

Dr. Nadel's first object was to discriminate between the essential characteristics of Nupe culture, and the variations from the typical pattern in 'a heterogeneous society divided by gulfs of culture, ethnic extraction, community, and class'. For this purpose he considered that what he calls 'the anthropological quadrivium—kinship, political organization, economics, and religion'—was unsuitable, and decided to base his research on 'the two inseparable aspects of culture, political and economic organization', with special reference to religion and law.

This involved in the first place an examination of 'the factors of social cohesion' upon which the claim of a community to rank as a unit of self-government is based, and in the second place the effect of changes brought about, *inter alia*, by contact with Europeans and especially by the British Administration—the two main objectives in his 'terms of reference'.

Since it is the declared policy of the British Government to help the different units of native society to govern themselves in accordance with civilized canons of justice, and of impartiality between rival claims arising from 'the interpenetration of essentially different social systems', such as Islam and paganism, it goes without the saying how valuable such an objective study would be to the Administration. We find that, in fact, it has been utilized in conjunction with the researches of District Officers.

Among the binding forces which constitute the state, kinship, says Dr. Nadel, has no part. Its influence is limited to component groups only. Nor can economic interdependence exert a binding influence. It is more likely to be disruptive. He finds that the factors which have contributed to the solidarity of the Nupe State are primarily the attachment of the people to the principle of Kingship, of which the *Etsu* (king) and the holders of the important Offices of State are the symbol.

The *Etsu* personifies the heroic achievements of the mythical Founders of the Kingdom whose glories are enshrined in legend and song, and in which the people take pride as citizens of the state. A second and potent centripetal force was the acceptance of the brotherhood of Islam, the creed of the ruling race, and the avenue to title and dignity.

The annual festival of the *Sallah* (*Id el Kebir*), attended by immense crowds, became a day of national ceremonial and national unity. To

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these influences may be added the common participation in a uniform system of law and justice. It is surprising that the cohesive effect of a language radically different from the *lingua franca* is not mentioned in this connexion, since it is surely one of the most important of the characteristics which confer a distinct individuality upon the Nupe State and a common bond among its people?

The two view-points of political and of economic organization inevitably involved research into 'urban and rural culture, Mohammedanism and paganism, the organization of the state, and the organization of the village community'. It is only possible here to name a few of the varied aspects of native life, of which the reader will find a very full analysis in these pages. They include the modifications of traditional law and custom brought about by the advent of Islam and later by the British Administration and the abolition of slavery.

The tenure of land; the place of women in the body politic; the relation of the ruling classes to the peasantry; the psychological effect of the multiplicity of titles of rank in every class and every vocation (not wholly peculiar to Nupe), are all exhaustively described. The comparatively advanced methods adopted in agriculture include manuring and rotation of crops, and Dr. Nadel has some shrewd comments on the system of 'mixed farming' introduced by the Government.

We learn how completely this African State has accustomed itself to a 'money-economy'—the extent of its trade, the contrasts between urban and rural economy, the system of collective assistance (*egbe*) and 'labour-units', and of financial expedients such as *dashi*, with careful estimates of the cost of living and of the family budgets of different classes. The account of the different Guilds—of blacksmiths, glass-makers, weavers and the rest, including the 'luxury-crafts' of bead-workers, and of artistic ornaments, is specially interesting.

The book is an exhaustive and meticulous picture of the life of an African community which has maintained its individuality through many cycles of change. It will be a very valuable addition to the parallel researches by other Fellows of the Institute. We may congratulate the Sudan on having secured the services of so competent a sociologist.

ABINGER COMMON
September 1941

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INTRODUCTION

121 THIS book has been conceived, written, and published under the shadow that darkens the face of the world to-day. We have long believed that the furtherance of knowledge carries its own justification. But in recent years the legitimacy of pure, self-contained, detached science has become more and more dubious.[1] For no field of science is this more true than for the science of society, which has been pressed into the service of ruthless political aims, persecution, and suppression. Historical falsifications, racial doctrines, distorted dogmas of social necessities, have produced weapons no less deadly than those manufactured in factories and laboratories. A science that could be thus abused must no longer hope to recover its spurious detachment. It will find redemption only in closeness to the problems of our existence as society and civilization.

A student of society professing this belief in the social mission of science could not wish for more congenial material than the African society described in these pages. Indeed, I have not been satisfied with the bare description of a remote and strange social existence. I have tried, on a modest scale, to contribute to our understanding of the forces that shape the fate of societies—of our own society to-day as of that West African polity. Wars, suppression, persecution, and the reactions against these forces—you will find them all in this book. And you will find them so presented that their relation to the problems of our own social existence is never obscured. I believe that some lessons might be read from these facts: at least, I have tried to write them out as legibly as I could.

And another thing. Large parts of this book are dedicated to what has become known as 'practical' or 'applied' anthropology. It has been said that modern anthropology is destined to be of great assistance to colonial governments in providing the knowledge of the social structure of native groups upon which a sound and harmonious Native Administration, as envisaged in Indirect Rule, should be built. Let me say that I for one firmly believe in the possibility of such co-operation between anthropologist and administrator. Indeed I hope that this book will bring evidence of the fruitfulness of the co-operation. The form which it should take in the concrete case is perhaps not as yet well defined or universally accepted, and a few words must be said about the view taken in this book.

Obviously, the description of a native society as it might appear if it had never been touched by modern changes, even a mere compilation of facts to which the administrator could turn as to a dictionary or gazetteer, would be misleading because artificially simplified. It must be the duty of the anthropologist to demonstrate the native society in all its complexity, fashioned as it is by a multitude of social causes and effects, in which the efforts of administration represent causes and effects

[1] See J. D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science*, 1939.

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among others. It may be debatable how far the anthropologist can go in this demonstration without introducing values of his own, without venturing criticisms or committing himself to concrete suggestions, and thus going outside his domain. But there can be no doubt about the legitimacy of his task to demonstrate alternative developments that have arisen, or are likely to arise, from administrative measures or their omission, from a new extraneous change or the unbroken continuance of an indigenous institution. If such a view is called implied or indirect criticism, I shall bear the blame lightly. For this 'indirect criticism' is nothing but a legitimate scientific device (used throughout the book) to assess the effectiveness of social forces—internal or extraneous, historical or modern. Moreover, all criticism stands or falls with the conception of principles and necessities of which it is an expression. Anthropologists and administrators may differ about these principles and necessities—we anthropologists are the first to realize this. But we feel that this divergence of view—if divergence there be—should be placed in the full light of knowledge; if our 'criticisms' are discounted, as indeed they may well be, the final decision should yet be inspired by them, and take the form of conscious choice.

Modern anthropologists will not lightly surrender their claim to the name 'explorer'. True, their work no longer takes them to peoples whom no traveller has yet encountered, and to countries which no white man's eye has yet seen. But they probe more deeply into the society of primitive man than any of the early explorers. They have set themselves the task of lifting the knowledge of primitive cultures beyond casual acquaintance, on to the plane of true scientific insight. They are explorers, not of the surface of the globe, but of an unknown social realm.

As an explorer, the anthropologist is faced with the difficulties of method and technique that beset all pioneer work. Anthropology in this new intensive sense is a young science, which is still evolving its methods of approach and has to find its instruments of research as it goes along. It has not yet been able even to map out with sufficient exactitude all the possible forms of society which its field-workers might encounter. Every new field-work may mean the discovery of unknown social structures unapproachable with the techniques hitherto used. This is indeed the plea that this book makes: a plea for understanding—and consideration—of its nature as a pioneer work, and for the difficulties and shortcomings inherent in such work.

The present book can claim to be regarded as a pioneer work in more than one respect. The technique of modern anthropology ('functional' anthropology as it is called by some) has been evolved on small islands in the Pacific, and in the study of small groups and cultures infinitely simpler than our historical civilizations. The West African society dealt with in this book is half a million strong. It is far from 'simple' or 'primitive'. Its social and economic complexity is comparable only with the civilizations of Imperial Rome, of Byzantium, of medieval Europe. Yet if the technique of anthropological field-work in the accepted sense must thus prove inadequate, the method of approach normally applied

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121 in the study of these historical cultures is equally barred. Very few historical records exist, and they are hardly informative from the sociolo-
[212] gical point of view. The people of Nupe have not yet risen to the stage of education producing written records and accounts of important events or institutions. With the exception of a few educated Mohammedan
[126] scholars whose co-operation I was able to enlist in the recording of folklore and historical traditions, I have been unable to use a single literate informant, for example, to keep diaries of important events, or to handle questionnaires. Lastly, the most essential evidence in the study of complex societies, namely statistics, scarcely exists. The statistics in this book were, with few exceptions, compiled single-handed and on a scale of the inadequacy of which no one can be more aware than the author.

121 I have described elsewhere the technique of inquiry which I applied, and need say nothing on that point here.[1] But it is necessary to describe
114 the general plan of research I pursued, for it illustrates the methods by which I attempted to circumvent some of the difficulties just mentioned. I spent two years in the field, in the course of two expeditions in 1934 and 1935–6. From the outset I was confronted with the problem how to cover, in intensive study, the vast area inhabited by the Nupe people. The political configuration forbade the selection of one section to the disregard of others. The widespread political system had clearly to be studied at different points, in its centre as well as on its periphery. Moreover, a short preliminary survey already revealed the existence of considerable cultural differences within the tribe. The further my studies proceeded the more manifest became the significance of these differences as variations of a common pattern, the study of which was essential to the understanding of the forces that moulded the culture of the people. The investigation thus became perforce a comparative study within the framework of one tribe and one culture. At a certain stage of my investigation I even had to go outside this framework and devote some study to neighbouring groups—the Kakanda, Gbari, and Bassa—which, closely akin to the Nupe and partly their fellow citizens in the Nupe kingdom, might throw light on certain aspects of Nupe culture.

The main problem was to discover representative sections and centres for the study of this widely spread social system and its varying culture. I will not speak of the difficulties which I encountered in this task, helped as I was only by records and information which soon proved superficial and inexact. In the first six or seven months I was reduced almost to the method of trial and error: a very short stay in a new place would have been useless even merely to discover whether or not this place might prove a useful centre; and once I decided on a long stay the time was gone and could not be recovered even if the place turned out to be less profitable than I had expected. Let me admit that this did indeed happen in two villages (Mokwa and Sakpe) which I had made my centres upon the advice of various informants and which, as I discovered later, were not as significant or essential as certain other places would have been. However, certain general facts about the culture and the

[1] See 'The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, chapter xiii, 1939.

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people could be obtained there as well as anywhere, and on my second expedition I could to some extent correct the mistakes of the first. On the other hand, I was unable to study one or two villages (e.g. Yeti, in the oil-palm area, and Kutiwengi, where an interesting variety of a certain religious cult is reported to exist), partly because I had discovered their significance too late, and partly because my time did not allow the inclusion of further centres and communities. 121 114

The main centres on which I based my investigation were: Bida town, with its surrounding belt of hamlets and small villages; the large villages of Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, and Mokwa, in the west; and finally Jebba Island on the Niger, which commands an important stretch of the river area. Each of these centres I visited several times. The repeated periods of study enabled me to check my material and to remedy oversights; often they led to the discovery of new points of view which only emerged from the comparison of the cultural variations typical of different areas and local communities. In addition I stayed for shorter periods in certain other communities in order to study a specific question or to collect certain comparative evidence. Thus, for example, I paid several short visits to the village Lemu, twenty miles north of Bida, because a new commercial crop had been adopted that year by the people of Lemu; and once I spent two weeks in Patigi (a quite uninteresting visit, by the way), because there the last descendants of the old dynasty of Nupe kings hold court. 114

Bida, the large capital of the country, required the longest time. Here also I began my studies of the Nupe language with the help of the English- and Hausa-speaking teachers of Bida Middle School. During these first months I carried out my anthropological work through the medium of Hausa, which I had studied before going to the field, and which is widely understood among the people of Bida, but from the fifth or sixth month of my stay I used Nupe exclusively. During the first expedition I spent altogether six months in Bida and the Bida area, in the course of three visits; three months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits; and one month each in Mokwa, Agaie, and Jebba Island. During the second expedition I spent five months in Bida, in the course of two visits, two months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits, three months, in one visit, in Jebba and on the river, and two months on travels to the neighbouring area of Gbari country and to Ilorin, Ibadan, and Lokoja, where I made a special study of the large Nupe colonies in these towns.

The difficulty of discovering in this large and complex culture representative areas and group sections, and of distinguishing them from others whose cultural life must be regarded as a variation of the main pattern, arises in a different form with regard to documentation. The problem here is how to prove with scientific exactitude the typical or non-typical nature of cultural facts and events, and how to present them convincingly as representative or as in some degree deviating from the norm. The distinction between typical and non-typical facts is primarily a question of frequency, and the ideal method of documentation would be one in which all descriptions and analyses were backed by statistical evidence. For obvious reasons such a method of documentation is rarely 128

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128 applicable. So far as it was possible I have made efforts to supplement all descriptions with quantitative evidence to show the frequency and regularity of social facts and events. It must be understood that where I limited myself to a few descriptions or single instances these are presented (unless stated otherwise) as typical instances, and that there exists sufficient evidence of their representative nature. But I must admit that in certain cases no such evidence could be adduced: if I record the absence of a certain cultural fact or its occurrence in a certain degree of frequency, this may only mean that the fact did not occur at all, or did not occur in any higher degree of frequency, in the areas and groups with which I was mainly dealing, and during the time of my investigation. Unhappily, the orbit of the anthropologist is limited by time and space. The larger and more complex the group which he studies, the more strongly he feels his dependence upon that treacherous purveyor of facts, chance. It was chance that brought to my knowledge the fact that in one small and unimportant Nupe village succession to chieftainship is matrilineal—an isolated occurrence in that otherwise conspicuously patrilineal society. And it was chance that led me to the discovery, in a small riverain village, of a certain ritual which amounted to a symbolic 'king-killing'—again a usage for which there seems to be no parallel in other parts of Nupe. I could discover no evidence that would allow me to explain these anomalies, and I have put them down as such, well aware of the possibility (slight though it may be) of such evidence existing, undiscovered, in the villages and group sections of Nupe to which my studies did not extend. The general knowledge of the cultural constellation gained from the available material allows us to a certain extent to formulate theories, to predict, as it were, whether or not a certain cultural fact is likely to occur, or to occur in this or that frequency. But we can predict only a likelihood; we can delimit the possible sources of error: we can eliminate them as little as we can eliminate chance itself.

The presentation of the material involves also difficulties of a more technical nature. Its very quantity forbade treatment in the form of a comprehensive monograph. Nor did the material lend itself to a neat division into a number of separate treatises each dealing with a different aspect of the anthropological quadrivium—kinship, political organization, economics, religion. The solution could only be found in a compromise. My original intention was to build the book round the relation between the two paramount group configurations, political association and family—'Kingdom and Kinship'. But this would still have meant a very unwieldy book. The final result, then, is a 'rump' monograph, dealing with the culture of Nupe viewed from the two angles of political and economic organization—two aspects of culture which must be regarded as inseparable. Even so, I had to leave out, or to reduce to a short quasi-preliminary outline, the description of two domains of culture the bearing of which upon the problems of the book I will not minimize: religion and law.

I must anticipate two further criticisms. One may be provoked by the

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rather unusual dichotomous arrangement of certain chapters. It was necessitated by the nature of the material, by the contrasting configurations which dominate the cultural life of Nupe—urban and rural culture, Mohammedanism and paganism, the organization of the state and the organization of the village community. One dichotomous formulation I have made almost the *leitmotif* of this analysis, namely, the twofold classification of social systems, formulated most clearly by MacIver, into *Communities* and *Associations*. Let me quote his definition: Community is a 'circle of people who live together, who belong together, so that they share, not this or that particular interest, but a whole set of interests wide enough and comprehensive enough to include their lives'. And Association: 'a group specifically organized for the purpose of an interest or group of interests which its members have in common.'[1] These two categories are used in this book consistently in MacIver's sense, that is, as descriptive categories defining, not rigidly separated social entities, but rather two poles of a more fluid social reality of many shades and grades. 128

Again, it might be objected that the descriptive accounts in this book are frequently interspersed with theoretical discussions. I shall offer no apology. Description is meaningless and misleading unless supplemented by a clarification of the concepts and categories with which it operates, and by an assessment in terms of theoretical generalizations of the concrete data which it produces. This is doubly true of the complex and, from the viewpoint of traditional anthropology, unusual culture described in this book. Thus I was forced to devote comparatively long theoretical discussions to the examination of such concepts as 'tribe' (in Chapter II) and 'state' (in Chapter VI), to the analysis of social class in Nupe (Chapter VIII), and to an inquiry into the relation between economics and sociology (Chapter XX).

In the research programme of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, under whose auspices the present investigation was carried out, the study of culture change under the impact of modern Western civilization is assigned a prominent place. Culture contact in Nupe is not restricted to this most recent historical phase; nor does it affect only certain well-defined domains of social life—it pervades the whole history and the whole living culture of the people. Nor can it be said (with some anthropologists) that the study of modern culture contact entails specific methods of approach, applicable only to this one aspect of social development. It did not therefore seem feasible to concentrate its examination in special chapters. Every description and analysis contained in this book bears to lesser or greater extent also on the problems of culture contact and culture change, ancient or modern. Only in a few instances did the material lend itself to a separate treatment of modern culture contact. They will be found in Chapter X, under the heading 'Problems of Adaptation', in Chapter XVII, which is entitled 'Industrial Labour', and in Chapter XIX, in the section on 'Modern Business Methods'. 121 128

[1] R. M. MacIver, *Society, Its Structure and Changes*, 1931, pp. 9, 12, 13.

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104 A minor technical point, in conclusion. In the orthography of vernacular words I have used the phonetic script generally accepted to-day by students of African languages, which, in the case of Nupe, contains only two not very common symbols: ~ for nasalized vowels, and ƶ for the fricative sound (like *s* in 'lesion'). I have not distinguished open and closed *e* and *o* vowels since this distinction is not of great importance in Nupe. And, for the sake of simplicity, I have not marked tones, although Nupe is a pure tone language; or rather, I have reduced the symbols for the five tones of Nupe (low, medium, high, rising, and falling tone) to a single accent (′) indicating the relative higher tone—a mark which the reader unfamiliar with tone languages can interpret as accent indicating stress. In words where no accents are marked, the different syllables are of equal tone or stress. I have marked the low tone only in the case of the negation, which consists of the suffix *a* pronounced on the low tone (*à*). In the spelling of geographical names I have kept largely to the spelling used in official maps (e.g. Kacha instead of Kaca). Only where the official spelling is at variance with the correct pronunciation have I corrected the spelling (e.g. Gbako river for Bako river, Eggà for Eggan, &c.).

000 There remains the last task of Introductions—acknowledgements. The first acknowledgements are due to my teachers and friends, to whom I owe most of my scientific equipment, the late Professors Malinowski and Seligman; to the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, as whose research fellow I went to the field and whose subsidy rendered the publication of this book possible; and to the Government of Nigeria and to the many officers with whom my work has brought me into contact for the generous help in many forms which they extended to me throughout my stay in Nigeria. I am greatly indebted to Professor Radcliffe-Brown for many fruitful suggestions and criticisms. I owe special gratitude to Sir Gordon Lethem, Governor of the Leeward Islands, late Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria, who first drew my attention to the Nupe tribe, and to the Rev. Dr. G. P. Bargery, who initiated me into the secrets of Hausa and the world of Nigeria. Mr. T. E. Alvarez of the Church Missionary Society in Bida and Rev. Ira W. Sherk of the United Sudan Mission in Mokwa have been most kind friends and helpers to the new-comer in a country of which they had lifelong knowledge. Last but not least I owe deep gratitude to all my native friends without whose freely given help my work would not have succeeded: *Etsu* Ndayako, the Emir of Bida; Mallam Aliyu, the Headmaster of Bida Middle School, who was my teacher in Nupe and my first guide through Bida life; Mallam Ndayako, whom I was proud to call my friend; old Ndakotsu, who is dead now, and who was so close a friend of mine that the Bida people knew me as the *nasara* Ndakotsu—Ndakotsu's European; and many others whose words and opinions are quoted in these pages.

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CHAPTER I

ENVIRONMENT

THE COUNTRY

131 THE people who call themselves Nupe live in the heart of Nigeria, in the low basin that is formed by the valleys of the two rivers Niger and Kaduna, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ N.L. A line drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupe land, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger south of Baro the southern boundary. The Niger, flowing almost straight north–south between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the west; the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.

133 It is a low-lying, softly undulating country, not more than 200 feet above sea-level in most parts. A few low ridges of broken, rocky hills stretch out, rib-like, from the river valleys, and curiously symmetrical flat-topped hillocks rise abruptly here and there from the plain. The highest points are no more than 800 feet above sea-level. At Jebba the Niger forces its way through a narrow passage formed by rocks, the ragged end of a short, broken chain of hills. Farther south, at Kpatagbã and Baro, and above Yankyedya in the north, hills and rocks close in upon the river. Rabá, the ancient river capital of Nupe kingdom, stands on high cliffs of red sandstone. Between cliffs and rocks the river bed is bordered by low banks on which stretches of thick rain-forest alternate with shrub and low bush. During the rains both forest-covered banks and open bush are flooded far inland and turned into vast swamps; the level of the Kaduna at Wuya rises by 30 feet; and in the Niger valley villages which lie on high ground in the dry season have the water of the river washing the threshold of their houses. Part of Jebba Island is flooded every year; and Nupeko, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, about two miles from the river in the dry season, can be reached only by canoe in the rains.

The big rivers Niger and Kaduna form the two axes of the country, an efficient, natural system of communication. It is no accident that the early Nupe kingdom grew in the area near the confluence of the two rivers, which were its first high-roads as well as its natural boundaries. A net of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, covers the country, providing an efficient system of natural irrigation. In most parts of Nupe
134 land the soil is rich and fertile, especially in the thinly inhabited districts west of the Kaduna, the only part of Nupe which still possesses large areas of virgin forest. East of the Kaduna, especially round Bida, a dense population and intensive cultivation have reduced the fertility of the land. It is the typical soil of Northern Nigeria, red earth mixed with laterite and rich in silicates—a fact which becomes important for the native glass industry in Bida. In a few districts, round Sakpe and near

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134 Lemu, pure white sand is found, a much more fertile soil as far as I can judge, which makes the country in the eyes of the native 'more beautiful' —by which he really means 'more useful'. Lastly, the low broken hills of Nupe are ferruginous, and on their slopes iron ore is mined by the natives.

VEGETATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

137 The geographical position of Nupe country makes it a typical area of transition from the southern forest belt to the arid savannahs of the north. Narrow strips or patches of thick rain-forest-like vegetation accompany river valleys and watercourses; but then, inland, we find a country of thin forest, shrub, and 'orchard-bush', alternating with beautiful open park-land, such as round Bida and Agaie, where intensive cultivation has cleared bush and shrub. The plant-life, again, reflects the geographical position of Nupe midway between north and south. Nupe is one of the northernmost countries in which the oil-palm is found, and yam and the southern variety of maize are cultivated; it is, at the same time, the southernmost habitat of the date-palm, the shea-nut tree, and millet crops. The trees and plants which are important for Nupe production and diet are these, in the order of importance. In the drier inland areas we find the locust-bean tree (*Parkia filikoidea*), in Nupe *lonci*; the shea-nut tree (*Bassia Parkii*), *koci*; the indigo tree or vine (*Lonchocarpus cyanescens*), *eci*, and indigo grass (*Indigofera arrecta*), *tsentse*; baobab (*Andansonia digitata*), *kuci* or *kuka*; silk-cotton tree (*Malvaceae*), *lembubu*; date-palm, *dobina*; and finally the mango, *mangoro*, a European importation. On irrigated land and in the thick groves near watercourses grow the oil-palm and other, less important, varieties of palm-trees, kola-nut tree (*Sterculia acuminata*), *ebi*, and banana, *yaba*. Only the kola-nut tree, the mango, and partly the banana are cultivated, all other trees growing wild. Nupe cultivation comprises the following kinds of crops and edible plants and roots: three millet varieties, bulrush-millet (*Pennisetum*), *mayi*, 'late millet' (*Spicatum*), *kpayi*, and guinea-corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), *eyi*; yam, *eci*; cassava, *rogo*; maize, *kábá*; ground-nuts, *gužya*; rice, *jenkafa*; sugar-cane, *kpāsanako*; and onions, *lubasa*, in the river marshes; further sweet potatoes, *duku*; beans and ground-beans, *ezo* and *edzu*; red pepper, *yaká*, and various kinds of greens which are eaten as vegetable. Of plants utilized commercially and in native industry cotton, *lulu*; henna, *lali*; hemp, *rama* or *egba*, 'rope'; and gourds, *ero*, are the most important.

241 In this enumeration of crops and plants of Nupe we have left the field of physical environment in the narrow sense. This rich and varied 177 system of cultivation reflects already a standard of civilization, technical achievement, and inventiveness of a people which has learned to master its environment. Some of the plants and crops mentioned have been adopted comparatively recently and introduced into Nupe from the north and south. As the Nupe names for hemp, henna, or cassava are borrowed from Hausa the plants themselves represent 'borrowed' cultural goods. The cultivation of onions was introduced into Nupe from

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Hausa, and partly from Bornu, in historical times.[1] Nor is the cultivation of yam an original cultural possession of the Nupe, which is proved by two facts: first, that the Nupe north and east of the Niger are unfamiliar with certain important ways of preparing yam common in all 'real' yam countries, e.g. the drying of yam; and second, that yam, though to-day an important staple food, has still no place in their sacrifices, ritual meals, and first-crop ceremonies: only corn and millet may be used for these ritual offerings.[2] Cassava, finally, has only been introduced in the last thirty years; thirty years ago, I was told by a missionary, it was almost unknown in Nupe. Thus communication and culture contact have helped to mould the physical environment of to-day. This manifold agricultural system, however, could not have been evolved if the natural conditions of the country had not been favourable. The meeting of south and north in the vegetation of Nupe, the coexistence of marsh-land and savannah country, the natural irrigation and the strips and patches of thick forest, all this was as essential to the development of the productive system of the country as was the inventiveness and stage of civilization of its people. We cannot attempt to decide which factor, environment or civilization, has had the larger share in this development. The rigid distinction between environment and culture has long been abandoned as misleading and futile. For our investigation it is irrelevant. We can well regard the environment as it appears at present, the natural resources as they are utilized by the people to-day, as a unitary complex of factors the effect of which, upon the life and well-being of the people, we have to examine.

CLIMATE

Nupe, lower lying than any of the neighbouring districts, with its two big rivers, their dry, blazing sand-banks in the dry season, and their vast swamps in the rains, is one of the hottest and at the same time most humid districts of Nigeria. The river valleys especially, and the hollow in which Bida is situated, are damp, airless, and unhealthy. The following figures give the average temperature, humidity, and rainfall in Bida for 1933:[3]

TABLE I

	Jan.	*Feb.*	*Mar.*	*Apr.*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug.*	*Sept.*	*Oct.*	*Nov.*	*Dec.*	*Annual total*
Minimum temp.	60	70	72	72	71	71	68	68	68	70	70	67	..
Maximum temp.	93	98	102	103	98	88	92	90	85	91	96	96	..
Humidity (per cent.)	60	50	66	71	78	92	92	92	85	76	75	62	..
Rainfall (in inches)	2·99	..	..	1·99	3·06	12·33	15·41	15·82	11·87	2·29	0·32	..	66·08

[1] It is still practised to-day by the Bornu settlers of Kutigi.

[2] There is one exception: Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, where yam is sacrificed at certain annual rites. But the exception proves the rule, for Mokwa is the gate for cultural influences from Yoruba.

[3] This table was copied from the readings taken regularly in Bida Middle School.

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132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, 164 Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The 231 forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the 164 highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of 732 leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity, 158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

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SURROUNDINGS OF BIDA

THE KADUNA RIVER NEAR GBARA

[Facing p. 4]

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164 Sleeping sickness is the great scourge of the country. A Sleeping Sickness Commission which visited Nupe in 1936 found 70 per cent. of the people infected—the highest figure in the whole of Nigeria. Bilharzia and other worm diseases are no less widespread. The prominence of venereal diseases is characteristic of Nupe as it is of the whole of Nigeria and indeed of the whole of semi-civilized Africa. Dysentery, malaria, and yaws complete the unhappy picture. It is worth noting, [146] however, that typical deficiency diseases, including boils and ulcers, are comparatively rare. A statistical table, compiled from the attendance figures of the N.A. Hospital and Dispensaries in Bida Division, may illustrate the distribution of the more important diseases occurring in Nupe.

TABLE II

The figures for Bida Hospital refer to in-patients treated during April, July, October 1935 and January 1936. The figures for the Dispensary of Lemu give the attendance in January 1936. For another dispensary (Kutigi) only the order of frequency of the various diseases could be ascertained; it is indicated in the third line by roman numerals.

	Venereal diseases	*Malaria*	*Ulcer, scabies, &c.*	*Bronchitis, pneumonia*	*Dysentery, enterics*	*Eye-diseases*	*Rheumatic diseases*	*Leprosy*	*Bilharzia, worm diseases*	*Various*
Bida Hospital	35	14	15	13	9	3	5	2	80 per cent. of all cases	128
Dispensary Lemu	21	18	3	54	2	2	68	4	?	106
Dispensary Kutigi	II	IV	III	VI	?	V	I	10 cases	?	?

The description of health conditions has a more special bearing on the anthropology of the Nupe people. First, it is of a certain significance in connexion with certain cultural elaborations of the theme of disease among the Nupe;[1] second, it involves relevant questions of mortality and population movement—a subject to which we shall turn presently. Finally, with respect to mental disorders: psychology and sociology have long realized that certain tensions and maladjustments in the social system tend to manifest themselves in the sphere of psycho-pathology. We shall see that this correlation is true also of Nupe society.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

121 It is unnecessary to stress the importance of population studies for the understanding of a society and the nature and working of its institutions. But it may be necessary to justify the inclusion of a discussion on population movement in a chapter on environment. A first justification lies in the fact that, in a study of social organization, environment and popula-

[1] Most instances of this kind, however, I must leave for future publications. To one typical instance, the part which leprosy plays in the mythology and ritual of the *gunnu* cult, I have referred in the description of this cult in '*Gunnu*, A Fertility Cult of the Nupe in Northern Nigeria', in *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

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121 tion movement are to some extent methodologically of the same order. Both represent in certain respects 'data', given facts—factors external to the field of social phenomena which we investigate. Moreover, population movement and environmental conditions are inseparable from one another. Population movement reflects the effects of a complex of heterogeneous factors of which physical environment is one of the most important. It bears on possibilities and means of production, on nutrition, health, and livelihood in general.

But we shall also encounter the effects of other factors upon population movement, namely, specific 'cultural' factors—social and economic conditions, 'standards of living', moral concepts—and certain historical events which have influenced the distribution of population in Nupe country.

Birth-rate and Fertility

163 The Nigerian Census places Nupe birth- and fertility-rate at the bottom of the scale.[1] The proportion of live children per mother among
842 the Nupe is 1·8 (the Yoruba are the only other tribe with an equally low rate), as against an average for all tribes of 2·6, and a fertility-rate of 2·4 in the tribe with the next lowest figure. Fifty-eight per cent. of Nupe women in the age group 30–39 are sterile, as against the total average for Nigeria of 22·7, and the next highest sterility rate of 27·1 among the Yoruba. These figures contain certain inconsistencies, and leave certain relevant questions unanswered. Thus the rate of live children per mother is equal among Nupe and Yoruba, while the proportion of sterile women among the Nupe is exactly twice the corresponding figure among the Yoruba. This would imply that infant mortality among the Yoruba is twice as large as among the Nupe—which seems hardly probable. Moreover, the proportion of live children per mother does not indicate to what extent the low figure is due to still-birth, infant mortality, constitutional sterility or, possibly, birth restriction. Finally, the statistics ignore the sociologically most important distinction between rural and urban areas.

The last point can to some extent be answered indirectly. The following figures give the birth-rate of three Nupe towns and one district (Kontagora) which has a very large proportion of Nupe among its inhabitants. Though only approximate these figures are well worth quoting in this connexion as they refer to localities representing different degrees of urbanization: the purely urban area of Bida town side by side with the much less urbanized village-capitals of Agaie and Lapai Emirates.

TABLE III

	Birth-rate per 1,000
Bida town	12
Agaie town	36
Lapai town	27
Kontagora Division	26

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, i, p. 55.

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In the course of our investigation my wife and I attempted to ascertain further statistical data which could throw light on these points. They were obtained by the method of house-to-house investigation in three selected localities, in the villages Kutigi and Jebba Island, and in one town ward of Bida. The scale of this statistical research, carried out single-handed, was of necessity very limited. Nevertheless, certain significant facts could be ascertained (Tables IV and V). 163 842

TABLE IV

	Mothers (age group 30–40)	*Total children born*	*Children alive*	*Children dead*	*Births per mother*	*Live children per mother*
Villages	101	206	108	98	2	1·06
Town	144	230	126	104	1·5	0·8

TABLE V 165

	Mothers	*Children died at age of*					*Total*
		Birth	*1–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–15*	
Villages	101	29	25	27	8	9	98
Town	41	21	15	27	7	4	74

Table V shows, first, the distribution of infant mortality over different age groups. Infant mortality in the villages seems, on the whole, considerably lower than in the town, remarkably so at, or shortly after, birth and in the first five years of the infant's life. This seems in the main due to the spread of venereal infection in the town, and also to the effects of abortion and artificial birth restriction which, as we shall see presently, is practised in Bida. The highest mortality, both in urban and rural districts, occurs at the age of 3–5. This peak of mortality seems due primarily to malaria, which is especially fatal at this age.[1]

Table IV (examining a larger group from the urban area) attempts to establish a comparative birth-rate for urban and rural areas. For the low fertility-rate of the Nupe women in general two physiological explanations suggest themselves: first, reduced fertility may be the result of certain endemic or widespread diseases, such as sleeping sickness and gonorrhoea; or second, it may be the result of prenatal deficiency of vitamin E (a vitamin contained, for example, in palm-oil). The effectiveness of these two physiological factors cannot be denied.[2] However, the striking difference in the birth-rate of town and villages demands a different interpretation. The distribution of venereal diseases, definitely higher in the town than in the rural area, would fit into the picture. But of sleeping sickness rather the opposite is true; and the vitamin deficiency 163 842 164 [146] 163 842

[1] For this information, as for the other medical information in this chapter, I am indebted to Dr. M. Ellis, of the Nigerian Medical Service, who at the time was in charge of Bida N.A. Hospital.

[2] A study of diet among the Nupe has shown that the women's share of the daily meals (i.e. the meals cooked with palm-oil) is only about one-fourth of the men's share.

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163 should be less marked in the town, where rich food is the rule. Physio-
logical factors are thus not sufficient to explain the low fertility-rate in
842 Nupe. This is confirmed by the data of Table IV. For in the context of this table, which refers only to women who have had children and excludes sterile women, the difference in birth-rate precludes to some extent the explanation on the ground of constitutional sterility and suggests instead the influence of another factor: the existence of birth restriction in the town, in other words, the effects of *social* motives.

842 Nupe religion and morality, as we shall see later, emphasize very strongly the idea of progeny. Nevertheless, in the higher social strata, especially in Bida town, the women often prefer childlessness, or at least do not want more than one child. Childlessness opens to them certain economic opportunities of which women with children, or many children, cannot avail themselves as easily. The Bida women know how to bring about abortion, and even know the use of contraceptives—or rather of certain practices and drugs which are believed to work as contraceptives. Many of them are clearly mere superstitions and the expression of magical beliefs; whether certain drugs which one can buy (in the greatest secrecy) from medicine-men and barber-doctors are more effective, I am unable to say.[1] However this may be, sterility of the Bida women is, to speak with Durkheim, a typical 'social fact'. In our own terminology, it represents a typical case of that 'indirect' influence of environment which determines population movement, working through considerations of economic benefit and standard of living. And this influence becomes evident in our case not only as an abstract social trend, derived from statistical correlations, but still more in the form of conscious and tangible behaviour.

Sex Ratio

162 Statistical figures show a surprising fact: a marked preponderance of females among the adult population, but hardly any preponderance of females—indeed, in Bida town, the reverse relation—in the sex ratio of non-adults.

TABLE VI[2]

	Adults		*Non-adults*		*Females per head of male population*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Adult*	*Non-adult*
Bida Emirate	57,759	66,546	22,949	24,204	1·15	1·1
Agaie-Lapai Emirate	20,148	23,915	6,139	5,938	1·1	0·9
Bida town	7,714	11,602	3,240	2,675	1·5	0·8
Bida Emirate excl. of Bida town	50,045	54,944	19,709	21,529	1·1	1·1

[1] The Nupe 'doctors' know two kinds of contraceptives: temporary contraceptives of a magical nature (e.g. a magical belt), and permanent contraceptives—powders which are taken internally. These drugs are considered 'evil', immoral medicines, but are made and sold all the same.

[2] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, pp. 176 et seq.

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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

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for example, the Gana-Gana (Dibo) sub-tribe of the Nupe is classed sometimes under 'Nupe' and sometimes as a separate group. In the Census of 1921 their number is given as 19,700, in the Census of 1931 as 2,897;[1] into which tribal category the rest of them disappeared I have been unable to discover. A last example: only in 1936 did the Administration of Ibadan Division discover that the people who were listed in their statistics under the heading 'Tapa' (Takpa) were identical with the 'Nupe' of the Northern Provinces, Takpa being the Yoruba name for Nupe.

The difficulties and sources of error which render tribal statistics so uncertain do not affect in the same degree population statistics compiled for certain single Provinces, political Divisions, and especially townships. Here the improvement in registration has had its full effect; and I may add that in the preceding discussion I have used only these more reliable statistics. Here are certain figures illustrating population movement in Niger and Ilorin Provinces—the two Provinces in which the bulk of the Nupe people are living.

TABLE VII

	General Census 1921	*General Census 1931*	*Local Census 1934*
Bida Emirate . . .	171,958	171,458	168,247
Bida town . . .	29,848	25,231	23,286
Nupe in Ilorin Province .	64,652	65,040	53,600
Nupe in Niger Province .	233,840	226,132	..

Again we find a marked decrease in population and a decrease which cannot be dismissed as due to miscalculation. Evidently, a decrease in population even considerably smaller than that shown in these figures cannot be due merely to unfavourable birth- and death-rate. Emigration seems the only alternative, and I have indeed found evidence of this. A continuous emigration on a small scale and the existence of a floating population of traders and craftsmen drifting to the prosperous centres in the south could be established beyond doubt.[2] The study of life-histories and genealogies among the Nupe shows further that emigration of considerable importance occurred, roughly, in the last six to ten years. The drift of the emigration was again mostly south, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, that is, to the wealthier and, above all, less heavily taxed districts of Southern Nigeria.[3] In-

direction of an anthropologist, Dr. C. K. Meek, is in many respects more correct than the more comprehensive and elaborate recent Census.

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, p. 70; on p. 30, however, there are, again, 18,220 Gana-Gana.

[2] A census of Nupe people living at present in Lokoja, for example, showed the following distribution of professions among 60 family heads: 2 farmers, 4 mechanics, 5 barbers, 15 tailors and embroiderers, 4 black- and brass-smiths, 9 Koran teachers, 3 mat-makers, 2 carpenters, 5 canoemen, 5 N.A. messengers, interpreters, and other small officials.

[3] These are the comparative tax figures for 1934–5 per adult for Bida Emirate and Ilorin and Ibadan respectively: Bida town, 9*s.*–10*s.* 6*d.*; Bida Emirate,

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vestigations among the Nupe community of Ilorin and Ibadan have elicited the information that in 1934–5 a big wave of Nupe emigration had reached these towns.[1] These two years, my informants explained, had been bad years, with a severe food scarcity in the north, high prices, and shortage of money. The reason is indeed convincing: 1933–4 marked the nadir of the economic depression in Northern Nigeria, which almost paralysed trade and native industry. To the mobile professions of trader and craftsman emigration appeared in many cases as the natural solution.

Density of Population

The following table illustrates the density of population in different parts of Nupe country. The first three figures are taken from the Census of 1931, the other figures, referring to districts of Bida Division, are compiled from the local Census of 1934.

TABLE VIII

Locality	*Density per sq. mile*	*Locality*	*Density per sq. mile*
Bida Division	35·22	Mokwa district	12
Agaie-Lapai Division	21·70	Kutigi "	13
Lafiagi-Patigi Division	30·00	Districts west of Kaduna river ('Trans-Kaduna')	17·6
Badeggi district	22	Districts east of Kaduna river ('Cis-Kaduna')	55
Gbangba "	50		
Jima-Doko "	53		
Kacha "	60		

The striking difference in density of population east and west of the Kaduna river needs explanation. It lies in the historical fact of the Fulani conquest of Nupe and the immigration of the Fulani rulers and their huge army of warriors, slaves, courtiers, and other dependants into the area east of the Kaduna, where they settled, occupied the land, and built their capital and numerous villages. The history of the conquest and the political reorganization of the country which it entailed will be described later in more detail. But here already we realize the far-reaching influence which this difference in population density must have upon the social organization of the country, and upon the distribution of natural resources on which its economic life depends.

districts, 9*s.* 6*d.*–15*s.*; Ilorin town, 9*s.*; Ilorin Emirate, districts, 10*s.*–11*s.*; Ibadan town, 7*s.*

[1] During 1935 200 people from Bida Emirate migrated south. (Personal information received from the District Officer, Bida Division.)

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CHAPTER II

CULTURE, TRIBE, SOCIETY

000 THE description of environment is concerned with a solid, easily defined, almost self-evident reality. A description of the general demographic and cultural constellation deals with the fluid entity of groups and systems of unity, the mere circumscription of which involves already theoretical definitions and classifications. These definitions and classifications must be based on facts which only the full analysis of the society can establish. This chapter will thus have to anticipate certain results of the general description which forms the main body of this book. It will not attempt to anticipate the descriptions themselves. Its aim is only to sketch in a background, to stake out a field of demographic and cultural facts by which is bounded that social reality with which this book is dealing.

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

101 Let me draw a tribal map of the part of Nigeria where Nupe country lies: in the north the neighbours of the Nupe are Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; in north-east and east lies Gbari country; in the south, on the river, the country of the Kakanda; and west of the river, Yagba (a section of the Yoruba) and Ilorin Yoruba; and in the north-west, finally, the people of Borgu and Bussa. Colonies of Nupe, small sections, split off from the main body of the tribe, are scattered all over Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of them, a group of about 15,000 people who call themselves Bassa, or Bassa Nge, lives near the confluence of Niger and Benue. They appear to have emigrated from the mother country about a hundred years ago, before the Fulani conquest; they settled first on the right bank of the Niger, on the hills of what is to-day Lokoja, and moved later, when the new town of Lokoja was founded by the Niger Company, to the left bank where they are living to-day.

The Nupe are known as *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*) among the Hausa, as *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*) among the Gbari of Kuta, and as *Anupeyi* and *Anufawhei* among the Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari; the Yoruba know them as *Takpa* and the Kakanda as *Anupecwayi*. The Nupe call themselves *Nupeci* or, in the plural, *Nupeciži*, their language *Nupe*, and their country *kin Nupe*, Land of Nupe. No special word for 'tribe' exists in Nupe; the Nupe speak of *za Nupe*, Nupe man, Nupe peoples.

619 This book is concerned with the culture of the people that calls itself Nupe. But what does 'people' mean here? What is the social reality to which the term Nupe people or Nupe tribe refers? The three meanings of *Nupe*, people, language, and country, do not coincide. Disregarding the split-off sections we may say that the Nupe tribe inhabits, roughly, the same territory. But it is not, and never was, 'one country' in the sense of a group united politically, or by facts of close contact and 'common life', thus marked off from other, similar areas or groups. Of

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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map. 619

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira. 161 631 619

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa, 619 197 [191]

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

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and Kupa. Nupe proper differs from Ebe, or Bassa from Žitako, no less than Nupe differs from the languages of the other, related, tribes, Gbari and Kakanda. Dialects, language, language group, or linguistic class—these are all fluid categories, shading over into one another, and none of them capable of being identified with tribe or people.

Political group and language group thus imply the existence of the tribe, they do not explain it. The objective reality of political and linguistic organization leaves undefined the nature of that elusive human substratum, tribe or people. Nor can we count on any external symbols of tribal unity to help us with the definition. No tribal costume, or tribal emblems, exist, no tattoos or face-markings characteristic of all Nupe.[1] Yet to the Nupe man himself the Nupe tribe or the Nupe people is a clearly defined, unmistakable entity. He will rarely hesitate whether to describe the population of a district or village as Nupe or to put it down as alien, non-Nupe. This is, of course, an expression of traditional, historically accumulated, and transmitted knowledge. People and tribe themselves represent but the product of complex historical processes, contacts, and ramifications. These processes are no longer traceable to-day; but even if we could trace them they would tell us nothing about the nature of this social fact which we witness to-day, the classification of groups which do not speak the same language and do not live together in 'one country' unified by political organization, under the heading of 'one tribe'. The only definition of tribe that seems possible is the tautological statement that a tribe or people is a group unit the members of which claim to form a group unit. But perhaps there exists some other, objective, social reality which can help us to define this evasive concept?

We have not examined yet that paramount social reality, culture. But culture no less than language or living-together seems a fluid criterion of tribal unity. The only definition of tribe that we can give in terms of culture is to call the tribe a group possessing more or less the same culture—as it possesses more or less the same language or lives more or less in contiguity and 'togetherness'. In Nupe the unit of culture is in certain respects smaller than the unit of the tribe. The different 'countries' of Nupe represent different, and differently organized, cultural 'provinces'. Culture varies with environment and the productive organization which it entails; it expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. We can thus speak of a rive.ain Nupe culture, a hunters' or peasant culture, and distinguish town from rural culture, or the culture of the ruling group from the culture of the subjects and commoners. The cultural unit is also wider than the unit of the tribe. Nupe shares its political and social system with many tribes in West Africa, its traditional religion with neighbouring groups in the north, east, and south, its modern religion, Islam, with the whole Sudan. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking of a West African culture, or a culture of the inland groups of West Africa (as against the culture of the groups in the rain-forest and near the coast). Finally, culture appears also, as it were, crystallized in the form of

[1] See below, p. 22.

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a tribal culture, and the area of cultural unity reveals itself in some respects as coextensive with the tribe.

This is not merely an enumeration of isolated 'traits' selected at random. Each cultural factor which we reviewed affects, and is interdependent with, a wide range of other cultural factors. Culture, as anthropologists are realizing, is not a sum total of discrete traits; it possesses a definite structure and identity; its traits or elements, interdependent and mutually determined, build up a 'pattern' that tends towards coherence and consistency. This consistency—a functional consistency—reveals its existence to the student of the society in those cultural characteristics which he learns to regard as 'typical' or 'non-typical' of a culture. Each of the three cultural units which we enumerated shows, in some measure, the features of this consistency and identity. We will not here probe deeper into the nature of this consistency which seems to crystallize in different degrees of intensity and comprehensiveness. But we must clarify our concept of culture. So far, we have used the word in a rather vague sense. It is not the same culture, the same category of culture, which we discovered in these three relations between cultural and tribal unit. Cultural unity is, speaking generally, unity and correspondence in forms of social behaviour. When speaking of culture units wider than the unit of the tribe, we referred to a correspondence of behaviour among disconnected groups which we as students of cultures and peoples discover, classify, and name; it is a correspondence upheld by the unconscious processes involved in tradition and the perpetuation of custom; it impresses upon the groups a certain external *uniformity*. When speaking of the smaller cultural units which reflect common environmental conditions and common interests, common spheres, that is, of organized social life, we refer to something that goes beyond an externally visible uniformity. We mean a *conformity* of behaviour, a conscious unity created by, and embodied in, a common group life and the mutual control and adjustment of behaviour among the people who form the group.[1] The identification of cultural group and tribe implies, in the observer's interpretation, something of both.

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But were this all it would enable us only to define the tribe as a natural species is defined—unknown to the subject of the definition. It would amount to colouring a certain space on a cultural map and calling it 'Nupe tribal culture'. It would not explain the crucial point in our argument, that the people are themselves conscious of the reality of the tribe. But culture has also another, new, meaning: it represents the conception of the people themselves. To the Nupe the tribe possesses a certain culture, specific to it and only to it, irrespective of variations within or similarities with groups without the tribal boundaries. Their awareness of this unity is expressed in the form of almost axiomatic statements, 'the Nupe do this or that', 'this and that is a Nupe custom',

[1] The historian may attempt to link the two, and derive 'uniformity' from an original 'conformity', that is, explain the present cultural correspondence among disconnected groups by cultural diffusion from a centre in which culture was identical with organized common life. But considerations of this kind remain outside this discussion.

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121 contrasting Nupe usages with customs and forms of behaviour characteristic of other tribes. You discuss, for example, the worship of human
183 figures and idols of the kind you see in every village and every house in
619 neighbouring Yoruba; or the face-like masks which the Yoruba and many southern tribes wear in their ritual dances; or perhaps the ceremony of spirit possession which the Hausa who live in Bida town perform on Bida market. Your Nupe informant will tell you positively: no —we have none of this; only Yoruba do it, or Hausa do it, as the case may be. Or you ask a Nupe man what all Nupe have in common. He will, as a rule, enumerate the same few traits. All Nupe, he will say, have the *ena gbarúfuši* (age-grade associations), all Nupe have the same system of *tici* (ranks), and all Nupe have the *gunnu* cult. Of the Nupe community in Lagos, a group which has forgotten its traditions and abandoned its language, I was told that they were still Nupe, because they still practised the Nupe *kuti* (ritual) of the *ndakó gboyá* (a ritual closely linked with the *gunnu*). Yet on closer examination this shibboleth of Nupedom proves only half true. Worship of idols and human figures exists also among the Nupe, in the riverain area; mask dances with face-masks are practised in a large section of the Nupe, in Mokwa and the neighbouring villages. The age-grade associations are common both to Nupe and Hausa. The rank system is common all over Northern Nigeria, but the details in its organization (very significant details) vary considerably among different groups of the Nupe. The *gunnu* cult exists also among Gbari, Gara, Basa Kom, and, what is more important, appears in Nupe itself in strikingly different forms in different parts of the country.[1] Finally, as regards the Nupe colonies outside Nupe country: I have visited the Nupe communities in Lagos and Ibadan. They are descendants of Nupe slaves and serfs, completely Yoruba-ized to-day in language, custom, and everyday habits. It is true they have the *ndakó gboyá* (which they call by the Yoruba name *igunnu*). But the *ndakó gboyá* is completely absent among the eastern section of Nupe, the Dibo, and also, I believe, among most groups of the Ebe, the northern section of the Nupe tribe.

Objectively, then, the rigid distinction of Nupe and non-Nupe on the basis of cultural characteristics often proves incorrect, and must do so, since culture is both wider and narrower than the tribe. True, there exist certain traits, or 'patterns' of traits, which are typical of all the Nupe, and possibly only of the Nupe—facts of material culture, social organization, religious beliefs. Like the Nupe who mean to uphold the identity of their tribe, I shall speak of things 'the Nupe do' or 'do not do'. True it is that the people admit the existence of certain cultural variants which qualify the cultural unity of the tribe. But the essential fact to us here is not the objective constellation of cultural traits. The identification of Nupe tribe with a core of Nupe culture represents a concept, a spiritual reality, rather than a critical interpretation of cultural facts. It reflects not the quasi-scientific calculation of more essential against less essential traits, or of a majority of common characteristics as against a minority of

[1] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

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dissimilarities, but a phenomenon of a different order, a theory and ideology which ignores divergences *ex definitione*. It represents, in one word, the theory of the Nupe tribe. Our tautological definition of tribe then reads thus: a tribe or people is a group the members of which claim unity on the grounds of their conception of a specific common culture.[1]

To define the unity as conceptual does not make it less real or less significant. The awareness of unity is the basic element in all social unity. Consciousness of commonness is the primary element in social commonness. 'Communities, for all their external marks, are not objective things, they are spiritual realities.'[2] The tribe is not a community in the strict sense of the word: it lacks, as we have seen, the element of 'common life' and co-activity. But communities exist in different degrees of intensity; they have a different compass of social inclusiveness; there is not *one* community, but a complex hierarchy of communities.[3] The consciousness of a uniform culture defines the widest, loosest unit in the hierarchy of communities—potential rather than actual 'common life'. One turns easily into the other. 'One of the great processes of society . . . is that thereby the common is built out of the like, common interests growing out of what were at first merely like interests.'[4] We add that the consciousness of uniformity is the first step towards conformity of culture.

At the same time this uniformity of conduct which is conscious of itself is more than merely a potential stage of social existence. It represents, in itself, a specific social reality. Let me define here a vital concept of social existence which will occur throughout this book: social integration. The essence of integration is co-activity—potential or actual; social integration is predictable co-adaptation of behaviour in a group. It reveals itself in the certainty with which, in the group, certain actions of individuals or group sections will call forth appropriate response actions of other individuals or group sections. Now uniformity of behaviour is, sociologically, meaningless. Conscious uniformity, however, is predictable uniformity; the knowledge that a certain familiar pattern of activity will be repeated endlessly throughout the group represents a first form, and a degree at the same time, of social integration.

These two types of integration, uniformity and conformity, do not exhaust the forms of unity of behaviour existing in society. We shall meet in this analysis also with a third interpretation of cultural commonness or likeness, namely, the co-adaptation of behaviour involved in all organized associations. We shall speak of it as *co-ordination* of behaviour, for it represents essentially a planned, controlled organization of behaviour in the group, regulated and enforced by specific social mechanisms. In

[1] This definition claims to hold true for all large tribal groups ('peoples') of a similarly complex structure. It does not apply to smaller and more homogeneous groups. The factor of size and numbers is of importance. Evidently, for a small group on a Pacific Island tribe equals local group; or among American Indian tribes the tribal unit may coincide with the political group (see A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, 1923, p. 232).

[2] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 66.

[3] Ibid., p. 10; *Community*, p. 23.

[4] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 8.

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121 this book we shall be dealing mainly with the political association, which seems characterized by two sets of factors: first, by its inclusiveness, being the relatively widest unit of co-ordination, and, underlining it, by the conception of a collective identity which is emphasized, above all, in inter-group dealings. And second, by the nature of its regulative mechanism (here the 'Government'), which rests, in the last resort, on the employment of force and coercion, and which controls both co-ordination for the purpose of internal stability ('law and order') and co-ordination for the purpose of external, inter-group, action ('offence and defence'). Cultural groups and communities have fluid boundaries; the association (in our case the political unit) is or is not rigid, but its boundaries—the boundaries of the group and sphere of conduct within which the co-ordination is to be valid—are by definition rigid. The consciousness of this validity defines the membership of the political association—in modern terminology, nationality. The political unit, unlike culture and community, is exclusive: one either is or is not a citizen of a country; one either comes or does not come under its laws and restrictions. However, one remains at the same time a representative of a culture which may not simply coincide with the cultural uniformity upheld by the political system. One remains also a member of a community or of communities which may exist apart from the 'common life' embodied in political co-ordination. Planned co-ordination of behaviour cannot ignore these other forms of integration—cultural likeness and commonness. Whether it utilizes them, creates them anew, or simply accepts their existence, they are the cultural raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

The three planes of integration, and the group units which they define, thus cut across each other, overlap, and possibly grow out of each other, It will not always be easy to separate them clearly in the concrete description. The preceding analysis has to some extent defined their theoretical boundaries. In what follows we can attempt to isolate, in our concrete material, these three social realities: the integration of (conscious) cultural uniformity or the tribe; the integration of cultural conformity or the community; and the cultural co-ordination typical of organized society, above all, the political system and its paradigm, the state.

THE TRIBE

619 The conception of a common tribal culture is kept alive, as part of
184 Nupe tradition, by the transmission of traditional knowledge. It forms part of the general ideological background of all institutionalized behaviour. For many forms of customary behaviour membership of the tribe constitutes a convincing *raison d'être*. The tribe, lacking all unity of comprehensive co-operation, also lacks the unity of a common centre of cultural teaching. The consciousness of a common tribal culture is thus maintained by the scattered, disconnected mechanism to which the transmission of traditional knowledge is entrusted in Nupe. It is implied in the nature of this transmission that the same *raison d'être*—'we do this

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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpā, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpā and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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619 to have crossed later to the other side where they settled and became, in
173 the course of time, independent sub-tribal sections.[1] In the case of the Kupa the tradition is more concrete; it describes them as Ebe people who have crossed the Kontagora river (called in Nupe Eku, to cross the river is, in Nupe, *lá 'kú pà*, and this is supposed to be the origin of their tribal name) in the time of the big Nupe wars of conquest, about 1800. The Kusopa, the Forest Tenders, appear in Nupe tradition out of nothing. Somehow they grew into a separate sub-tribe the identity of which is based on their habitat in the thick inland forest west of the Kaduna and also on their special occupation, which is the cultivation of kola-nut trees. Gwagba is a deprecatory nickname given originally to a small section of 'Nupe *zam*' from Gbara, followers and henchmen of the Nupe kings who, in the wars for the Nupe throne, fled to Zuguma. *Gwagba* means, literally, Those who threw up their Hands, the Defeated, but it is applied to-day to the whole group of Nupe living in and around Zuguma town. The Benu, finally, represent another sub-tribe of recent origin, formed in historical times. They are people of Bornu origin (*Benu* being the Nupe corruption of *Bornu*), from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Bornu, who came to Nupe country towards the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of *Etsu* Ma'azū and settled, with his permission, in Trans-Kaduna. They came as wealthy traders, bringing with them certain new agricultural techniques—onion growing—horses and cattle (the latter soon disappeared in the tsetse-infested country). They soon became the dominant group, economically as well as politically, in the region where they settled, but they Nupe-ized themselves, intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their language, and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. Thus they are to-day a section of the Nupe, speaking the Nupe language, and conforming in their whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. Only their great annual festival, the *gani*, and the title of their chief, *Zonuwa*, are reminiscent of the ancient culture of Bornu.[2]

619 The name Nupe has also been extended to other originally alien
groups living in Nupe country, which have become Nupe-ized and are
563 hardly distinguishable to-day from the people among whom they live. In many villages and towns of Nupe we find groups known by the name of *Konú*, Prisoners of War,[3] or Eyagi-Nupe, Yoruba-Nupe, people of Yoruba origin, who are the descendants of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani kings of Nupe against the Yoruba; they were later freed and, by order of the king, settled in various districts of the kingdom. In Bida town I met the makers of horse-trappings—a craft imported from Hausa—who assured me that they were Hausa no longer. 'Yes, our fathers were Hausa,' they admitted; 'but we are Nupe'—claiming Nupe-

[1] They speak, in fact, the same dialect—proof that the tradition is not without historical foundation.

[2] See Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 148. I have given a more detailed description of this process of cultural fusion in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] *Konú* means 'war' in Fulfulde; the adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early times of the Fulani régime, when the rulers still used their own language.

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ization after barely one generation. The people in the north of Nupe country, near the boundary of Gbari, are known as *Gbari bautá*, Gbari slaves. They represent the original Gbari population of an area conquered by the Nupe and incorporated into the kingdom about 1800. In the north-east, too, Nupe culture is absorbing groups of Gbari, in a smooth and silent development which is still observable to-day. In Kataeregi, for example, in the north-east corner of Beni country, one or two old men still speak Gbari and remember their tribal origin; but the younger people speak only Nupe, regarding themselves, and being accepted, as Nupe and Beni full and proper. On the river, in the south, we have another group which has for some time been under Nupe political influence and has partly adopted Nupe language and culture: the Kakanda. They are not, however, regarded as part of the Nupe tribe —or not yet. Whether or not the consolidation of their cultural links will advance further and will eventually lead to an adoption into the tribe we cannot say for certain; perhaps the Kakanda will, with the completion of cultural assimilation, some day be regarded as another, thirteenth, Nupe sub-tribe.[1] In one or two cases, finally, people of one sub-tribe have emigrated into the district of another sub-tribe, living there as settlers in a 'foreign' land. Thus we find a group of Beni villages in Dibo country, emigrants from Beni during the Fulani wars, and also two small groups of Ebe in Trans-Kaduna, in the area of the section which calls itself 'pure Nupe'.

Thus one can 'become' a Nupe—*a ẓe Nupe*, they have become Nupe, is what the Nupe say of their cultural proselytes. It is, of course, impossible to define precisely the point when cultural assimilation warrants, or might warrant, inclusion in the tribe. But it may seem as if this elastic application of the tribal name, which takes into account *de facto* cultural similarities, contradicted the 'theoretical' and 'conceptual' unit in which we saw the definition of the tribe. The unobtrusive assimilation of a small group on the fringes of some Nupe section and its eventual absorption in this section (as in the case of the Kataeregi Beni) can be easily understood. But the so-to-speak official inclusion of a new section, under a separate heading, seems to presuppose something like a cultural tribunal which grants tribal membership to new, 'naturalized' groups. This contradiction is due not to an obscurity in our definition but to an obscurity in the facts themselves—and an obscurity which cannot be eliminated. The substratum with which we are dealing has, as it were, changed under our hands. The concept of tribal culture has changed into the concept of a culture vested in a political unit and its deliberate, conscious expansion. The proselytes of the Nupe tribe or Nupe culture were in reality proselytes of the Nupe kingdom.[2] (It is,

[1] A few informants, in fact, already classified them as a sub-tribe of Nupe—but these were informants from sub-tribes adjacent to the Kakanda, that is, from groups which, so to speak, could directly watch the cultural changes. Groups farther away kept to the established, traditional definition of the Kakanda as a separate tribe.

[2] This is the conception of the people themselves. All informants spoke to me of the various sub-tribes as having 'become one through Tsoede' (the ancestor-

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619 in fact, doubtful if a tribe not backed by any political organization could make proselytes on any larger scale.) Later we shall see more clearly
563 how it happens that tribe and kingdom become, for the people, one and the same thing. But the mark of the 'theoretical' tribal distinction is not obscured completely. It is visible in the qualified adoption of these new 'naturalized' sections. They 'have become Nupe'; but they are still called 'Gbari slaves' or Yoruba-Nupe. And perhaps now, since the expanding Nupe kingdom no longer exists, there will be no thirteenth sub-tribe of Kakanda-Nupe, after all.

THE SUB-TRIBE

184 The fact of common origin which is excluded from the concept of the tribe becomes an essential element in the definition of the sub-tribe. The sub-tribe is thus not a 'tribe' on a smaller scale; it differs essentially from the wider unit of the tribe. If the Nupe tribe possesses no external symbols, costumes, or body markings, such emblems exist to some extent for the sub-tribe. The Nupe practise body and face markings, [304] *etsa*, 'patterns', which are cut into the skin of newborn babies, male and female, and which differ in the different sub-tribes.[1] The sub-tribe, too, has its ideology in which the conception of unity and differentiation from other groups is expressed. The ideological criteria are two: one we have just discussed, the unity of origin and of historical continuity. The other is, again, the criterion of cultural unity. But the physical fact of the smallness of the group as compared with the tribe makes 'culture' here a more concrete, so to speak more concentrated reality. No Nupe term which corresponds to our 'sub-tribe' or 'section' exists. The Nupe refer to the various sub-tribes as to 'lands', they speak of *kin* Beni, land of the Beni, or *kin* Kusopa, land of the Kusopa, and even of *kin* Kyedye, land of the Kyedye, a 'land' which consists of a narrow strip of territory running across river banks and islets. The sub-tribe is thus, like the tribe, a territorial unit. But again the fact of physical size changes the meaning of the concept. The smaller locality is, in fact, more of one 'land'; it implies a more unified environment. This is partly expressed already in the names of the sub-tribes, some of which refer to the nature of the environment in which the group lives and to the nature of the occupation by which it earns its livelihood. The Bataci or Marsh Dwellers are a group of marsh-land farmers and fishermen whose hunting-grounds are the pools and backwaters of the Niger. The Kusopa or Forest Tenders work the famous kola-nut plantations of Laboži and

king of Nupe), or explained the development as due to the fact that '*one Etsu* established his rule (or law) over the whole country'.

[1] I must add, however, that even here these external symbols of group unity are not quite unequivocal. Fashion is changing the markings to-day—and there is no reason to assume that this has not always been so. I have seen fathers and sons whose faces bore different markings. The markings of the Bida people, like other fashions associated with the capital of the kingdom, have been adopted by the people of the districts. And the modern Bida and Beni markings are in turn said to have been adopted originally from the Yoruba, whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found 'nicer' than their own crude slashes. (See Appendix II.)

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Kudu and occupy the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. The name Kyedye, finally, is often used synonymously for all canoe-men and fishermen on the main river. Unity of environment, a uniform productive system, a uniform material culture, represent a first aspect of the cultural unity of the sub-tribe. 184

Then there is language, certain linguistic differences which throw into relief the cultural boundaries between sub-tribes. The Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa still speak dialects which differ considerably from each other and from the Nupe spoken in the rest of the country. To-day most people in these sub-tribes are bilingual and understand and speak both their own dialect and 'Nupe proper'. The Gbedegi, too, are said to have spoken a special dialect, only a generation or two ago. No trace is left of their language; I found only one old man in Jebba Island who could speak a little Gbedegi. In the area where Nupe proper is spoken only insignificant dialectal differences exist. This linguistic unification within Nupe is the counterpart of the expansion of Nupe language (Nupe proper) and culture beyond the tribal boundaries. Both reflect the same development. The linguistic unification proceeded from the political centre of Nupe kingdom, the area of the Beni, Kyedye, and Bataci sub-tribes. Their dialects, identified with the language of the Nupe state, gradually came to embrace all other tribal sections. The language map of Nupe reveals the phases of this process, the stages in the growth of a supreme, unified culture. We can see the resistance to assimilation increase as we move away from the centre of expansion: the dialects spoken on the borders of the kingdom are losing their identity more slowly and more reluctantly than the dialects of the groups in the centre. The last phase of this development is not yet completed. We are yet to see the full Nupe-ization of Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa. 184 197

But in the centre of this expansion the differentiation between cultural centre and periphery gains a new meaning. It is conceived of as a differentiation not of dialects representative of tribal sections, but of dialects, or forms of *patois*, representative of a cultural and social milieu and upbringing. To-day we have a Bida-Nupe, a 'higher', more refined Nupe (a Nupe which, for example, has replaced many Nupe words by words adopted from Hausa and Arabic); and we have, besides, the cruder, 'low', peasant Nupe—sometimes called 'pagan' Nupe—spoken in the districts. However, this new attitude towards cultural differences, this evaluation on the scale of a 'lower' and 'higher', a more or less refined culture, belongs to another chapter.

The cultural unity of the sub-tribe manifests itself also in the religious field. Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to single sub-tribes, and inter-tribal contact and assimilation have hardly obscured these cultural boundaries. Certain cults, bound up with conditions of environment, seem linked naturally to special areas: a sacrifice to the mythical ancestor of kola-nut planting among the Kusopa; cults which have to do with the water, with floods, with the dangers of the river, and success and safety in fishing, among the riverain groups. The *elo* ritual, and the *mamma* cult, masked ceremonies, are known only among the Gbedegi; the *fikinta* among the Ebe, the *gani* among the Benu, the 'white' *gunnu* 184 771

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among the tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, and (a negative evidence mentioned already) the *ndakó gboyá*, which is regarded as 'typical' Nupe by Hausa and Yoruba, is unknown among Dibo and Ebe. There are also other rituals and cults which cannot be assigned (at least not to-day) to a certain sub-tribe, and finally rituals and cults which represent the cultural possession of single village communities. In brief, the possession of a common cult means only an external uniformity of culture. None of these rituals implies co-operation and actual contact in the group at large. They are still but the expression of parallel, 'like', behaviour and not of concrete co-activity and 'togetherness'.

This is equally true of the other cultural features on which the cultural identity of the sub-tribe rests. The consciousness of a cultural uniformity is supported by the actual existing uniformity. But there is still no organized centre of co-activity behind this uniformity or behind the transmission of the consciousness of this uniformity. We can only say this: the sub-tribe, much more than the tribe, constitutes a potentiality of such co-activity and intensive 'togetherness'. The links of a common language, of similar economic pursuits, similar interests, parallel religious ideas, may grow easily into links of co-operation and 'togetherness'. Only in two cases, however, has this potentiality become reality—among the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. In no other section are there contacts and forms of co-activity which make the sub-tribe 'one country', and its people 'one group'. How, then, does that cultural uniformity crystallize into the unified, conscious commonness of 'one country'?

I have described elsewhere the growth and organization of one of the two sub-tribes which have evolved such unified structure.[1] Let me repeat here the main facts. The growth of the Kyedye organization was the growth of a colonizing and conquering group. Expanding from one centre—Muregi, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna—the Kyedye established themselves in the course of time all along the river banks. They built their settlements on the land of the aboriginal sections, Bataci and riverain Gbedegi, and claimed rulership over them. Twin villages arose, half Kyedye and half Bataci or Gbedegi, from which the Kyedye administered the district, assuming judicial authority and levying taxes. This colonization is still going on, and their rulership, rigidly centralized, is still alive and undisputed.[2] Close contact, intermarriage, and regular new emigration link the settlements, old and new, capital and colonies. Delegates from Muregi, relatives of the Kyedye chief, reside in the settlements, and these administrative 'posts' are correlated with the ranks which the delegates hold in the Kyedye hierarchy; promotion in rank involves promotion to a more important as well as more lucrative post. This closely knit ruling group precludes all permanent links between the cultural groups which this political development has thrown

[1] See 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940, pp. 165–95.

[2] Only twenty or thirty years ago have the Kyedye established themselves on the river Kaduna, or on Jebba Island, a place which had only then become of economic importance.

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together. There is no intermarriage, and almost no cultural give-and-take; to-day the Kyedye are Mohammedans (or semi-Mohammedans), but the Bataci and Gbedegi have remained pagans. Yet in one significant field cultural unity has evolved, over and above the differences of culture, tribal origin, and social status, and over and above also the co-operation embodied in the political structure. With the political rulership the Kyedye have assumed spiritual authority as well; myths and sacred insignia confirm the position of the *Kuta*, the Kyedye chief, as the ruler over the whole riverain area and its people; and two most important sacrifices to the river Niger, which secure large catches and safety from floods, the *ketsá* and *ndáduma*, are linked with his person and office. Every new appointed *Kuta* will send one of his near relations to Jebba and Buka, the two places where these sacrifices are performed, with two white bulls to be sacrificed to the river spirits by the priests of these cults. By these sacrifices the chief secures 'greatness' for himself, and success and welfare for his subjects.

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The Beni organization presents an entirely different picture. Unlike the Kyedye system it exists no longer; it was broken and destroyed by the Fulani conquest. It took the form of a confederacy formed by the twelve 'towns' of the Beni: Bida, Tafiẽ, Esã, Doko, Towagi, Egbe, Gaba, Nupeko, Eda, Panjuru, Ewu, Yesa. The political bonds were twofold: the twelve towns recognized the supremacy of one town, and paid a small tribute to its chief, or 'town-king'; further, in case of war, the twelve towns were bound to fight together and to support each other, again under the leadership of one town.[1] Mythology, and the existence of certain common sacred insignia of the twelve town-kings of Beni, supply the spiritual background for the political unity. Moreover, the *gunnu* cult, this most important religious cult of Nupe, appears among the Beni in a special form, namely, as a cult which utilizes comprehensive co-operation between the priests of the whole country, thus underlining, in the religious sphere, the unification of the sub-tribal section.[2]

One might ask why it was that just these two sub-tribes evolved a comprehensive political and cultural unit. The origin of the Beni confederacy is hidden in the dim past of a Nupe of which we have no records. As regards the Kyedye we can, to some extent, answer the question. In the environment of the river valley, and in the pursuits of a riverain people, lies the germ of territorial and political expansion. Long fishing expeditions, an extensive river trade, on which the livelihood of this riverain group depends, demand extension of political influence as security for the very wide area of their economic activities. Trading-posts become political outposts, and fishing colonies become strongholds of territorial expansion. The spirit of adventure and enterprise, finally, which alone could have built up this efficient organization, is part of the life of this riverain people.

Of the enterprising spirit of Kyedye chiefs, born colonizers and

[1] This chief town of the Beni seems to have been Tafiẽ till the Fulani conquest; after that the headship passed to Bida, till it disappeared finally with the absorption of the Beni confederacy in Nupe Emirate (see p. 82).

[2] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, p. 98.

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pioneers, the history of the Royal Niger Company can give many instances. But let us read these examples correctly. They show, first, that political integration tends to widen its basis so as to embrace all spheres of cultural activity; political unification calls into being other forms of contact and co-activity, and thus cements its own unity with the help of a more comprehensive and more intimate 'togetherness'. But these examples show also that the creation of such co-activity and togetherness does not simply follow from the potentiality of cultural uniformity. In the case of the Beni confederacy cultural uniformity appears intensified into co-activity and togetherness; among the Kyedye the political fusion of different sub-tribes, different cultural areas, created the wider area of co-activity and common life. Obviously, the nature of this co-activity and common life is different in each case. The commonness that grows from uniform culture and the commonness that is superimposed upon a cultural diversity represent two different social realities. What we have said above of the links of cultural uniformity which 'grow easily into links of co-activity and togetherness' was not, therefore, quite correct. We have before us not a simple quasi-automatic process of 'growth', but two specific, alternative forms of social development.

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CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO NUPE KINSHIP

BEFORE attempting the analysis of the Nupe community we must examine certain essential aspects of the kinship system of the country. This description cannot claim to be more than a brief outline. It is concerned only with the main principles of kinship structure among the Nupe so far as they bear on the subject-matter of this book.

The basic structure of the Nupe kinship system is the *extended family*: all individuals who can trace their descent to a certain initial, nucleus family—a husband and his wives—regard themselves as related and as forming one kindred. The Nupe have only one word for kinship, *dengi*, which defines relationship in the widest as well as in a more restricted sense. The vagueness of the terminology reflects the inherent vagueness of this concept of relationship. The extended family is a fluid unit in two respects. First, as the women of the family marry outside, into other houses and families, their connexion with the family from which they come, although never admitted to have ceased entirely, becomes weaker and less effective generation after generation. Secondly, the constant growth and expansion of the kinship unit which this principle of reckoning descent entails leaves the boundaries and 'fringes' of the family unit only vaguely defined. People cannot, in fact, trace their descent back farther than two or three generations, and in every family there are a certain number of 'relatives' who are known to be *dengi*, related, without anyone being able to define the degree or nature of the relationship. Moreover, individuals and sections may split off from the main family group, move to other parts, and thus disappear from the view of the rest of the kinship group.

It is implied in these facts that the effective kinship unit is represented, not in the vaguely defined 'theoretical' extended family, but in that section of it which remains living close together—whose members keep, as it were, in each other's view—in the particular case, the kinship section inhabiting one house. This kinship section is, in fact, referred to as a 'house'—*esu* in Nupe. The Nupe reckon relationship in 'houses', saying, for example, that people belong or do not belong to the same 'house', that is, are or are not related. Technically, the 'house' is a compound of a number of houses (to be described later in more detail), which is enclosed by a common wall and possesses a common gateway or entrance hut, called *katamba*. The term *katamba* is frequently used synonymously with 'house': in enumerating the kinship groups of a village the Nupe will tell you that the village numbers so many *katamba*.

To some extent the house-group, too, is subject to the natural fluctuations of increasing or decreasing population. An overflowing population may necessitate the building of new houses and compounds, mostly placed close to the original home, but in some cases at some distance from it, in another part of the village, perhaps in another locality

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592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found dis-
596 tributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the sub-division of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

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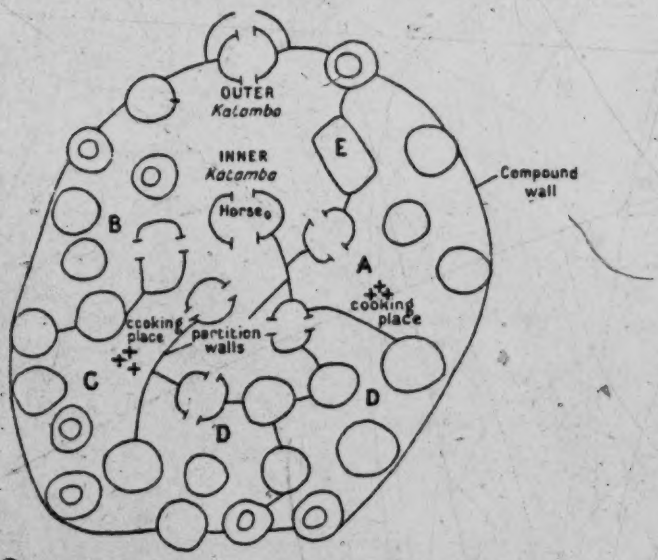

○ Sleeping huts (○) Katamba A... partition of family head. B...partition of unmarried sons. C...partition of unmarried daughters. D...partition of married sons and younger brothers. E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discus-
[621] sions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kin-ship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

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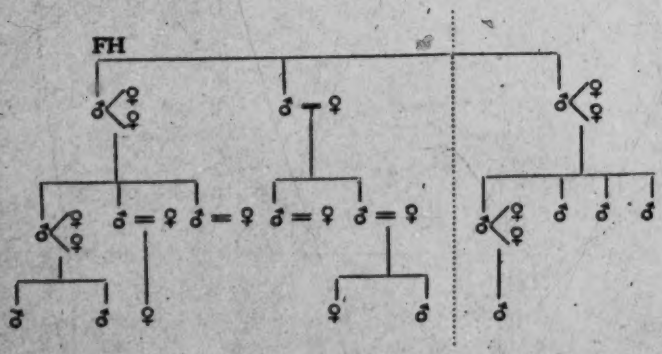
single *efu*, and the family section inhabiting one house is reduced to the smallest size. Moreover, independent economic position and independent, possibly even divergent, political interests and connexions cause adult family members to leave the paternal home and to set up households of their own. Even the wider local unit, the *efu*, is no longer based on kinship, but is largely replaced by a local unit the composition of which is determined by the factor of political allegiance and partisanship.

The size of the house-group varies widely: the largest group which I encountered numbered about sixty individuals, including men and women, adults and children. The smallest groups are found in Bida, and may comprise not more than six or eight people.

The effective kinship unit—the 'house' in the abstract sense of the word—expresses itself conspicuously in the recognition of a common family head, who is called, significantly, *emitsó*, Owner of the House. We shall learn later of the political, religious, and economic prerogatives vested in the person of the family head. Here I will only add that where a section of the house-group splits off from the main body and establishes itself in a new, separate, house it cannot claim to be at once recognized as a new unit, entitled to a separate *emitsó*, but continues to acknowledge the old family head. In the course of time the head of the new group may gain the position of an independent *emitsó*. The following diagram illustrates a case of this kind. The members of the family group placed to the right of the dotted line separated from the main family body in 1934 and moved to a newly built house in another part of the village (Kutigi). The reason given was that the old house had become 'too crowded'. The head of the new group expected to be recognized as *emitsó* after the death of the old family head (marked FH in the diagram).



The 'house' is subdivided into a number of family sections, each of which inhabits a division of the compound. The single section represents an even more effective unit than the house-group and its members enter a more intensive co-operation: they keep house together, eat together, and also form a common productive or labour-unit. No special

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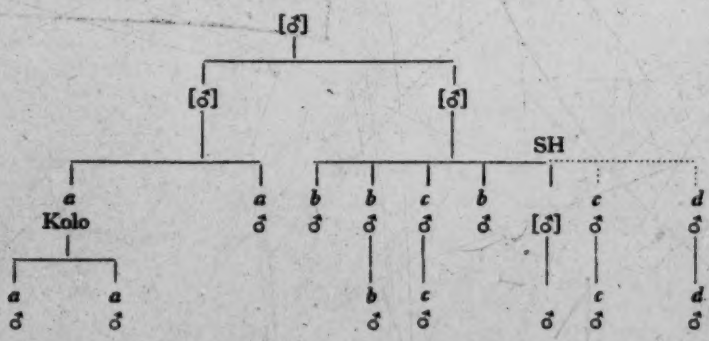
596 name exists for this group *qua* group, only a name referring to its organization as a labour-unit, or *efakó*. To-day these smaller sections are often reduced to the small individual family consisting of a father, his wives, and unmarried children; as often, however (and regularly, under traditional conditions), they embrace larger units and represent 'sections' in the strict sense of the word, cut from the house-group, and repeating its composition on a smaller scale. Such a section embraces, for example, a number of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren. The attached genealogy may illustrate the relation between the 'house' and the smaller kinship unit.

This genealogy shows another household in Kutigi whose family head is a certain Kolo, a man of about 50 or 55. Brackets indicate deceased family members. A dotted connecting line means that the nature of the relationship cannot be ascertained concretely but is only referred to vaguely as implying relationship of 'younger brothers'. Family members working together in the same *efakó* group are marked with the same letters (e.g. all individuals marked *a* form one *efakó* group, all individuals marked *b* another, &c.). The family members marked SH have left the original family home and have built themselves a separate house. Women and small children are ignored in the chart.



Each of the sections of the house may one day contribute the family head for the group at large. The position of the family head falls to the senior male member of the house-group, who is succeeded by his younger brother in the classificatory sense, i.e. the man next in seniority of the same generation, and, when the generation is exhausted, by the oldest man of the next generation, i.e. the eldest son of the eldest brother. This rule, however, is not applied rigidly and allows of some latitude so that personal qualifications can also be taken into account. Especially is this so where succession to family headship entails the assumption of a certain important position in the community (e.g. priesthood, or position of an elder). This brings us to the question of the transmission of rights and duties vested in family membership and to the method of reckoning descent.

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The family has been regarded by many anthropologists as a typical *bilateral* unit—a group in which the transmission of rights and duties follows both the paternal and maternal line. We know now that such family structures are extremely rare, and that in most societies succession in paternal and maternal line supplement each other and are assigned different spheres of validity, certain rights and duties being transmitted in the paternal and others in the maternal line. For the Nupe family we

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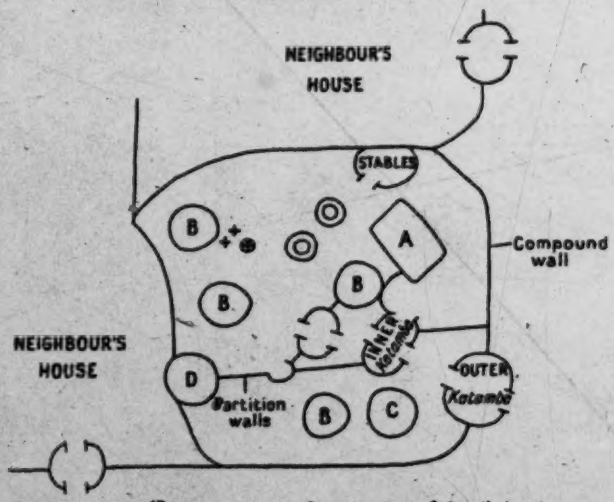
HOUSE OF A BIDA NOBLEMAN OF LOW RANK



[592
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○ *Sleeping huts* ⟲ *Katamba*. A... *Sleeping hut of family head*.
B... *Sleeping huts of his wives*. C... *Sleeping hut of unmarried son*.
D... *Sleeping hut of unmarried daughter*. ● *Well*. ◎ *Granaries*.

can say that rights and duties which are transmitted through the father greatly outweigh in scope and importance those transmitted through the mother. Kinship membership itself and the access to the political and religious rights vested in it are determined by paternal descent. As women in Nupe neither own nor work land, this most important property is also inherited through the father. The rights to certain forms of financial support (e.g. for the payment of bride-price or support in old age) are equally derived from descent in the father's line. As Radcliffe-Brown has shown, the genealogical division into paternal and maternal succession depends also on the nature of the rights and duties that are transmitted from individual to individual, some being transmitted more satisfactorily through men (i.e. the father) and others through women (i.e. the mother).[1] Thus the personal property of the Nupe women is inherited by their daughters—as the personal property

[1] R. A. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, XX, 1935.

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611 of the men is inherited by their sons. As in the Nupe economic system
428 the women frequently enjoy a financially more advantageous position than the men we find also that, in the event of economic stress, a mother may take over some of the financial duties normally discharged by the father.

611 Generally speaking, matrilineal descent in Nupe, including here both descent from the mother as an individual and from her family, has essentially the significance of an ultimate safeguard in case the patrilineal arrangement proves insufficient. In Bida society, with its great inequality of wealth and status, rich or powerful maternal relations may be as valuable as paternal relations; political connexions, especially, through the mother's family will often be utilized profitably. We realize that these 'matrilineal' rights do not follow rigid rules of descent and succession; rather they represent a 'second line of defence' on which individuals can fall back in case the 'first line of defence'—claims derived through the father—has failed. If we speak of the Nupe extended family as 'patrilineal' it will be understood that we refer only to the preponderance and the more rigid formulation of rights and duties transmitted in the father's line. The kinship organization as such, in which the alternative methods of reckoning descent stand in that relation of 'first' and 'second line of defence', can be most aptly described by a term which was suggested by R. W. Firth as 'ambilateral'.

601 The rule of succession to the rights and duties derived in the paternal line, which, as we have seen, imply a succession running through one whole generation before descending to the next, is expressed very clearly in the Nupe kinship terminology, about which I will only say a few words. It is of the classificatory type and corresponds to the generation pattern: it subsumes all members of the kinship group who are of the same generation under a common term. Thus members of the same generation are all 'brothers' to each other, 'sons' to the generation above them, 'fathers' to the generation below, 'grandsons' to the second generation above, and so forth. Within the generation seniority is specially defined: elder brothers are distinguished from younger brothers, and also the father's elder brothers from the father's younger brothers. The former, who represent the potential family heads senior to one's own (real) father, are called 'father', the latter, who may be placed as junior relations under one's father, 'little father'.

602 Let me summarize the main kinship concepts with which we shall be concerned in the course of this book. We shall largely disregard the fluid and vaguely defined large kinship unit formed by all individuals who are regarded as being *dengi*. When speaking of kinship group, or large family group, we shall always mean the 'house-group'. To the smallest unit, finally, we shall refer either as the family section, or as the household or labour unit, according to the aspect under which we are considering it. I must add, however, that the Nupe also recognize a much wider unit derived—in a very vague sense—from kinship factors. Thus a whole village is sometimes spoken of as representing one *dengi*, and as having 'one ancestor'. This interpretation does not refer to concrete common descent from an original family, but rather reinterprets

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the existing political structure of the community in a kinship sense. The ancestors of the chief who are regarded as founders of the village are also thought of vaguely as ancestors of the whole community. These essentially mythical kinship links exercise no influence upon concrete kinship claims and obligations. 602

Political factors are also responsible for the development of the large units which characterize kinship among the ruling family. We shall see that the ruling house of Nupe crystallized in three dynasties, which trace their descent from different sons of the founder of the ruling house, and divide between them the rights and duties vested in the ruling house. The ancestors of the three dynasties lived only two or three generations back; but already certain religious observances (prayers on their grave) mark them off from all subsequent royal ancestors. In this rigidly defined system of reckoning descent in the father's line back to these almost sanctified 'first ancestors', and in the relationship with one another which is in the nature of mutual obligations for the sake of the larger unit, the royal house itself, the three dynasties correspond from kinship point of view to incipient *clans*—the only analogy to clan structure which we find in Nupe. 643 769 [613]

Let me say in conclusion that kinship structure in Nupe is not that dominant, all-enveloping structure which we know from many primitive societies. Although it bears upon religious life, education, and the organization of production, it is greatly overshadowed as a determinant of social behaviour by the factors of political organization and, in economic life, by economic interests proper. Indeed only because of its lesser significance in social life could we omit the detailed description of Nupe kinship from the sociological analysis with which this book is concerned. 601

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CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNITY: VILLAGE AND TOWN

621 THE description of 'areas of common life' must start with the description of the external arrangement, that is, forms of settlement. The Nupe live in large villages or towns. They have only one word for both, *eži*, thus defining the essentially identical nature of the two forms of settlement. There exists another Nupe word, *tunga* or *kangi*, which is applied to very small settlements. But this name refers not so much to the size as to the different sociological nature of the settlement; for the *tunga*, unlike the *eži*, does not represent an independent local unit but a 'daughter-settlement', a 'colony' of a village or town.

621 The size of the *eži* varies considerably. Nupe Emirate counts three villages with a population of over or near a thousand: Doko with 800
361 inhabitants; Mokwa with 2,000; and Kutigi with 3,000. But there exist also smaller 'towns', villages the population of which had been reduced by emigration and which may be, in size, hardly bigger than a large *tunga*. The local arrangement of the Nupe village, large or small, is nearly always the same: clusters of compounds scattered comfortably over an area, each 'cluster' consisting of a number of walled compounds, 'houses' in native terminology, and forming what the Nupe call an *efu*, or ward. These village wards are separated by stretches of open land, spacious cultivated fields, studded with clumps of trees. More rarely the *efu* stand close together and are separated only by narrow thoroughfares between the walls of neighbouring compounds. This latter arrangement is typical of many riverside villages where, in narrow space, house presses upon house and compound upon compound. Each *efu* has its own name, derived either from a topographical peculiarity, e.g. Takogi,
[103] meaning 'the one below', or Kpacinefu, 'the river bank *efu*', or from a sociological feature, namely, the rank or profession of the people living in the *efu*, e.g. *efu* Žitsu, '*efu* of the chief', or *efu* Tswata, '*efu* of the blacksmiths', and so forth; or, finally, the name of the *efu* may refer to the origin of its inhabitants, betraying them as immigrants from another village or tribe, e.g. Yafu (abbr. for Eyagi-fu), 'Yoruba *efu*', or *efu* Daži, '*efu* of (the people of) Daži'.

The Nupe eži with its scattered efu clusters is encircled by a large town wall, or more correctly, used to be encircled by a town wall. It exists no longer, but its ruins can still be seen in many places, and all the people insist that formerly all 'towns' were protected by such walls. These crumbled ruins of the old town wall provide us with a piece of important historical evidence, which tells us, I think, why the Nupe have chosen just this type of settlement, in large populous 'towns', and not, for example, settlement in loosely linked, scattered homesteads; it allows us to grasp at least one of the motives behind this social development: the dangers of war.[1] Large villages represent in a country of

[1] The other motive is economic and is entailed in the organization of the Nupe system of production and exchange. (See p. 366.)

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constant warfare the oply safe method of settling. The small outlying settlements could quickly seek the protection of the walled town; a large concentrated population meant comparative security from raids, comparative safety in unsafe times. We have more historical data to support

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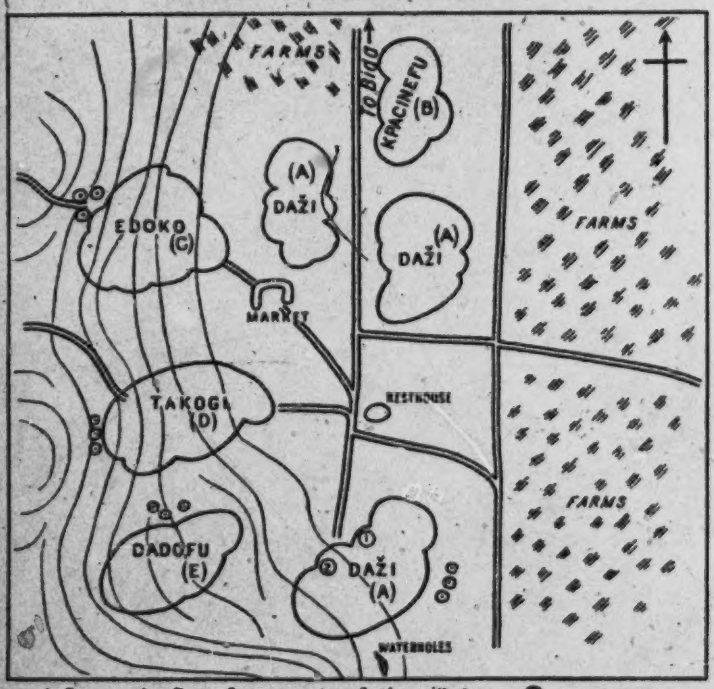
SKETCH MAP OF DOKO



A–E are the five *efu* or wards, of the village. ⊙...roast ovens.
①...house of chief (*Etsu Dači*). ②...house of village priest (*Ziji*).

this interpretation. One or two Nupe villages have sprung from the amalgamation of small groups, and in one significant case this fusion of component groups into a single large 'town' can definitely be traced to the time of the Fulani wars. What is to-day the village of Doko originated then out of the fusion of a small hill-side village, called Edokó, with a village situated originally about two miles away, in the plain, by the name of Dači. To escape from the Fulani raiders the people of Dači moved to Edokó, into the protection of the hill-side. The new twin-town was called Doko, with Edokó and Dači as two of the five *efu* which form the village to-day; and the chief, who comes from the stock of the Dači people, still takes the title *Etsu* Dači, king of Dači.[1] We possess also

[1] How far a development such as this, with a large village growing out of the fusion of two or more component groups, is typical of Nupe settlement in general

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negative evidence to show that with the pacification of the country the reverse process has set in: Jima, once a capital of Nupe kingdom, a huge town to judge from the ruins of its town walls, is reduced to-day to a tiny village; most of its people have moved outside, and the eight former town-wards, still known by their old typical *efu*-names, are to-day scattered outposts, village 'colonies'—*tunga*.

The origin of the *tunga* settlements of Jima represents an unusual development. Normally the *tunga* reflects the expansion rather than the breaking up of the 'mother-town'. But the term *tunga* is not unequivocal. It refers to three different types of settlement. The first, the release of small groups for the foundation of 'daughter-settlements', is a direct consequence of the concentration of a large population in a single town. A growing population in the village, the need of new land, may lead to small groups moving into the uninhabited bush, to occupy virgin land and to found new settlements. A small section of one family at first, a few young men with their wives and children, the *tunga* may grow to a small hamlet embracing two or three large family groups. Or immigrants from another part of the country may choose to settle on the land which belongs to a certain village, and under its political protection: this settlement, too, will then be called *tunga*. Finally, the big landlords of Bida have settled their slaves and dependants on the land all round the capital, in small hamlets, called again *tunga*. But these settlements are in a different category, they represent not colonies of villages or towns but private property, farm settlements of individual landlords. A *tunga* is thus easily identified, for it is always referred to as a *tunga*, a 'colony', *of* a certain village or, in the case of private settlements, *of* a certain landlord. *Tunga* settlements seldom grow beyond three family groups. Should the population expand further, the *tunga* would again release some of its members who would leave the old settlement and found a new colony near-by. But it seems to have happened very rarely that a *tunga* grew into a 'town' proper—Gbangba, a prosperous village north of Bida and to-day the seat of a District Head, is the only example I can quote. Gbangba, however, was not a village colony but a *tunga* founded by people from Bida. On the other hand, I have seen several cases of *tunga* settlements which have grown out of each other, dependencies of dependencies. The *tunga* is itself a much more mobile settlement than the village proper. A *tunga* is often abandoned, and the people move to a new place, if there have been two or three bad harvests, or repeated cases of illness.

We understand the mobility of the *tunga* when we realize that these small farm settlements, founded by younger branches of families, can have none of the spiritual bonds—religious and ancestral—that would tie the 'real' village more permanently to the locality.[1] The same factor

I will not examine here. I may say that I have found two other typical instances; one I have described in *Man*, 1938, 85. There may be many more, of which the traces have become much more obliterated.

[1] An exception is provided by certain cults which are linked with individual families and not with the village as such; a sacred shrine of this kind may thus be carried to a *tunga*. The *tunga* Shebe Wero, for example, harbours the sacred chain and the shrine of Tacode—two paraphernalia of the *eshe gbegi* cult.

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COMPOUNDS IN KUTIGI

JEBBA ISLAND

[facing p. 36]

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621 also explains why *tunga* settlements rarely (if ever) develop into real 'towns'. The factor of size and numbers, too, plays its part. In order to provide that self-contained social and political life that is typical of the Nupe 'town', and in order to afford its inhabitants the political security which is part of the *raison d'être* of that form of settlement, a much larger concentration of people is necessary than the village *tunga* is likely ever to achieve in a sparsely populated country with so low a birth-rate. But the attitude of the people is as important: they cannot conceive of a *tunga* becoming an *eki*—a rival settlement to their mother-town. The village *tunga* has no social life of its own; it possesses no market, no independent political organization, often no age-grades of its own, and celebrates its feasts and ceremonies with the 'mother-town'. 'Towns', on the other hand, are independent, self-contained units, which have little in common with each other, and often know nothing of their next-door neighbours. To become a 'town' would thus mean for the *tunga* to deny the very essence of its social identity.

Every village then counts, 'owns' as the Nupe say, a certain number of colonies, which surround it in a radius of six to seven miles, right up to the point where the area of the next village begins. Kutigi, for example, possesses six *tunga* settlements founded between 1860 and 1910. Five were founded by people from the two largest *efu* of Kutigi, one by people from Etsú, a neighbouring 'town', who preferred to settle on the more open and fertile land of Kutigi. Doko, a much smaller village but situated in a more densely populated area, owns nine large *tunga* settlements and a number of smaller, secondary, dependencies. Two of the large *tunga* settlements were founded by people of the Cekpã sub-tribe who fled from their homes during the Yoruba wars and settled in more peaceful Beni country. The other seven are village colonies proper. Interspersed between these colonies of Doko are four 'private' *tunga* settlements, founded by slaves and other dependants of Bida landlords.

The following examples may illustrate the organization of two comparatively recently founded *tunga* settlements:

Zaboru, a *tunga* near Sakpe, consisting of two compounds, was founded by the man Zaboru, together with his elder brother, the present Village Head of Sakpe, about thirty years ago. The two men went out together to find a place with new farm-land, and built first temporary, later permanent huts. The elder brother returned to Sakpe after the death of their father to assume his position as the new head of the family. In his place a third, youngest, brother, who had just married, went out to the *tunga*, about ten years ago, where he is still living.

Shebe Woro, belonging to the 'town' Shebe and consisting of two compounds, was founded in 1933, when a certain Kolo left Shebe 'because the place was too full'. Together with some relations and two friends he occupied a new place, about three miles away, deeper in the bush, and founded there the settlement now called Shebe Woro, which means, New Shebe.

342 361 Let us now go inside a Nupe village. I have described already its typical lay-out—the scattered *efu* and the walled compounds or 'houses'

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342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and
[631] windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the
361 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
[354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *fanga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

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A VILLAGE *KATAMBA*

A *KATAMBA* IN BIDA

[facing p. 38]

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621 pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly.
571 Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups
[484] without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the
621 parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in
186 the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

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621 and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its
186 centre, the town of Bida.[1] It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

361 Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of
162 Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

361 And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

361 Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross, from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river
363 enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

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enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

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361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where [346] the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along 361 the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, 443 stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It 438 starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

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THE PALACE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF MASABA

THE PALACE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF USMAN

[facing p.42]

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548 dark and quiet. After 9 o'clock the market-place and the streets are almost deserted.

But let us return to our daylight inspection of the town: we were 361 standing at the crossing of the four main streets of Bida. Turn to the 363 north, and you come to *lálemi*, the strangers' quarter of Bida, where Hausa and Yoruba are living in houses and huts built in their own tribal style and fashion. They are traders by profession, and shops and stalls line the long road to the north gate—shops in which you can buy everything at every hour of the day, from native food to a European wrist-watch, from the powders and amulets of the Hausa medicine-man to brass buttons or bicycle spare parts offered for sale in a Yoruba man's shop. The road to the east bridges a stream and a stretch of marsh-land that runs across the town, with its fields of rice and sugar-cane; it runs past another quarter of brass-smiths, skirts the quarter of the *masagá*, the Bida glass-makers, and leaves the town by the Badeggi gate, so called [446] after a village thirteen miles from Bida on the small rickety railway line (the oldest railway line in Nigeria) which links Baro on the Niger with Minna on the main line of the Nigerian Railway. The south road crosses another stream, with yellowish, dirty water in which children are bathing, grooms watering horses, and women washing their clothes and cleaning pots and pans. It runs on through a thickly populated part of the town, past a beautiful old mosque perched precariously on the edge of a deep trench; another day-market, and another royal residence. Another weavers' quarter, and another group of blacksmiths. Old Bida and New Bida mix for a while: still inside the town walls are Prison and Hospital; on the other side the Native Administration Workshops and the Middle School. And beyond this, the European Reservation, the Government Offices, and then open fields and farms.

This, then, is Bida. Like all large towns it is both more and less than 361 one community. More, in that contacts, communications, and forms of intercourse stretch far beyond the town boundaries; and less, in that within the town walls of Bida there exists a vast number of different, almost independent, strata and 'areas of common life'. Some, perhaps the weakest and least tenacious, are defined by tribal origin. The social differentiation of rich and poor, of social status and political rank, create others—strata in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different values are valid and different patterns of behaviour accepted as normal. But we have also observed the division of the town into three large districts, almost exact copies of each other, each with its day-market, its quarter of craftsmen, and its royal residence. The three districts are separated, geographically, by the two streams which run through Bida, and they are spoken of as three *ekpā*, 'banks', and given the name of the royal house that stands on their ground. Here we deal with units of a different order: they represent political factions, organizations of partisanship and patronage, which cut across the other social, cultural, and tribal strata. They reflect specific political and economic interests, they are vested, ultimately, in that paramount political organization, the state. But that we shall understand more clearly as this description proceeds.

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CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE

621 THE political organization of the Nupe village differs in certain respects in different parts of Nupe-land, but the general outline of the system remains, with one or two exceptions, the same. Every Nupe village, as it constitutes a separate community, also constitutes a separate political system. The area over which its sovereignty extends is formed by the village and its *tunga*, the 'town' and its 'dependencies'. At its head stands the 'town-king', *Žitsu*, who, to use the language of the people, 'owns' the village—*u wũ ži*—and the land on which it stands. By this right of 'possession' he controls the lives of his community and the main resource from which it derives its livelihood, land. The close identification of chief and locality is often expressed in the title which the chief assumes and which is identical with the name of the village: the chief of Jebba (the correct name of which is Gebba) is known as *Gebba*, of Bele as *Belé*, and the old Beni 'town-king' of Bida styled himself *Bida*. In the chief, then, the collective existence of the village community is represented as in a symbol.

621 173 This political configuration is to some extent thought of as having evolved gradually in the course of time. But the Nupe village (unlike the kingdom) possesses no elaborate mythology which tells of the origin and the growth of the present polity. We have spoken of the vague interpretation in a kinship sense of the past of the village, according to which the people of the village have all descended from some common ancestor. As regards the specific political features, we find equally vague traditions of half-forgotten ancestors who were the founders of a village and the first settlers in the locality (we can disregard here the recent memories of fusion and separation of villages). The following tradition, referring to the village Doko, is a typical instance:

> Two brothers came from beyond the river, from a place called Gaze (a village on the river Kaduna). They came to a place now called Kopa [Kopa is about five miles from Doko, on the other side of the hill on the slope of which Doko is situated]. There was nothing in this place then save bush. They settled there, first as hunters, later they began to work the land. After two years the younger brother left Kopa and came down the hill to the place where Doko is to-day. He settled there and called himself chief. He became the first *Žitsu* of Doko, *Žitsu* Lefiya.

These traditions of origin become more articulate only where the tradition of the village can be linked with the semi-mythical history of Nupe kingdom and its ancestor-hero Tsoede. In a number of Nupe villages the people trace their line of chiefs back to one who was confirmed in his office by Tsoede, and invested by him with certain insignia and magical emblems. Of both Tsoede and these insignia we shall hear more at a later stage. Here it may be said that the ancestral chief thus

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi tradition has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed chieftainship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nũsaki* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiki*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nũsaki* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunna*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nũsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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623 many elders. No 'house' may be excluded from the share-out of village offices, nor may one 'house' 'own' more than one title—at least not in theory. The senior members of the house sometimes accompany their family head to the meetings of the council in the chief's house. Or if an elder is himself too old, or an invalid, a younger relative may do his work for him; but there would not as a rule be two holders of a *nŭsa* rank in the same house.[1] These rules, however, are not, in fact cannot be, rigid. A powerful chief may appoint a friend or favourite to a rank to which he would not normally be entitled, or refuse a rank to the legitimate claimant for reasons of private enmity or jealousy; an immigrant group may demand that a rank be conferred on its head as a confirmation of established citizenship; or an expanding family may claim additional titles for its members. New ranks may thus be created, new titles introduced, which do not correspond to the traditional system of village ranks.[2] On the other hand, titles may disappear with the family in which they were vested or with the special profession to which they referred. The title *Ndace*, Father of Hunting, originally a title common everywhere in Nupe, is missing to-day in many villages; the titles *Etsu Dzã*, Head of the Drummers, and *Maji Tswata*, Master of the Blacksmiths, have disappeared here and there where strangers (Hausa) have taken over the work of drumming and smithing and have disorganized this originally family-owned profession.

The equation: so many houses, so many titles, may also be upset (at least temporarily) by the opposite trend: in an expanding family group sections may split off from the main body, and build themselves a new house, without being awarded a separate rank. The *tunga* very rarely 'owns' a *nŭsa* rank. Founded by young people, it usually keeps its status of a 'junior branch' even in subsequent generations. However, a son or younger brother may be called to succeed the family head in the village and leave the *tunga* to assume his inheritance and position in the 'town'.[3]

623 554 Thus the institution of ranks of elders has two aspects: one is the official recognition, by the community at large, of the headship of certain individuals over the component groups of the community—kinship groups and 'houses'—a headship which implies both a certain moral control and control of the economic resources of the group; and the other the division of the political executive of the village between a number of selected individuals. The closer examination of the first aspect belongs to the chapters on kinship, land-tenure, and economics. We are concerned here more especially with the second aspect. But we shall see that the two are closely intertwined. The acceptance of a family head into the village executive enhances the position of authority which he normally occupies in his kinship group; but it signifies at the same time that he may be called upon to use this moral authority in the service of the village at large. Appointment to a village rank also strengthens the measure of

[1] Thus an old, blind *nŭsa* in Jebba no longer took part in the meetings of the village elders. But no successor was appointed until his death.

[2] In Mokwa, for example, the new title *Maji Kechagba* (lit. Master of Grave Digging) was conferred on the head of a Hausa family which had settled there during the Fulani wars.

[3] See p. 37.

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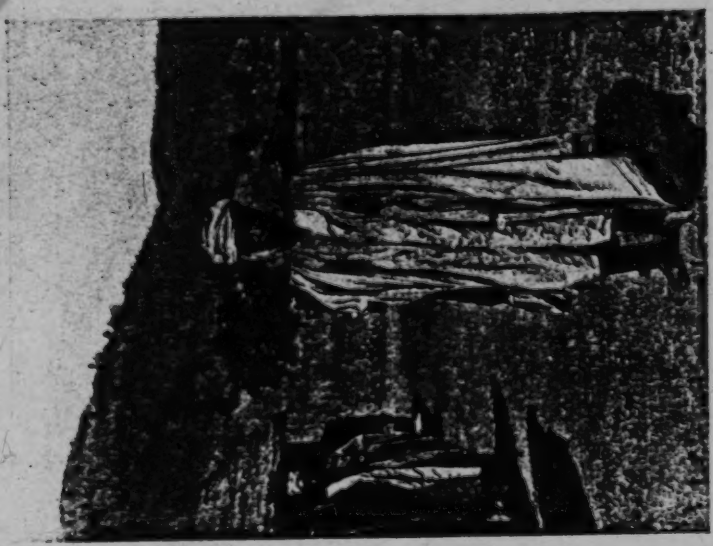

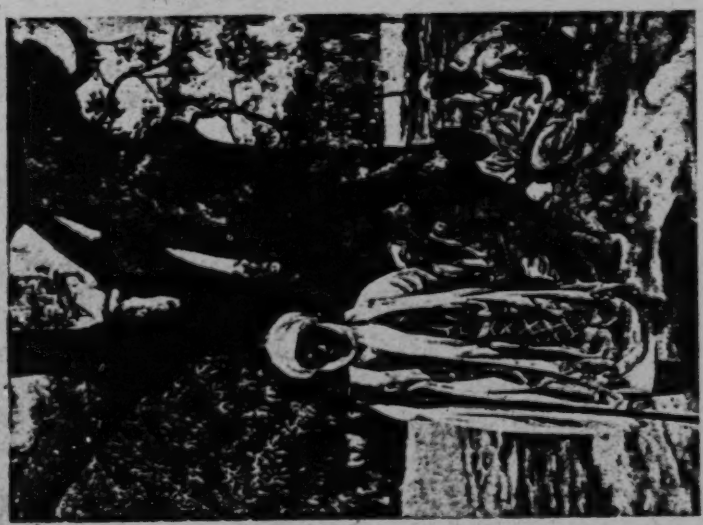

TWO VILLAGE CHIEFS

[facing p. 46]

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economic control which he exercises, by granting him access to special economic resources (above all, fruit-bearing trees) unattainable to the other members of his group. Thus supported, the titled family head is qualified to assume his double role, as official agent of the community at large and as representative of his group *vis-à-vis* the village community.

The relation between the two roles and their relative preponderance varies with the rank which an elder may attain. For the *nũsa* ranks are not of equal order. They are defined by strict order of precedence, and there is never any doubt which title ranks higher or lower. The measure of political responsibility closely corresponds to the place in the scale of village ranks. In some villages we even find a formal distinction between the 'great' and 'small' ranks, the former three or (more often) four in number, forming as it were the 'inner council'. Where the village is arranged in a number of separate large clusters of compounds (as in Doko, Kutigi, or Sakpe), the distinction between 'great' and 'small' ranks also implies a distinction between headship over the whole cluster of compounds, the *efu*, and headship over single compounds or 'houses' only.[1] The professional ranks of blacksmiths and drummers are always at the bottom of the list of village ranks. The political importance of the rank of the Head of the Hunters and of the ranks which are combined with priestly offices differs in different communities.

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It would be wrong to think of the village council of elders as of an elaborate, rigidly formalized, instrument of government. The full council is rarely summoned except on important occasions, such as the election of a chief, or the visit of the *Etsu* and his delegates or the District Officer. The normal routine work of village government is carried on by the chief and his 'inner council' of two or three elders of highest rank. And here again we have no formal appointed assembly, but rather casual meetings in the houses of the chief or of one of the elders, at which current questions are discussed and the necessary decisions taken. If more elders have to be consulted or instructed, a messenger will be sent to their houses, or they will call individually at the house of the chief or the head *nũsa*. If in the case of the *nũsaẽi* of high rank their position of authority transcends the component groups to the headship of which they have risen in virtue of their kinship position, this latter aspect preponderates in the case of the *nũsaẽi* of lesser rank who are excluded from the 'inner council'. They are executive organs of the village in the indirect sense of intermediaries through whom decisions of the chief and the leading elders reach the various kinship and local groups, and through whom, in turn, these groups can voice claims and interests so far as they call for action on the part of the community.

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The graded scale of village ranks does not command an unequivocal corresponding system of appointment and succession. Succession to the lowest, professional, ranks is invariably hereditary. So is succession to the priestly ranks or the ranks linked with a priestly office: the secret

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[1] In eastern Nupe, especially among Dibo and Beni, the number four plays an important part in the arrangement of *efu* as well as in the order of ranks. We find four *efu* and four ranks, or four head ranks and four secondary ranks, or four ranks plus the chief's rank.

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623 of the ritual office remains vested in one family group. But succession to
554 the other ranks involves a certain ambiguous situation. Only a few com-
184 munities have worked out the principle of precedence consistently, evolving a system of promotion from lower to higher rank—Jebba Island and Mokwa are examples. In these communities every vacancy is made an occasion for a reshuffle of the ranks. A *nūsa* whose seniority and standing qualify him for the rank that has fallen vacant is appointed, his own rank going to another *nūsa* deserving promotion, and so forth, till finally one of the lowest ranks becomes vacant, which is then duly bestowed on a fitting, as yet untitled, candidate. But in other communities all promotion from one rank to another is excluded, the titles in almost caste-like rigidity remain linked with 'houses', and a man can claim only this one title whether or not it is one for which his age, experience, and personality would qualify him.[1] The people are themselves well aware of this ambiguity. It is overcome, in practice, in various ways. First, the appointment to the rank which has fallen vacant may be postponed till the candidate has reached the age and gained the status appropriate to the rank; a 'young man' of Kutigi (he was about 45) had been waiting for ten years for the title which his father's brother had held before and which had been 'reserved' for him; every time I saw him and asked how his affair stood, he replied with the same words: *n'voa ke degi*, 'just a little longer'. Or one may introduce new titles, intermediary ranks, by which device the rigid order of traditional ranks is circumvented. Finally, hereditary succession in Nupe is never understood in the narrow sense of a quasi-automatic appointment. Often it is a selection from a number of candidates of suitable seniority—younger brothers or eldest sons (in the classificatory sense) of the deceased. Though seniority counts above all, old age and debility will disable a prospective successor to family headship. Apart from seniority, other attributes are also essential: good reputation, skill and experience as farmer, a friendly temper, and good health; a leper or a man suffering from elephantiasis or blindness is ineligible; so is a complete invalid. But so long as his impediment (e.g. a short leg, a crooked arm) does not interfere with his work on the land and his ability to move about, it does not matter. The main attribute is *ánkali*—intelligence. In Kutigi a serious quarrel had broken out between the chief and some of his elders who refused to give their consent to the appointment to a high rank of a man whom they considered 'to have no brains'.

623 The following genealogy illustrates the succession to the position of a certain titled family head, the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa. We

[1] An interesting transition from hereditary ranks to ranks of the promotion type has evolved in Fažc, a village in Ebe country. Only recently the former system of hereditary ranks was replaced in this village by a promotion system, the depopulation of the village in the Fulani wars having made this step necessary; for some of the families in which the most important ranks had been vested had died out, and only promotion from lower to higher ranks could prevent this untoward vacancy. This local development cannot, for various reasons, be taken as affording the explanation of the origin of the promotion system of *nūsa* ranks in Nupe. But it clearly shows that the people are aware of the inherent conflict between the rank system based on precedence and the strict rule of hereditary succession.

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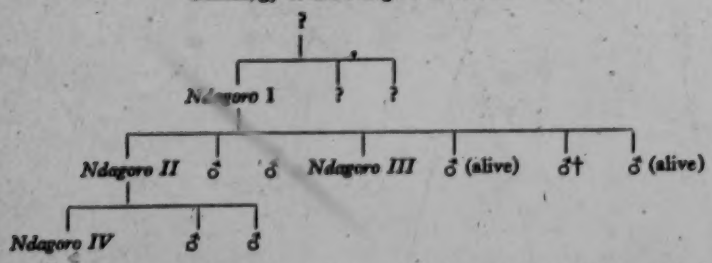
observe the general scheme of Nupe inheritance, one generation being run through before the next generation is admitted to the succession; but we notice also that the progress of succession left out two men of the older generation. 623

Genealogy of the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa



The same qualifications would also make a stranger who has settled for some time in a Nupe village eligible for a higher or lower *nũsa* rank. But 'good reputation' would be understood according to local standards, which may not be the standards of the applicant. A lute-player in Doko, who had been living there for some twenty years, a fairly prosperous and well-liked man, still went without title. Lute-playing, though appreciated in Bida, was not in the eyes of the villagers a respectable profession. Had he been a farmer, or even a drummer, he would have been awarded a title long before. 623 554 609 533

If a 'new man' desires to be granted a title he broaches the subject first with one of the titled *nũsa* with whom he is intimate; the latter will bring it before chief and council of elders, who will then discuss the question at their leisure. If, on the other hand, a rank falls vacant, especially one of the higher ranks, the official discussions will start at once, and all the men of the village will be talking about it and surmising likely successors. In the lowest ranks succession is a simple matter. In hereditary ranks, particularly in small families, the decision may also take but little time. When the *Ejukó* of Jebba Island—the hereditary Keeper of the Chain of Tsoede—died, his successor was known a week after his death, and the title was conferred upon him within a month. But sometimes the appointment of a successor is a serious and long-drawn-out business, and often enough, as we have seen, feuds may break out over the appointment of the most suitable candidate. Discussion follows discussion, often for weeks and months, especially if it happens to be the rainy season when everybody is busy and can spare only an evening or two in the week. The elders meet first, in small groups, in their own houses; later when the discussion has reached a more advanced stage they meet in the house of the *nũsa* of highest rank and finally in the house of the chief. As always in meetings of this kind the assembly gathers in the entrance hut of the house; the younger men sit near the outer door, the elder men on the inner side of the hut. They are rarely given anything to eat or drink except perhaps a few kola-nuts in the house of the chief. 623

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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nũsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nũsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nũsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nũsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nũsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

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highest in the order of village ranks, and one of the senior elders of the village is promoted to the position of the chief. In all other areas chieftainship is hereditary and bound up with one 'house'. Chieftainship of the promotion type goes invariably hand in hand with a rank system of promotion type. But hereditary chieftainship does not invariably imply hereditary *nûsa* ranks. In Dibo country, for example, chieftainship is hereditary, but the *nûsa* ranks in some villages follow promotion. The elected chief is by no means regarded as less closely identified with the village which he 'owns' than the hereditary chief. The rule that he assumes the name of 'his' village as title holds good both for elected and hereditary chiefs: the *Gebba* of Jebba (Gebba) is, as we have just seen, an elected chief.

Neither chieftainship by election nor hereditary chieftainship implies an automatic, rigidly fixed, succession. Under the former, any elder who has reached an important rank is eligible for the final promotion. The latitude which this arrangement allows is illustrated in the succession to the chieftainship in Mokwa, where, in the case of the last five chiefs, the following rank-holders were elected as chiefs: *Sámaza*, the fourth on the village rank-list, *Sojekó*, the second on the village rank-list, *Maji Bagidi*, the eighth, and *Sarkin Zongu*; this last rank, borrowed from Hausa, has been abandoned during the régime of the present chief. It was attached to the position of a caretaker in the camp prepared for the trading caravans stopping at Mokwa—a responsible and lucrative, though from traditional point of view inferior, post. (See chart I, p. 54.)

Hereditary succession to chieftainship follows the same elastic rule which governs succession to hereditary *nûsa* ranks.[1] A few communities have adopted the practice of appointing beforehand the successor to chieftainship, an 'heir presumptive', mostly known by the title *Shaba*. But it can be shown that this practice is of comparatively recent origin, in fact, a copy of the system of succession characteristic of Nupe kingship. The larger the family group or 'house' of the hereditary chief, the more scope there is for the selection of a fitting successor. Expansion of the chieftain family may lead to a splitting-up of the 'house' as a result of which the chief's office, vested in two or more related houses, is taken in rotation by these families. In at least one case hereditary succession itself was abandoned, and replaced by free election: in Doko the line of hereditary succession was interrupted two generations ago, and a 'new man', a man of outstanding ability, was appointed as successor by the old chief and accordingly 'elected' later by the elders of the village. The genealogy of the Doko chiefs (p. 52) up to the appointment of this 'new man' may illustrate the latitude allowed even in strictly hereditary chieftainship. We see that sons, grandsons, younger brothers, and brothers' sons are all equally admitted to the succession of village chieftainship.

The appointment or election of the new chief is a matter for the council of elders. It is presided over by a certain *nûsa* of high rank who is in many places called *Ndeji* (a corrupted form of *Ndeźi*, viz. *nda eźi*),

[1] In one village, Etsú, I found matrilineal succession to hereditary chieftainship, through the mother's brother's son, although in all other respects the rules of inheritance were the same as everywhere else in Nupe. I am unable to explain this isolated instance, unless perhaps historically.

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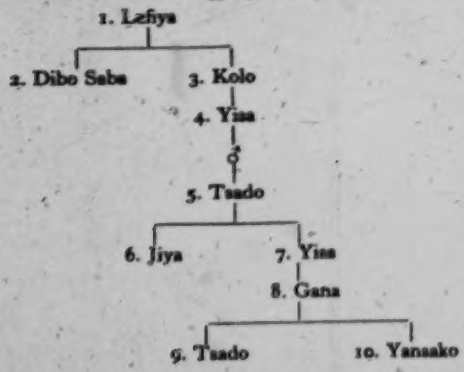
Genealogy of Doko Chiefs



Father of the Town, and who stands somewhat apart from the other village ranks. He plays the part of the chief 'elector' or 'king-maker'; he is never himself a candidate for chieftainship, but is entrusted with the rule of the village during the interregnum. We shall hear more of him presently. The Nupe dislike a long interregnum: as a rule only a few weeks, filled out with discussions and the consultation of diviners, elapse before the appointment of a new chief.[1] This appointment will eventually need the confirmation of the *Etsu* Nupe and, to-day, of the Administrative Officer. This last rule, however, applies only to those chiefs who are recognized as official Village Heads under the modern Native Administration. In the reorganization of the Emirate under British rule only the larger villages have been created seats of official Village Heads. Their number does not comprise all the places which are 'villages' or 'towns' in traditional native conception.[2] A significant terminological dualism has been the result: the people speak of *Zitsu*, 'town-king', when referring to their traditional, officially unrecognized, chief, and call the officially appointed Village Head *Etsu Nyenkpa*, 'Money Chief' (i.e. tax chief).

I can offer no explanation for the coexistence of these two different systems of chieftainship, of hereditary and promotion type. There is no evidence of either having developed from the other. Nor can local conditions, economic factors, or the factors of size and population be made responsible. But I could discover the sociologically interesting correlation between the system of succession and the religious elements which surround Nupe chieftainship. In the villages where chieftainship is hereditary we find that vague mythology of origin which tells of the first occupation of the land, and of the foundation of the village by the

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[1] I have been told that formerly unanimity between the various diviners of the village was considered necessary. In Mokwa my informants stated that the normal duration of the 'interregnum' is ten days.

[2] In connexion with a scheme to raise the salary of Village Heads the number of Village Headships in Bida Emirate has recently been further reduced.

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ancestor of the present chief. A certain special magic and sacred insignia are linked with the house in which chieftainship is vested. Thus the chiefs of various Beni villages and of Sakpe possess the brass bangles of Tsoede; chiefs in Dibo country an iron staff; chiefs in the riverain area the sacred chain of Tsoede. The magic ritual which is associated with chieftainship varies as widely: in Doko it is a harvest rite, the 'eating of the bulrush-millet'; in other villages it appears as magic against barrenness, as a rain sacrifice, an ordeal, or as a general rite to secure health and prosperity of the community. But invariably the chief's ritual, whatever its more specific aim, will be performed as funeral rite and ceremony of installation of chiefs, and also whenever certain great calamities befall the community—a drought, famine, or epidemic. The chief is not himself the priest of this magic, and often has not the insignia in his own possession. Insignia and magic are entrusted to another member of the chief's family. The office of the *Ziçi*, the village priest, is kept in the junior branch of the chieftain house, and *Zitsu* and *Ziçi*, Town-king and Town-priest, appear in the genealogies as elder and younger brother (in the classificatory sense).[1]

In the communities, on the other hand, where the chief is elected from the senior rank-holders, his house 'owns' no special magic or insignia, and there is no mythology of a founder of the village, but tradition speaks of the village as having 'always been there'. The religious duties fall, instead, to the *nãsa* who acts as chief 'elector' and who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum. This man's office will be hereditary and sacred, he will own insignia or a special powerful magic, which is, again, invoked at the death and the appointment of chiefs or in the case of great calamities. A supernatural agency, a mystic safeguard, is thus always assumed behind the chief's authority. But Nupe village organization has evolved two different solutions, in accordance with the two different systems of chieftain succession: one makes the chief or his family the agents of the supernatural power which supports the claim to chieftainship; the other separates the political rule from the mystic safeguard and, instead of a hereditary king, brings into being a hereditary 'king-maker'. (See chart II, p. 55).

This division of religious and secular office seems to eliminate effectively conflicts between chief and priest. The priests of the village cults, experts in religious matters only, have no influence in political affairs; they are, as we saw, not even granted the general prerogative of their age: a seat on the council of elders. The priest of the chief's cult, if of the chief's family, is classed as a 'younger brother' and thus equally barred from the position of an influential elder. Only the priest-king-maker (where he exists) could gain the position of a rival power and interfere with secular affairs. However, by his office the main 'elector' of the chief, he should be a supporter and ally of the chief, whose office reflects to some extent his own authority, rather than his adversary or rival. He may prefer a puppet at the head of the village—I saw an instance

[1] See the genealogy given in chart II, p. 55.

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I

Rank System from Mokwa (Promotion Type)

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Rank order	Title	Office	Locality ('*efu*' or '*emi*')	Succession	Insignia, magic, &c.	Remarks
1	*Lile*	Chief	Efugbo or *efu* Lile	Promotion	..	Present chief was promoted to chieftainship from rank *Sarkin Zongu*
2	*Shaba Lile*	..	Gunnuba (so called because *gunnu* priest lives here)	"	..	Title introduced under Fulani influence; replaced original title *Sajaki*.
3	*Ndeshi* (Sheshi)	'King-maker'	Ilancita	Hereditary	Sacred chain, priesthood of Tsoede	Title *Ndeshi* corresponds to *Ndeki*, 'Father of the Town'.
3a	*Gaye*	Successor to 3	Etishashi and Korofugi	Hereditary in family of *Ndeshi*[1]	..	..
3b	*Tsaashe*	Successor to 3a	Ntaci	As 3a	..	..
4	*Sabaara*	..	Gbaye and Yafu	Promotion	..	Was promoted to present rank from *Tsaakua*.
5	*Ndagoro*	..	Goro	"	..	..
6	*Maji Koshebe*	..	Kpege	"	..	Newly introduced rank.
7	*Tsaakua* (*Tsoua*)	..	*emi* Ndakogi	"	..	..
8	*Maji Bagidi*	..	Ilancita	"	..	..
9	*Maji Dende*	..	"	"	..	..
10	*Maji nya Kata*	..	Goro	"	..	..
11	*Maji Gaye*	..	Kpege	"	..	..
12	*Maji Tsaaci*	Head of Blacksmiths	Tawata	Hereditary	..	..
13	*Etsu Dali*	Head of Drummers	*emi* Dzezi	"	..	..
13a	*Shaba Dali*	Successor to 13	*emi* Dzezi	Hereditary in house of *Etsu Dali*[2]	..	..
•	*Wangwa*	..	*efu* Wangwa	..	..	This rank no longer exists. The position of the head of the *efu* has fallen, quasi-unofficially, to the *Limam*, the Mohammedan priest, who is not yet, however, officially admitted into the village council.

[1] These secondary ranks defining succession to the hereditary rank of 'king-maker' I have found only in Mokwa. The *Sheshi*, *Gaye*, and *Tsaashe* regard each other as elder and younger brothers respectively. I was told that originally the office of *Sheshi* was inherited matrilineally, and that this is the explanation why it has become divided between three kinship sections living in different *efu*. Though this explanation is, logically, incorrect, and although these three offices have actually been inherited in paternal line since the people can remember, the fact remains that the three groups which succeed each other in rotation are vaguely thought of as of matrilineal origin. The aloofness from the other village ranks which characterizes the office of the 'king-maker' is thus further enhanced by the different conception of succession.

[2] Secondary professional ranks of this kind are found also in other craftsmen groups, e.g. blacksmiths. Sometimes there exists also a third rank of this order, with the title *Kpota*. This organization of craftsmen ranks will be discussed in Chapter XIV.

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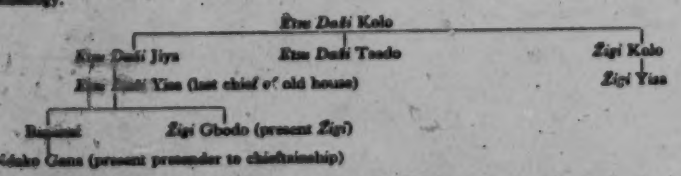
II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('ofu')*	*Succession*	*Insignia, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Etsu Dafi*	Chief	Dafi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Zigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dafi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotii*	..	"	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Mahii*	..	"	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndafie*	..	Edakó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dasko*	..	Takogi	"	..	..
8	*Boko*	..	Kpacinefu	"	..	..
9	*Shabaati*	..	Ndadofu	"	..	..
10	*Bada*	..	Dafi	"	..	..
11	*Zitsu Baki*	..	Edakó	"	..	..
12	*Magi*	..	"	"	..	..
13	*Magi Egbe* (or *Ndaco*)	Head of Hunters	"	"	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Zitsu* and *Zigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences.

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Zitsu* and *Zigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual powers vested in his house as a weapon

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622 against the ruling chief whom he regarded as an usurper. He refused
793 the chief the use of the sacred insignia—the bangles of Tsoede—without
518 which the annual chief's ritual cannot be performed. Finally, in 1934, he asked me to intervene for him so that he should be given official authority to keep in his possession the invaluable insignia, which the chief was demanding back not so much for religious reasons (for some of his brothers and sons were already posing as Mohammedans), as in order to deprive the rival family of this convincing evidence of their claim to the rule of Doko. The case remained undecided, and the rivalry between the two men unrelieved, till in 1936 the chief offered the 'pretender' official recognition of a sort, namely, the title *Makū*. The highest rank next to the chief's, *Shaba*, had just fallen vacant, and a reshuffle of titles had taken place. Ndakó Gana, however, rejected the title *Makū*—a new title, introduced *ad hoc* (copied from the dynastic ranks in Bida)—as a meaningless, makeshift sort of rank and demanded instead the rank of *Shaba* itself. The deadlock was finally overcome by an appeal of both parties to the *Etsu*; he managed to persuade the young man to accept the offered rank, at least as an earnest, and as more fitting to his age.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

622 The tasks of government which fall to the village chief are these:

1. He appoints the village elders from the ranks of the family heads and is thus bound, as by a constitution in the modern sense, to accept their co-operation and advice in all matters of village government.
2. He controls the land resources of the community and in this capacity apportions farm-land, trees, fishing rights, and levies certain tributes and land dues from the families holding village land. With this aspect of village government we shall deal later on in detail, in the chapter on land-tenure.
3. He is not, as we have seen, the religious head of the community. But he organizes, directly or indirectly, and partly finances, certain religious rites linked with chieftainship.
4. He arbitrates in litigation and wields (though now only on a limited scale) a certain informal judicial power.
5. He organizes all large-scale co-operation and concerted action of the village community.

We have already spoken of the composition of the village council and the co-operation between chief and elders. Let me add some concrete data to illustrate the working of the village 'constitution'.

627 A Doko farmer had quarrelled with a neighbour over some trees; people from a village near Mokwa came into Mokwa to borrow masks for the *elo* ritual which they were going to perform, having lost their own masks; a family head in Sakpe accused his sister's son who lived in his house of having stolen rice from his farm; a girl in Laboži denounced two strangers who had been given hospitality by a neighbour and whom she saw stealing their host's clothes; a young man in Jebba accused his wife of adultery; another man in Jebba complained that a certain hunter

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who was reputed to possess strong and deadly magic had threatened his life; a family head in Kutigi that his family was too highly taxed; a man in Pichi that a neighbour had beaten his goat (which the other man had found eating his grain): these are some of the cases which a village chief and his elders may daily be called upon to decide. 627

The procedure is nearly always the same. The various news, requests, or complaints are communicated at once to the chief, directly, if the supplicant or bearer of the news has the chief's ear, that is, is himself a titled elder, and indirectly, through the family head or the *efutsó* (head) of the *efu* in which he lives, if the bearer of the news is an ordinary peasant. Upon receiving the news the chief will summon the head *nũsa* (the *Sheshi* in Mokwa, the *Lile* in Doko, the *Ndeji* in other villages), and he in turn will call together the other members of the council whose co-operation is required: two or three of the senior elders—the members of the 'inner council'—and always the *nũsa* to whose kinship group or *efu* the litigant or supplicant belongs. Not only does this *nũsa* act, as we have seen, as the official informant of the chief on all matters concerning his group and locality, but his intimacy with the people whose case is to be heard, and his moral influence, make him an important witness and, when a decision has been reached, a guarantor of its execution. Before this tribunal, then, supplicants and litigants in the village appear. The discussion that ensues is informal, and devoid of the stiff procedure that characterizes, for example, the Native Court. Supplicant or plaintiff state their case in a few sentences—the Nupe are not fond of long speeches and elaborate expositions. Obscurities in the statement are unravelled in patient cross-examination, in which everyone present can take part. Then, at one point, the chief or a *nũsa* may suggest a solution, which may be agreed to by the others with the stereotyped expression *u ge*, 'it is well', or revised in renewed discussion. Very rarely do tempers flare up and the discussions become heated. The final decision of the chief and his council is pressed home in the form of advice, persuasion, warning. A discussion of this kind rarely lasts longer than two or three hours, after which time it will be interrupted to be resumed on a following day. Mostly one or two sessions suffice to arrive at the final decision.

But then, in more difficult cases, in which many witnesses have to be called and thorny problems of arbitration settled, the decision is taken out of the hands of the village executive. For the chief is not entitled to dispense formal justice and to enforce arbitration. He must send all legal cases to the professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*) of the district; moreover, litigants who are dissatisfied with the chief's decision may themselves bring their case before the professional judge or the District Head (a point to which we shall return later). This limitation of village jurisdiction makes it impossible to pronounce in more detail on the efficiency of the village council and the way in which it handles, or could handle, more severe conflicts. The gamut of advice, persuasion, and warning is the only one which it can use: the more strident notes of authoritative orders and severe reprimands are outside its scale. 692 627

That they, too, have a rightful existence in the administration of village affairs is shown in the organization, by chief and elders, of all concerted 651 621

651 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal cere-
621 monies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nūsaši* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an
[694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the
623 chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also, in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece
661 of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; 622
a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* 623
group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on
their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a 661
rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the 622
economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free himself from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the 661
economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important 622
economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive)
a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankó*, 'tithe', 651
from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this [431]
payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, [476]
which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankó*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general 622
money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes.
Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., 651
receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind 431
has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a

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622 651 [431]

voluntary present. It is, I was told, only the 'old men who are still doing it'. The value of the right to communal farm-work has also lost its former importance. A number of salaried Village Heads have abandoned almost completely their former agricultural work, being too busy with their official duties. One village chief, who is District Head at the same time (in Kacha), has found it impossible to spare even his sons and brothers for farm-work, needing them as messengers and the like. Instead, he has adopted the most recent innovation in Nupe economics, and engages wage-labour to work his land. The chiefs of small villages, however, who draw no wages, and have been given no official position under the N.A., have lost the most important of the old economic prerogatives—unless their people voluntarily continue the old practice—without benefiting from the new. Only the right to special fruit-bearing trees, game, and fishing has survived everywhere without change. It is not surprising, therefore, that the old term *Žitsu* is more and more losing its splendour, overshadowed by the matter-of-fact term *Etsu Nyenkpa*, Money or Tax Chief. And often the small chiefs, who have been passed over in the political reorganization of the Emirate,[1] tell you that to-day there is little difference between chief and commoners.

622 How far did the former economic prerogatives in reality establish a definite, unassailable economic superiority of the chief? The approach to this question must be through the comparison between traditional income and expenditure of chief and elders respectively. Here we see that some of the economic prerogatives of the chief are shared (though in lesser degree) by the other family heads and titled elders. The *nŭsaži*, like the chief, have a right to the possession of fruit-bearing trees; they too can avail themselves of communal farm-work—though only after the chief. And if they have a large family, many sons and younger brothers helping in the farm-work, their normal income may not be very much lower than the chief's. Of the economic prerogatives of the chief only the land-tithe (or its modern counterpart, the chief's salary) and the game and fishing rights are exclusive to his official position. The game rights contribute mainly to the symbols of chieftain status—the possession of a leopard or lion skin, allowed only to the chief. The additional capital resources vested in chieftainship—additional in the sense that they are unavailable to ordinary family heads—were thus derived in the main from the tithe.[2] I have calculated that the annual land-tithe of a village the size of Doko would amount to about seventy bundles of corn—twice the annual yield upon which an average peasant household could reckon.[3] Now, on this evidence we are justified in saying that the

[1] See p. 52.

[2] Certain other irregular forms of income it is impossible to estimate to-day: occasional land fees from new tenants, fines or gifts from parties between whom the chief was arbitrating. Moreover, certain chiefs received a small share of the tax money they levied for the *Etsu* Nupe (see p. 116); but this last income, derived from the kingdom, no longer reflects the village system as such.

[3] There is a certain margin of error in this calculation. The constant extension and subdivision of Nupe family groups and households make it impossible to define with any precision the size of the households originally responsible for the payment of the tithe. I have taken an average of the larger groups, such as are

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chief's special income did not, normally, constitute an insurmountable economic barrier between himself and his subjects. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristic possessions of a chief—possession of things generally valued in the society—were not unattainable by others.

His surplus income the chief uses as follows: some of it he must devote to special expenditure attached to his office, the purchase of a goat or fowl for the annual sacrifices, or some other large contribution (larger than that of the other family heads) towards the cost of the village ceremonies. Occasional liberal presents to the elders, food, kola-nuts, beer, gowns are also indicated; a niggardly chief is much disliked. The larger part of his income the chief spends on himself, his family, and generally on things the possession of which are demanded by his status and prestige. Some chiefs, with a view to profit as well as prestige, have bought slaves or taken pawns. Every bigger chief possesses at least one horse. His dress is always of the more expensive kind—embroidered trousers, a turban, and an indigo-dyed gown, possibly an embroidered Bida robe. Many chiefs possess the beautifully carved staffs which are made by the craftsmen in the river valley and sold for sums up to two pounds. One or another chief owns an old flintlock gun, and some chiefs pride themselves on building bigger and more ornate houses than the majority of the people possess. Finally, as the most conspicuous symbol of economic advantage in this country of extremely high bride-price, two at least of the bigger chiefs I met had what among the Nupe peasants is considered a very large number of wives (5 or 6 as against the usual 1 or 2), and so had some of their sons and younger brothers.

Set against this the economic position of a well-to-do family head and rank-holder. He too used to own slaves or pawns. The higher rank-holders often possess large, imposing houses. They carry carved staffs, own a horse, turban and state gown, and a gun. Some of them may have three or four wives. With regard to the accoutrements of his office—the religious elements linked with chieftainship, its insignia and symbols of rank—the chief stands on a plane by himself; as regards things 'that money can buy', or liquid capital, he is placed only one step higher than his citizens of rank. The surplus capital which he derives from his office is not, as we can see, large enough to be turned into an effective instrument of political ambition.

Involved in this is the question how far the temporary economic benefits linked with the chief's office can be used so as to be turned into a lasting economic advantage, enjoyed by the descendants and the whole family of the chief. For the communities in which succession to chieftainship follows promotion or rotation the question answers itself: the surplus income vested in the chief's office is not sufficient, once acquired, to endow his whole 'house' permanently with economic superiority.[1] In

presided over by the *nūsa* ranks, and the smaller family groups (approximately 100 in number) with which we should have to reckon to-day.

[1] Here is a significant illustration: in Mokwa and Jebba, two villages of 'promotion type', the imposing houses of the late chiefs have fallen into disrepair; the descendants are no longer able to command the communal labour without which the upkeep of the large house is impossible.

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622 hereditary chieftainship, the accumulation of surplus renders such development more likely. But even here the existence of the special chief's cult, which imposes additional expenses on the chief (higher than in the case of cults to which he need only contribute his share), should tend to adjust more equitably the economic balance between chief and elders.[1]

622 However, we have other evidence to show that the chief's position, 576 economically privileged though it may be, is not *meant* to lead to the 554 formation of an essentially different, sharply separated, permanently privileged ruling class; evidence, in other words, to show that the political organization of the village is meant to preserve the social homogeneity of its community. This evidence lies in the rules of etiquette defining the behaviour of the people towards their chief. People everywhere show reverence to their chief: they kneel down by the door when entering his presence. Often there are raised platforms in the chief's entrance hut, near the door leading to the inner part of the house, on which he would sit, while the others are squatting on the ground in front of him. Or the chief would sit on a leopard skin or at least a cow-hide, while the others are assigned seats on grass-mats. The chief, finally, is addressed by special formulae of greeting reserved for his title. Yet again, this attitude of reverence represents only the highest grade of respect as it is shown similarly to all *nūsaži*, graded in accordance with age and rank. In every house young men or visitors of lower status and seniority would squat near the door while the head of the house, or honoured guests, occupy places on the inner side—the more honoured side. Special greetings of the same symbolic nature as the salute reserved for the chief are typical of the various ranks. Here as in the case of economic privileges etiquette marks off the chief not as standing on 'a plane by himself' but merely as the most prominent in a graded order of prominence. If on state occasions, wearing his state robe and turban, the chief is conspicuously marked off from the rest of the people, when going out to his farms there is nothing to distinguish him from an ordinary farmer; like him he carries his hoe across the shoulder, a straw hat on his head, and wears only the cheap blue cloth slung loosely round the body. There is thus ample 'neutral ground' in the matter of etiquette and distinction of status between chief, elders, and the rest of the people.

But above all, the attitude of reverence and the special chief's salute 622 are reserved for the chief's person; they are not enjoyed equally by his 565 relations merely in virtue of their being his relations. The exalted social 554 position of the chief does not extend to his family—there exist, even in hereditary chieftainship, no symbols of a hereditary class differentiation. Later, in the discussion of social classes in the kingdom, we shall understand fully the significance of this 'democratic' element in Nupe village chieftainship.

[1] In 1936 the chief of Doko bought five sheep for sacrifices connected with the 'chief's cult', contributed beer to other ceremonies, and presented two gowns to men with whom he was anxious to keep on good terms—not counting occasional small gifts and contributions, e.g. to family feasts, &c. Altogether an expenditure of approximately £2–3, or 30 to 40 bundles of corn, that is, roughly half of his income from tithe.

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nisazi*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *eźi u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunu* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

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621 of this coextensiveness of the spheres of religious and political control
182 could the village elders of Kutigi to whose 'strike' we referred above effect that political adjustment by religious pressure. And again only because of this coextensiveness of the spheres of political and kinship control could, in another instance, a family head be excluded from the ranks of the titled elders on the grounds that one of his sons had twice been caught thieving. The family head was identified with the moral standards obtaining in the kinship group the headship of which would have entitled him, in the normal case, to a position in the political executive. 'How can a man who cannot keep order in his own house,' said my informant, 'keep order in the village?' But these three agencies of control are only three in a multiplicity of coextensive forms of social organization: economic pursuits, the contacts of everyday life, recreation, education. The political activities take place within this one area of common life. Expressed in one formula: the political system and the closely knit social life of a single community organize an identical human substratum.

Here we may, in parenthesis, touch upon the theoretically interesting question whether this system of 'multiple control' which the political organization is capable of utilizing can be taken to explain the absence, in the case of the Nupe village, of the more conspicuous specifically political instruments of control. However, this question cannot be solved on the basis of Nupe material alone. For here the issue is confused by the fact that the state organization, superimposed upon the village system, obviates the necessity of the more essential of these instruments, especially with respect to legal and military executive. Indeed, the fact that the state removes graver legal cases from village jurisdiction releases the social system of the village from certain social pressure which must otherwise have necessitated a more strongly marked specific political authority.

621 This brings us to the question of the resistance of this delicately
622 balanced system of multiple control to outside influences and, generally, the influence of change. Its efficiency is clearly a function of the uni-
182 formity of social interests obtaining in the community. It will fail as soon as the closeness of community life is broken by a strong divergence of interest. Extraneous changes creating new aims which are apt to dissociate the political executive from the rest of the people may disturb its equilibrium, which could then be readjusted only by a corresponding strengthening, at the cost of the other agencies in the multiple machinery of control, of political power as such. The most radical adjustment of this kind is that brought about by the modern political changes which, in accordance with the system of Indirect Rule, have turned the village chief into an official agent of the Administration. In this capacity he may have to give orders, enforce laws, and exact actions unpopular with his people. He is bound to stand for aims and interests which may threaten to estrange him from the community. An inconsiderate Administrative Officer may still more widen the rift. Twice I have come across chiefs who, in their official capacity and by the order of a District Officer, had to forbid all dances and festivities in a district which was

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'kingmaker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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621 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the
622 highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadú*. Having been granted this
182 responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.[1] But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results
622 of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very
182 similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the
631 pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

[1] It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks—we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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itself ideally. Through the person of its head, first of all, the village organization is bound to duties towards, and linked with the fate of, the wider political organization—the kingdom. Through religious, economic, and educational factors which follow in the wake of political absorption the one-ness of community and political organization which proved the essence of the village society is finally broken. The communities themselves, their areas of integrated social life, are broken open and forced partly into a system of integration, under the dictate of a concept of social unity which is part of the centralized political system of the state. I say 'partly', for the latter has to some extent left intact the social identity of the village. This is not meant only historically, but refers to the relation and actual inter-penetration of two essentially different social systems. Nor does it refer merely to a distinction between political autonomy of the village, or certain villages, as against political domination by the kingdom. One may perhaps speak of a partial autonomy of the villages under or within the kingdom, but the essential point is the different solution of the problem of political integration in one and in the other case. We have met with the analogous difference when we discussed the two different systems of political unification evolved by the two sub-tribes Kyelye and Beni. Let me [illegible] again: it is the difference between an organization growing out of and utilizing the potentialities of uniform culture and common life, and an organization relying on the extraneous machinery of political control; between a political integration which remains true to the concept of Community, and an organization which forces unity upon diversity of culture and common life—the State.

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CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM

THE STATE

IT will have become clear that we regard the state as a specific form of political organization. Not every political system represents thus a state. This book can do no more than suggest a descriptive working definition of that difficult and much discussed concept. If we accept the definition of a political system suggested above, on the basis of its inclusiveness and the nature of its ultimate sanctions, we may regard the state as a social system in which these two characteristics crystallize in specific forms. Thus we arrive at the following threefold definition: (1) The state is a political unit based on territorial sovereignty. Membership of the state, i.e. citizenship or nationality, is determined by residence or birth-right in a territory. The state is thus inter-tribal or inter-racial, and distinguishes nationality from tribal or racial extraction.[1] (2) A centralized machinery of government assumes the maintenance of law and order, to the exclusion of all independent action.[2] (3) The state involves the existence of a specialized privileged ruling group or class separated in training, status, and organization from the main body of the population. This group monopolizes, corporately, the machinery of political control. It is regarded as a 'representative' group, and its actions and decisions are accepted by the people as actions and decisions on behalf of the country at large. These three factors must appear combined to justify our terming a political system a state.[3] The three factors of state structure represent interdependent social necessities which follow from one another and can be reduced to the basic principle of territorial sovereignty maintained over groups of different cultural and ethnic extraction. Such sovereignty must involve a certain measure of centralization, powerful enough to counteract separatist tendencies (Lowie), and also the creation—or continued existence—of a group of rulers and administrators who, by special training and tradition, are raised above the complexity of cultural and ethnic groups. Historically, an inter-tribal sovereignty of this nature can only have arisen from the ascendancy of one ethnic group over others. Certain students of society have interpreted this fact as implying the essential identity of state

[1] Cf. Sir Henry Maine's statement that the 'most nearly universal fact concerning the origin of known states' is that they 'were formed by the coalescence of groups' (*Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, p. 386).

[2] Political order in the state is 'distinguished most of all by this trait that it is a peaceful order which allows of no individual violence and only permits itself to enforce justice' (N. M. Korkunov, *General Theory of Law*, New York, 1922, p. 342).

[3] Obviously, there exist transitory forms in which only one or two of these political principles are manifest. The Beni confederacy represents such an incipient state organization. Yet if Lowie says: 'Some sort of state is a universal feature of human culture' (*The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 44), we feel inclined to alter this to 'some sort of political organization'.

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121 origin and conquest, state organization and alien domination.[1] I will not go too deeply into this controversial question. But we cannot pass without comment the fact that the structure of the Nupe state as it exists to-day, with its ruling class of Fulani conquerors, and also its growth so far as we can with any claim to accuracy trace it back in history, indeed support this theory of the origin of the state.

Our discussion of the principles of state organization has thus led to an historical interpretation. Indeed the description of Nupe kingdom would be incomplete without the description of its growth and development. Its inter-tribal and inter-cultural nature cannot be fully understood without the inclusion of the historical viewpoint. Our three-fold conceptual system of cultural unit, community, and state must itself be envisaged under the aspect of a dynamic process rather than of a static differentiation. For the deliberate political co-ordination of forms of conduct must tend to influence other spheres of cultural activity as well. In Nupe as everywhere, social patterns, common ideal types, spring up by themselves as 'natural products of long association'.[2] Political unification goes hand in hand with dissemination of culture and with an extension and reinterpretation (in the widest sense of the word) of racial and community boundaries. The 'inter-cultural' and 'inter-tribal' state gives way to a new 'state culture' and a new paramount group-unit, the nation.

121 563 It will be for a later chapter to examine how and how far this unification has been achieved in the Nupe state. But we must point out at once that this absorption of heterogeneous elements could only achieve a relative unity. The antagonism between the original heterogeneity and the subsequent unification is never allowed to disappear completely. It survives in certain forms of cultural and racial discrimination. The culture of Nupe, more correctly the culture typical of that section which formed the core in the historical growth of the kingdom, became the representative culture of the whole country, set up as a standard and 'ideal type' for the heterogeneous population. The sections of the Nupe tribe which were the carriers of this culture became the representative group of 'real' Nupe, sharply distinguished from the groups which have become Nupe-ized and absorbed in the state in the process of political expansion. A tribal and territorial section thus gained the position of a cultural *élite*, considerations of political status came to determine the evaluation of cultural features, and facts of cultural and tribal extraction were re-interpreted in the sense of political class distinctions. Here we understand the anomalies in the application of the name Nupe which we discovered in our discussion of Tribe and Culture: why the people in the capital regard the Nupe spoken in the districts and on the borders of the country as an inferior brand; or why the Nupe still speak of 'Gbari slaves' although culturally this tribal section has become indistinguishable from the Nupe proper. The 'real' Nupe call themselves *kintsi*, Owners of the Land, as against all who have come later into the country—settlers, aliens, citizens of Greater Nupe. For all the groups outside of

[1] F. Oppenheimer, *The State*, 1923.
[2] A. E. Row, *Social Control*, p. 222.

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the 'core' of the kingdom, whether they are Nupe, aliens, or Nupe-ized aliens, the Nupe have a common name: *zaži kati*, 'Outside Peoples', and the cultural evaluation implied in this term is felt acutely by these groups. It was extremely interesting to see how strongly the people of Lemu, Nupe-ized since three generations only, resented being called *zaži kati*, although they frankly admitted their Gbari origin. 'This name', they said, 'does not apply to us; we have been Nupe and Beni for a long time. The Gbari in the north and east, in Wushishi and beyond Kataeregi, they are Outside Peoples.'

The Fulani conquest added a new chapter to this ambiguous history of cultural and political unification. But here 'representative' and 'absorbed' groups have exchanged places. The Fulani conquerors of Nupe, numerically an insignificant minority, were absorbed completely by the culture of the people whom they subjugated. Some of the Fulani came from nomadic herdsmen stock; the majority belonged most probably to the 'town Fulani' (as they call themselves), who had long been settled in the northern Hausa states and whose culture had become identical with that of Hausa. The former surrendered their identity completely; the latter had little, if anything, of their own to give. The Hausa traits visible in Nupe culture to-day did not reach the country through the Fulani; and Mohammedanism, the religion of the Fulani conquerors, was firmly established already at the time of the early Fulani infiltration. In Nupe the Fulani lost their language[1] and the last characteristics of their race and original culture. Racially, after generations of intermarriage, they are indistinguishable from their subjects; culturally, they are as much Nupe as the Nupe themselves. Many are even eager to step into the cultural heritage of the country over which they rule. They read and quote the history of ancient Nupe with the same enthusiasm and pride with which they learn or talk about their own historical heroes, the first Fulani emissaries.[2] Yet they remain a separate social group, conscious of its alien origin, and still distinguished by a special tribal name: they call themselves, and are called by their subjects, *goiži* (a name which distinguishes these settled, 'town Fulani' from the nomadic cattle people, who are known as *bororóži*), never Nupe. They are a 'representative' group in a different sense—the small *élite* of conquerors and rulers. The historical memory of their alien origin—for it is only this to-day—buttresses their detached social position. Racial antagonism which might have disappeared in a homogeneous community here, in the framework of the state, blending with the antagonism of class, remains alive, and even strengthens with its sentiments the inner tension of the society. It flares up with every open friction between rulers and ruled. We have again a political and social cleavage in the guise of 'racial' discrimination.[3]

[1] *Etsu* Mohamadu (1897–1914) was given the nickname '*Etsu* with two tongues', being the last Fulani ruler who—already a striking exception—could still speak Fulfulde.

[2] For some time I carried on a correspondence (in Hausa) with two of the most prominent members of the Nupe-Fulani community who had asked me to let them have all information I could obtain on the ancient history of Nupe.

[3] The following is a significant anecdote: the *Etsu* Nupe once confided to me

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121 Visualize this intricate racial and cultural pattern: two *élites* of different order—*kintsoši* and Fulani—and surrounding them, almost in 560 concentric circles, ethnic groups of varying cultural dissimilitude, each cultural grade also a grade on the scale of political evaluation. This is indeed the exact picture of the historical growth of Nupe kingdom. Through conquests and expansion, with fluid, ever-changing boundaries, Nupe kingdom maintained its conspicuous centre, the core of its political and cultural growth. Like a tree, it grew from the centre, and you can still trace the rings which mark its growth.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

121 Before embarking on the historical account we must clarify the concept of 'history' as we propose to use it. For there is a certain ambiguity in the term 'history' as it is used by anthropologists. History can mean two things: first, what we may call 'objective' history, that is, the series of events which we, the investigators, describe and establish in accordance with certain 'objective', universal criteria of connexion and sequence. Second, the 'ideological' history, which exists in the society which we study, and which describes and arranges events in accordance with accepted traditions about past happenings and developments. The two may coincide (as they do in modern history); or the second may at least supply some source of information for the first. But also it may have significance only as a sociological datum *per se*, i.e. as a system of accepted beliefs and traditions influencing social behaviour in the group. As such, it is often indistinguishable from mythology and from what Malinowski has called significantly the 'mythical charter' of customs and existing cultural usages.[1] Different societies may stress in a different measure either the mythical, supernatural or the rational, pseudo-scientific nature of what they accept as an account of their past. The Nupe are what we may call an historically-minded people. The highest, constantly invoked authority for things existing is, to the Nupe, the account of things past—but an account which is clothed in terms of a sober, pseudo-scientific 'history'. Such is also the nature of the Nupe tradition of the origin of their kingdom. Only for the more recent periods do we possess 'objective' sources; the earliest period of Nupe kingdom is described only in their own 'ideological history'.

173 The earliest history of Nupe centres round the figure of Tsoede or Edegi,[2] the culture hero and mythical founder of Nupe kingdom. The genealogies of Nupe kings which are preserved in many places in Nupe country, and which have also found their way into the earliest written records of Nupe history which were compiled by Mohammedan scholars

his grievance against a certain little unruly relative of his whom he believed to have intrigued against him. He added: 'All Nupe are bad people, you know.' The said relative, himself, of course, as much Fulani as the *Etsu*, retaliated by informing me that 'all Fulani were liars'.

[1] B. Malinowski, in *Encycl. Soc. Sc.*, London, 1931, vol. iv, p. 640.

[2] Tsoede is, linguistically, a contraction of *Etsu*, or *'tsu Ede*; the Nupe more often use the name Tsoede, the Hausa the name Edegi.

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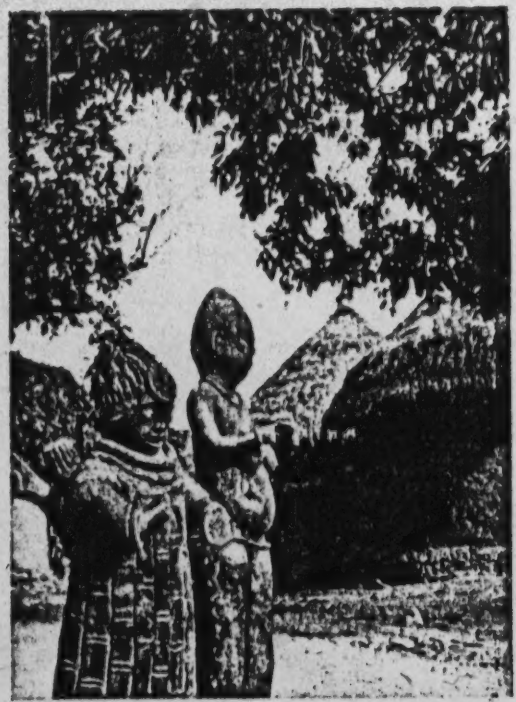

THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES ON JEBBA ISLAND

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THE *CHAIN OF TSOEDE*

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[Facing p. 72]

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173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [643] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were [778] entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

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173 ling up-river, hotly pursued by his half-brothers and their men. On the way he is helped by two men, whom he later rewards by making them chief and second-in-command of the Kyedye tribe. When he reaches the Kaduna river he turns into a creek called Ega, and lies here in hiding till his pursuers, tired of their fruitless search, return to Eda. Tsoede and his men leave the canoe and sink it in the river; the people of Ega still perform an annual sacrifice on the spot, where, as the tradition has it, Tsoede's canoe was sunk, and at these ceremonies they are able, you are told, to see the bright bronze of the canoe glitter in the water. Tsoede then went to Nupeko, a village near-by, killed the chief, and made himself chief of the place. He conquered Nku, the town of his maternal uncle, made himself the ruler of all Beni (or Nupe—all informants are vague on this point), and assumed the title *Etsu*, king. He made the twelve men who had accompanied him from Eda the chiefs of the twelve towns of Beni and bestowed on them the sacred insignia of chieftainship, brass bangles and magic chains. The present chiefs of Beni (as far as their 'towns' still survive) claim descent from these twelve men, and still treasure bangles or chains as insignia of chieftainship. Tsoede carried out big and victorious wars against many tribes and kingdoms, conquering in the south the countries of Yagba, Bunu (two sections of the Yoruba), Kakanda, as far as Akoko, and in the north the countries of Ebe, Kamberi, and Kamuku. He resided first in Nupeko, which name means 'Great Nupe', for eight years, and when Nupeko grew too small, he built the new capital of Gbara, on the Kaduna, which was to remain the *eẓi 'tsu*, the King's Town, till the Fulani conquest. At that time his residence is said to have counted 5,555 horses, so many in fact, that there was no room for them in Gbara, and one of Tsoede's sons, Abdu, who was in charge of the horses, crossed the Kaduna and founded on the opposite bank a place which is still known by the name of Dokomba, 'Horse Place'.

Apart from the royal insignia and emblems of magic Tsoede is said to have brought to Nupe from Eda certain crafts and techniques hitherto unknown in the country. He brought with him blacksmiths and brassmiths who taught the crude blacksmiths of Nupe their more advanced technique; the canoe-men who came with him imported into Nupe the craft of building large canoes of which the Nupe are said to have been ignorant at that time. Tsoede is also believed by some to have introduced human sacrifices—there is a gruesome story of the first sacrifice, the victim of which was Tsoede's mother's brother—and to have established first the custom of bride-price.

We can to some extent ascertain what there is of historical truth in this tradition. Certain indirect evidence tends to confirm the main facts of the Tsoede tradition. The alien, southern provenance of some of the cultural goods, which in the tradition are linked with Idah and the coming of Tsoede, seems fairly certain. Some at least of the sacred bronze figures in Tada and Jebba, cast in *cire perdue*, a technique unknown in Nupe and the north, bear the stamp of the culture which we are wont to associate with Benin—and Benin, as we know, has for a long period been the political overlord of Idah; the same is true of the beautifully cast brass

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bells—among them the square-shaped bells typical of Benin work—on the state drums found all along the Niger. The heavy iron chains and fetters, on the other hand, are most probably of Portuguese origin; they may have been brought in by slave-traders from the coast and have found their way up the river into the hinterland—the home of these precious trading goods.[1] Even the approximate date of the immigration of Tsoede and his band can be fixed with some accuracy. For on this point all the various genealogies of Nupe kings, obtained from quite different sources, tally. Giving the years of reign of every Nupe king, back to Tsoede, they all place the life of Tsoede in the same period, the early fifteenth century. It is interesting to note that the royal genealogies in two great neighbouring kingdoms, Yoruba and Ewe (in Togoland), also trace back the history of their royal ancestors to the same period, about 1400.[2] We may not be mistaken therefore in assuming that the beginning of the fifteenth century marks the end of a big wave of immigration which eventually led to the firm establishment of a number of new West African societies—kingdoms, in our three instances. For Nupe we can go farther than this. The same period saw the first contact of the Guinea Coast with Europe. In 1498 the Portuguese established themselves in Benin. But at that time they found a Benin already on the verge of collapse, the once powerful kingdom weakened and in obvious disintegration. Idah, once tributary to Benin, and master over Nupe as of many other dependencies, must have weakened with it. The myth of Tsoede's delivery of Nupe from the yoke of Idah may well contain a kernel of historical truth (whatever form the events may have taken in reality); the foundation of an independent Nupe kingdom may have been one of the historical results of the disintegration of Benin and its vassal states. The ancient contact of Idah and Nupe as well as the former sovereignty of Idah, are undoubtedly historical. The tradition of Tsoede is as well known in Idah as in Nupe. And when some years ago the *Atta* of Idah came to Bida—he was keen to visit that country of which the tradition of his tribe had so much to tell—a significant political imbroglio threatened the meeting of the Nigerian potentates. It arose from a question of precedence; the Idah man insisted on being given a higher seat than the *Etsu* Nupe, basing his claim on the unforgotten historical fact of Nupe's ancient vassalship to Idah.

This bare framework of facts—if facts they are—has absorbed many other features, legends, traditions, embellishments; which of them contain any historical truth it is impossible to say. But we are not concerned here to determine what is and what is not historical truth in the rich cycle of traditions round the figure of Tsoede. The myth as it stands, and as it is treasured by the people of Nupe, is to us a sufficiently significant social reality. It represents the typical 'mythical charter' of

[1] Exactly the same chains and irons have been found on the Gold Coast; small models of these fetters, of brass, iron, or gold, are sold as charms all down the river and the creeks of Southern Nigeria. A common origin suggests itself forcibly.

[2] See Bishop Johnson, *History of the Yoruba*, and D. Westermann (personal information).

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173 the kingdom, and its common knowledge constitutes the first and foremost of these common beliefs and forms of cultural 'commonness' which supply the background of political unity. I have found the consciousness of this tradition developed most strongly in the river area and among the Beni, that is, in the area that marks what I have called the 'core' of the expanding kingdom. It is totally absent to-day, and most probably has always been absent, among the Dibo, who have never formed part of the old kingdom, and among some of the Nupe-ized groups (such as the 'Gbari slaves') which, absorbed into Nupe in more recent times, have remained culturally 'Outside Peoples'. The distribution of the 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom and the boundaries of the kingdom itself coincide.

To go on with the tradition of Tsoede. For sixty years he reigned in Gbara; he died, 120 years old, on one of his military expeditions to the north, near Gbagede. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and his sword, are still kept as almost sacred treasure by the people of Gbagede (who are Kamberi, not Nupe). At the time of Tsoede's death the kingdom of Nupe was expanding towards the north, and his four sons who succeeded him as kings of Nupe, one after the other, are said to have founded Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, as their temporary capital. Another of his descendants, Abdu Waliyi, founded the capital Jima, on the Kaduna opposite Gbara.[1] The fifteenth king after Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned according to Nupe genealogies about 1770, was the first Nupe king to become Mohammedan. He was deposed by his son and died in exile, in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen. Under *Etsu* Ma'azū, the nineteenth king of Nupe, Nupe kingdom reached its greatest power. During his reign, about 1810, Mallam Dendo, also called Manko, 'Great Mallam', a Fulani from Kebbi who was destined to change the whole fate of Nupe kingdom, is said to have first appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and seller of charms. With *Etsu* Ma'azū we also reach, for the first time, in this account, the plane of 'objective history'; his death is recorded by one of the first European visitors to Nupe as having occurred in 1818.[2]

THE FULANI CONQUEST

175 [814] We enter now a period of Nupe history which is illuminated by the light of 'real' history. It is described with many details in the written records of Nupe court historians, the earliest of whom was a certain Abduramani, a Mohammedan scholar who seems to have lived in Rabá in the early days of Fulani rule. It was during this period, too, that European travellers first penetrated into Nupe.[3]

[1] In addition to the historical capitals of the kingdom, Gbara, Mokwa, Jima, and finally Rabá (see below), the Nupe records also mention certain other places at which the Nupe kings are said to have resided temporarily at various times, viz. Etsú, Jengi, and Yeti.

[2] Journal of Rev. J. F. Schoen and Samuel Crowther, *Expedition up the Niger*, 1842, p. 191.

[3] I owe to the kindness of the Administration the opportunity of having been able to consult unpublished Government records, compiled by the first officers who were serving in this area; I must acknowledge specially the very complete 'Notes on Nupe History', by Major Burdon (1902).

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From that time Nupe history is linked indissolubly with the fate of the Fulani conquerors of Nigeria who had made themselves rulers of the main Hausa states in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The history of the Fulani *Jihad* has often been described,[1] so I need say only a few words. The Fulani established their suzerainty over Northern Nigeria in a loosely organized, decentralized dual empire, the western part under the supremacy of the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, and the eastern under the Emir of Gwandu. Nupe kingdom fell to Gwandu's share. The Fulani conquest was achieved in two phases and by two methods: a gradual infiltration of the foreign country by Mohammedan Fulani, and then, ultimately, a military conquest. The same policy was adopted in Nupe. Mallam Dendo was one of those Mohammedan preachers and emissaries to 'heathen countries' who was to collect an ever-increasing group of followers as the nucleus of future conquest. His followers seem to have included men of all stations: cattle Fulani to whom in their semi-nomadic life Nupe had become a second home; Fulani and Hausa mercenary soldiers who took service in the Nupe armies; merchants from northern towns; and Mohammedan priests and missionaries; I estimated their number at the time of the conquest at not more than 1,000 or 1,500. When Mallam Dendo became strong enough to venture the decisive blow, he applied to the Emir of Gwandu, his overlord, for military help and for a *tuta*, flag, which signified his official recognition as a leader and accepted feudal chief of the Fulani Empire.

The opportunity for the Fulani to make themselves masters of the country soon came. Almost immediately after *Etsu* Ma'azū's death internal trouble broke out. The claim of Maazu's son Jimada, the legitimate heir to the throne, was disputed by his father's brother's son, Majiya II. The details of this feud are not clear. According to some accounts Jimada was Majiya's father's sister's son, who had been appointed regent for the boy-king Majiya; later, when Majiya grew up and demanded his kingdom, Jimada refused. Other accounts make the two claimants sons of elder and younger brother respectively, namely, of *Etsu* Ma'azū (the nineteenth king of Nupe) and *Etsu* Mama (the twenty-first king of Nupe). Majiya claimed the throne by the right of general Nupe succession, being the elder brother's eldest son; Jimada, however, was regarded as the legitimate heir according to the ancient Nupe rules of royal inheritance which decreed that the son 'born in the purple' should become king.[2] Whatever the origin of this dynastic feud, it led to a temporary division of Nupe kingdom into a western and eastern half: Jimada reigned in Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe, and Majiya built himself a capital in Rabá, on the Niger. Majiya gained the friendship of Mallam Dendo and the Fulani group in Nupe, and with them on his side he became by far the more powerful, and soon snatched the other half of

[1] See A. C. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1929; A. W. Bovill, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, Oxford, 1933; C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, i, pp. 98–102.

[2] In Africa this rule of inheritance is unique, and cannot, according to Nupe tradition, have applied to Tsoede himself and his four sons who succeeded him. All informants insisted that it became, at some unspecified period, the rule of succession in the Nupe dynasty.

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175 Nupe kingdom from his rival. He defeated Jimada in the war, killed him at Ragada, near Jengi, and thus made himself the undisputed king of Nupe, about 1820. Idirisu, Jimada's son, fled with the rest of his followers to Laboži, and later across the river, to Eggā, where he stayed, an exile and fugitive, powerless against Majiya's army. Nupe was not to remain at peace for long. Majiya's gratitude to the Fulani who had helped him to defeat his rival soon changed to jealousy and fear. He turned against them, only to be himself defeated, and to lose his throne to his sometime friends and allies.

This is the story that is told in Nupe of the rise of the Fulani and of the final struggle for the Nupe throne. Majiya, as king of Nupe, had learned of the fame of Manko as a preacher and Mohammedan scholar and diviner. He invited him to his court and installed him there in the influential position of his private counsellor and diviner. He trusted his prophecies and his advice and was convinced that his victories in the field were due to Mallam Dendo's *asiri* (lit. 'secret', that is supernatural powers); he rewarded him magnificently, gave him money, slaves, horses. He took Mallam Dendo's youngest son Masaba into his house as his foster-son, as the Nupe do with sons of friends. More and more of Mallam Dendo's kin and fellow countrymen came to Rabá to take service under him or under the king, till at last Manko's power and influence were more than equal to that of the king himself. Majiya now thought it high time to rid himself of the dangerous rival. He drove Mallam Dendo and all his followers from Rabá, and chased them from his territory, across the Niger, into Ilorin country.

Here another Fulani emissary, Mallam Alimi, had already been established for some time as king over the Yoruba of Ilorin. He now gave protection to the Fulani refugees from Nupe. But *Etsu* Majiya, desirous of uprooting for ever the power of his dangerous vassals, decided to attack Ilorin and to conquer this southern stronghold of the Fulani invaders. He attacked Ilorin with 4,000 horsemen and 10,000 foot-soldiers. He marched for two days from Rabá to Ilorin, and halted his army at the gates of the town. The victory seemed his. This war of Majiya against the Fulani of Ilorin, as it is told in Nupe, is a magnificent epic. There were five Fulani emissaries in Ilorin at that time: Mallam Baba, who had fled with Dendo from Rabá and later became the first Emir of Agaie; Mallam Dendo himself; Mallam Musa, another fugitive from Rabá; Mallam Maliki, who had resided in another Nupe town, Lafiagi, and had been driven from there by Majiya; and Mallam Alimi, the Emir of Ilorin. Dendo was the youngest of the five, but his keen intelligence made him at once their leader. He first sent word to Idirisu, Jimada's exiled son, asking for his support in this fight against Majiya, the murderer of his father. Then Dendo prepared his most powerful *asiri*. Two brave men were sent out at night to steal into the enemy's camp and to bring back some earth. Dendo dug a large pit close to the town wall. He put the earth into this pit, and covered its mouth with grass. On a Friday morning he entered the pit, taking with him fourteen dates. He stayed there till the hour of evening prayer, but what he did in the pit, what secret magic he performed, no one knows.

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When he reappeared, he called again the two men who had brought the earth the previous night, and ordered them to scatter it by night all round the town walls. Next morning Majiya attacked. A thick mist had fallen over the country. Majiya's troops were unable to move in the mist. Then a sand-storm sprang up, blinding men and horses. The horses bolted, and Majiya's cavalry, placed (in accordance with Nupe military principles) behind the infantry, trampled down their own men. When the small army of Ilorin sallied forth from the gates of the town, it met an enemy already half defeated. Majiya was beaten, he fled across the Niger, back to the protected Rabá, with only 1,000 horses and 1,070 men left of his huge army. This was not the end. Idirisu and his followers joined forces with Mallam Dendo. Together they pursued Majiya's troops, marching their men up the Niger as far as Gbajibo, fifty miles north of Rabá, where they were able to cross the river unmolested. Here Mallam Dendo is said to have used a clever ruse: for a week he collected horse-dung, and then threw it into the water; drifting down the river it reached Rabá; and the Nupe, who had hardly recovered from their defeat at Ilorin, thought that an enormous army of horsemen was approaching Rabá and had already crossed the river. Majiya fled into the interior, to Zuguma, leaving Rabá unprotected, an easy prey to the Fulani army.

Mallam Dendo repaid Idirisu's help badly. He let him remain a puppet king of Nupe exiled to Eggã,[1] while he installed himself in the capital Rabá as the real ruler. Dendo and his people collected taxes and tribute; they had the command of the larger part of the army; they began to dispense justice, and generally to direct the affairs of the kingdom. A revolt of Idirisu ended in his being killed by Mallam Dendo's troops, whereupon Dendo, 'true Fulani' (say Nupe informants), turned back to Majiya, previously his enemy, offering him friendship and recognition as king of Nupe—another puppet king, in far-away little Zuguma. Two years after this unification of Nupe, in 1833, the year when Oldfield and Lander visited Rabá, Mallam Dendo died.[2] He left four sons (two having died before their father) and two daughters, the sons being Abdu Gboya, Usman Zaki, Mamudu Gwogi, and Masaba (Mama Saba), the daughters Gogo Sabaci and Gogo Wodiko.

During Mallam Dendo's lifetime Mallam Baba, one of his companions on the flight to Ilorin, set out to conquer a kingdom for himself. Following Dendo's advice, he took twelve men, crossed three rivers, travelling by night and hiding by day from the Nupe troops who might intercept his party. The small troop raided the country, and growing as it marched, finally reached Agaie, which Mallam Baba made the capital of another (much smaller) Fulani Emirate in Nupe country. Revolts of the Nupe of that part, and attacks of Majiya, whose sovereignty had extended over Agaie, were in the end defeated, and soon Mallam Baba could enlarge his small kingdom by new victories: over part of the Bataci tribe on the river; over Kacha, which subsequently fell to Bida;

[1] In 1833 Oldfield, whose ship, the *Quorra*, was anchoring off Eggã, met there the exiled Idirisu (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit. ii, pp. 38–9).
[2] Laird and Oldfield, op. cit. ii, p. 76.

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175 and over the Gbari of Payi, which became later the independent Emirate (again under a Fulani) of Lapai.

Mallam Dendo is said to have advised his sons not to seek, after his death, official secular power, but to remain what he had been: the uncrowned king, nominally only an emissary of Islam and the spiritual head of the country. But the division into real and nominal, spiritual and secular rulership did not work. Two years after Majiya's death (1835?) Tsado, his son, like him puppet king of Nupe in Zuguma, revolted again against the hated Fulani. He was defeated and killed by one of the Fulani generals near Egbako. His son, Dzurugi (The Red One), returned to Zuguma. But new Usman Zaki, the second son of Dendo, himself adopted the title *Etsu* Nupe, demanding the ancient regalia from the exiled shadow king in Zuguma and making Rabá again the official capital of the kingdom. From this time the legitimate dynasty of Nupe abandoned all legal claim to the rulership over the country, and the new Fulani dynasty assumed full powers. Of the other descendants of Mallam Dendo, Abdu Gboya, Usman Zaki's elder brother, whose leanings were more scholarly than warlike, became *Alkali* (judge) of the kingdom, and Mamudu Gwogi, Usman's younger brother, *Shaba*, or Heir Presumptive.

From this time the history of Nupe kingdom is the history of constant intrigues, fights, wars, and rebellions. Fights between the sons of Mallam Dendo, wars against other tribes and against factions in Nupe, and rebellions of the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty, who did not give up hope of recovering the throne from the Fulani, or rebellions of powerful generals of mercenary troops who claimed the rulership for themselves, and often rebellions of both, one using the other as a pawn in this game for the throne of Nupe. Masaba, the ambitious and most popular youngest son of Mallam Dendo, born of a Nupe mother and educated at the court of the Nupe *Etsu* Majiya, claimed the throne on the grounds that he was a real Nupe and not, like Usman Zaki, a Fulani by descent. He won the support of Tsado in Zuguma and Idirisu in Eggã, the two shadow kings of Nupe, and finally even the support of the Emir of Gwandu, the spiritual head of the Eastern Fulani Empire. Masaba led two revolts against Usman Zaki, the first from Rabá, shortly after the latter had assumed power, and the second, from exile in Lade, south of the Niger, in 1841.[1] It was successful and forced Usman Zaki to leave Nupe kingdom together with Umaru, the son of his eldest brother Majigi, and to return to the home of his ancestors, Gwandu. Masaba became king of Nupe.

Let me enumerate the main facts in the involved history of Fulani-Nupe, with its revolts, its constant bloodshed, and its fratricidal wars. During Masaba's reign Nupe kingdom grew extensively. Masaba, residing first in Lade and later in Rabá, conquered the Kamuku in the north, the Gbari in the east, and the Kakanda in the south; he entrenched himself firmly on the Yoruba side of the Niger, snatching the country from other Fulani chiefs who had gained a foothold there. A revolt of one of his mercenary generals, the Bornu general Umar Bahaushe, drove

[1] Schoen-Crowther, op. cit., p. 161.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Masaba from Rabá, and the king had to seek refuge in Ilorin. Umar Bahaushe, for some time undisputed master of Nupe, attempted to make himself *Etsu* Nupe. All Fulani rallied against him, Usman Zaki and

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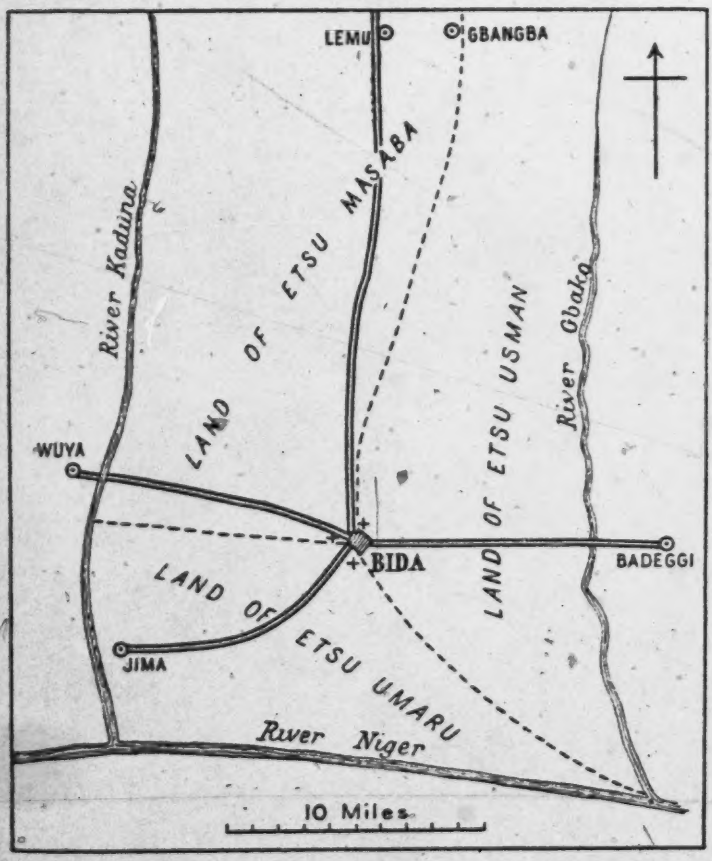
SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE DIVISION OF ROYAL LAND

[102]



+..... Royal Estates *(esozi)*

Umaru Majigi returned from Gwandu, their self-chosen place of exile, and joined forces with Masaba against the usurper. For three years the Bornu general drove the Fulani armies before him and beat them in battle after battle. At last the luck turned. The Fulani army under Umaru, son of Majigi, fleeing from the usurper's army across the Kaduna river, found protection in the walled town of Bida. With the arrival of Masaba's troops from the south, and with the assistance of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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175 the town-king of Bida and the twelve Beni towns whose confederacy is brought into play for the last time in Nupe history, Umar Bahaushe's army was defeated after a three months' siege of Bida. The rebel general was killed, and when the *Dayspring* reached Rabá, in 1857, Dr. Baikie saw the head of the unfortunate Umar Bahaushe impaled at the landing-place.[1]

Then came a time of comparative peace. Bida became the centre of the new kingdom. Usman Zaki, now reinstated, was the first *Etsu* Nupe to reside there. He died in 1859 or 1860, and was succeeded by Masaba, whose second reign lasted till 1873. Under his rule Bida was transformed from a huge war-camp into a capital worthy of the most powerful kingdom of Central Nigeria. Many great buildings in Bida date from this time: the three royal palaces, the great mosque, and the lay-out of the night market. Masaba, suppressing revolts of the Gbedegi in Mokwa; of the riverain Kyedye, fighting wars against the Kukuruku, Kakanda and Bassa Nge in the south, and Gbari and Agaie Fulani in the east, consolidated the country internally and expanded its boundaries farther and farther afield. Of the two descendants of the original Nupe dynasty, one, Yisa, of Jimada stock, had fought on the side of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe, and had then settled, half guest, half hostage, in Bida. The other, the descendant of Majiya, after having revolted, in vain, several times, fled again to the refuge of his father, Zuguma, in Kontagora. In *Etsu* Masaba's time, Nupe kingdom is said to have stretched from Mulye and Awawu, in Ebe country, in the north, to Akpara in Bunu in the south, and from half Yoruba Tsaragi (Shari) in the west, to Payi, in Gbari, in the east.[2] After Masaba's death Umaru, the son of Majigi, became *Etsu*. He reigned from 1873 till 1884. He is said to have been a fanatic Mohammedan, and he, too, helped to extend the boundaries of Nupe kingdom. He fought against Bunu and Gbira—and in this fight used for the first time gunpowder bought from the first Niger Company trading-post which had newly been established in Eggã, on the Niger. He quelled a revolt of the Kusopa under a chief from Yeti who joined forces with the exiled Nupe king of Zuguma, and another rising of the Kyedye. In this fight he had the help of the Kakanda, now tributary to the Nupe, and of the Niger Company troops which then for the first time played an active part in Nupe politics.

Etsu Maliki, who succeeded Umaru Majigi, reigned from 1884 to 1895. He is said to have been the wealthiest *Etsu* of Nupe, but (which means, perhaps, the same) avaricious and cruel. Under his reign taxes reached an almost insufferable height. His reign was on the whole peaceful except for the usual border raids and punitive expeditions against recalcitrant vassal tribes. Abubakari, 1895–7, followed. It was under his reign that the Niger Company troops were fighting against the

[1] A. C. G. Hastings, *The Voyage of the 'Dayspring'*. London, 1926, p. 90.

[2] About that time Dr. Barth, travelling in Hausa, was told of the great warlike kingdom of Nupe, whose boundaries he records; they are almost exactly the boundaries given above: Faże (in Ebe) in the north, Bunu country in the south, Tsaragi in the west, and Liffe (?) in Oban, in the east. (Henry Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, London, 1857, vol. iv, Appendix V, p. 545.)

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Nupe, finally taking Bida, in 1897, deposing *Etsu* Abubakari and appointing Mohamadu in his place. 175

The story of the Niger Company campaign has been often written. Between 1870 and 1890 the Royal Niger Company had established trading-posts all along the river, its northernmost posts being situated on Nupe territory. Shortly after the accession of Abubakari trouble broke out in the south of Nupe kingdom, in what is to-day Kabba Province, where the Yagba and Gbira had revolted against Nupe suppression. The Niger Company, which had many important trading-posts in this part of the country, promised them protection from Bida. *Etsu* Abubakari, no friend of the white man, decided to kill two birds with one stone, to 'pacify' Kabba country and to oust the hated Europeans. He moved his army south, under the command of *Makû* Mohamadu. But the latter, who nursed a grievance against the *Etsu* for having refused his claim to the title of Heir Presumptive, made a pact with the British; in exchange for the promise of Sir William Wallace, who commanded the Niger Company troops, to make him *Etsu* of Nupe, he agreed to keep his army out of the fight. The Kyedye, always ready to revolt against the central government, manned their canoes, placed them at the disposal of the Niger Company and, under the command of a gunboat, undertook to guard the river so that no reinforcements should reach the beleaguered capital. The Niger Company troops marched on a city depleted of soldiers and arms. After twelve days' fighting the stubborn resistance of Bida was broken. Abubakari was deposed, and Mohamadu, Sir William Wallace's ally, appointed *Etsu*. The chief of the Kyedye was rewarded with the grant of the semi-independent status which his country had lost under the Fulani, and was placed directly under the authority of the Niger Company (a prerogative which was later withdrawn). Moreover, acceding to the request of the Kyedye chief, Patigi, the territory on the southern bank of the Niger opposite the Kyedye capital Muregi, was detached from Bida and given, as a separate Emirate, to Idirisu, the exiled Nupe king of the Jimada branch, who had been living in Bida as the 'guest' (hostage, in reality) of the Fulani kings.

The Niger Company and later its successor, the Government of Northern Nigeria, continued for some time this policy of breaking up the too dangerous big Nupe kingdom. Kolo Yisa, a grandson of the exiled Majiya, had thought of using the defeat of Bida for his own ends. He hurried to Zuguma, where his ancestors had lived as puppet kings of Bida, made himself king over the territory, and was later confirmed in this position by the Government. Yagba, Bunu, Bassa, and Kakanda had become independent districts and provinces immediately after the conquest of Bida. Now also the Nupe possessions on the southern and western bank of the Niger were taken away from Bida and placed in a different province, Ilorin, where they were divided up between the Emirs of Ilorin, Shonga, and Lafiagi (1900–5). Of the Nupe Empire that had reached from the Benue in the south to Gbagede in the north, only Bida Division remained, bordered on all sides by countries populated by Nupe, but ruled by different sovereigns.

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175 *Etsu* Abubakari, who had been banished to Lokoja after the conquest of Bida, made one attempt to return to his country and to recover throne and independence. He succeeded in collecting a following large enough to threaten Bida. He defeated *Etsu* Mohamadu and drove him from Bida (1906). But the British, by this time firmly established, helped Mohamadu, brought him back to Bida, and sent Abubakari back to Lokoja, where shortly afterwards he died in exile. Mohamadu died in 1914, succeeded by *Etsu* Bello, 1914–26, *Etsu* Mallam Saidu, 1926–34, and finally the present *Etsu*, Mallam Mohamadu Ndayako.

Viewing the historical growth of the Nupe Empire as a whole we discover the familiar two trends which, closely intertwined, force political systems into an endless twofold development: from expansion to military and political consolidation, in the course of which the necessity of further expansion seems invariably entailed. The roots of this development are no less evident in Nupe history than in the political developments of our own history. First, newly conquered territory demanded in due course conquest beyond its boundaries in order to ensure the pacification of the conquered areas and to prevent interference from tribes or states without. And second, the expanding territory absorbing more and more alien groups, all to be controlled and governed from a small nucleus-country, by a population less than one-fifth the size of the population that was brought under political control, necessitated continuous 're-conquests' and wars of consolidation. In the field of social organization this development becomes manifest in the rise of the feudal system; in the military sphere, in the ever-increasing employment of mercenary troops.

Not every step in the expansion of Nupe kingdom was carried out by war. There is evidence of peaceful expansion as well. Certain communities and tribal groups are said to have 'submitted' (*gba*) voluntarily to the Nupe state, accepting the position of tributary groups and claiming at the same time the political protection which the Nupe overlords extended to their subject groups. But accepting this 'protection' meant largely avoiding the more disastrous subjection. Though not the direct result of war and conquest, it was yet a submission to the threat of war and conquest which the momentum of a steadily expanding Nupe must have seemed to entail to her weaker neighbours.

To discover with equal certainty the first stimulus of the whole development, the force which, as it were, set the stone rolling, is impossible. The origin of Nupe rule and expansion is buried in the mythical past. Whether it was the immigration of a large tribal group (condensed in the myth to the small band of men round Tsoede) or a small *élite* of the kind Pareto likes to discover in every political achievement, we have no means of deciding. We do not even know what the original social structure and economic system of this immigrant group was, or whether it contained any stimulus to territorial expansion or conquest. Only in the Fulani conquest does this first 'stimulus' lie open to historical examination. We have described to some extent the gradual infiltration of Nupe by the Fulani, who came as herdsmen, mercenary soldiers, and Mohammedan preachers. Here a distinct tribal section, a semi-nomadic group on its

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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wanderings from west to east and south-east, was the carrier of conquest. It was separated from the groups which it subjugated by ethnic descent and social structure, consisting apparently of a loose aggregate of kinship groups and self-constituted warlike bands, and only partly by its system of livelihood; for the predecessors of the Fulani, the Nupe rulers, had already been soldiers and had themselves evolved an urbanized civilization in which Mohammedan culture played its part. But the analysis of Fulani political history goes beyond the scope of this book. 175

We can study some of the stimuli which, though perhaps it did not initiate, yet certainly influenced and directed the political growth of Nupe. Limiting ourselves to the periods that come under the heading of 'real' history, we can point out the essential difference in the policy of expansion before and after the Fulani conquest. The expansion of the pre-Fulani kingdom appears to have been most marked in the north, and of the Fulani era, in the south. Tsoede's grave, symbolic to all Nupe kings of what we might call his 'political testament', lies in Gbagede, 100 miles north of their northernmost capital, Rabá. The Fulani Emirs, on the other hand, drove their armies farther and farther south; only in recent times, less than two generations ago, did they begin to 'consolidate' the Gbari provinces, thirty or forty miles north of Bida. The conquest of the northern territories, inhabited by primitive pagans who possessed no handicrafts or remarkable wealth, had evidently two main aims (apart from the necessity of pacifying the border countries): first, to tap the rich, easily accessible reservoir of slaves which the Nupe found among these primitive and poorly protected groups; and second, to protect and attract the trade from the wealthy centres of civilization in the Hausa states. Of this latter aim we have concrete proof. The main trade-routes from Hausa passed through, and partly ended in, Nupe, crossing on their way the territories of unruly hostile tribes. Rabá was the goal of the huge caravans that carried regularly *kanwa* (potash) from Lake Chad over Kano to the countries of the south.[1] When the first European explorers, in the times of the last indigenous Nupe kings, reached Nupe country and Rabá, they found it a town rich in cattle (the humped, northern, breed), horses, camels, and ostriches—which must all have come from the north—and the markets full of precious goods from Hausa, Bornu, and North Africa.[2] [439]

The turning to the south represents a new political interest, bound up with a later phase in the history of West Africa. Fulani-Nupe, as the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, carried its wars of expansion into the pagan south and no longer into the northern countries which had come under the sovereignty of various Fulani potentates to whom Nupe was tied by common allegiance. The south offered, over and above new densely populated areas for slave raiding, the command of the main route for the slave-trade, down the river to the coast whence ships took the slaves to foreign ports. Not until the Fulani subjugated the Kakanda

[1] See Barth, op. cit. ii, p. 115.
[2] See J. and R. Lander: Rabá had large herds of 'horned cattle remarkable for size and beauty' and a 'prodigious number of excellent horses' (op. cit. ii, pp. 312–13).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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175 tribe could Nupe canoes, with slaves and various goods, travel unmolested between Nupe and Lokoja and Onitsa, having had, before then, to stop at Eggã and to tranship their loads to Kakanda boats.[1] The highly developed trades and crafts of the south, capable of supplementing the northern trade, proved another attraction to a kingdom that had grown rich and fastidious. We have heard of the Yoruba slaves imported by the Fulani *Etsu* Masaba because of their skill in weaving and dyeing. Finally, the south became of paramount importance as the main door to European imports. This importance reached its climax when *Etsu* Umaru bought gunpowder for his long-barrelled flintlock guns of Arab pattern from the store of the Niger Company on his territory—north and south matched again in most profitable manner.

Our sketch of the growth of this West African kingdom has shown political expansion dominated by economic interests. If other motives—a collective desire for military adventures and glory—were decisive in shaping it, they are now invisible in the historical perspective. The impetus of religious zeal, which drove the Fulani armies across Northern Nigeria, was spent when, as rulers of Nupe, the Fulani turned their faces southward. I will not pursue farther this question of political philosophy, of the ultimate stimulus behind political expansion. But we shall see that economic considerations were involved in the building and maintenance of the kingdom in many other, more subtle, ways. The incentive of gain will appear not only as an abstract, impersonal, historical stimulus, but as a concrete element, directly affecting individual action and directly shaping the motives and interests by which the individual agents of the political system are animated.

[1] See *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 170, n. i.

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CHAPTER VII
POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM
(*continued*)

KINGSHIP

IN the tradition of Tsoede, that 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom, the essence of the Nupe state is already clearly expressed, sanctioned, almost sanctified, by that paramount authority that attaches to prehistoric events: it outlines a system of political domination, growing by conquest and expansion, and governed by a group detached in origin and status from the rest of the population, and claiming its supreme position by the right of might. The small river kingdom which figures, in the Tsoede tradition, as the nucleus of the great Nupe of later times, and the vast empire under the Fulani Emirs, are essentially of the same nature. The twofold process of expansion over alien groups and cultures, combined with cultural assimilation and absorption, is reflected in both, in the ideological history of the Tsoede myth as well as in the 'real' history of the Fulani kingdom. In one there is Tsoede, who conquers Nupe with the help of alien magic, who brings into Nupe the insignia of alien rulership and culture, but who, himself half Nupe by descent, creates a new, independent, and united Nupe. In the other there is this remarkable piece of empire-policy when Masaba claims succession to the Nupe throne on the grounds of his being half Nupe by birth and full Nupe by education. If the mythology of Tsoede establishes the essence and growth of kingship, later history shows its vicissitudes involved in such system of domination which forces unity upon heterogeneous groups and cultures, revolts and feuds, kings deposed and exiled, usurpers and shadow kings. 175

We know little about the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times. I have mentioned one piece of information already which I obtained from various sources, namely, the ancient rule of succession which made the eldest son 'born in the purple', that is, the son first born during the father's reign, the heir to the throne of Nupe. A few other facts concerning the person of the king I was able to ascertain from the *Etsu* of Patigi. Certain ritual rules obtained at the king's court—and some of these rules are still observed in Patigi. Thus the *Etsu* may only wear white; he can travel and go out whenever he likes, but may not eat any food save that prepared by his wives; nor may any stranger watch him eat. Finally, no one may be killed in the presence of the king or in the town in which he is residing.[1] 643 175

[1] This helps us to understand the organization of the 'King's Hangmen', the crucial fact of which was that the royal executioners killed their victims in places far away from the king's capital. Another effect of this observance, which is still visible, is the rule which forbids the performance of the *ndakó gboyá*, a cult believed to lead to the death of witches, in Patigi, the present 'king's town', or anywhere within a distance from which 'the shrieking of the spirit could be heard in Patigi'. (See *Man*, 1935, 173.) [696]

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643 Although the present-day political system of Nupe appears to represent in many respects only a copy and continuation of the pre-Fulani system, the characteristic features of ancient Nupe kingship—the former rule of inheritance, the ritual taboos, and the sacred emblems and form of magic linked with kingship—have disappeared under the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs. But already a new background of religion and myth is forming behind the modern kingship. The memory of the ancestor of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, Mallam Dendo, has become sanctified. The stories of his life and exploits, emphasizing his supernatural faculties, have the flavour of myths. And his tomb at Rabá, over [788] which a mosque has been built, became a place of worship and pilgrimage. At the time of the election of the present Emir, when a number of important political posts were due to change hands, the *Rani*, a Fulani prince anxious to obtain one of these posts, went to Rabâ, fasted for seven days, sacrificed in the grave-mosque, and prayed to his ancestor for help.

The disappearance of ancient Nupe kingship reflects the far-reaching historical changes which Nupe kingdom had undergone in the Fulani conquest. In pre-Fulani Nupe the link with magic and myth, ritual rules and taboos, and possibly even the law of succession, separated the king from the rest of the people, even from the members of his own house. Fulani rule, only recently established by undisguised conquest, and dependent upon the co-operation of a band of war-chiefs and faction-leaders, turned semi-sacred kingship into rulership of the strongest. The king becomes a *primus inter pares*, the highest rank-holder in a royal nobility ruled by precedence and promotion. The exclusiveness of primogeniture gave way to a system of succession that allowed for balance of power and could satisfy rival claims. This final balance was not achieved at once. Of the seven sons of Mallam Dendo three only were destined to found royal houses, two directly, Usman Zaki and Masaba, and one in the second generation, Majigi, through his son Umaru. Having once concentrated military and political power in their own hands, these three families eliminated the other sons and grandsons from the succession, paying them off with political offices the importance of which decreased from generation to generation. This resulted in three dynasties which succeed to the throne in strict rotation. In the genealogy given in Appendix II this development is clearly visible. This historical explanation of the present system of kingship is borne out by the views of the people themselves. One of my most enlightened informants, a very learned man and himself a member of the royal nobility, defended the present form of succession against the old primogeniture on these grounds: the old system could work in ancient Nupe, when there was a powerful *kuti* (magic) behind the *Etsu*'s authority. For the Fulani dynasty, which came to power as a large group, composed of jealous relatives and partisans, a divided succession was the only solution. The country too, he added, could only benefit from such balance of power.

643 We may mention here another change from pre-Fulani to Fulani kingship which concerns the political status of the Nupe state. While the 648 Nupe kings were absolute masters in their own country, the Fulani

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Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims.

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotũ*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpâ*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions.

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field.

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
652 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
661 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in
[575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
652 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that
655 matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help
[782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual
567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

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the walls of his house. This morning ride is still part of the daily routine of the *Etsu* Nupe, even up at his modern brick residence which stands by itself on the hill outside the town. He may extend his ride to visit his *esoži*, a short distance away, and inspect his farms, or possibly to inquire after his guests—for visitors of standing who have come from far away are assigned quarters in the *esoži*. Once when I accompanied the *Etsu* on this ceremonial morning ride he went to see a Nupe Mallam who had returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca and stopped in Bida as the king's guest on his way home. Another time two noblemen from Sokoto, relatives of the Sultan, had come on a visit to Bida and were invited to stay in the *esoži*. Later in the morning, back in his house, the *Etsu* receives the first official visitors of the day: the *Etsu Dogari* and the *Sarkin Yandoka*, the chiefs of the two police forces of the Emirate, who come to bring him the 'news of the town'—arrests made on the market the night before, a case of small-pox in one of the town quarters, and so forth. The *Alkali* and his Chief Assistant drop in to pay their respects, possibly to report on an important law-case, before they go down to the Court House in the centre of the town. The guild-head of the traders may present himself in order to inform the *Etsu* of the arrival in Bida of traders or a trading caravan with new attractive goods which the *Etsu* might care to inspect. Messengers come and go—from the Native Administration Treasury, or the Divisional Office, the Bida Town Council, or from a District Head. In the meantime the highest officers of state, the members of the Emir's Council, have arrived in his house for the daily *nkó*, the Council of State. At the *nkó* all matters of importance are discussed; or there may be legal cases on the day's agenda. For the *nkó* has also judicial functions and tries cases referred to it from a lower court. The session of the *Etsu*'s Council concludes the official duties of the day. In the afternoon the *Etsu* might see friends or visitors in his house, or drive through the town in his splendid motor-car—one of the modern symbols of royal prestige.

The climax of Bida Court life is the celebration of the Friday. On Thursday night and again on Friday afternoon the *Etsu* rides in great state to the mosque in the town, and on Friday at his return he holds a reception in his house which is attended by every man of rank and standing. Envisage this Friday procession: king and courtiers on horseback, in their sumptuous gowns, the king under the great silken state umbrella, the horses with trappings of silver and beautiful cloth; a bodyguard carrying swords, and police with their staffs, are running ahead, shouting the *Etsu*'s name or blessing formulae or little proverb-like sentences which illustrate the king's greatness; drummers are beating their drums, three mounted trumpeters blow the huge bronze *kakati* in an incessant deafening chorus; with it blend the shrill notes of the *aǵeita*, the Hausa oboe, while another musician is beating an iron double bell with a wooden stick, shouting and singing at the same time. All streets are lined with people, adults and children, who watch, fascinated, this procession, bearing witness to the impressiveness of this display of royal power. And then, back again in the royal palace: the wide place in front of the house and the courtyard are crowded with people; the *talakaži*—

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the commoners, men without name and rank—sit and stand outside, chatting and watching what there is to watch; the members of the privileged classes, titled nobility, and Mohammedan priests, are sitting in the inner courtyard and in *katamba* (entrance-halls), each *katamba* reserved for a special group. Only royal princes and the highest officers of state are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu*; they sit in the inner part of the house together with personal friends and favourites of the king.[1] All these people come to pay their respect to their sovereign, to see and to be seen, to exercise prerogatives, or to proclaim their connexion with the privileged and mighty. This external arrangement of the Friday ceremonial is indeed a symbol of the whole social structure of Nupe kingdom with its rigid system of etiquette and precedence, its differentiation of status, rank, and prerogatives, and its display of wealth and power. This structure we must now analyse in detail.

THE ROYAL NOBILITY

The descendants of the house of Mallam Dendo, under their three heads *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotũ*, form the royal nobility of Nupe, the *ena gitsúẽi*, the Group of Those who will become King. They are *gitsúẽi* in the sense that from their ranks the new king is elected. The titles of nobility which they hold by the privilege of birth may lead every one of them, by slower or more rapid promotion, eventually to the highest rank, kingship. In most cases the royal prince who succeeds to the throne has reached first the rank of *Shaba*; the change from old to new king is thus made almost automatic, a dangerous interregnum is avoided, and the fight between the rival factions is confined to the less dangerous sphere of competition for the ranks next to the king. Only twice was a man who had not reached the title of *Shaba* (or, if the *Shaba* had died, the title of *Kpotũ*) made *Etsu*.[2] In 1936 there existed, or more precisely, were actually held, 41 royal ranks, of which 10 fell to the house of Usman Zaki, 17 to the house of Masaba (the house which had supplied the last

[1] The arrangement at these receptions, the way in which the people who are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu* group themselves, is invariably the same. It is shown in this diagram:

Two bodyguards with ostrich fans
Etsu (on state bed)
Gitsúẽi — *Ndeji* — *Sarakiẽi*
Mayaki
Liman-Alhali
Mallams

[2] These exceptions were *Etsu* Mohamadu who, only *Makũ*, was appointed *Etsu* by the Niger Company, and the present *Etsu* who had been *Nágenu*, but had held the important office of a District Head of Jima. It is the present tendency of the Administration to abolish the office of *Shaba* and to make the appointment to kingship a free election from the royal ranks. After the death of the late *Shaba* in 1935 no new *Shaba* has been appointed. It is not yet clear what effect, if any, this innovation will have upon the internal dynastic organization. The threefold system is so deeply rooted that I believe the effect will be only to abolish a name, and that the rank next in order in the dynastic section will assume the main function of the abolished rank, that is, headship of the dynastic clan.

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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wiriwiru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsú* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wacī*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaži*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsúži*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [557] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotû*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [732] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Liman*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *lerama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsúži*.

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bearance; do not set the hearts of your men against each other; beware of conceit, and do not fail the people.' All present repeat, like a formula of confirmation: *Hakíḿa, hakíka*, 'verily, verily'. Drummers and musicians intone the songs and drum rhythms which are associated with the family and rank of the newly knighted; he mounts his horse and rides, accompanied by all rank-holders, through the town, dismounting at each house of a prince or *saraki*, making his greetings to the head of the house. If the newly appointed (or promoted) nobleman is a member of the royal dynasty he stops at each of the three royal houses and says a prayer at the grave of his ancestors. A great festivity in his house, lasting for several days, to which everybody in the town is invited, noblemen and commoners alike, concludes the ceremony.

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Descendants of the men who conquered the country and appropriated all vacant land, the *gitsúši* may become, through ordinary inheritance, owners of land and considerable wealth. But the appointment to a royal rank meant more than this chance of inheritance: it meant status, influence, and access to increasing power and wealth. The princes of rank were admitted to the *nhó*, the Council of State, but had little influence, it seems, upon the actual government—this was entrusted to the council of the more competent, appointed, officers of state. The power of the *gitsúši* rested in the main on two things: the part they played in the wars, and their position as *egba*, royal fief-holders and delegates placed in charge of the districts of the kingdom. We shall speak presently in more detail of these services which the royal nobility rendered to king and state. I will give here a list of all the ranks held at present among the *gitsúši* of Bida. To illustrate the system of promotion I have indicated certain changes in the distribution of ranks which had been anticipated by the *Etsu* and his council after the death of the *Shaba* in 1935; as already said, the Administration was not prepared to endorse this reshuffle, which would imply the reoccupation of the post of *Shaba* (see p. 93, n. 2). The list also shows some of the fiefs which were connected with the ranks in pre-European times, and finally the offices under the present-day Native Administration which are linked with certain *gitsú* ranks.

Dynastic Ranks in Bida 1936

1. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Maru (House of Umaru Majigi)*

Etsu, appointed 1935, former title *Nágenu*.
Shaba, died December 1935; till 1934 District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: Mokwa.
'Old' *Makū*, till 1934 District Head of Kacha, then retired; previous title *Lukpā*. Fief in pre-European times: Kacha.
Makū, younger brother of 'Old' *Makū*; no official position.
Ginya, present District Head of Badeggi.
Cekpa
Gara
Lafyene (Lakpene)
Uban Dóma
Tmdyi

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565 *Táka*, held by eldest son of *Shaba*.
Sontwdraki
554 *Wacī Taba*, held by younger brother of *Shaba*.
Nda Iya
Nágenu, held by younger brother of *Etsu*, appointed 1935; no previous title; District Head of Jima.
'Old' *Natsu*, retired from office 1934.
Natsu, son of a former *Kpotū*, younger brother of *Ginya*; on the Bida Town Council.
Shabarabá, a new *ad hoc* introduced rank, bestowed in May 1936 on the eldest son of the late *Shaba*, as no higher rank was vacant.

2. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Usman* (*House of Usman Zaki*)

'Old' *Kpotū*, died in 1936; for some time District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: *Edupkā* (countries beyond the Niger).
Kpotū, son and nephew of former *Kpotū*; District Head of Kutigi. He will shortly be asked to resign, that is, to become an 'old' *Kpotū*, on the grounds that his health is not very good. The *Etsu* does not contemplate promoting him to the vacant post of *Shaba* in accordance with the general rules of succession.*
Nágya, till 1935 District Head of Mokwa, now member of the King's Council. He is chosen to succeed to the rank of *Shaba*. Fief in pre-European times: *Edukpā*.
Rani, since 1935 District Head of Mokwa.
Kusódu, younger brother of the late *Etsu* Bello, living in his Bida house. Fief in pre-European times: Kamberi country.
Wacī Tswa
Shaba Gini
Fogū
Lafarma
Kafa
Cata

[643] * The ground of ill health is a pretext rather than the true reason—and this is very significant. The *Kpotū* does not belong to the house of Usman Zaki, although he is generally regarded as belonging to this dynasty. He is a descendant of Abdu Gboya, one of the sons of Mallam Dendo whose offspring had failed to secure succession to the throne of Nupe. He is, in fact, the only member of these 'second-rank' royal families who had obtained, still in the fourth generation, one of the three highest dynastic positions. His premature resignation is a striking evidence of this dynastic policy to restrict succession to the throne to the three 'houses'.

3. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Saba* (*House of Etsu Masaba*)

(Late *Etsu* Saidu, died 1935.)
Wacimbe
Nákorji, District Head of Gbangba. Chosen to succeed to office of *Kpotū*. Fief in pre-European times: Yeti.
Lukpā
Tsaduya
Tsaci
Tswasha Giraba†
Tsuroma†

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Benú, Fief in pre-European times: Kin Agbadya (Lokoja).
Tswanku
Tsoyida
Tswankúku
Rofiẽ
Cecekó
Nkoci
Tswashakó
Yitsa
Ndáma

† Two established *gitsú* titles, *Fokpo* and *Gbaruku* (a Dibo word, meaning Old One), are not represented in this list, i.e. are not held at present. On the other hand, new titles are constantly introduced to cope with an increased demand; e.g. *Tsuroma* is a Bornu title (*Ciroma*). The rank *Tswashá Giraba*, lit. '*Tswasha* bestowed in Rabá', seems to have been a newly introduced, additional, rank at one time, in Rabá, as the meaning of the title indicates. The *Etsu* bestowed a new title of this kind shortly before I left Bida on the younger son of the late *Shaba*, making him *Shabami* (lit. '*Shaba* of the House').

OFFICERS OF STATE

Placed under the royal nobility in rank but its equal in political influence is the titled office nobility of the kingdom. Its members are known as *ticiži*, the Titled Ones, or *rowni*, the 'Turbans', so called because the gift of a turban by the king is the symbol of the bestowal of rank and office. There are three groups of officers of state, each of which is thought of as a sharply defined social order or estate—*ena* in Nupe, which means 'group', 'society', 'order': first, the *sarakiži*, a twofold group of civil and military nobility, consisting of the *ena Ndeji*, the Order of Town Elders, and the *ena 'kũ*, the Order of War. Second, the *ena manži*, the Order of Mallams, comprising the judiciary and the clergy of the kingdom, the *Alkali*, judge, and *Liman*, religious head of the Nupe Mohammedans, with their scribes and assistants. The third class of state officials, lowest in rank but still possessed of great influence, is the *ena wuži*, the Order of (Court) Slaves; we shall deal with this group later, in the chapter on slavery.

We shall see that many of the titles of the *saraki* nobility are identical with the ranks bestowed on the village elders. Of some ranks we know that they have been copied comparatively recently by the villagers. Whether this adoption of state ranks by the village communities explains all the existing correspondences, or whether they are due, historically, to the evolution of the kingdom from a village community, we have no means of deciding. To-day, it is a correspondence in name only. The identical symbols of status in the kingdom and in the village refer to very different social contexts. The differences in the official duties and in the rules of appointment will become clear presently. Here I will only mention the difference in the social conceptions upon which the two rank systems rest. Both must be interpreted as systems of selection by means of which the society obtains its leaders. But selection in the village means offering 13 ranks to, say, 200 adult men or—expressed more correctly—13 families; in the kingdom, it means admitting to

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leadership 30 men out of a population of hundreds of thousands. In the village, the position of importance and responsibility already attained by the individual who qualifies for the rank (through seniority, experience, and headship of a kinship group) is at least equal to the new benefits entailed in the appointment; in the state ranks these benefits far outweigh any position one could have made for oneself previous to the appointment—often the latter is negligible. At the same time many of the state ranks, subject to changing political fortunes, are held more insecurely. In the village, then, rank is essentially a form of assured public recognition: in the state it represents a hotly contested and often capricious elevation to the privileged *élite*.

I have called the *saraki* nobility an office nobility to contrast it with the hereditary nobility of the *gitsúži*. The *saraki* ranks are, at least in theory, always open to new blood. Only one or two of the higher ranks are to-day hereditary in practice, having become the prerogative of certain families which, once established in their influential position, secured these offices for their descendants and relatives. Civil and military nobility are mutually exclusive, and are ruled by rigid precedence and promotion. Promotions and first appointments are granted by the king in council with his princes and other officers of state. These ranks, unlike the *gitsú* ranks, cannot be accumulated in the same family; they are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group, and no other close relative can claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his 'house'. Only the less rigidly defined benefits of status and economic privileges that go with the elevation to the nobility extend, to a lesser or greater extent, also to the other members of the family group. Outsiders, even commoners, who have won the favour of the king may be admitted to the nobility of the *sarakiži*. Success in war and outstanding military achievement constituted formerly the main claim to *saraki* rank. Wealth and financial influence, which, under the old system were bound up with big land ownership and the slave-trade—prerogatives of princes and noblemen—have come into their own in modern times and are demanding recognition. The granting of titles to rich traders in return for huge presents has, in fact, become a new feature in the Nupe nobility.[1] The result is that the *saraki* group embraces people of very different origin: descendants of the old office nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe as well as families of Nupe commoners who had become partisans of the Fulani conquerors, and also strangers, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani mercenary soldiers, or rich traders who have earned the gratitude of this or that *Etsu* Nupe. The titles themselves equally reflect the situation, new titles being frequently invented or borrowed from Hausa or Bornu.[2]

[1] *Etsu* Bello and *Etsu* Saidu are said to have 'sold' certain titles for prices varying from £5 to £20 to ambitious, wealthy traders; they are even reported to have conferred important state offices, offices to which the candidate was entitled by birth and standing, such as the office of the *Alkali*, on the payment of a 'fee'.

[2] In present-day Nupe Hausa names have replaced to a large extent the original Nupe titles. The traditional Nupe name, for example, for *sarakiži* (which is a corruption of the Hausa *sarakuna*) is *agabi*, but this name is only pre-

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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*,' Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawraciši nya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kū*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manši* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somarū*, which is the old Nupe title.

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565 the *saraki* ranks and offices. Thus the present Chief *Alkali* of Bida as
535 well as his assistant is himself the son of an *Alkali*. The same few families
693 supply to-day the judges for the district courts in Nupe and indeed for
793 many courts outside Nupe country, where the reputation of Bida scholarship has found recognition. And, as a final result of this tendency to make these offices the prerogative of a small group, we find since the time of *Etsu* Mohamadu the two offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* combined in one person.[1]

565 The office of the *Alkali* in Bida, the highest Mohammedan judge of
554 the kingdom, dates back to the first period of Fulani rule. Its impor-
693 tance and distinction is expressed in the fact that Mallam Dendo's eldest son chose for himself the office not of a temporal ruler but of judge of Nupe. Many of the men who held these offices were of great learning and outstanding ability. Some have left behind records of the history of

1. *Ranks of the Ena Ndeji*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Ndeji	Nupe from Dibo	*Magajin Gari*	Grandfather was *Ndeji*, appointed by *Etsu* Masaba; the father had no title. To-day highest official of the N.A.; head of the Emir's council.
Nyáfyenye	Fulani	*Magajin Gari*	Father and grandfather both *Ndeji*; first appointment under Usman Zaki.
Magajin Gari	Nupe	..	Father was *Nyáfyenye* and later *Ndeji*.
Sonfadakó	"	*Gadza*	Father had no title; his first appointment was under *Etsu* Maliki, his second under *Etsu* Mamadu.
Gadza	No holder at present, but formerly a very important title.		
Sakitsa	Fulani	..	Father was *Ndeji*, titled under Umaru Majigi.
Mamasũ	"	..	Father held a lower title; he himself was titled under *Etsu* Maliki.
Etsu Basa	Benu-Nupe	..	A hereditary title held in one family.
Etsu Gbari	Nupe	..	Father was *Uban Dawaki*.
Tsadza	Fulani	*Galadiman Gari*	Father and elder brother have held same title.
Ndasũ	Hausa	..	Newly introduced title.
Galadiman Gari	Fulani	..	Father was *Gadza*; he himself was appointed under *Etsu* Bello. He became later a 'ward-head' of the modern town-administration.
Kotonkomu	Nupe	..	Father held same title.

[1] There exist two different kinds of *Liman* offices: the *Liman Ratibi*, the minister of the weekday service held in the various mosques of the town, and the *Liman Jemaa*, the minister of the Friday service, which is held in the big city mosque, in the presence of the king. In every part of the town there is a *Liman* of the first kind; but there is only one *Liman Jemaa*. And it is to this highest priestly office that we referred above.

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2. *Ranks of the Ena Maiyaki*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Maiyaki	Hausa	*Dokoyiringi, Uban Dawaki*	Father received title of *Maiyaki* in the war. To-day official of the N.A.; on the Emir's council.
Uban Dawaki	Nupe	*Sokyara*	Father *Maiyaki* and *Uban Dawaki*. To-day on the Bida town council.
Sokyara	"	*Wambayi*	Father was *Sokyara, Uban Dawaki*, and finally *Maiyaki*. He himself was formerly on the Bida town council.
Dokoyiringi	"	*Wambayi*	Father was *Uban Dawaki* and *Maiyaki*.
Ejukó	"	*Twakoko*	Father already *Ejukó*.
Sondzamitsu	"	..	Father had no title; son got his under the late *Etsu* because of his wealth.
Sonlawu	"	*Sarkin Barayi*	Father had no title; son received his in the war.
Sarkin Barayi	Hausa	..	Father was *Maiyaki*.
Twakoko	Nupe	..	Father was *Nagun*.
Nagun	"	..	Father was made *Nagun* in the war.
Sagamuwa	Hausa	..	This title is hereditary in one family, followers of the Hausa general and relative (by marriage) of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Wambayi	"	..	Father was a serf (*bara*) of *Etsu* Abubakari.
Sanaji	Nupe	..	..
Galadiman Masii	*Komi*-Yoruba	..	Held in Bida now instead of the old Nupe title *Somasii* (the Nupe equivalent of *Maiyaki*), but is to-day a very small and unimportant title.
Luci	Nupe	..	Formerly a powerful man; lives to-day on a farm in Trans-Kaduna.
Rwafi	Hausa	..	An hereditary title, held by relatives of the Hausa general of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Sonfaddkwa	Nupe	..	..
Barize	"	..	Father was *Sojetsu*.
Sojetsu	"	..	Received title from *Etsu* Bello; rich landowner.
Magayaki	"	..	Received title in the war, under *Etsu* Maliki.
Songubi	"	..	..
Sónkali	"	..	..
Manlawo	"	..	..
Mamasii	"	..	Father was *Sonlawu*, a title which he received in the war.

Nupe. The judicial organization of the kingdom left them free hand to interpret and apply, even to alter and create laws. The names of past *Alkalai* are known to everybody, and are associated with certain new

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565 laws or special judicial practices. Of this aspect of their activity we shall
554 hear more at a later stage. But one point (already mentioned) must be
693 stressed here. The office of *Liman* and *Alkali* could become hereditary; many judges and Mohammedan scholars are of Fulani stock; but this reflects only the political influence and partly also the tradition of learning in these families. As representatives of Mohammedan scholarship *Liman* and *Alkali* are only the most exalted exponents of a professional class which comprises men of every status and birth—the Mallams, 'learned men', who are held in high esteem by everyone. Even without rank or title, when of little and insignificant learning, they are placed above the ordinary commoner. They may marry the daughters and sisters of the high-born. The *Etsu* himself, descendant of a Mallam, puts a 'Mallam' before his name. Like his ancestors he honours and receives at his court all Mallams of reputation. They are a class between the classes, a mobile, privileged intelligentsia.

565 The description of the hierarchy of Nupe kingdom is incomplete without the mention of a last group of minor rank-holders, composed of
554 the heads of the Bida craft-guilds. The guilds are closed occupational groups, the members of which live together in one locality and practise
467 certain hereditary crafts such as glass-making, brasswork, weaving, &c.[1] The guild-heads receive their titles, together with the usual gift of a turban, from the *Etsu*. Though low down in the scale of ranks, they have yet an official standing, and are raised above the ordinary commoner and peasant. Their headship implies authority over all the members of their craft in town and village. Formerly the guild-heads received a small annual tribute of products of their craft from their fellow craftsmen. Like the members of the nobility, the titled guild-heads are summoned to the *Etsu*'s Council at the *Sallah*, the great Mohammedan festival; and,
[651] like the privileged nobility, they are exempted from taxation. Their only tribute takes the form of an annual gift—an *emisa*, or 'salute'—again of products of their craft, the cost of which is borne jointly by the whole guild, and which is presented to the *Etsu* at the *Sallah*.

Certain craft-guilds are linked with the dynastic division of the capital and are divided into three sections each of which resides in a different *ekpã*. The groups of craftsmen also bear more special allegiance to the royal house in whose *ekpã* they live and with the ancestor of which they associate their coming to Bida and the foundation of their guild. But over and above this party allegiance guilds and guild-sections are closely linked with the ruling king of Nupe. For the king and the court represent the most important customers of the Bida craftsmen. All orders which the court intends to place are given through the guild-head, who guarantees their execution and acts as an official 'controller' of his group of craftsmen.

A position similar to that held by the guild-heads is also assigned to the head of the Bida brokers, the *Etsu Dilali*, who again plays the part of an agent of the king in all matters concerning commerce and trade in the capital.

[1] The organization of the Bida craft-guilds will be described in more detail in Chapter xiv.

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We shall see later that the explanation of this incorporation of artisans and brokers in the rigid bureaucracy of the kingdom lies in the control which the state exercises over crafts and merchandise; only by means of a control of this kind could the head of this warlike state secure an unimpeded supply of the commodities that were vital to the court and the state: arms, clothes, and saddles for the soldiers, food for the huge capital, and the luxuries that were needed for the display of royal power and wealth. We find convincing evidence for this interpretation in the fact that the different crafts are not of equal standing. Some rank higher than others, and this grading is not correlated with economic success: the very prosperous butchers are last on this list, blacksmiths and brassmiths, on the other hand, head the list, 'for they are makers of arms'. Only the glass-makers, a strongly independent and important craft, stand aloof from this order of craft-guilds. This is a list of the craft-guilds in Bida, with the titles of the guild-heads, arranged in order of precedence. 565 554 467

The figure in brackets shows the number of *ekpã* in which they live. The titles of the guild-heads are given in italics.

Brassworkers (2): *Muku.*
Blacksmiths (3): *Dokodza.*
Carpenters and Builders (1): *Egbaba.*
Barber-Doctors (3): *Sokyara.*
Beadworkers (2): *Majĩ Lantana.*
Leatherworkers (scattered in the town): formerly *Majĩ Kimpa.*
Weavers (3): *Leshe, Majĩ, Ndakó.*
Butchers (3): *Sonfawa.*
Glass-makers (1): *Masagá.*

SLAVERY

The lowest in the complex order of social classes in Nupe are the slaves (*wuži*, as against *egi*, freeman, lit. child). But in this one class there are shades and distinctions of social status. Some slaves have risen to positions of wealth and influence. Others have remained menial workers in the households and on the farms of their masters. Pre-British Nupe numbered its slaves by the thousands. Twenty to thirty slaves was a moderate average for the household of a man of consequence. The prosperous craftsmen of Bida town, blacksmiths and weavers, always had slaves to work for them; even in villages one found households with one or two slaves. 567

The people of Nupe obtained their slaves by two methods: first, there were the slaves captured in the war, who became the property of the man to whose share in the booty they had fallen; and second, there were slaves bought in the markets of Bida.[1] The majority of the latter, it seems, were slaves sold by their captors—noblemen who had taken more slaves than they needed for their household. Slaves were also sold abroad, mostly to the south. Many Nupe men of rank were engaged in

[1] Lander reports that 200 slaves were on sale in the market of Rabá, the then capital of Nupe (op. cit. iii, p. 313).

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567 professional slave-trading; they acted as middlemen between the slave markets of the north, Kano, Katsina, and others, and the buyers in the south, on the river and coast.[1]

567 At the time of the Fulani conquest the price paid locally for an able-bodied male slave was 40,000 cowries, i.e. £1, and for a female slave 435 50,000 cowries, i.e. £1. 5s.[2] The price of slaves rose very high in later times. Shortly before the British occupation it had reached the sum of £7 for male, and £7. 10s. for female slaves. As my inquiries from various informants showed, this price had become almost standardized in the last decade before the British occupation and was valid throughout the country. It is interesting to note that this rise in price took place at a time when the largest market for slaves from Nupe was disappearing, shipments of slaves to countries overseas, especially to the Americas, having come to an end. We cannot say how this rise in price started, nor what might have been its cause. I can only suggest that it was due to increased difficulties of supply. Half a century of wars and raids had denuded the country of people who could with no great difficulty be made slaves. Slave-raiders were forced to obtain their human chattels in more distant areas and by more serious warfare—in the language of the economist, under conditions of higher 'cost'. Whatever the cause, this rise in price meant that the commoners and peasants of Nupe could derive from the wars and raids by which their rulers gained their fortunes not even the benefit of cheaper slave labour. Commoners and peasants would suffer when their country was defeated and their villages invaded by the enemy, or when, in civil wars, rival troops fought on their land. But the fruits of victory—rich booty in slaves—they could share only at a price: the same price which foreigners had to pay when buying slaves from Nupe in the open market.

567 Slaves were, in the strict sense of the word, the property of their masters. If anyone killed a slave belonging to somebody else this was [685] not regarded as a case of murder or manslaughter, but only as an offence demanding restitution of the 'destroyed' property, i.e. the full purchase price had to be paid over to the owner. But the slaves who were kept in the houses of the Nupe nobility were on the whole well treated. The master of a slave was quite within his rights if he chose to maltreat him, sell him again, or even kill him. But there is no doubt that this happened rarely—if ever. Many slaves, in fact, preferred to stay on in the houses of their ex-masters when slavery was abolished, in the position of an unpaid servant or retainer, rather than to start life on their own, especially if they were of advanced age. Custom even guaranteed the

[1] Barth states that most of the slaves from Kano were carried by small caravans to Bornu and Nupe; 'the best of slaves now go to Niffee (Nupe) to be there shipped for America. . . . Slaves are sent from Zinder to Niffee. Indeed it now appears that all this part of Africa is put under contribution to supply the South American market with slaves' (Dr. Barth, op. cit. ii, pp. 132 and 135). Lander mentions that the slaves brought to Rabá were purchased by southern peoples, traded down the Niger, and from there 'delivered from hand to hand till they at length reached the sea' (op. cit. ii, p. 298).

[2] See Schoen-Crowther, *Journals*, p. 194, and J. and R. Lander, op. cit. ii, p. 298.

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slaves a not inconsiderable measure of economic and social independence. An adult male slave would work for his master in the same way as sons and junior relations work for the head of the household. If he was put to farm-work, he would be given a small plot of his own to cultivate in his spare time. Or if he helped his master in a craft or in trade he would be able to count on a regular commission. Other slaves, who made good soldiers, were put into their master's private army, in which they would serve as foot-soldiers, armed and equipped at their master's expense. In the wars they would have their share of the booty. Slaves could thus acquire property, and the more fortunate owned horses, sheep, cattle, money—even slaves of their own. But when they died their property fell not to their wives and children but to their master.[1] Female slaves became personal servants of their mistresses or possibly concubines of their master. Unlike the male slaves they had no income of their own; what they might earn—by handicrafts or trade—would be their master's property.

Frequently the master would have to find wives for his male slaves; he would buy either a slave girl from the market, or possibly a girl belonging to another master—a slave girl to whom his own slave may have lost his heart. In the latter case a very reduced price would be paid, but the children would belong to the owner of the girl. But a slave might make money enough during his service to pay the bride-price for a free woman —mostly a widow, for whom a low bride-price is paid. In such marriages the free wife would in no way share the conditions of slavery, she would have her own house and work (a farm or trade) and might in due course be able to ransom her husband. Or a slave who had done well might be able to buy his own and his children's liberty. In this case he had to pay the full purchase price, except in the case of very old slaves who were no longer good for work—they would be released for half the amount. But if the offer to ransom a slave came from the slave's (free) relations, the owner would ask an exorbitant price, up to £20 or £30. Very rarely would a master let a slave free without the payment of the ransom, for example, as reward for faithful service. In all these cases the slave would bring two men as witnesses of the act of manumission.

A slave girl often became the wife of a free man—her own master or another man who bought her from her master, the purchase price replacing in this case the usual bride-price. This was not, however, real marriage; the slave girls became only concubines, not wives, and no religious or legal ceremony accompanied the marriage. Once they had borne their 'husband' a child, both mother and child became automatically free (though the status of a concubine remained unchanged). The families of the Fulani nobility count an innumerable offspring from this type of concubinage.

Children born of a free father and a slave mother were thus free

[1] To-day, more than thirty years after the abolition of slavery, this rule still holds in a modified form, with respect to ex-slaves who die without issue. In a court case heard before the Chief *Alkali* in Bida in 1936 the considerable property (cattle) of an ex-slave who had died without heirs was thus awarded to the son of his ex-master.

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567 themselves; so were children born of a slave father who married a free woman, and also of a slave father who bought a girl slave for himself and married her. If, however, slave married slave, the marriage being arranged—i.e. the purchase price for the girl paid—by the slave's master, the children remained slaves. But these slaves in the second generation were slaves of a different kind. They were no longer called *wuši*, but *mangi*, 'born as child' (i.e. as freeman). Though not really free they were exempted from many of the disabilities of slavery. The children of a *mangi* who married another *mangi* were themselves *mangi* slaves again. But a *mangi* could not be sold by his master, nor could he be maltreated or killed—in the latter case his parents could obtain legal [682] redress and would be paid the usual purchase price as 'blood-money'. At the death of a *mangi* only half of his property could be claimed by the master, the other half was inherited by his own family. The *mangi* also had family farms of their own, and were generally treated like full members of the household in everything except that they were not entitled to any share in the inheritance of their master's property. A *mangi* was brought up together with the children of the house, was given the same education, and, like the sons of the house, served in the mounted household troops. Many *mangi* would free themselves, or at least marry free women. But the names of these house-born slaves invariably betrayed their origin; for they were named by their masters, [551] and given not the usual Nupe names but names made up of some well-known blessing formula, of the first words of a proverb, and such like, for example: Adetsua, from *a de 'tsu à sei Sokó*, 'there is no Lord but God'; Barsu, from *bar su ga Allah* (Hausa), 'leave them to God'.

567 It would be wrong, however, to assume that slavery in Nupe carried with it a stigma. True, the people of Bida still speak with contempt of 554 the 'pagans' and 'slaves' (the two terms are almost synonymous) into whose countries their fathers had carried their profitable raids. But, characteristically for Nupe, the stigma attaches to the humble status rather than to the misfortune of having been made a slave. It disappeared with the signs of success and prosperity, open to slaves as to anyone. The wretched slave who could never rise above a menial labourer had to bear the ignominy of his position. But in the case of the trusted slave in a noble household, and above all the successful, freed slave, the taint of slavery meant little more than, in their own words, 'luck of war'. Slaves who served in the houses of the high nobility did indeed share some of the splendour that surrounded the position of their masters. Able and faithful slaves were rewarded with the position of head slaves, overseers, bailiffs; their masters bestowed upon them rich presents and gifts of land—more land than they cared to work with their own hands, having become men of wealth and importance. Their masters bestowed upon them, above all, special titles, household ranks—the ubiquitous symbol of social rise in Nupe, which in this case obliterated even the last external symbol of slave status, the typical slave-names.

000 The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host

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The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host of slaves: slaves for menial work—in the house and on the land—as well as the titled slaves of respected position. At the court this latter group of slaves formed the *ena wuži*, the Order of Court Slaves, a distinguished slave *élite* into which only few selected slaves could ever hope to be admitted. From the slaves captured in war those of high birth and status, chiefs or distinguished warriors, were selected for the court. These, too, were given ranks and titles, and could rise high in the service of the king. Theirs was the specialized service of officials and trusted royal agents. There were those who looked after the king's vast household; those who were in charge of the *Etsu* Nupe's no less imposing harem—both offices formerly entrusted to eunuchs.[1] Other slaves formed the king's bodyguard and police force; they were provincial delegates, tax collectors, trusted messengers, 'liaison officers' between the king's palace and the houses of his noblemen, and between the king and the army in the field. These slaves, like the other rank-holders, owned land and held fiefs. The Nupe kings in Rabá are said to have had only four titled court slaves; the slave ranks that existed at the court of Bida some thirty years ago (and the ranks still exist, although their holders are no longer slaves) were more than three times that number. Under *Etsu* Maliki, one of the last independent kings of Nupe, the most responsible state offices were taken from royal princes and *sarakiži* and entrusted to slaves. The position of the slaves as officers of state thus seems to have overshadowed more and more all other state ranks. Slave ranks were ranks bestowed *ad personam*, and ranks bestowed by the king personally, independent of the council of princes and ministers; and this gives us the explanation for their rise in importance. The offices linked with civil and military rank also depended to some extent on the personal favour of the king. But once appointed, these men stayed on, servants of the kingdom rather than of the king. They had behind them the claims of powerful families, they were exponents of political factions, and could play on that 'balance of power' between the dynasties. The slaves were personal servants in the full sense of the word. They were brought into office, not by family claims or promotion or a rigid rule of succession, but by personal appointment, selection, and trial. They were bound to the king's service generation after generation, by the strongest bond: their position of unfree men. It frequently happened that a new *Etsu* took over the slaves who had served his predecessor and left them their ranks and possessions. The rise of the slave officials at the Fulani court is the counterpart of the rise of a powerful, dangerously independent feudal nobility.

The following is a list of slave ranks held to-day, not by slaves, but by former slaves or descendants of slaves at the court of the *Etsu* Nupe. I have again tried to indicate in what manner they received their title, and also in certain cases the office which some of them are holding to-day in the Bida Town Administration. That so many of these former slaves

[1] In the pre-Fulani kingdom the court is said to have employed only a few slaves—all eunuchs. All slave ranks which have a *nda* in their title, meaning 'father' (ranks that are still in use—see attached chart), were originally ranks reserved for eunuchs.

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567 had been placed in responsible positions proves what I have said about
554 the selection and rise of slave officials at the court of Bida.

Slave Ranks

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Present office*	*Biographical remarks*
Gabi Seidi	Kupa	'Officer of Liaison' between *Etsu* and District Officer	A rich slave who under *Etsu* Bello bought his title for £16.
Ndatwaki	Yagba	On the Bida Town Council	Father was *Ndatwaki* under *Etsu* Maliki; he himself received the same title under *Etsu* Bello.
Dzwoáfu	,,	,, ,,	An hereditary slave title, first granted under *Etsu* Usman.
Ndamáraki	Bunu	,, ,,	Father was *Ndamáraki* under *Etsu* Masaba.
Sántali	Benu-Nupe	..	Grandfather was a slave of Usman Zaki; they remained slaves of this house.
Masántali	Yagba	..	Grandfather was a slave of *Etsu* Umaru Majigi; they remained slaves of this house.
Swajiyd'tsu	,,	..	Father held same slave rank.
Ndatódo	,,	..	Father held the same title and also title of *Ndamáraki*.
Manfáda	,,	..	Another slave title which has become hereditary in one house.
Sonmdźi	Kusopa-Nupe	..	Id.
Ndádari	Nupe	..	Id.
Shangbo	Nupe from Rabá	..	Father was a *saraki* (*Somasū*) of *Etsu* Majiya. He was made prisoner in the war and became a slave of *Etsu* Masaba.
(*Sarkin Dogari*	Hausa	Head of police force	To-day not regarded as slave title. Formerly bestowed on a personal slave of the ruling king.)

WAR

124 It will be understood that this description is based entirely on informa-
721 tion and the historical recollections of informants. However, the wars that were fought in Nupe and by the Nupe are not so far distant that there are no longer eyewitnesses left, or people who have themselves borne arms in these wars. Thus information could be checked and cross-checked. For certain details I could, moreover, count on most authoritative informants, who had played a leading part in the last wars of the kingdom; the description of the military organization, for example, is based on information obtained from the late commander of the *élite* troops of Nupe, the king's bodyguard.

721 War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state. No warfare or
669 organized fights occurred between the villages or tribal sections of the

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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dakári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 1,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

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The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the nobility were of three categories: ordinary foot-soldiers, called *dakári*, foot-troops carrying guns, or *bindigaciśi*, and horsemen, or *dokociśi*. The *dakári* were composed entirely of volunteers, i.e. men who had entered the service of a feudal lord as soldier-*bara* or 'clients'.[1] They were all young men, and their ranks comprised peasants and townsmen, Nupe as well as foreigners. Every noble household had its own *Etsu Dakári*, Chief of the Foot-Troops, a *bara* of higher rank, who was in charge of these volunteers and responsible for their training. The *dakári* wore a sort of leather apron, called *walké*, and caps, and were equipped with shields and bows and arrows or spears. The troops which carried guns were, like the king's bodyguard, slaves. The cavalry represented the *élite* of the Nupe army. It was composed of senior *bara*—men whose sons might be fighting in the foot-troops—and younger relations, sons and brothers, of the feudal lord himself. The horsemen wore short shirts of strong coarse material, called *ewogí*, i.e. small gown, into which leather amulets were sewn, caps or turbans, and, over the *ewogí*, a *sulke*, a chain mail. They carried shields, swords, and spears. In the Kyedye war certain feudal lords could muster the following troops: the *Kusódu* 100 foot-soldiers, 200 guns, and 200 horses; the *Kpotû* 100 foot-soldiers, 100 guns, and 20 horses; the *Ndeji* 100 foot-soldiers, 200 guns, and 10 horses; the *Bení* 50 foot-soldiers, 50 guns, and 20 horses; the *Waziri* 50 foot-soldiers and 5 horses. Many of the feudal lords—princes and civil nobility—would themselves join the army at the head of their household troops; but they would have to place themselves under the command of the 'professional soldiers'—the military nobility—who would join the troops in a body.

Warfare in Nupe possessed its etiquette, its conventions, and rules, which show how highly developed and specialized a technique it had become. Two kinds of war are distinguished: the great wars planned and organized by the central government, and smaller raids and military expeditions carried out by individual feudal lords. In the latter case, the feudal lord would request the permission of the *Etsu* for undertaking a campaign against this or that village or tribe. Without the sanction of the king his military expedition would amount to *cin amana*, a breach of the peace (lit.: devouring friendship), and might itself become the cause of a punitive expedition sent out by the central government. In the 'real' war, before hostilities are opened, a messenger of the king, called *kuru*, is sent to the enemy's camp to deliver the 'ultimatum', that is, to inform the enemy of certain demands of the kingdom the rejection of which would be followed by war. A titled royal slave of high rank acts as messenger. His person is inviolable—in theory; but during the Kusopa revolt three royal messengers were killed, one after the other, by the rebellious tribesmen. The next step is the appointment of a commander-in-chief of the armies, in the person of a royal prince who will then be known as *Nna 'Kû*, Mother of War.[2] Sometimes soothsayers and Mallams are

[1] For the definition of *bara* and 'client' see p. 123.

[2] Owing to erroneous information I have mentioned this title as *Nda 'Kû*, Father of War, in a previous publication (*Africa*, 1935). I must add that I was unable to obtain any explanation of this rather surprising matrimonial touch.

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asked to divine a victorious general. Invariably his rank would correspond to the importance and scope of the war that is planned. At the same time his office is only nominal. Although he would take the field at the head of the army, and although he would bear the responsibility for success or failure, the actual organization of the campaign is left to the professional soldiers: in an important war the *Maiyaki* himself would take command, in a minor war his next in rank, the *Dokoyiringi*. 721

Now the council of war meets in the house of the *Maiyaki* to discuss the question of raising the levies. The various feudal lords are informed that they are expected to produce so many guns and horses. Preparations take one or two months—the troops must be raised, recruits trained and equipped, and food supplies provided for the campaign. Finally diviners and Mallams are summoned again by the commander of the army to decide on a propitious day. On the appointed day, drummers and trumpeters sound the assembly, and the troops leave Bida on their march into enemy country.

The Nupe never fought by night. Their method was to move up as close as possible to the enemy, hiding in bush and scrub, camp for the night, and attack in the early hours of the morning. In open battle the attacking troops would be arrayed in a long straight line facing the enemy. But often the war would turn into the long siege of a walled village or town, close to which the army would put up its war camp, the troops surrounding the town and cutting the population off from their farms, supplies, and reinforcements. 726

This was the typical formation of the Nupe army in open battle: first came the foot-soldiers, the various household troops each under their *Etsu Dakári*, commanded by an officer of the king, the *Sónkali*. Behind them, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, a first troop of horsemen halted, under the *Sokyara*, and with it the lesser military and civil nobility. Behind this group again another, larger, detachment of cavalry was posted, under the highest generals of the army, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi*. With these troops were the higher civil and military nobility and certain princes of lesser rank. The infantry would move first, sent into the battle by the shouts of the *Sokyara*: '*Kay Dakári*', 'Forward! foot-soldiers'. When they had engaged the enemy, the cavalry of the *Sokyara* would charge after them, the *Dokoyiringi* giving the signal with shouts of '*Kay Sokyara*'. The *Dokoyiringi*'s own troops would charge last, to the signals of the long bronze trumpets which only the troops of the highest military ranks may carry. There would also be drums and flutes, and the soldiers would shout the *kirari* of their leaders and sing their war songs. [534]

In the rear of the troops the reserve was placed, which would come into the fight only if the other troops were unable to master the situation. It was commanded by the *Maiyaki*, with whom were also the princes of highest rank, including the commander-in-chief. In the last big war, against the Yagba (the same war which ended in the conquest of Bida by the British), the infantry is said to have numbered 6,000, the cavalry of the *Sokyara* 400, those of the *Dokoyiringi* 1,000, and the reserve 2,000 men.

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726 An unsuccessful army would never retreat, or return to Bida with the
goal unachieved. One would call for reinforcements from the capital,
643 which would be sent out together with a new *Nna 'Kũ* to replace the unsuccessful commander-in-chief. If these troops too were unable to bring the war to an end, the *Etsu* would take command personally, at the head of a third army composed largely of his own bodyguard and of the household troops of noblemen who had not joined the troops previously. During the king's absence from the capital a regency council, headed by the *Ndeji*, would be appointed to look after things at home. In the Yagba war the *Etsu* did not join the army but stayed behind, with his bodyguard of 200 men, which, together with the household troops of four noblemen who had remained in Bida, were the only trained soldiers to oppose the British attack. The king and the noblemen of high rank took the field accompanied by their whole household staff of slaves and servants, and often by their wives as well. They stayed in the Great Camp—consisting of huts of grass and matting—which was put up behind the fighting line or established in a hamlet near-by. A number of Nupe villages betray by their names that at one time the Great War Camp, *edokó*, had stood on their site.

The Nupe war was carried on till the capital of the enemy, that is, the village or walled town in which the chief resided, was captured. If the chief and the other leaders fled, they would be pursued until they were captured or until further pursuit became impossible. Often a fugitive chief sought refuge with the king of a neighbouring country whose territory the Nupe troops would have to respect. All captured places
727 were looted and burnt, and the whole enemy country devastated. But slaughter was avoided as far as possible—the defeated enemies were more valuable alive, to be sold later as slaves. Only when rebellions had to be put down by force of war the enemies, above all chiefs and leaders, would be killed mercilessly, either in the battle, or later in Bida, whither they were taken to be executed.

No less well defined than the etiquette of warfare were the rules and conventions governing the economic aspect of the Nupe wars—the division of loot and booty. All booty taken before the decisive battle—the capture of the enemy's capital—belonged to the king and was dispatched to him immediately. Upon the capture of the town *wasóso* was declared, free looting, in which everyone who fought in the battle could join. The shares in the spoils of war varied according to rank and position. The slave soldiers had to deliver everything to their masters but were rewarded with a small share in the booty they had taken. The *bara* soldiers could keep all booty in kind—(called *dukiya*, wealth)—but were expected to present some of it to their overlords as 'gift of thanks'; of the slaves whom they captured they had to surrender half the number to their overlords. The independent fighters, i.e. the sons of noble houses, kept whatever they captured, both 'wealth' and slaves, except for a voluntary gift to the head of the house. If I have at various occasions in this book called war in Nupe a profession and a source of income, these facts substantiate that view.

000 Let me conclude this description with the report of an eyewitness of

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Let me conclude this description with the report of an eyewitness of standing—the youngest son of *Etsu* Masaba—who had fought in one of the last great wars of old Nupe, against the Kyedye. I have referred before to the origin of this war. It was the answer of the central government to the capture by the rebellious Kyedye of the town Kacha, which, having submitted to Fulani rule, appealed to Bida for protection against their unruly fellow tribesmen. It was, incidentally, also the last war in which the Niger Company assisted the Bida government. In the next war Niger Company troops were to turn against the Fulani, and (helped by the same Kyedye) to defeat the armies of the kingdom. 721

Since the time of Manko, *goy* and Kyedye were always at war. It happened like this. The Kyedye refused to recognize the Fulani kings. They contended that they were independent 'kings of the water'. So Manko sent his son Ibrahima from Raba to the *Kuta*, to come to an arrangement and to stop hostilities. But the Kyedye killed the messenger, cut his body to pieces, and threw it to the fish. Thereupon Manko went to fight them, but could not do much. So the wars between the two went on and on.

Later, at the time of *Etsu* Umaru, the Kyedye attacked Kacha under their *Kuta* Usman, because Kacha had submitted to the Fulani and accepted their *egba* (delegate). The Kacha people fled to Bida and asked for help. *Etsu* Umaru sent out a big army led by *Shaba* Mamudu. Most of the *gitsiži* went with him, and I was among them, also many *sarakiži* both from the *ena Maiyaki* and *ena Ndeji*. We were three days on the way, stopping twice for the night (Kacha is about 40 miles from Bida). We made camps of grass huts; some of us lived in a *tunga* near-by. For the great men we built huts with grass fences round. The army had guns and men and horses—you could not count them. In Kacha the water was covered with Kyedye canoes. We attacked at once, shooting from the banks down upon the canoes in the water. The boats of the Niger Company were helping the Fulani then. They closed the Kacha river in the back of the Kyedye. The Kyedye fled, and we crossed the river in canoes which they had left behind. The *Dokoyiringi* led the pursuit, accompanied by *Shaba* Mamudu. The rest of the troops followed later. We pursued the Kyedye on the other bank, both on land and water, for three days, as far as Lafiagi and Shonga. This was a war not only against the Kyedye, but also against Kupa and Ebagi, who were helping the Kyedye. All villages and hamlets were burnt down, numberless men and women captured. We made more than 2,000 slaves. Later they were all sold (although the Niger Company had asked for the release of the prisoners of war). At Shonga the war ended. Many Kyedye had been run down and captured or killed, but some hid in the creeks and the river forest. The chief and the seven elders of the Kyedye fled with their wives and children to Ilorin. It did not help them. Emir Aliyu (the Fulani Emir of Ilorin) sent them back as prisoners to Bida. Here they were held as hostages till *Etsu* Umaru's death. But shortly after his death *Etsu* Maliki condemned them to death, and they were strangled secretly at night in the houses where they lived. 726 727

In war, which is political action *par excellence*, the essence of state structure must reveal itself most clearly. We observe what we have recognized as an element of state organization: the monopoly position of the ruling group with regard to the employment of the political machinery, in this case military action. We see, too, that this monopoly of control is vested in the ruling group *corporately*: its individual members, 721 642

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though they control severally the executive side of the political machinery, can only use it subject to the agreement of the administration as a whole (of which they form part), else the military machinery is directed against them as breakers of the 'king's peace'. Finally, wars are planned and the military machinery is set in motion by the ruling group as a *representative* group, that is, on behalf of the country at large. In wars against outside enemies the interests of the country and the people are perforce identified with the interests of the ruling group—expansion, conquest, or the destruction of a rival power. But in wars waged against internal enemies—rebellious sections or dangerously independent members of the government—the military action is taken as much in the interest of the ruling group (safeguarding, above all, the revenue) as in the interest of the state and the people in that it re-establishes order and public security. Thus in the Kacha war, referred to above, the ruling group, as the representative group of the state, protected one subject group against abuses by another. The government can take sides and place the political machinery at the support of one section against another only because it is vested in a group (as I put it in a previous section) raised above the heterogeneous component sections of the state. The monopoly control over the machinery of force thus reveals its twofold significance: as a privilege or prerogative, in the sense that it can be used (in war proper) for conquests and expansion, thus serving the specific interests of the ruling group; and as a constitutional duty, in the sense of being used internally, for the purpose of maintaining the 'king's peace'.

These two functions are not, however, securely balanced, and we shall discover the effects of this unstable equilibrium in the internal administration of the country, to the description of which we must now turn.

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CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM

(*continued*)

THE FEUDAL STATE

WE have seen how in the history of the kingdom a certain territorial nucleus evolved, an area of 'Nupe proper'. This concept of a territorial 'nucleus' also forms the basis of the division of the country for the purpose of government. For the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration the kingdom was divided into four zones. First, the area of the conquered tributary countries outside the boundaries of the 'kingdom proper', in Nupe terminology, the countries of the *zazi kati*, the 'Outside Peoples'. Second, within these boundaries, an innermost core, the countries of Beni and Kyedye; having formed the nucleus of the rising kingdom they are now assigned the privileged position of royal domains. The third zone comprised the wider 'ring' of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, most of which lie in Trans-Kaduna. Bida town, the seat of the central government, formed an administrative district of its own. 631

Under the name of Outside Peoples were comprised the conquered territories of Gbari, Gbira, Kamberi, Kakanda, Yagba, Bunu, and certain sections of Nupe (Dibo and Ebe mostly). These districts were not administered fully by the central government. Their political dependence entailed two things: an annual tribute to Bida, and the recognition by other Emirates and chieftainships of the political status of these territories as 'under the protection' of Bida. It was a one-sided 'protection': Bida itself was free to raid her own outside peoples, but no other country could do this or levy taxes in these territories with impunity. The guarantor of these 'treaties' was, in the last instance, the Emir of Gwandu, the highest feudal overlord of all Fulani Emirs in this part of the world.[1] The central government in Bida did not assume jurisdiction over these countries, nor did it interfere in their own political administration. The tribute was paid in slaves and was collected annually by royal messengers, *tuci*, or as they were also called *ajele* (from the Arabic *ajala*, to dispatch), who visited these countries at the head of small armies, ready to quell any disturbance or to bring recalcitrant taxpayers to heel. Of the tribute levied a little more than half went to the king, the rest to the royal messenger. The office of tax-collector in the outside areas of the kingdom was entrusted mostly to the royal nobility, and the districts over which they were put in charge were linked with 636 651 636 651 662

[1] Such an 'international' agreement existed, for example, between the *Etsu* Nupe, the *Sarkin Sudan* (the Emir of Kontagora), and the Emir of Zaria with respect to Gbari country. These treaties were not always kept by the parties concerned. Thus the *Etsu* of Agaie used to raid the territories of his brother Emir, the *Etsu* Nupe, and had eventually to be stopped by a big war which was led by the Emir of Gwandu himself.

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636 certain ranks. Thus *Edukpã*, the Countries beyond the Niger, were always the province of the *Nágya*, the country of the Kamberi of the 651 *Kusódu*, of the Gbari of the *Etsu Gbari*, of the Yagba of the *Makũ*, and so on. Political influence, however, could alter the rule, and a rich dis- 662 trict would sometimes go to the more powerful royal prince irrespective of his rank. Thus *Etsu* Maliki, to win over the powerful *Kpotũ* Abubakari (who became *Etsu* after Maliki's death) transferred the rich fief of *Edukpã* from the *Nágya* to him. Power and the possession of a strong private army was essential for the post of an *ajele*. An *ajele* who failed in his task was dismissed from rank and office and replaced by a 'stronger' man.

635 It is no accident that the two royal domains of Nupe kingdom were the two political organizations which embraced the whole tribe, the two 651 small 'states within the State', Beni and Kyedye. The political unification which they had evolved was recognized and utilized by the political administration of the kingdom. These areas were placed directly under the king. The chiefs of Beni and Kyedye acted somewhat as royal agents. Their appointment and succession was subject to the confirmation of the king, and a gift of sandals, a gown, and a turban which he presented to the new *Žitsu* symbolized, as we have seen, the fact that the local chief held his office 'by the grace of the king'. The town-kings of Beni and the *Kuta* of the Kyedye administered law in all cases which came under the category of *gyara*, 'reparation', and were required to refer graver cases, cases involving *sheri'a*, 'judgement', to the central authority—a point to which we shall return later. The town-kings also collected the tax in their areas on behalf of the king. This tax, *edu*, levied in these areas as in the whole kingdom, was in money, thus differing from the *dzanká*, the local tithe in kind. The tax was collected first by the head chief of the district, i.e. the *Kuta* among the Kyedye, and the town-king of Tafiẽ and (in Fulani times) Bida among the Beni, who placed the money into the hands of the royal tax-collectors appointed for these two royal domains. Of the tax levied in the domains the *Etsu* received two-thirds, the royal tax-collectors and the head chiefs of the two districts sharing between them the remaining third. In the time of *Etsu* Masaba, however, the *Etsu* took all and the town-king of Bida, in order to obtain his share, levied an additional tax of his own. The total tax paid by a Beni village in Fulani times is said to have amounted to £2 under *Etsu* Masaba and £3 under Umaru Majigi; later, under the greedy Maliki, it rose higher and higher till *u de iyaka à*, 'there was no limit'.[1]

000 The rest of Nupe kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

[1] The Bororó Fulani who came regularly to Nupe with their cattle formed another such royal domain with respect to taxation. The organization of this nomadic group evidently lent itself to no other method of administration. Their tax was collected by their own group head, the *Diko*, and then handed over to the royal tax-collector, who was known as *egba Bororó* (Delegate to the Bororó). He was himself a Fulani, who lived—and is still living—in Bida. When the *Etsu* Nupe recently wanted to buy cattle for his new experimental farms he arranged the deal through the man who used to be *egba Bororó*, making use of the old connexion for the new purpose.

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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

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'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and 651
tunga which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the [436] *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 [285] mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order 632
in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the 692
right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, 631
relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These 651
fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king 554
after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

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631 became too great. The towns or villages which were granted as such
631 personal fiefs could lie anywhere within the boundary of the kingdom, on
651 the royal domains as well as in the areas held as office fiefs by *egba*. The
554 personal fiefs involved no legal or administrative authority, only the authority of levying an additional tax called *edugi* (small tax) over and above the royal tax, *edukó* (big tax), after the latter had been collected. There was no limitation to this additional tax, which must often have exploited the peasants ruthlessly. Yet I have also seen close personal attachment between villages and their lord still existing to-day, bearing witness to the existence of more friendly ties between feudal lord and tenants.

631 It is clearly impossible to state in more detail how this administrative
554 system worked, and especially how far the administrative and judicial authority of the feudal delegate worked in harmony with the existing traditional authority vested in village chief and elders. Later on, I shall give more data about the working of this legal machinery. But it is easy to understand that the powerful feudal lord and his delegate could uphold political and legal authority by the very fact of their power and influence. They could, for example, secure redress or punishment where the village chief's limited power might be too weak to enforce judgement or arbitration. But this intervention might easily distort justice rather than further it. As aliens, never linked permanently with the people over whom they rule, the fief-holders were bad guardians of tribal law and traditional justice. This, in fact, reflects the fundamental conflict involved in the system of feudal administration. The feudal lords were officially responsible for the well-being of their subjects; they were agents of a central authority which was vitally interested in the maintenance of peace and order; they themselves, like their royal master, depended on the people of the fief for tax, supply of food, and supply of men for their armies and wars. But the connexion of fief with rank, involving as it did a change of the fief with every promotion, did not allow the mutual attachment between the feudal lord and his subjects to grow really strong and permanent—too strong and permanent for the safety of the king and the unity of the state. To balance the danger that might arise from a too firmly entrenched feudal lord, the kingdom had to risk the other danger of maladministration and discontent among the people on the fiefs.

642 This policy of preserving the balance of power between dynastic and
631 feudal interests which had to be re-established and readjusted with every change of régime is reflected in the many changes which the administration of the kingdom has undergone in the hundred years of Fulani rule. *Etsu* Masaba, intent on building up an enormous dynastic power, divided the whole of Beni and Kusopa country, town for town, among his sons and daughters and other followers as personal fiefs. There was no place in the kingdom, the Nupe say, which had not its private 'owner'. The Nupe nicknamed this generous king *ndă na ma gã na*, Father of Distributing. *Etsu* Umaru, who succeeded him, adopted the opposite policy in order to win the support of the native tribes against the feudal lords who had supported his predecessor. He abolished all private fiefs in

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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaži kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoži*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

621 Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
554 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accor-
571 dance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpã*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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linked with a title or name, encased in these *ekpã* which bear the name of a royal house, the group of commoners rallying round a noble patron, and the nobility rallying round a dynastic head—this is one of the most conspicuous symbols of the political relationships which rule the capital.

The political administration of Nupe kingdom (like every political administration) can be regarded as an organization guaranteeing order and security to the subjects of the state—individuals and groups—in return for specific forms of submission: submission of individuals to the established rules of conduct; surrender, by groups, of all independent political action; and surrender, by individuals and groups, of portions of their property in the form of taxes and tributes. The law-abiding, tax-paying citizens are thus promised protection against enemies at home and abroad, and general security for carrying on their daily work, holding markets, using the roads, and enjoying the fruits of their labour. With regard to individuals, a legal machinery safeguards their civic rights, that is, their claims to this protection. With regard to subject groups, we may speak of constitutional rights in which this safeguard of security is embodied. The element of reciprocity implied in these constitutional rights, namely, the promise of security in return for a surrender of autonomy, is clearly understood by the people. This is shown in the current interpretation of such political measures as the suppression of the Kyedye attack on the town of Kacha described above. The intervention of the central government on behalf of Kacha is positively linked with the previous surrender of autonomy (*a gba ya Bida*, 'they submitted to Bida').

A striking feature of the internal organization of Nupe are the considerable regional differences in the completeness and directness of administration and the frequent changes which it has undergone in the fifty years of Fulani rule. These variations and changes have a threefold explanation: (1) They interpret, in terms of political status, the cultural and ethnical provenance to which we referred in the preceding chapter. (2) They are a compromise between the superstructure of the state and certain claims to autonomy, admitted mainly because of the difficulty of establishing a more complete control—for example, over the strongly organized river-state of the Kyedye, or over the newly absorbed 'outside' groups on the periphery of the kingdom. (3) They are a compromise also between centralization and delegation of power. The delegation of power represents an essential structural characteristic of the Nupe political system. The ever-expanding kingdom, increasingly dependent on the military help of the nobility, had to secure their services more and more by granting them landed property in the form of fiefs, and thus investing them with a portion of territorial sovereignty. But then, only through this indirect—feudal—administration could the expanding state hope to reach and to control its entire population, above all those scattered village units which never evolved a larger political system than could be fitted easily (like the Beni confederacy or the Kyedye political organization) into the large-scale framework of the Nupe state.[1]

[1] Compare the similar situation in Imperial Rome: 'The state had to appeal to private persons of wealth and influence because it was not able to transmit its

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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war,
642 and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the
675 declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *egi kata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attachment to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 563, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

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566 patron's family. If he has been accepted as *bara* by an influential feudal lord, he may hope to be rewarded with the grant of land or a sub-fief. A title, finally, bestowed by patron on client proclaims publicly the *bara*'s position as a henchman of a man of rank. These are the titles which are usually bestowed on *bara: Sonfada*, *Mižindadi*, *Tsowa*, *Tswanya*, *Tsadú*.[1]

566 In all these cases the benefit is mutual. The *bara* receives material support and possibly a rank; the patron gains servants, soldiers for the
554 contingent which he is to muster for the king's army, and followers and henchmen to add to his prestige. The patron will choose his clients and will not accept everyone. A young man of about 25, who had become a labourer, told me that he intended eventually to attach himself as *bara* to a certain nobleman, but he was as yet too young and no one wanted him. To have gathered around oneself a large number of *bara* and *egi kata* is the final, most undeniable, mark of success. Whenever you visit the house of a nobleman, at any time of the day, you will find him surrounded by some of his *bara* or *egi kata*: possibly they have just returned from an errand or have come to discuss important questions with him, or simply to pay their respects and share, as they regularly do, his meal.

566 Often the loyalty of clients to their patrons extends to the whole family of the *bara* and is transmitted from generation to generation. But loyalty and ambition may come into conflict. Sons may choose a new patron for themselves, hoping for increased benefits from the new association; or the *bara* himself may leave his own protector when the influence of the latter decreases and look for another more influential patron.

The *élite* of clients are the *bara* of the royal princes. Not only are they
566 servants of masters who have ample land and sub-fiefs to bestow, but they may also rise, with their masters, to the highest positions and
554 become, some day, *bara* of a ruling king. These royal *bara* are almost equal in rank to the nobility of the officers of state. The *Etsu* Nupe has only two *bara*, the *Mižindadi* (lit. equal to major-domo) and *Sonfada* (lit. companion on travels—the present holder of this rank sits beside the chauffeur in the *Etsu*'s car), not counting the freed slaves who play to-day more or less the role of *bara*. But the lowest *saraki* titles which the *Etsu* may bestow on his favourites are nearer clientship than nobility proper. Social climbers, rich and ambitious men, could buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or the king: *Etsu* Saidu, the late Emir, sold the title of *Mižindadi* three times over. Wealth buying a serf's title—this is indeed a paradoxical result of a social system which, intent on promotion and social rise, turns even the humiliation of clientship into a vehicle for a social career.

566 The complex pattern of clientship and the various motives which make free men seek patronage are illustrated in the following list of *bara* who were in the service of the late *Shaba*.

[1] Political ranks are frequently distinguished from *bara* ranks using the same title by adding the suffix *-kó*, meaning great, or the word *tsu*, meaning 'of the king', e.g. *Sonfada* and *Sonfadokó*, *Soje* and *Sojetsu*.

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List of Bara in the Household of the late Shaba Usman

(*Bara* titles are printed in italics)

1. Ibrahima *Madawaki*—in Bida. Formerly warrior by profession, now matmaker. Made submission to *Shaba*; his father and the rest of the family are not *bara* of the *Shaba*.
2. Etsu Ndakó—in Bida. Wealthy trader. He is the type of *bara* who is out for social promotion—a '*bara* for greatness'. He began as *egi kata* of the *Shaba*, who had no rank at that time. When Usman became *Shaba*, Etsu Ndakó made full submission, in the hope of profiting by this allegiance to the 'heir apparent' who might become *Etsu* one day and then bestow a *saraki* rank upon his client.
3. *Sonmáži*—in Bida. Mat and straw-hat maker. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru (of the same dynasty). The son followed in his footsteps, and served two *Shaba* in succession. He married a widowed daughter of his present master.
4. Yisa Gbodu—in Bida. Made submission to *Shaba*. Poor, a small trader by profession. Plays the role of a handy-man in the *Shaba* household.
5. Jiya Fugi—in Bida. Was formerly a *bara* of *Etsu* Mohamadu, the *Shaba*'s father.
6. Yisa Sharu—in Bida. He is a Mallam by profession, and became *bara* of the *Shaba* before the latter obtained his rank.
7. Mamudu Yakagi—in Bida. As No. 1.
8. Umaru Zainu—in Bida. Was formerly a *bara* of *Etsu* Maliki (of a different dynasty). He is a tailor by profession. His patron is at the same time his most profitable customer, having all dresses needed by the family made by him.
9. *Babban Ndeji*—in Bida. His father held *Ndeji* rank. When he died, his widow married the *Shaba* and took her son with her, who then became a *bara* of his stepfather.
10. Etsu Saba *Manzo*—in Bida. As No. 1. Acts as personal messenger of the *Shaba*. The title *Manzo* means messenger (in Hausa).
11. Suleiman *Gadza*—in Bida. His father was a titled slave of the *Etsu*. He gave his son as *egi kata* to *Shaba*. When the father died Suleiman's elder brother inherited the title, and the younger brother, having no prospect of obtaining a *saraki* rank, remained with *Shaba* as his *bara* and received from him the *bara* rank *Gadza*.
12. Idirisu *Madawaki*—in Bida. A very wealthy trader who became *bara* in order to obtain a title. (Cf. No. 2.)
13. Mallam Yusufu—in Bida. His father was *Alkali* of Bida, he himself formerly *Alkali* of Mokwa. Later he lost his position and became *bara* of the *Shaba*, for whom he now acts as a private 'chaplain'.
14. Mallam Mamudu—in Bida. Also a private chaplain of the *Shaba* household.
15. Jiya Man—in Bida. Another Mallam. His father was already *bara* of the *Shaba*.
16. Ndakó Tétengi—which means 'little Ndakó', to distinguish him from his father, who was called Ndakó and was also a *bara* of the *Shaba*. At that time they lived in Bida. Later they built themselves a farm settlement (*tunga*) on land given them by their patron. They live there now, paying an annual *dzanká* to the *Shaba*.

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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

665 566 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 579 754 683 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpã*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

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565 chiefly political, economic, occupational, and educational.[1] But so is the widest constellation defined on the basis of similarity or diversity of conduct—culture. The essence of social class lies in the specific fashion in which these various factors appear combined. To understand it fully we must view social class under two aspects. The first is that of firmly established and comparatively permanent differences in actual conduct—differences in standards of living, in habitual behaviour, occupation, and moral values.[2] The second aspect is that of the social agency which attaches to these differences of conduct the index 'inferior' or 'superior', and makes them reflect different grades on a common scale of values. Were we dealing only with differences of the first order we should be describing merely different cultural groups in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different customs are observed and different values valid. What turns mere cultural differences into differences of conduct typical of social class is the loss or absence of their self-contained and largely unconscious nature. Their permanence is no longer, as it were, self-chosen. The 'cultural' differences are now conceived of as results of unequal advantage and opportunity, and they are never allowed to lose their significance as different grades in the 'common scale'. It lies in the nature of things that this common scale, which depends essentially on the demonstrability of unequal opportunities, should rest above all on political and economic factors. The essence of class (as of any group) lies in the consciousness of group membership; the consciousness of class is the consciousness of this 'common scale of values'.

Let us examine first the social mechanism which maintains and propagates the consciousness of the common scale. It is essentially an educational mechanism (in the widest sense of the word). While perpetuating the various cultural traits characteristic of social class it perpetuates at the same time the common perspective from which these traits are set off as traits valued more or less highly by the society. One of the most efficient instruments of this mechanism is the convention of class symbolism and class etiquette, which not only regulates the intercourse between the classes, but also serves to demonstrate the reality of class barriers.

Nupe society is plentiful in such symbols of class distinction. The collective name for nobility, *rowni*, 'turban', marks already one of these outward signs of class: it refers to the turban of glazed blue cloth which only members of the nobility may wear. Another prerogative of rank is the right to carry a sword, or rather, have it carried by one's sword-bearer, the *zagi* (lit. 'little person', i.e. 'page'), and to appear on horseback on all official occasions. With regard to these emblems of rank the Nupe have kept abreast of the times: a novel symbol of status is an alarum clock, put in a little wooden case, which body-servants of men of rank carry after their masters.

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[1] M. Ginsberg, *Sociology*, 1934, p. 162.

[2] Cf. M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 159: 'To the outward observer class is primarily a matter of behaviour, speech, dress, education, and especially habits of social intercourse.'

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Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by cowering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner. 565 576 516

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver. 565 576 431

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally, 643

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565 576 431 small kola-nuts, in fives or tens, were handed out to messengers, dancers, guild-heads, and other people of lower rank.

Even language and music are used as symbols of class. There exist in 565 Nupe special drum-rhythms, *take*, greeting formulae, *kirari* (Hausa, lit. 576 'calls'), and songs which are linked with certain noble families and important ranks. As soon as a family comes to power or a man receives 533 rank and title, the drummers of Bida will compose such *take* and *kirari* in their honour. You can, in fact, have them made to order, at various prices; but an influential person will not need to order them, for the drummers, counting on his patronage, will supply him at once with this musical salute. Some of the *take* and *kirari* which one can hear to-day date back to pre-Fulani times; others were composed recently. Whenever a member of these noble families attends a festivity, the drummers would announce his arrival by playing 'his' *take* and singing 'his' *kirari*, and the 'master of ceremonies', who is always present at such gatherings, would recite a long list of illustrious ancestors to whom the nobleman can lay claim, the ranks which he had held, and the deeds which he achieved. Lastly, the Nupe address each other by titles only, and never by name, if the person addressed bears a title. Special formulae of greeting are linked with every rank, and thus mark position on the social scale by the most obvious system of signs—everyday speech.

Class symbols and class etiquette shade over into the more substantial 565 differences of class. Behaviour which is pressed into the service of class 576 manifestation becomes indistinguishable from behaviour which results from differences in social and economic advantage. The right to carry a sword or appear everywhere on horseback presupposes the economic ability to acquire these 'emblems of rank'. Submissive behaviour of a client towards his patron, or a member of the lower class towards a man of rank, is determined as much by the convention of class etiquette as by the special interest of gaining favour in the eyes of a person of consequence. Here we are dealing with the other aspect of class differen- 565 tiation, those 'cultural' differences which are, or become, typical of different classes. They revolve round the two pivots: political and economic structure.[1] They involve the existence of political prerogatives and the varying measures of individual liberty and mastery over one's own destiny, enjoyed by the different classes. Here we can outline the existing classes of Nupe society. We have met their protagonists already: the ruling class of the kingdom, rich absentee landlords, men whose occupation was war and slave-raiding, and, low down on the social scale, commoners and peasants, heavily taxed, and gaining a scanty livelihood rendered insecure by the very facts that add power and prestige to the ruling class. We have also met the craftsmen in the town, who share some of the privileges of the nobility, and the Mohammedan intelligentsia who can attach themselves to the highest stratum irrespective of

[1] The two structures do not define identical strata, nor is the economic differentiation invariably reducible to political prerogatives. However, we will leave the examination of the exact relation between the two 'pivots' of social stratification for a later chapter.

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

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group, the 'town culture' typical of Northern Nigeria. These habits and customs exist, as it were, in their own right, quite apart from questions of economic or political opportunity. But as in the growth of the kingdom certain customs and habits have become representative of the *élite*, they have set the standard of cultural desirability and superiority in general. They have imparted to habits and customs which differ from the standard the stigma of lower, less 'respectable' ways of life. In this sense, then, class differentiation as we find it in present-day Nupe can be said to represent a direct result of the growth of the state. 565 184

The intensity of class cohesion and the vividness of class consciousness are determined by 'the amount and ease of social mobility', that is, inter-class movement.[1] We have denied to the economic and social stratification that obtains in the Nupe village the character of a social class, on the grounds that the higher and highest social orders were potentially attainable to all—universal mobility contradicts the conception of social class. Exclusion of all social mobility, on the other hand, would turn social class into hereditary caste. Nupe society, a true class society, steers a middle course. 565

The social classes in Nupe represent to a large extent self-recruited, closed groups. A man born of commoners as a rule remains a commoner, a craftsman a craftsman, and the ranks of nobility are filled with men of noble birth. But there exists promotion from grade to grade within the class, and a certain amount of inter-class mobility. Inter-class mobility in the fullest sense, that is, formal adoption into the higher orders, is attained, as we have seen, through service in war and, to less extent, through wealth and clientship. Its scope is narrow and closely controlled: there exist only thirty to forty ranks to which an 'outsider' may aspire, and only seven out of the thirty-seven civil and military ranks enumerated in our lists were granted to men whose families had held no rank previously. Moreover, adoption into the titled classes means only gaining a first foothold on the long social ladder. All social rise possible in Nupe is rigidly canalized by the hierarchy of ranks and grades. Here, viewed from the angle of social mobility, the Nupe rank system reveals its full significance: it controls and restricts as much as it aids social advancement. In the interest of governing the extensive kingdom, carrying on its wars, and administering its subject groups, political power had to be distributed and delegated. Individuals whose services were of value had to be attracted by the promise of admission to privileged positions. But by making social rise subject to the formal investiture and, above all, by admitting individuals only gradually, through a step-by-step promotion, to increased power, the ruling class could regulate the infiltration of new blood as well as the accumulation of power by its members. We have seen that ranks and promotion are subject to changing political fortune; even the meaning of ranks and offices may change under different sovereigns. Recognition can be withheld or withdrawn from men who might prove dangerous or from families already too powerful. The hierarchy of ranks thus helps to pre- 565 555

[1] M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 163.

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565 serve the precarious balance of power in the feudal state. It becomes, in
555 the hands of the established ruling group, an efficient weapon to safeguard their class privileges.

Social mobility of a more fluid, indirect kind, which admits individuals
565 to a close association with the privileged classes and indirectly to a
186 certain share in their privileges, reaches a much larger proportion of the population. It is upheld by the institution of clientship and by the existence of the Mallam intelligentsia 'between the classes'. The possibilities of social mobility, above all, the extensive possibilities of this indirect mobility, account for the lack of cohesion among the lower classes of Nupe, or at least of Bida. The conspicuous symbolism of rank and the rigid definition of the social estates cannot but stimulate class-consciousness: commoners will always describe themselves as *tálaka*, and men of rank will leave you in no doubt about their consequential position. But this class-consciousness is blurred by thoughts and prospects of a social career that might raise anyone to a higher estate. Concern about betterment rather than sentiments of group solidarity define the nature of class-consciousness in Nupe. This can be seen most clearly in the attitude of the younger generation, who are just planning their future career. Only in two social groups do we find a more strongly pronounced and self-contained consciousness of common fate and common, class-bound interests; they are characteristically groups in which mobility, direct or indirect, plays hardly any part—the closed group of guild-organized artisans and (in the framework of their scattered communities) the peasantry.

565 How far social mobility took the form of local mobility, that is, of a movement to the town in the attempt to bridge over the cultural and social gulf between townspeople and peasantry, we cannot say. If it existed, it could only have been of very limited scope. For there were strong natural limits to such a development, above all, the scarcity of land near the capital.

Now to be complete and convincing, social rise must go hand in hand with assimilation to the habits and modes of life typical of the higher classes. This, in Nupe, proves no stumbling-block. The familiar instances of 'parvenus' who, though adopted into the higher social order, do not fit into the picture of its social life are unknown. The explanation is that cultural assimilation of this kind is much more widespread than actual mobility. The mechanisms of social mobility which we have enumerated all accord their benefits to individuals, not to groups; on the contrary, individuals may succeed where groups (local communities, tribal sections) would fail to achieve that improvement of social conditions and that increased security bound up with classes. But the assimilation of which we have just spoken must be regarded as a qualified form of social mobility which includes groups and whole sections of the population. Whole groups are free at least to imitate the external characteristics of the higher social orders. Where economic conditions allow it commoners and peasants adopt habits and modes of life of their betters—fashions in dress and housing, their way of talk, their food habits, and the forms of entertainment which they patronize. They also

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adopt, even more eagerly, the religious practice of the higher and highest classes, Mohammedanism. This is not 'real' social mobility; it serves only to blur the border-line between the strata. It involves attachment to a higher stratum only in the sense of external closeness and assimilation. 565

The assimilation achieved is irregular and of very unequal significance. Yet it is prompted by a definite motive running through the whole society—self-enhancement. The readiness of groups to identify themselves culturally with the representative stratum reveals an incentive to overcome that heterogeneity of cultures and groups in which we have grasped the essence of state structure. Potentially, this incentive may carry forms of cultural reorientation capable of wielding more intensive, more real, commonness. To examine how and how far this potentiality is utilized by the political system is to examine the crucial problem of this discussion: the dynamic relation between political integration and the heterogeneous raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

BINDING FORCES

What then is the specific apparatus of control by means of which this heterogeneous society, severely divided by gulfs of culture, ethnic extraction, community, and class, maintains itself as a unit? And to what extent does it draw into its orbit and use for its own support these other non-political configurations and spheres of social life? When examining the political organization of the Nupe village from this viewpoint we discovered that there the basis of political control is extended to its widest possible limit: political organization utilizes the integrative forces of community life at large; it organizes into a unit what is integrated into the same unit by every existing institution. It might very well seem from our foregoing analysis of the Nupe state that here we have the exact opposite. A state machinery which concentrates political power in the hands of a small *élite* and ignores—save in order to transform into class barriers—tribal and cultural identity, seems committed to the narrowest system of political control: by coercion and physical force. 642 182

However, this section will show that such conclusions would be incorrect. One might, on general principles, reason that no state could afford to rely solely on coercive measures; and that it would rather utilize coercion only as a 'short cut' to bring about sentiments which, 'once established and sanctified, . . . may well flourish without compulsion, glorified as loyalty to a sovereign king or a national flag'.[1] A state that would disdain to call to assistance these bonds of inner unity seems to jeopardize continuously its safety, and to risk being shattered and broken up by unrest and revolts, possibly beyond repair. Such tension and unrest seems indeed characteristic of the political history of Nupe. But the historian would have to point out also that with all these grave disturbances Nupe kingdom yet maintained itself as a unit. Even when the Fulani took over the rule, testing most severely an already strained

[1] R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 117.

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642 political structure with the additional weight of alien rulership, the state
182 did not break down but on the contrary appeared to have taken out a new lease of life.

Now we shall be able to prove the existence of strong trends of integration which form within the political unit, incidental to it or fostered by it, and which, bridging over cultural diversity and the rift of social and economic inequality, endorse in their fashion the unit wrought by political control. However, in our search for these 'binding forces' of more subtle and conciliatory type we shall discover that they do not all point the same way. They are indeed 'binding' forces—but what they tend to bind and draw together is not invariably the same group substratum.

We must examine first a significant negative instance—kinship.
182 Kinship has no part in this integrative scheme, either ideologically
642 or factually. No attempt is made to invest the conception of the state with that fiction of genealogical or kinship unity which is linked
602 with the concepts of the sub-tribe and the village community. With the increased freedom of movement which is one of the results of political unification kinship relations become more widely scattered and marriage between distant localities is increasing and is regarded more and more as normal; but these new kinship relations draw only a patchy, irregular pattern that can have little influence upon the integration of the people at large. Moreover, kinship relations are often subordinated to political interests; patronage and the adherence to political factions may even break up family units. The widest gulf, between rulers and subjects, and between the *élite* culture of Bida and the peasant sections, is bridged only by the sociologically less significant form of intermarriage between men of the upper and women of the lower classes. We shall see later that full intermarriage is rigidly restricted and rendered specially difficult, unless it follows already existing political ties of patronage. We shall, in fact, have to speak of a definite class endogamy among the ruling classes. Marriage and kinship ties thus cement the solidarity of the component groups of the state, not of the state itself.

We continue our search in the economic field. Political unification
182 carries in its wake expansion of economic co-operation and interdepen-
642 dence. Economic areas were re-designed in accordance with the new, wider political unit and its centre of gravity, the populous capital, which depends for food and supplies on the agricultural districts. But the contribution of this widened economic co-operation to national solidarity is negligible if not wholly negative. In this reorientation of economic links the boundaries of the state have frequently been crossed and disregarded: trade became 'international'; craftsmen, traders, and even peasants are always ready to seek profitable new markets outside Nupe, and even to emigrate for the sake of better business prospects. Economic interdependence and co-operation even introduce new conflicts and forms of antagonism which set group sections against each other. We shall speak of the village artisans who openly admit (and partly resent) the competition of the superior Bida crafts. In times of crisis conflicts of this kind tend to become more strongly marked. During the depression of 1934–5 I could notice distinct resentment on the part of the peasants

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against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotũ*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotũ*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotũ*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows:

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The needle is coming,
The Mallam of the needle,
The father of threading.
O let me go,
And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes
642 the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achiev-
642 ing, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-
186 enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *élite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1] 182 642 186

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiži* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'. 182 643 533 186

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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Song of Etsu Bello

182 The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
643 On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
539 Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
186 The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

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Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

> God, we have come.
> God, everybody has come.
> This ancient thing of Tsoede
> Which is lying on the ground,
> It says we should bring beer.
> Because of the old saying which we have heard,
> Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
> Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
> the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

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[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
643 pous title of *Maji Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
794 recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
642 and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
797 after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Maji Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

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more solid bond of political protection embodied in clientship. Attachment to the ruling group thus fused with conversion to its religion. In the early days of Fulani rule hundreds of pagans are said to have flocked into the capital to seek out an important person as their patron and to declare to him—and not to the religious officers of Islam—their readiness to embrace Mohammedanism. They received their turban and sword, insignia of clientship and new creed in one. Of such men the Nupe say not 'they become Mohammedans' but '*a ze goiži*'—'they become Fulani'.

Whatever the true essence of Mohammedan faith may be in Nupe, and however sparsely Mohammedanism has so far spread, Fulani rulership did create, and is creating, another 'mythical charter' of the kingdom. It tries again, with its new means, to mould the religious elements into the intensive unit almost of a State Church.[1] The effect of Islam as a 'binding force' of the precarious political system that the Fulani had erected cannot be doubted. A striking example is that under *Etsu* Umaru the whole Trans-Kaduna revolted, refused to pay the tribute, and finally made war on Bida. The rebellious peasants crossed the Kaduna river, marched against Bida and almost reached it, being defeated at a place called Bidakoko, a few miles outside.[2] The whole Trans-Kaduna, that is, with the exception of one town—the strongly Mohammedanized Dabbā, the same town where Mallam Dendo started his proselytizing work in Nupe, and which now refused to join in the war against the rulers with whom they shared their creed.

The identification of State and Church is demonstrated in the annual Mohammedan festival, the *Sallah*, which is as much a pageant of the might and splendour of the kingdom as a religious feast. There are two *Sallah* feasts, the Small *Sallah* and the Great *Sallah*, separated by a two months' interval.[3] Their celebration may be called the climax of the whole year's cycle: the two feasts give the months in which they fall their names—*etswa salagi* and *etswa salakó*, 'month of the Small *Sallah*' and 'month of the Great *Sallah*'; and to these the people look forward and look back, in the long-drawn preparations and anticipation, and in recollections and memories. The *Sallah* feast is like a Friday celebration on an immensely enlarged scale. On the first day the king on horseback under the state umbrella and surrounded by his noblemen and state officials, leads the vast procession to the praying-ground outside the town, where the *Liman* holds the service. After the service the procession returns to the royal residence. Here a great display of horsemanship takes place, at which the bodyguard of the king, his police, and officers of state parade before him and his guests of honour—the foremost among whom are the District Officer and all the Europeans living

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, 1925: 'Islam . . . has converted isolated pagan groups into nations; . . . it is largely due to Islam that numbers of tribes are now, before our eyes, forming themselves into nations' (ii, pp. 4, 10).

[2] It is said that this name Bidakoko was later given to the place of the battle, because *koko a tũ Bida o*, 'almost they (the rebellious army) had reached Bida'.

[3] The Nigerian *Sallah* is the *Beiram* or *Id* of other Mohammedan countries, which feasts are also celebrated twice, as 'Little *Beiram*' and 'Great *Beiram*'.

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182 in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and 642 title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to 746 offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral 182 orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of 642 Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round 186 the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.[1]

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

[1] It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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tinguishable from the self-willed conformity born of a closely knit 642
community life. The state itself becomes that twin-creation as which 186
MacIver conceives it, and, with one side of its being, a community.

The process is not yet complete. Existing social divisions and diver- 182
gent 'interest units' are not wholly submerged in the new consciousness
of unity. Sociologically, the incompleteness of the development is 642
visible in the reluctance with which certain sections, especially among the peasantry, respond to the cultural reorientation. Psychologically, it manifests itself in the ambiguous attitude of many individuals in the lower classes, vacillating between bitter resentment against the ruling class and readiness to identify themselves with its glory, of which we have seen examples. It is an attitude familiar in many societies similarly split by sharp distinctions of political and social inequality.[1] One might doubt whether this process of intensive unification will ever be completed now, with new influences coming in, new cultural and class divisions being formed which disturb the steady growth and blur the old border-lines. I do not myself think that this will be so. But in a wider sense the growth of the Nupe nation, even if it were to continue undisturbed, would never be complete: for the nation is a dynamic, not a static, unit, a unit which must constantly readjust itself and constantly absorb new 'raw material'—new generations, newly-formed classes, strata, groups.

The achieved integration of the state is then in some measure, like that of the village community, the integration of a 'multiple system of control'. Yet the state and the village community differ not only in the intensity and completeness but also in the quality of the integration which they achieve. We noticed that the 'binding forces' of the state appear in varying degrees of concreteness, from actual co-operation to moral orientation, and that those of most abstract appeal were the really effective ones. In this, I believe, lies the essential difference between the integrative mechanism operating in the village community and this new mechanism of creating nation-wide unity. Evidently, the very difference in size and numbers must play a decisive part. In the village all integrative agencies can address themselves to an identical group substratum, and can envelop it in the network of actual collaboration. The state, with its huge human substratum, its subdivisions and sections, precludes the full effectiveness of such direct and concrete integration. Direct contact and direct co-adaptation of behaviour is subordinated to indirect methods of bringing about conformity, through ideological persuasion. Actual concerted action gives way to efforts at securing parallel action, and 'common' interests in the strict sense are replaced by 'identical' interests. Instead of communal rites at which groups that in other contexts act as political units are welded together by the influence of religious experience, we have the spreading of common beliefs and practices designed to call forth identity of outlook and to foster, though not an identical group, a group conscious of identity.

Ultimately and rather surprisingly, then, the binding forces of the

[1] M. T. Herskovits has called it, by a suggestive term, 'socialized ambivalence' (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 295).

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state can be reduced to the fact of cultural assimilation. Yet it is not that random assimilation which is only incidental to the expanding state, and which only superficially obscures social division, achieving but an insecure, external, likeness. This assimilation is designed to carry the foci of cohesion and solidarity—ideologies, and the institutions by which they are sustained. I said 'designed'. But how far are we justified in regarding this assimilation and the incentives behind it as deliberately conceived and employed by the political system and its agents? Certain practices such as the encouragement given to Mallams proselytizing among the pagans, the reward of increased security held out to converts, or the engagement of musicians and poets to sing the praises of the king and the kingdom, represent actual 'propaganda', still carried out under our eyes. Others, such as the supplanting of a local cult by a 'king's ritual', must have amounted to the same in former times (in the case of the royal interest in the *ndakó gboyá* society it can be proved to have been so only two generations ago). Other forms of persuasion, again, may have worked through the unconscious mechanism of habits and views formed imperceptibly. Often their agents are men who have been in the Fulani wars or who have in some other way been associated with the ruling group and then returned to their villages, where their stories and memories aid the other, institutionalized, 'propaganda' of the kingdom. In a wider sense, however, they all are deliberately conceived and employed: they are agencies of an assimilation conscious of itself and of the message which it carries.

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CHAPTER IX
THE POSITION OF THE WOMEN

RANKS AND OFFICES

IT speaks for the consistency of the political system of Nupe that the position of the women, too, should be drawn into its orbit and even into the framework of official grades and ranks. Among the women of royal blood in pre-Fulani Nupe three women's ranks existed: *Nimwoye*, *Sagi*, and *Wogbo*. Precedence and succession in these three ranks corresponded to the succession in the three highest *gitsú* titles. At the court of ancient Nupe the titles were bestowed by the king on his mother or father's sister, elder sister, or daughter. The holder of the title had to be a *nyizagi gbakó*, a 'strong woman', that is, a woman of about 40–50 years. She had to be unmarried, or else her marriage would be formally dissolved on her appointment to the rank, and she would forthwith be regarded as unmarried. She lived, not in the house of her husband or father but in the *Etsu*'s own house. The Fulani adopted the first two ranks, abandoning, however, the condition of celibacy or nominal celibacy, and made the two daughters of Manko the first *Sagi* and *Nimwoye*. The two ranks have remained in the royal house of Nupe since then. After the split of the dynasty into three branches the women's ranks followed the new dynastic division, the title *Nimwoye* being assigned to the women of the royal house of Masaba, and the title *Sagi* being taken, in rotation, by the women of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman. This rule still holds good: the present *Sagi*, for example, is a sister of the late *Etsu* Bello of the house of Usman, and the *Sagi* before her was an elder sister of the *Shaba*, of the house of Umaru.

The women rank-holders occupied an extremely influential position at the court. They took part in the king's council, they could join in the war with their own troops of slaves and serfs, they held fiefs and owned land. Theirs was the position of 'kings over the women of Nupe'. Although these political prerogatives have disappeared, the position of authority vested in these women's ranks is unimpaired. All quarrels between women, especially women of the noble families, are brought before them; the women of Bida and the villages send them presents and receive counter-presents from them, much as is the custom between the noblemen of Nupe and their king. *Sagi* and *Nimwoye* are often the official representatives of the court at the family feasts of the Bida nobility. At the name-giving ceremony which was celebrated in the house of the *Shaba* in 1936 the *Sagi* came to bring presents and congratulations from the *Etsu*—an honour which was duly appreciated by all who were present.

Among the Bida women of low birth, the wives and daughters of commoners, we find another women's rank, *Sonya*.[1] She is, as the Nupe

[1] The Nupe word *Sonya* corresponds to the Hausa word (and the equivalent women's rank) *sarauniya*, lit. queen. *Sō* or *So* is a Nupe root meaning head or chief.

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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women
554 of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The
[443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding
[651] land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women',
562 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about
624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a
754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

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of the office of the village *Sagi* and to emphasize its harmless business side instead. 562 624 754

Thus we find that in many Nupe villages an efficient business-like head of the women has succeeded the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the old type. In other places, again, the people would not admit the magic significance of the woman's rank. Yet the strength of the belief, concealed though it may be, was shown in a witchcraft case which I happened to witness in Gbajibo, a small village on the Niger above Jebba. Here the *Sagi*, the very business-like head of the local women, was yet behind the public outcry against an alleged witch. The women much more than the men were leading in this persecution; they had been the first to ostracize the victim; and when I questioned them about their motives, they all referred me to the *Sagi*. Her own motive appeared to be jealousy of the other woman, the alleged witch, in whom she saw a dangerous rival, possibly even for the position of a *Sagi*.

The office of the *Sagi*, modern or traditional, is invariably a much-coveted one. Her moral hold over the women, as our example has shown, is complete. It is equally strong in the less sinister spheres of communal life: like the *Sonya* in Bida, the village *Sagi* advises the women, organizes women's work, arbitrates between them, and receives small presents from every business transaction which they carry through.

MARRIAGE AND STATUS

The ranks and offices already discussed all belong to married women. But we have seen that they represent forms of status which the women acquire in their own right, on the grounds of descent, or personal ability, or both, independent of their status as wives of men who occupy this or that social position. We shall see later that the same principle applies also to the status won by wealth. In particular the status by descent of the Nupe women is affected but little by marriage, i.e. by the social status of their husbands; in so far as it is so affected, this change is in the direction of social advancement. Women of low birth who marry above their status into the aristocracy can claim the status of their husbands; and women who marry beneath their station do not lose their status but raise their husbands to their own social level. The men will be allowed to share most of the social and political privileges of the class into which they marry. Two cases were reported to me in which the men could even acquire *saraki* ranks after marrying a woman of the *saraki* nobility. But even if the men are not admitted fully into the titled class, their children would always acquire the status of their mother. Daughters may thus inherit the status of their fathers, and both sons and daughters that of their mothers; husbands may be adopted into the social sphere of their wives and parents-in-law. This social regulation may seem surprising in an otherwise strongly patrilineal society. But this one-sided interpretation of the change of status that goes with marriage is not an expression of matrilineal kinship tendencies, nor of 'feminist' leanings in Nupe society (though we shall find ample evidence of these, too); rather it expresses political 562 554 565

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interests, deep-seated class sentiments, which cannot admit of a lowering of status in any one high-born. Yet if, owing to the rigid class system, marriage between the classes is thus turned into a potential instrument of social advancement, its utilization in this sense is also rigidly controlled.

For marriage in the aristocracy, especially in the royal nobility, is to a very large extent endogamous—'family marriage' as the Nupe call it. As the Nupe-Fulani regard themselves all as related, and as most families of the nobility are more or less closely related by marriage, practically all 'family marriages' of this kind are at the same time marriages within the ruling class. The Fulani in Nupe, moreover, following Mohammedan practice, encourage parallel cousin marriage (which is forbidden by the traditional marriage rules of the country) as well as cross-cousin marriage, and thus widen enormously the scope of 'family marriages', especially between descendants in the male line. Family marriage in Nupe, finally, is characterized by a much lower bride-price than that paid in ordinary exogamous marriage. This leads to the rather paradoxical situation, on which my informants invariably commented, that the wealthiest and proudest classes of the country favour 'cheap' marriage, while the humble commoners and peasants are committed mostly to a very high bride-price. The explanation is that the low bride-price in this case supplies an additional incentive for endogamous marriage—'class endogamous' marriage, as it were—and thus for the preservation of the social identity of the ruling classes (as well as, incidentally, a strengthening of their group solidarity).[1]

Indeed the counterpart of the incentive of a low bride-price in 'class endogamous' marriages is the 'deterrent' of an exceptionally high bride-price demanded in the case of marriages between the classes, i.e. between men of the *tálaka* class and girls or women of the nobility. Such cases are accordingly rare. Yet we may note that if a chance of such marriage exists, if the girl loved the man sufficiently to overlook the difference in social status, the high bride-price alone proves no obstacle. For friends and relations would join forces to find the money and to enable the ambitious suitor to make his luck by this advantageous marriage. The benefits of his new position would be considered sufficient promise of an eventual ample gratification. One of my Bida servants was an example: the son of a commoner, he had succeeded in winning the love of the daughter of a very high *saraki* and eventually, after considerable difficulties, in marrying her with money borrowed from friends and relations.

The endogamous marriage rules only ensure that the women of the ruling classes should marry within the class; they do not attempt to exclude the less dangerous form of dilution implied in the marriages of the men to women from other classes and strata. Indeed, the polygamous nature of marriage in Nupe, which forces the men to seek wives

[1] One of my informants who belonged to the *saraki* class even went so far as to explain the whole principle of having a different bride-price for 'family' and 'outside' marriages as a political measure taken by the *saraki* and Fulani nobility with the purpose of preventing commoners from marrying into their class. Though incorrect as regards the facts, this interpretation is significant as an expression of the dominant class sentiments.

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from outside their social group, precludes an application of 'class endogamy' in this sense. Marriage of this kind between the strata has reached enormous dimensions. And this shows, incidentally, that the rule of 'class endogamy' serves, even in the case of the Fulani rulers, the interest only of a social identity and solidarity and not, as one might perhaps assume, of racial purity. 582 565

POLYGAMY AND SEX MORALITY

In Nupe as in most polygamous societies in which marriage is by bride-price (and by high bride-price at that) the number of wives a man possesses becomes an infallible index of wealth and status. In the peasant districts, where we find comparatively little inequality of wealth, the range of polygamy also varies in narrow limits. Genealogies which I collected in the two Nupe villages Doko and Kutigi show the following range of polygamy (the figures refer to middle-aged or old men, both of the living and previous generation):. 595 565 [554]

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	68	96	20	11	1	1	179

The average is thus 2.1 wives per man.[1] To quote a similar average for Bida would be meaningless: the great inequality of wealth and status is reflected in the widely varying range of polygamy. In the houses of the *talakaźi*, the 'poor ones', monogamy is the rule; in the 'middle class' the conditions are much the same as in the peasant districts; but as regards the men of substance and rank, though it would be correct to say that they have rarely less than four wives, the upper limits of their polygamy are very fluid, and cannot even be ascertained with any accuracy. Popular notions attribute to certain royal princes and, above all, to the kings of Nupe, numbers of wives varying between 100 and 200. Even the late *Etsu* Saidu is reported to have had sixty wives. Discretion forbade any direct inquiries. Besides, the vagueness in the legal definition of 'wife' and 'marriage' in these cases would have detracted from the value of the information. According to Mohammedan law a man may have four wives only. But this rule is easily circumvented by limiting the number of legal wives whom one marries with religious rites to four (or four at a time), and relegating the rest to the position of mere concubines. In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found

[1] The range of polygamy varies to some extent locally. In Mokwa, for example, I obtained the following figures:

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	44	28	3	3	..	..	60

The average is, again, 2 wives per man.

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In the houses of the higher as well as of lower nobility I found
595 the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more
565 attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would
586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying
[832] age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphrodisiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and
837 the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral con-
831 cepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-profes-
837 sional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The
837 obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men
586 cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d.* and 1*s.*

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Men who have to uphold their prestige and social position would never risk the publicity and ridicule of divorce proceedings in which they would have to appear in the role of the wronged husband.[1] The amorous affairs of Bida noblemen supply, in fact, an ever-welcome topic for the town gossips. When some years ago two popular noblemen quarrelled, everyone knew that it was about a girl and had the details at their fingertips. Only the men of very great wealth and highest status are in a position to restrain or threaten their unfaithful wives. For one thing, they can afford to forfeit more than one bride-price, and can thus divorce their wives (according to Nupe Mohammedan law) without invoking elaborate public proceedings. Besides, wives and paramours would hesitate to provoke the enmity of these powerful personages. It is not unnatural, then, that (as my informants said) the wives of these men supply the only example of unimpaired marital fidelity in Bida—another no less striking instance of 'double morality'.

If the older married men are either resigned or complacent, the younger men see in illegitimate adventures only an exciting and tempting aspect of Bida life. We shall meet later with their ideal, the dashing young man 'about town' who can 'have' all the women he wants and can boast of his conquests. The women who avails herself of the loosened marriage ties may be talked about and called (behind her back) a 'bad woman'—*nyizagi banza*, a 'worthless woman'. But in their ordinary behaviour towards these women, when meeting them in the street or in the house of a mutual friend, the men will never fail in their respect towards them or betray by a sign their moral prejudices. This ambiguous attitude is symptomatic of a society which, though still conscious of its traditional dogmatic appreciation of chastity, is yet adapting itself to a spreading laxity of morals.

There is indeed evidence to show that sexual licence has been greatly increasing in the last generation or two. But there is also evidence of the fact that sexual licence on a smaller scale and within strictly defined limits enjoyed a legitimate existence in traditional Nupe society. The anomaly of public morals which would condemn sexual licence yet at the same time sanction it in a certain well-defined social domain is familiar to the student of society. In Nupe as in all other societies this qualified admission of sexual licence is due to various social causes. A first cause lies in the nature of sex itself, namely, in the reaction to the restraint on all pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations which characterizes the traditional sex morality of the people. Another cause is the large floating population in Bida, composed of traders, warriors (formerly), labourers (to-day), that is, men who come to Bida without their wives and depend on prostitution for the satisfaction of their sexual appetite. A third cause is embodied in the institution of female trade. We shall see later that women's trade involves a loosening of matrimonial and family ties and tends to become identified with licentious living. In female trade Nupe society thus has grasped a ready occupational framework for that domain of sanctioned

[1] Clear evidence of this is the scarcity of divorce cases, which form two-thirds of all court cases in Bida, from the houses of the nobility.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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562 837 831 sexual licence towards which the other social forces appear to be driving. The result is the close association between professional female trade and semi-professional licensed prostitution which we can observe to-day.

562 837 831 842 Yet admission into this 'domain' was in turn made dependent upon a certain qualification, namely childlessness. Here we can add a final, ideological motive to the social causes behind the moral development. It is embodied in the Nupe conception of barrenness as a state outside conventional morality, and its contribution is twofold: it helps to define more narrowly the group in which sexual licence shall be sanctioned, by making sterility of the women a criterion of admission; and it provides at the same time the spiritual framework for such social sanction, by linking it with certain religious or quasi-religious beliefs. To some extent the ideological association between barrenness and sexual licence can be reduced to certain obvious rational motives, which are, in fact, present in the minds of the people: childlessness is of great advantage in the life of the women traders whose profession involves constant travelling and long absence from home; moreover, the sexual indiscretions of sterile women are socially of less consequence than those of other women, being comparatively safe from discovery and precluding the more disturbing legal complications (i.e. birth of illegitimate children). But the social interpretation of barrenness also expresses certain more deeply [581] rooted beliefs. To the Nupe marriage has no real meaning without progeny. Barrenness is regarded as a great curse and misfortune, and many cults and forms of magic are designed to secure fertility of the women or to cure barrenness. Traditional religious beliefs place barren women in a category apart and exclude them from participation in the most important annual cult of the country, the *gunnu*.[1] As the barren woman fails by the common standard of marriage and womanhood, she is also exempted from the standards of common morality. Adultery and unchastity count less in her than in other women. And although the stigma of immorality would still attach to the unchaste barren woman (she would still be called a 'worthless woman'), it would be, as it were, overshadowed by and fused with the other paramount stigma of barrenness itself.

The growth of sexual licence far beyond its traditionally sanctioned limits is again due to various causes, economic, political, and religious. The primary cause appears to be economic and will be discussed in that context. Its effectiveness, however, is greatly strengthened by the political and social factors which foster what I have termed the 'double morality' in Nupe society. We can also see that the Nupe conception of barrenness must itself indirectly aid these tendencies and defeat the limitations which it was meant to uphold. For in a country with spreading sterility and even birth restriction, a religion which withholds its sanctions of matrimonial morality in the case of childless women can prove but a weak bulwark against the tide of sexual licence. Mohammedanism in Nupe, committed as it is to that 'double morality', undermines rather than supplies forces of moral restraint.

[1] For a description of this aspect of barrenness see *J.R.A.I.* 1937, p. iii.

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A comparison between sex morality in the town and in the villages will bring the final proof of our interpretation of the social causes of moral laxity and publicly condoned sexual licence. For in the villages, where the political and economic factors to which we have attributed this development are much less conspicuous than in Bida, sexual licence in this sense is absent also. The same informants who declared that there were no 'good women' left in Bida maintained that the opposite was true of the country. Within limits, this is correct. Semi-professional prostitution is absent and adultery is far less frequent than in Bida. Above all, it is not glossed over for fear of publicity and ridicule: it leads to quarrels and frequently to divorce. Nor are illegitimate amorous adventures applauded and bandied about. The more closely knit village life renders sexual promiscuity both more difficult and more risky, and the danger of provoking serious conflicts forces it into the sphere of clandestine and disreputable activities. The ideal of the Bida Lothario is absent in the Nupe village.

It is largely true to say that among the peasant women also the Bida ideal of the glamorous 'fast' woman finds no following. Or, more correctly, it finds no following among the peasant's wives and daughters who have chosen village life. For especially in the larger trading-places there is a certain (increasing) minority of women who leave the village to join the army of 'loose' women traders. However, they do not introduce their ways into village life itself. To quote again from my informants: 'Peasant women are on the whole better wives than our women in Bida. You see it when you come to a village: you will not find women with whom you can sleep. But who would want to sleep with them? They are badly dressed, they do not wash, use no scent, and smell of sweat. There are a few exceptions, though, for example the women in the house of the chief of K.'—referring to a village in which the chief's family was in many ways emulating the standards of Bida life. There is good sense in these cynical (though not cynically meant) remarks. Hard work, lack of leisure, the inability to afford nice dresses or the help of cosmetics, make the peasant woman comparatively unattractive; she ages more quickly than her more fortunate sister in town. It is not surprising that she should come short of the sophisticated urban standards of taste. If the peasant woman thus succumbs less to temptation, it is also true that less temptation comes her way. Having chosen peasant life she can but choose peasant morality also. The different sexual morality in town and village is thus essentially an expression of differences in economic conditions and of inequality of wealth and status.

It is tempting to dwell on this relation between economic and political factors and the attitude of the society towards the problems of sex and morality. There has been the tendency in recent anthropological writings to regard the elaboration of the sex theme in different cultures, the temperamental and personality traits which, in a society, appear associated with sex, as the expression of some ultimate quality in culture itself —the genius or *ethos* of a culture. That women in one society are 'gentle' and 'aggressive' in another, that one culture regards them as masculine workers and another as feminine mothers or partners in love,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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is all due to the mysterious workings of that genius of culture.[1] In a criticism of these views I have pointed out that the sex morality which a society makes its own and the whole *ethos* which its culture expresses are largely functions of the economic conditions prevailing in the society.[2] Of this the preceding discussion has, I think, provided conclusive evidence.

[1] M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament*, pp. 298, 310, and *passim*.
[2] 'The Typological Approach to Culture', in *Character and Personality*, 1937, p. 280 et seq.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER X

GOVERNMENT IN MODERN NUPE

OFTEN in the foregoing description I have used the present tense as if the Nupe kingdom of pre-British days still existed. True, this was to a large extent an historical chapter; yet it described a development the results of which are still valid and still mould society to-day as they moulded it thirty, fifty, or even a hundred years ago. I was not merely reconstructing dead events and past phases. The Nupe kingdom and its society still exist, not only very vividly in the memory of the people but to a very large extent in concrete reality. This is not denying the force of social changes, but stressing the tenacity of a social structure that survives although its contents have changed materially. The recent economic and political changes have affected fundamentally the 'contents' of the social life of the country, the main interests and incentives round which it revolved. There are no more wars, raids, and conquests; slaves and feudal fiefs exist no longer. But ranks and titles and state offices linked with ranks and titles, still exist. Slaves have turned into *bara* or Native Administration officials; fiefs into administrative districts in the charge of royal princes. That the framework of the political organization could survive almost unchanged is in large measure due to the Administration of Nigeria under Indirect Rule and its tendency to utilize as far as possible the traditional social system. But a stronger proof of the tenacity of the Nupe social system is the fact that where the Administration had departed from it and tried to make way for a new development the old trend broke through, undeflected.

Two years ago the Administration built a new official residence for the *Etsu* Bida, with a brick wall, an imposing tower, a garage, and a flower garden—an emblem of modern Nigeria. Incidentally, for all its modernity the new house is but a replica of the hereditary palace of the Nupe kings, with special *katamba* for the *ena Ndeji* and *ena Maiyaki*, for *gitsúži* and *bara*, the *ena manži*, the men of the *Etsu Dogari*, and the commoners who come to wait on the *Etsu*. Now, this new house was built on 'neutral' ground, outside the town gates, as a symbol of the Government's intention to break with the division into three royal houses, which the Government considered harmful to the unity of the country.[1] The Administration believed itself to have overcome successfully the opposition of the late *Etsu*. An old and sick man, he was reported to have said—and his words were all over Bida—that he had agreed to the new site only because he knew he would not have to live in the new house. Which was true enough—he died before the building was finished. But the new *Etsu*, who willingly took up his residence in the splendid new house, one day surprised the District Officer by demanding that his 'proper house' in Bida, in his 'own' part of the town, should be put in repair at the expense of the Native

[1] See p. 93.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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177 Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the
642 Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official
643 nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida
648 Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúži* and *sarakiži*, or more precisely by those *gitsúži* and *sarakiži* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

645 The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiē*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiē*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaži*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934–6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiē* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

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Etsu Tafiẽ had been in pre-Fulani times the chief of the 'aboriginal population' of Nupe, the Beni tribe[1]—a justification which, as this chapter has shown, takes into account, out of the whole complex social structure of the kingdom, but one comparatively irrelevant fact: an external historical connexion with one isolated village community. Typical of what I have called the 'parochial outlook' of the village, the *Etsu Tafiẽ*, bearer of one of those 'petty village titles', having reached this new position through no acknowledged channel of 'social career', seems out of place in a council on which he could hardly hold his own against the traditional leaders of the country's fate, the highest ranks of the Nupe hierarchy. The insignificant role which I saw him play on the council seems to support my view. 645

Bida Emirate is divided for the purpose of administration into a number of districts; at the head of each is a District Head, appointed by the *Etsu* as a rule from the ranks of the higher royal nobility; he himself, as *Nágenu*, was formerly District Head of the Jima-Doko district (see table, p. 95). Some time ago the number of districts was reduced from ten to seven by amalgamating certain districts, making the area in charge of one District Head rather larger, and perhaps also more heterogeneous, than might seem advisable. Here is the list of districts and rank-holders appointed as District Heads. 634

List of District Heads

Former Districts	*Present Districts*	*District Heads*
Gbangba	Gbangba	*Nakorji*
Dakmon-Magwe	,,	,,
Badeggi	Badeggi	*Ginya*
Kacha	Kacha	*Sheshi*
Jima-Doko	Jima-Doko	*Nágenu*
Sakpe	Kutigi	*Kpotũ*
Egbako	,,	,,
Labodi	,,	,,
Mokwa	Mokwa	*Rani*
Kyedye	Kyedye	*Kuta*

Two District Heads are not members of the royal nobility: the *Kuta* of the Kyedye, whose privileged position as a provincial chief directly under the *Etsu* had been recognized in the early days of British rule and had been renewed recently by the Administration, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha, who was appointed in 1934. He had been the hereditary village chief of Kacha, and his appointment to an office which had been held previously by the *Mahũ*, a royal prince, was designed, like the appointment of the *Etsu Tafiẽ*, to open responsible state offices to the Nupe 'commoner'. Unfortunately this appointment was once more based on insufficient knowledge of the country. The territory over which the ancestors of the *Sheshi* used to exercise their rule as 'town-kings' of Kacha has been placed in the political rearrangement of the country mostly into a different Division, the Agaie Emirate. Also the town and

[1] See p. 25.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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634 territory which he is called upon to rule to-day, the richest trade centre of the country, is inhabited to a very large extent by strangers, traders, craftsmen, and canoe-men from other parts of the country, many of them from Bida, that is, by people who reluctantly bow to the rule of a culturally 'inferior' peasant chief. It is not surprising, therefore, that his administration of the district proved unsatisfactory, and that the *Etsu* felt justified in urging the District Officer to reinstitute in this responsible office a member of his own class.

The District Heads live in their districts; they reside in the largest town and hold there their little court, an exact copy of a nobleman's household in the capital. They have to make frequent tours of inspection of their area, and at regular intervals they visit the capital to report to the *Etsu*, especially at the time of the great Mohammedan festivals when all officers of state assemble at the king's court. District Heads are sometimes transferred from one district to another, but the tendency to-day is to let them stay in one district as long as possible so as to become thoroughly familiar with the people and the local problems of administration. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their districts, their main task being the supervision of tax collection; but they are also charged with such non-political tasks as finding pupils for the elementary schools of the Emirate. Their subordinates in the administrative machinery are the various Village Heads of the district, of whom we have heard already.[1] The District Heads are further assisted in their work by a staff of official and semi-official helpers—scribes, messengers, policemen, and the host of *bara* and henchmen who attach themselves to every man of rank.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

633 621 The administration of Bida town has undergone many changes in the thirty or forty years of British Administration. The original system was based to some extent on the division of the town into a number of 'wards', each associated with an influential member of the Bida nobility. The town was divided into twenty *efu* (or, as they were known officially, *ungwa*—the Hausa word for town ward); five of these wards were grouped together as one large *ungwa*, and these four *ungwa* were placed under four men of high rank: *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Galadiman Gari*, and *Gabi Seidi*. The four *ungwa* bore no relation to the dynastic division of Bida into three *ekpā*; their arrangement simply followed the four main roads which cross the town from north to south and east to west. However, the four rank-holders in charge of the large *ungwa* as well as the other subordinate ward-heads in the small *ungwa* (or *efu*) were actually living in the part of the town over which they had been placed; the link of locality which is so relevant in Nupe life was thus recognized officially. Later, however, this system of ward-heads lent itself to certain abuses, bribery and extortion of tax-money; it was abolished by the Administration and replaced by a new system which now divides the town into four

[1] See p. 52.

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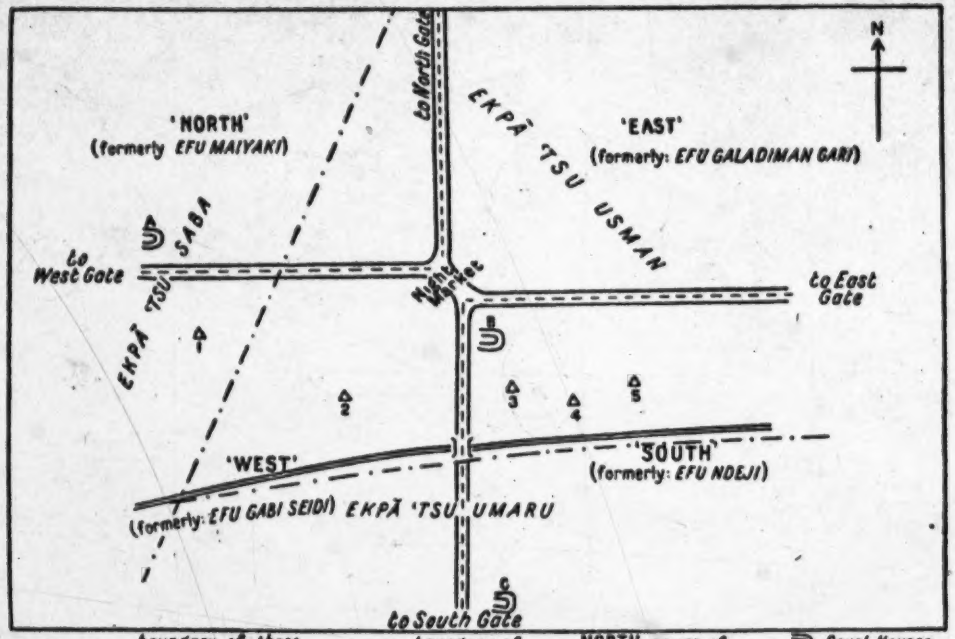

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633 *ungwa* (the same four *ungwa*), defined geographically as Bida North, South, East, and West. Four new officials were appointed who are no
621 longer inhabitants of 'their' *ungwa* but are supposed to be jointly responsible for the whole town, irrespective of their personal connexions with one or the other locality. The Hausa and Yoruba communities of Bida, who live in *Idlemi*, were placed under their own ward-heads. These six officials form the present Town Council. A royal prince, the *Natsu*, was appointed as its chairman, and at the same time as the representative of the *Etsu* on the Town Council. The attached sketch-map illustrates the changes in the town administration.

633 A certain inner weakness of this system becomes apparent at once. It lies in the disregard for the factor of locality and for those direct contacts and bonds of 'protection' and personal attachment which alone establish in Nupe a relationship of mutual confidence between the social classes, between ruler and ruled. It is not surprising therefore that the new division into four geographical areas 'did not work', and that in 1936, only three years after its introduction, a fundamental reorganization was contemplated.[1]

TAXATION

651 The taxation of the Emirate is fixed by the District Officer, who tours the country and, assisted by District Head and Village Head, assesses the income of the various villages and districts. The tax unit is the village area.[2] The distribution of the tax among the people of the village and its dependencies is left to the Village Head and his elders. Taxation varies partly from district to district and is also different in town and country. Complaints against too heavy taxation, or reports on defaulting, are forwarded through the District Head to the capital, that is, to the Emir's Council and the District Officer. Tax defaulters can be imprisoned.

Of the total tax revenue of the Emirate (to which are added fines, licence fees, &c.) 30 per cent. goes to the Central Government of Nigeria and 70 per cent. to the N.A. Treasury.[3] From the N.A. share in the revenue are paid the salaries of all (native) N.A. officials, the expenses of all Public Works for which the Emirate is responsible, the maintenance

[1] In a memorandum for the reorganization of the Bida Town Council, which I drew up on the request of the Administration, I have suggested (1) a town division based on the division into three *ekpâ*, which is so eminently characteristic of the social life of the kingdom, and (2) a system of election of ward-heads by the people themselves. The latter would, in my view, utilize and render more valuable the channels of personal connexion between patron and client, trusted 'protector' and the ignorant, intimidated commoner who still feels that he could only benefit from the association with a man of rank and learning.—A paper on the same subject was published in abridged form in the *Summary of Lectures*, Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1937, pp. 97–8. See also p. 123.

[2] Lord Lugard, Colonial Reports Misc., No. 40.

[3] This scale corresponds to the position of Bida Emirate as a First Class Emirate. In 1935–6 the scale was slightly altered in favour of the N.A. share, because the building of the *Etsu*'s new official residence—a typical item of N.A. expenditure—would not have been possible without this additional revenue.

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of N.A. Hospital and dispensaries, schools, experimental farms, &c. Part of it is used to build up and maintain a substantial reserve fund to be used for unforeseen expenses, in the case of a famine, and suchlike. The apportionment of the tax revenue, above all the allotment of funds for new enterprises, is subject to the joint approval of *Etsu* and District Officer. It is, in fact, in matters of this nature that the harmonious collaboration of the two men is often put to its most severe test. 651

The far-reaching social change that the introduction of modern taxation has meant for Nupe kingdom cannot be easily exaggerated. The universal taxation under British rule has completely overthrown the former prerogative of tax exemption enjoyed by the nobility and the population of the town. It is not surprising therefore that these people should still strongly resent this abolition of their privileges. But those who resent it most strongly are not the men 'on the top', but rather the people of inferior status, such as guild-heads and Bida craftsmen, who had not been recompensed as many of the others had been in the share-out of new, well-paid official posts. The old guild-head of the Bida woodworkers once quite violently insulted and attacked me, and with me all White Men, for having robbed him of his former status and privileges. 'Formerly', he shouted at me, 'the other craftsmen would come humbly to my house prostrating themselves before me and would present me with gifts to show their loyalty. To-day I have to pay the same tax as they—can you wonder that they have become arrogant and simply ignore me?' One would expect, then, that peasants and small craftsmen and traders would appreciate the equalizing effect of the present system. This is not wholly so—partly for reasons to be explained presently, but partly also because the change had done away with the former system of voluntary gifts on which so much of their social security used to depend. By these gifts they established a personal link with the men of rank and influence, on whose assistance they could count in many situations when such assistance was of utmost importance. These situations have not and perhaps never will disappear completely. It is not surprising that the people cannot yet fully appreciate the 'impersonality' of the modern system, nor realize fully that in return for their tax-money, paid to an 'impersonal' Administration, they receive things no less valuable than the former personal link with powerful individuals: public security, law courts, roads, hospitals, schools. 651 565

Taxation is the most sensitive spot in any governmental system. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that the administration of taxes proved the most dangerous stumbling-block on the path of the young N.A. Native official after official, often in the highest position, has lost his post, and even gone to prison, for embezzling tax-money or levying illicit dues. However, there are two more serious weaknesses inherent in the taxation system—more serious because affecting more deeply the inner structure of the society. 651

The first concerns the (in my view) disproportionately high taxes in the Emirate. Bida Emirate as it exists to-day is not a rich country, the masses of the people are not well off; the discussion on the economic system will bring ample evidence of this. Nupe country is in this respect

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651 much less fortunate than, for example, the neighbouring Emirate of Ilorin, a much richer country, yet paying lower taxes. One at least of the reasons for the high taxation in Bida Emirate appears to be the high cost of the N.A.[1] To compare it again with Ilorin: there, with a much higher revenue, the expenditure on the Emir's court and the salaries of the higher N.A. officials are almost the same as in Bida.[2] To understand how such a situation could have come about we must envisage the historical frame of mind with which a Government committed to the policy of Indirect Rule is often tempted to approach the problem of administration. Historically, Nupe Emirate was one of the most important Emirates in the north of Nigeria. Culturally it still is so. Politically, however, it has shrunk to a small country, shorn of many of its former dependencies (e.g. the whole south-west bank of the Niger with the rich rice-growing district of Patigi and the large town of Eggā). Long wars and longer political unrest have impeded its economic recovery. Yet it could hardly be made anything else but a First Class Emirate, and its ruler had to be given the corresponding status, weighing heavily though it does on the country's revenue.

The second weakness lies in the method of assessment. The tax in the more advanced areas of Nigeria is—in theory—an income tax. But how, one is tempted to ask, can any native District Head and group of Village Heads acquit themselves satisfactorily of such a formidable task of assessment? In Bida town, where District Officers themselves have computed incomes and taxes, the taxes are sadly out of proportion with the income (at least to-day, after the economic depression of 1932–4). In certain cases where property and capital are easily assessable some sort of rough approach to an income tax on a sliding scale is possible, e.g. among the Kyedye canoe-men where the amount of tax can be assessed in accordance with the number of canoes owned by an individual. But among the large majority of the people whose taxable income consists exclusively of farm products such a method must fail. The result is a qualified poll-tax assessing the tax per head of the population but admitting two or three different grades: the higher tax is paid by able-bodied married men roughly between the ages of 22 and 50, the lower by men younger and older than this. Children, women (unless they are independent traders), and old men or invalids who can no longer work are free from tax. Now, whereas the traditional productive unit among the Nupe peasants is embodied in the family, taxation takes into account only the individuals. At the time of my stay in the country the last tax-receipts made out for the whole family, to be paid by the family head—as one can imagine very large receipts—were disappearing rapidly, giving

[1] A British trader who knew the economic situation of the country intimately framed his impression in the following words: 'The overhead expenses of the N.A. are too high.' Bluntly expressed though it is, the statement is far from unsound.

[2] In Ilorin, with a revenue of £28,885, the salary of the Emir is £2,250, and the salaries of 17 District Heads amount to a total of £2,539 (an average of £149 per head). In Bida, the revenue of which is £18,161, the Emir's salary is £2,000, and the salaries of 7 District Heads amount to £1,110 (an average of £159 per head). *Nigerian N.A. Estimates*, 1936–7.

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way to the (much smaller) tax-receipts made out for individuals. It is, in fact, the present official policy of the Administration to encourage the issue and acceptance of individual tax-receipts throughout the country. Taxation thus ignores and even denies in its own powerful province the existence of the family unit—with what results we shall see later. 651

LAW

Let me try first to give a picture of the judicial system of Nupe kingdom as it existed in pre-European times. This is, naturally, an historical reconstruction. But the history to which it refers is not the history of a mythical past. It is a history well documented, and obtained from information which seems reliable and significant and which, collected from different sources, shows remarkable agreement on all main points. My chief informants were village elders and chiefs and the Mohammedan judges of Bida Emirate who, in charge of modern jurisdiction to-day, have witnessed and partly practised themselves the old system. 671 124

The theoretical difficulties with which the student of law in primitive cultures is faced are absent in our investigation. The problem, especially, whether to define the province of law on the narrow basis of systematic social control exercised by a politically organized society (Radcliffe-Brown) or, more comprehensively, as embracing all social sanctions that make for uniformity of conduct (Malinowski), is decided for us by the nature of the society which we are studying in the sense of the former essentially modern interpretation. Law in Nupe kingdom is quite conspicuously a concern of the political organization and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. This does not mean that no sanctions or forms of redress exist which are applied outside the political framework and left to the more diffuse workings of public opinion and individual or group 'self-help'. But the scope of this non-political (or extra-political) law is extremely restricted. It comprises only two types of offences: religious offences—desecration of sacred objects or places, both Mohammedan and pagan—and kinship offences—litigation over inheritance, offences against traditional marriage rules (i.e. marriages in forbidden degrees), and also incest. I cannot describe here in detail the treatment which Nupe society meted out to individuals guilty of these offences. Suffice it to say that public ostracism which might force the culprit to self-exile or to confidence in his vindication by the deity was its main feature. The society thus exempted from its otherwise comprehensive scheme of formal political jurisdiction the two offences which were either of a nature transcending human justice (as in the case of religious offences, and also partly incest) or concerned only internal frictions in individual kinship groups. All offences that affected the relations between kinship groups or individuals from different kinship groups, and all crimes against human life, were regarded as a concern of the community at large. 671

But the comprehensiveness of political jurisdiction admitted of two degrees. Traditional Nupe law operated with a legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between 673

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693 civil and criminal law, defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts, which were settled by 'repairing' the damage that had been done, and here the Nupe did not speak of sentence or judgement but of *gyara*, reparation, or arbitration; and graver delicts, 'criminal' cases in the modern sense, which called for formal judgement and punishment—*sheri'a*. The following table summarizes the various crimes and offences according to this twofold classification. Let me emphasize that these data are widely known, and that every village elder or older man in Bida is able to enumerate and explain the types of offences and the nature of the punishment. This wide-spread legal knowledge is clearly the psychological counterpart of the systematic co-ordination and centralization of Nupe jurisdiction.

Offences involving *gyara*	Offences involving *sheri'a*
Debts, small.	Debts, large.
Theft on a small scale and during the day; theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.	Theft on a large scale, theft of cattle or horses, and all theft committed during the night.
Adultery.	Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
Seduction of girl by unmarried man who is willing to marry her.	Seduction by married man who refuses to marry the girl.
	Murder and manslaughter.
	Highway robbery.
	Arson.
	High treason, i.e. rebellion of feudal lords against the king.
	Lèse-majesté (*gi tokó nyá tsu*, lit. abuse of the king).

692 The first type of offences was a matter for the local authority. In the royal domains it was dealt with by the chief and the elders, in the fief by the delegate of the feudal lord who resided in the village, in consultation with chief and elders. The sentences which this local tribunal could inflict were fines, flogging, and *shelá*, a practice closely akin to pillory: the culprit was marched through the village accompanied by drummers who proclaimed his offence.

The graver crimes, crimes which demanded *sheri'a*, were referred to the central authority—the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. They were, in fact, also called *leifi nyá tsu*, 'crimes of the king'. This highest court of Nupe could inflict sentences of every order, above all, the death penalty. The offences were brought to the notice of the central authority 694 through the feudal lords and delegates. The villagers would report to their overlord in the town, or the feudal lord would have the news from his local delegate, and would then inform the supreme court of Nupe. The criminal was apprehended by the king's slave police and taken to the capital where the court was sitting. This system which made the 696 feudal lords and delegates the 'recorders' of crimes and offences laid itself open to many abuses. The feudal lords could be influenced in favour of a better paying claimant, or prevented by bribes from reporting a particular case. The usual procedure as regards, for example, theft or debts was described to me thus: Up to the value of 10s. nothing

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.' 696

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *sheld*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1] 671 563 696 565

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law. 694 687

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial 692

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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692 control further and further in the course of time into domains of social life hitherto unaffected by state law. This extension proceeded on two planes: centralized control superseding local jurisdiction, i.e. moving the line of division between 'offences' and' crimes', and formal political law usurping domains that had been left originally to the informal workings of public opinion or self-help. An instance of the former is the treatment of witchcraft: we have heard of the secret anti-witchcraft society which the Nupe villagers could summon to detect and punish witches, and we have heard also that this secret society was brought later under the control of the Fulani rulers of Nupe. An instance of the second form of extension appears to be the treatment of adultery. Informants told me that formerly, at least in pagan communities, adultery was dealt with, not by legal measures but either by a religious sacrifice meant to safeguard matrimonial sanctity, or by self-help on the part of the husband, who was within his rights to beat up the paramour whom he caught *in flagrante*, strip him of his clothes, and drive him out into the street naked.

Now this strengthening of state jurisdiction is understandable from the viewpoint of the dynamic state endeavouring to extend its control over new groups and new aspects of social life. But here we note the rather surprising feature that there are indications of the subject groups themselves having welcomed and invited the extension of state jurisdiction. I was told in Mokwa that during the Fulani régime fathers of headstrong sons sometimes appealed to their feudal lord, and that the latter would lend his authority to the more severe forms of domestic punishment (i.e. flogging). This official cognizance of what is essentially a 'family affair' clearly represents an incipient stage of state jurisdiction. It is only one step from this appeal for moral support of the official organ of the state to a full acceptance of political jurisdiction in the sphere of kinship offences or litigations, for example litigation over inheritance or divorce, which has become reality to-day. How are we to explain this readiness on the part of the people to surrender the sanctions of custom and self-help to state jurisdiction?

The explanation lies in the evolution of the divided legal authority which had made this development inevitable. Two competing authorities of different range of power existing side by side and concerned with the same or closely similar domains of social life must be in danger of frustrating each other, as individuals dissatisfied with the decisions of one may be tempted to obtain help from the other. The elimination or (as in Nupe) surrender of the weaker authority is the result. Family heads could maintain their paternal authority only by appealing for support to that authority which had superseded their own in other social domains. We may formulate it almost as a social law that an expanding system of jurisdiction, once it begins to supersede another weaker system of jurisdiction, is bound to expand further; culture change in this sphere appears to be carried on by its own momentum.

But inevitable as is this development, so are the conflicts inherent in it. The surrender of new domains of social life to the judicial authority of the state means potentially surrender to an alien law. In our example

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the family heads invited the intervention of the political authority in the interest of preserving the existing code of conduct. But once this extraneous authority is admitted, it will have to be obeyed also should its decision run counter to the traditional code. Moreover, the rival authority may be appealed to equally by individuals or groups dissenting from the traditional conceptions of right and wrong. Ultimately, the issue will depend on whether the representatives of state jurisdiction are prepared to uphold customary practices and codes of conduct, or are committed to promote a uniform state law. The trend towards close political co-ordination and centralization must greatly limit the scope of such concessions as might be granted to the divergent legal conceptions in the various subject communities. The extension of state jurisdiction over new domains of social life may thus come to mean the substitution of existing traditional codes and doctrines by a new uniform state law.

I have stated this as a hypothetical case, being unable to produce concrete evidence to show that precisely this development occurred in the case of the various delicts and offences over which we found state jurisdiction already firmly established. I can only point to certain evidence of the reaction of group sections against what must have appeared to them as an excessive unification of the law, namely, certain attempts to change state jurisdiction back to independent local jurisdiction: thus the chief of the Kyedye is reported to have obtained from *Etsu* Abubakari the right to exercise full and independent jurisdiction in his tribal group; and the people of Sakpe and Kutigi claim to have been granted a similar legal franchise by *Etsu* Masaba in exchange for heavier taxation. However, the progressive extension of state jurisdiction and the trends underlying this development are still visible and effective in present-day jurisdiction, to which we shall turn presently. They appear, characteristically, in that domain of social life which was the last to be absorbed by state jurisdiction—kinship—and concern the relation between the spreading modern state law of Nupe, Mohammedan law, and pagan customary practice.

Before we describe modern jurisdiction in detail we may examine for a moment the causes of the spreading of Mohammedan law in Nupe. It has no doubt been consciously fostered by the Mohammedan rulers of the country. But to some extent Fulani rule, still in British times, appears to have avoided excessive legal unification by allowing for customary pagan law—the 'straight judgement' in the case of pagans. Here, however, we find that the same effects that accompanied the 'divided authority' occur again in the case of the 'divided law'. The coexistence of two legal systems, one backed by the prestige and supreme power of the rulers of the country, the other reserved for the pagan subject groups, is again reduced to uniformity, the 'stronger law' ousting the 'weaker law'. We have concrete data to illustrate this process. The Mohammedan judges used to ask the parties appearing before them whether they were Mohammedans or pagans. The large majority proclaimed themselves Mohammedans, and desired to be tried according to Mohammedan law. Administrative Officers in areas where pagan and Mohammedan courts exist side by side also said that the people would generally prefer the Mohammedan court. They explain

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671 this attitude as due to the reluctance of the people to be classed with the more backward sections of the population. But there is also a more fundamental reason. Offences and litigation involve by their very nature dissension from established rules of conduct. It is thus often in the interest of offenders and litigants to dissociate themselves from traditional justice and to appeal to the rival law existing in the community. We shall see that in certain extreme cases the 'divided law' almost puts a premium on dissension from the traditional concepts of right and wrong.

692 In modern Nupe, then, Mohammedan law is paramount. The legal administration of the country is entrusted to *Alkalai*, judges trained in Mohammedan law, who reside in Bida and in the districts. The District Courts, of which there are seven in Bida Division, are courts of a lower grade—in official terminology, 'grade C courts'—that is, they are entitled to deal with civil cases involving fines up to £50 and criminal cases involving imprisonment up to six months, in case of theft up to twelve months. Bida town possesses a 'grade A court', the chief *Alkali*'s court, which combines the two different functions of a local court for the town and an appeal court for the districts. It has unlimited jurisdiction over all cases which under the Native Courts Ordinance are subject to the jurisdiction of Native Courts, i.e. excepting such cases as sedition, charges against Europeans, treason, trial by ordeal, and corruption of officials. The jurisdiction of the Bida Court also excludes homicide cases—an exceptional limitation which was imposed upon Bida after the disturbances of 1931. The *Etsu* with his councillors forms another 'grade A court' which deals with cases concerned with land, and constitutes at the same time a higher court of appeal for cases from the districts. The District Officer represents a final court of appeal for all cases. Cases excluded from native jurisdiction come before the High Court, which sits from time to time at the Headquarters of Niger Province, presided over by a professional British judge.

695 It is interesting to dwell for a moment on the description of a Native Court in action. Picture the court building: a spacious round house, with a gallery running round its outer wall. The *Alkali* has his place on a raised platform near the wall, books and papers spread out before him. On the floor, leaning against the platform, his assistant is sitting. In the Bida Court there are also scribes who take down the minutes of every case. Ushers, messengers, and sometimes policemen are standing at the doors. The Bida Court sits daily from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m., the District Courts whenever there are cases. The court procedure is very rigid. Plaintiffs and defendants are squatting in the centre of the court room, facing the judge, their hands folded in their laps; to rest one's hands on the ground means disrespect towards the *Alkali*. The place of witnesses is to the side and back of the plaintiffs and defendants. Women must sit in the outer gallery (at least in cases concerning divorce, adultery, and suchlike); they speak through a small window in the wall. You will recognize at once the peasant from the country: he sits there shy and frightened, often quite bewildered by the questions of the judge; often too, he has to be reminded to raise his voice, which is almost inaudible.

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COURT HOUSE IN BIDA

THE *ALKALI* OF MOKWA

[facing p. 170]

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695 But in the Bida Court temper may run high, especially when people of standing and wealth are involved who not infrequently will argue and remonstrate with the judge. I have seen judges lose their patience with such unmanageable parties, shout at them and threaten them with punishment for this 'contempt of court'.

692 Before the pretentious Bida Court with its office hours and fixed rules of procedure, its crowd of subordinate officials, assistants, scribes, ushers, policemen, a multitude of cases are brought daily which fit well into its up-to-date routine: offences against the by-laws of a modern town (riding a bicycle without light, or riotous behaviour in the street or the market, &c.) and all the various disputes bound to occur where you have an intensive trade, complicated money transactions, and suchlike. But before the same court come the cases (and in this book we are only concerned with these) that are the expression of tensions and conflicts of the society in its old unchanged form—cases of inheritance, divorce, witchcraft. The extension of native jurisdiction over the problems and conflicts of a modern urban community, which is merely a question of applying jurisdiction and executive under the guidance of the British Administration, is of less interest to us than the progressive penetration of formal political jurisdiction into the domains of traditional native life, which is a problem of legislation that the native society must itself solve. In this, the modern Native Court is the legitimate heir of the pre-British system of law—heir both to its strength and its weakness.

692 We may say that the modern legal system is both more comprehensive (embracing, above all, the domain of kinship) and, viewed from the
671 standpoint of the groups which submit to its jurisdiction, more alien than the old system. To explain this we must for a moment go back to a question discussed previously. I have said that every extension of a uniform jurisdiction and legislation over new social domains involves potentially the substitution of a new law for original codes and conceptions, and thus a certain disparity between the recognized law and the culture of which the old conceptions were an expression. This disparity is clearly a phenomenon of transition: every society will tend in the course of time to eliminate such a hiatus—either by reacting against the expanding judicial system and forcing it to adjust its too extravagant claims (we shall presently encounter instances of this)—or by completing that process of cultural assimilation of which the co-ordination of legal concepts represents only one aspect. We may assume that our table of jurisdiction in pre-British times, which shows a certain system of law firmly accepted throughout the society, refers to aspects of culture in which this process of mutual assimilation has been completed. Whether or not my hypothesis is historically correct, we must admit that where the process is still in motion, where the politically-backed law is only just extending its hold over new domains, the disparity of which I have spoken must be visible. This is indeed the case to-day, when Mohammedan law is being applied to kinship offences.

671 It would go beyond the scope of this book to study the relation between Mohammedan law as it is practised in Nupe and the traditional
182 concepts of kinship conduct and kinship rights and duties. I may be

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allowed to reduce this relation to a simple formula: if the former is born of the social conditions of an urbanized stratified society and reflects the specific concepts of property and morality which have evolved there, the latter is typical of the peasant community, its economic pursuits, its values and interests. The Mohammedan law as it is applied in Nupe has undergone a number of significant changes in the comparatively short period of Fulani and later British rule. The knowledge of the more important changes (e.g. in the treatment of seduction and adultery) has spread throughout the country and the changes remain linked in the memory of the people with the names of the judges who were their originators. Some changes are regarded as good, others as bad, and accordingly judges have earned or forfeited the reputation of being 'wise men'. The lawgivers themselves have been aware of the necessity of bringing their extraneous legal machinery into at least partial harmony with existing conditions and conceptions.

Here a new aspect of the 'disparity' between law and culture reveals itself. The very fluidity of this evolution of a new legislation must remove the law from the orbit of the average citizen. He is no longer able to keep track of it as he could when the legal system could be reduced to the short list of 'civil offences' and 'crimes of the king'. I have encountered ample evidence of this kind—erroneous beliefs of individuals as to particular laws or forms of legal procedure. Some ten or fifteen years ago unscrupulous judges made use of the ignorance of the peasants and prosecuted, for 'neglect of their parental duties' the parents of girls and young men suspected of illegitimate sexual intercourse. The repercussions of this abuse are still felt, and many peasants dare not bring a case of seduction before the court for fear of being fined themselves. A conspicuous evidence of this gulf between the law and the people is the continued practice of peasants and commoners to seek out a Mallam or a person of standing and have him accompany them to the court when they are about to commit themselves to the vagaries of an unknown law.

The disparity between law and culture is naturally most marked in the slow-moving peasant communities, where social and economic conditions diverge most fundamentally from the social life of which Mohammedan law is an expression. Here the unfamiliarity of the judges, who come from the highest families of the kingdom and who are Bida born and bred, with the local situation and specific customary practices (e.g. marriage rules) may add yet another source of conflict.[1] Even the religious emblems upon which the Nupe were wont to take the oath are absent in the modern District Court which, instead, is using the Koran.[2] Pagans will always be ready to swear by the Koran if asked to do so by

[1] Some of the local *Alkalai* may be very reluctant to regard themselves as permanently attached to their station. They may be hoping for a speedy promotion, eventually to the court in Bida.

[2] In a court in the Nupe district of Ilorin Province a very enlightened *Alkali* used both Koran and the 'chain of Tsoede' to do justice to Mohammedans as well as pagans. In this as in similar respects much depends on the personality (and special training) of the individual judge.

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the *Alkali*, said one of my informants, and will think nothing of perjuring themselves. 671 182

Let me quote a significant instance. An Ebe man had refused to let his daughter marry a Hausa whom she loved, having a different suitor from Ebe country in mind for her. The Hausa brought the case before the *Alkali* of Kutigi (some 50 miles away); the *Alkali* instructed the father to give his blessing to the marriage on the grounds that the Koran decreed that no father should stand between two young people who loved each other. The father swore an oath to that effect on the Koran and returned home. But after a month the Hausa came back, reporting that the girl's father had renewed his opposition to the marriage. Three times they were summoned to court, and three times the father agreed in the presence of the *Alkali*, only to revoke his agreement afterwards. At last I happened to be in the court and asked the man if perhaps the Ebe disliked letting their daughters marry outside the sub-tribe or tribe. Evidently relieved, the man said that this was indeed the case. Curiously enough, the girl, who had till then stubbornly maintained her desire to marry the Hausa, declared that she would obey her father as soon as the customary marriage rule was brought up in the court.

This example also illustrates the effects of what I have called above the 'divided law': the girl and her suitor, well knowing that if they submitted to the customary law as it was upheld by her father and most probably the village elders would not be able to marry, appealed to the Mohammedan court, whose decision, as they anticipated, was favourable to them. Here we see what I have mentioned above—that in districts in which the customary conceptions of law still obtain, modern legislation puts a premium on breaches of the traditional usage. This is shown most clearly in litigation over inheritance. According to Mohammedan law the property and land left by a family head should be divided equally among the sons; traditional rules of inheritance hold that land and property should be inherited by the younger brother, and that sons and brothers' sons should stay on the land working under the heir as under their sociological father. This rule expresses the interest of a farming community in maintaining landed property so far as possible intact, while the Mohammedan rule does justice primarily to owners of movable property, money, trade goods, or cattle. Now, for reasons which we shall examine in a later chapter modern economic developments have led increasingly to the adoption of the Mohammedan solution. But were individuals still to attempt to enforce the traditional rule, dissatisfied family members could easily obtain a reversal of this decision by appealing to the Mohammedan court.

Again we observe the effectiveness of the 'social law' which we have formulated above, that a stronger law ousts a weaker law. The existence of the divided authority which favours 'dissenters' from traditional law, must force chief and elders—the guardians of traditional usage—to surrender in ever larger measure the authority which they are still holding to the stronger authority of the state law, even to invite its intervention—as did the family heads who appealed to their feudal lord for support of their paternal authority. It is important to emphasize this, as 671 182 692 622

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many Administrative Officers think it desirable that the village chiefs and elders should continue to practise their informal arbitration side by side with the existing official courts. Our data preclude the likelihood of such a parallel development; they show that the tendency is rather towards the virtual surrender of one to the other. We have heard that in the present-day judicial arrangement the Village Head is expected to send all legal cases which cannot be settled by arbitration to the District *Alkali*'s court. Now I have found the chiefs quite satisfied with this state of affairs, which freed them of the responsibility in more serious cases. Some seemed, in fact, quite frightened at the idea of taking over this responsibility themselves, and were only too ready to leave a larger and larger proportion of their judicial tasks to the professional judge. 'To-day', a chief said to me, 'people want written judgements in such cases as divorce, inheritance, debts; *ama mi de taharda à*, but I have no papers to give.' ('Papers' are only the modern symbols of the more powerful and more permanent authority wielded by state jurisdiction; in his own words the chief expressed the essence of that principle of 'divided authority'.

Shall we acquiesce with the chief in these results of an inevitable process of change? I think not. Politically, the chief is divested already of much of his former power. To divest him also of all judicial authority is to deprive him of the last vestige of the most vital prerogative of his office, which is the enforcement of a certain line of conduct upon his community, and to sanction all deviations from it as acts detrimental to the welfare of the community. It would amount to turning the chief completely into a petty executive official, entitled only to carry out orders, but with no right to voice public opinion. Besides, the disregard for local customs by the professional Mohammedan judges is felt as a real hardship by many. Even if more change is on the way, bound to promote the final assimilation of Mohammedan law and customary practice, its pace should be set by the people themselves, and not by an alien, uninterested judge. In the nature of things the solution must lie in a compromise. In my view the best compromise would be to vest the Village Head with the right (and, more important, the duty) to act as an assessor in the court, with full consultative authority, whenever cases from his community are brought before the *Alkali*.[1]

This does not contradict what I have said in a previous section about the 'parochial outlook' of the village chief. The parochial outlook may unfit him for responsible posts in the administration of the Emirate at large, such as District Headship, which call for a wide view and an appreciation of policy on, as it were, a national scale. But it is just this parochial outlook which qualifies the village chief eminently for dealing with legal cases, bound up as they are with local conditions. However, there is a wider issue involved in this question—the most intricate problem which modern administration has to solve, the problem of centralization versus local autonomy.

[1] This solution is envisaged in the Native Courts Ordinance, which leaves it to the discretion of the Native Court to appoint assessors from the ranks of village chiefs and elders.

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PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION

The description of the political system of modern Bida has illustrated the relation between the social structure of Nupe society and the new Native Administration, the points of harmony as well as of divergence and conflict. I have just formulated one of the graver conflicts; we recognize it as one of the central problems of this analysis, the problem of cultural and social diversity versus political unification. 178

Modern conditions have re-designed the cultural map of Nupe country. Roads, railways, and river steamers demarcate new areas of communication and intercourse. The scope of economic co-operation has widened immensely, far beyond the political boundaries of Nupe. Important trade centres, nuclei of a new, cosmopolitan Nigeria, with their large colonies of strangers, have arisen on railway lines, motor-roads, near river ports or river bridges: Badeggi, on the railway, is such an example, or Baro on railway and river, and Jebba where the railway bridge crosses the Niger. New cultural centres are forming in the villages which are the seats of District Heads, Native Courts, schools, dispensaries, and trading-posts of the big merchant companies of Nigeria. But this development above all emphasizes anew the cultural and social gulf between Bida and the country. Bida is more than ever the seat of 'civilization' and learning, art, and fashion, the residence of the wealthiest traders and of the new ruling class—the salaried officials of the Native Administration. Bida harbours the highest school of the Province, a hospital, the workshops of the Public Works Department which give employment to many, the large 'canteens' of the European trading companies. It represents again, on a new plane, the 'core' of the kingdom, the area of social life close to the 'powers that be'. Modern Nupe has re-defined the old conflict between cultural diversity and political unification, it has not eliminated it. In the political sphere the Government is attempting to do justice to this vital problem by admitting commoners and peasants to responsible offices in the central administration. I have ventured to point out certain weaknesses inherent in this experiment. But the question of the success or lack of success which is likely to meet this administrative experiment is less significant than the fundamental question which of the two principles of social and cultural development these administrative reforms are envisaging, a strengthening of unification and centralization, or support and preservation of the social identity of village communities and cultures. The former tendency has been the trend of the historical development of the Nupe state (as of any state); it has also become almost an accomplished fact in the other spheres of present-day development, in economic progress and in the centralization which is part of educational and health policy. The choice is thus, I think, in reality taken out of the hands of the Government. But whatever policy is adopted, it can, for the present, mean little more than a preliminary arrangement. The final solution cannot be found in the realm of political organization; it will arise—and this our survey of the political history of Nupe kingdom has taught us—from cultural commonness itself. One of the main instruments for achieving this cultural

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178 commonness in modern Nupe is planned *education*. A twofold plan of education: an ever-increasing spread of general education, disseminating the elements of modern civilization which so far have remained a prerogative of the few, among town people and villagers, people of rank and commoners alike; and also a reformulation of the higher education in the capital, so as to make it less specialized and bring it more into harmony with the culture of the country at large, to make it less an expression of exclusive, class-conscious 'town culture', and more an instrument of understanding for Nupe, writ large. Only when this development is complete will the rigid, exclusive class boundaries be dissolved; only then will the *tálaka*, the Poor One, be able fully to stand on his own feet, to have his share in the administration of his country, and to dispense finally with those links of clientship and patronage which so far have been his only weapons to overcome the vulnerability of his position. On this new plane the question of centralization *versus* independent local administration may then be reopened, and with more prospect of a permanent successful settlement. A peasant once said to me: 'I send all my children to school, then they will be able to read and they will know what it says on tax-receipts and fine-tickets. No more cheating or extorting money then!' Put it in this crude and a little aggressive manner, or call it education as a 'means of cultural unification', it means the same thing.

In the town and its rigidly stratified society our problem takes a slightly different form. The question how to transform exclusively political domination into a system with more equal, more 'democratic' distribution of political influence and responsibility reappears as the problem of social mobility. The social mobility of the Nupe class system, restricted as it was under traditional conditions, has been restricted further and at the same time diverted into new channels by the modern development. Of the vast bureaucracy of the kingdom only comparatively few ranks and offices could find a place in the new society and could thus maintain together with the symbols of rank their social significance. True there are a number of newly-created offices and posts under the newly-created Native Administration: the post of *Ma'aji*, Treasurer, posts as teachers in Middle School and elementary schools, posts of clerks, scribes, N.A. 'Mallams', messengers attached to the various offices, and so forth. But the more important of these modern posts demand modern education, which at present has been enjoyed only by a small minority. It is a convincing proof of the fact that this minority is still to a large extent drawn from the classes of the nobility that almost all important N.A. offices, down to scribes and messengers, are in the hands of what have been for a century the privileged classes of Nupe.

War, the paramount factor of promotion and inter-class mobility, has disappeared; free competition, individual success, are almost excluded as channels of a social career. The system of offices is more exclusive to-day than it had been in feudal Nupe. The comprehensive scheme of promotion which used to embrace the whole scale of Nupe society is reduced to insignificance by the exigencies of specialized training and by

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the changed conception of office and responsibility. The Administration itself is undecided in its attitude to the question of promotion and career. Certain distinguished state offices were granted in accordance with the traditional conception of a social career, that is, to men who had attained a high position on the native rank scale. Such are the appointments of *Maiyaki*, *Ndeji*, and the Town Councillors of Bida. But other offices have been bestowed *ad personam*, for special ability, irrespective of the traditional rank or promotion. Thus, a former Head Teacher of Bida Middle School was raised to the position of something like a 'Chief Secretary' of the Emirate, and given the (Mallam-) title *Naibi*. Or the *Nágya*, a member of the *gitsú* nobility, has been made a member of the Emir's council, although according to traditional practice membership of the *Etsu*'s council was reserved for the *sarakiši*, the military or civil ranks. The only promotion with universal application (and sure of universal appreciation) is promotion in salary. Fixed wages have become almost the only officially recognized symbols of social career. How then will class distinctions and inter-class movement re-establish themselves in modern Nupe? How will the native society adjust its conception of those paramount values in their cultural life, promotion, and status to the new situation?

The attitude of the people towards these questions is ambiguous and undecided—the typical attitude towards changing values. It is interesting to study the attitude of the young men of to-day, including those who have enjoyed the highest education the Emirate can supply, in Bida Middle School, towards the occupations which are open to them. It seems of little account to them whether they obtain the position of a clerk, an office messenger, or some other obscure post, or whether they are called to fill the post of a teacher or a responsible political official, as long as their appointment carries a salary. Again and again men of intelligence and high standing have said to me: 'All our native ranks and titles mean nothing to-day; what has meaning are only offices under the N.A., posts which carry real influence and wealth.' Yet it would be incorrect to infer from such statements as this that the traditional system of ranks and the whole concept of promotion and mobility are losing their vitality and significance. The class distinctions of Nupe are reduced to-day to distinctions of status devoid of their former economic and political significance; what seems to have remained intact is only the outer shell, a rigid empty structure. Yet I have often been surprised to see how little the meaning of this structure has been affected.

When I was in Bida a rich trader was just making all possible efforts to entrench himself in the position of a favourite of the king, and he was put down accordingly by 'those who knew' as the next candidate for promotion to a *saraki* rank. I have seen three vacancies occur among the higher ranks of the nobility; I have witnessed the ensuing party feuds, the passionate play of interests, the bartering for support and influence —all these signs of a changed social atmosphere which can be characteristic only of a system still intensely alive. And one of those enlightened, sophisticated informants who deprecated the traditional ranks and titles was the hero of the following story: I have just mentioned that the

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178 former Head Teacher of Bida Middle School, a very able (though unscrupulous) man, had been attached for some time to the Administration in a very distinguished official position, with the title of *Naibi*. When he was dismissed from his post for malversation the new Head Teacher definitely expected to be appointed *Naibi* and even approached his superior officer officially to help him secure this post, to which, according to precedent, he felt entitled. This example is deeply characteristic. It shows that that fundamental trend in Nupe society is still alive: it reveals the anxious search for traces of a routine of promotion to which the people had adjusted their life, and the eagerness to rediscover in the new society in which they are living the paramount social value of their culture.

If the restriction of social mobility and the reduction in the number of official positions under modern rule have caused this moral uncertainty in the ruling classes, indirectly they threaten to unsettle the morale of the people at large. Not only because they render promotion from the lowest orders of the society so difficult, but because they have thrown out of gear the whole machinery of inter-class relationship. Many of the channels through which public opinion—the desires and grievances of the people—used to find its way to the ears of the rulers of the country have been rendered useless; clientship and similar forms of political attachment can no longer promise protection when the large majority of the men whom native society had endowed with status and rank can no longer claim any official standing. Or rather, the channels still exist and still continue to function in their way, but they have been forced underground, and they function in the subterranean sphere of intrigues and scheming. The Government, supporting those whom it has appointed, cannot stoop to recognize an authority resting only on the fluid, ill-defined loyalties involved in patronage and clientship. The former wide distribution of political influence, combined with the system of comprehensive promotion, had secured a fairly efficient 'balance of power', and this 'balance of power' the powerless masses could turn to their advantage through the institution of clientship. The rigid present-day system ranges its authority exclusively behind the few men to whom it entrusts its offices; it must brand all other efforts at political influence as disturbing and even dangerous.

I have a concrete case in mind: a man of highest status in the native society, highly educated (in the Mohammedan sense), who was regarded by a large number of people, in the town as well as in the districts, as their patron and adviser in many questions. However, holding no official position, he was regarded by the *Etsu* and his entourage as an interloper, an unwelcome meddler in state affairs; and an over-cautious Administrator described him officially as a 'subversive element'. In a sense, he was that; he had been forced into this position, since the influence which he attempted to exercise in favour of his clients and followers had to work outside, and not infrequently against, the established system. Yet had the rigidity of the present system not excluded him from an official position I have no doubt that he would have been able to use his influence over the people to the benefit of the country.

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I need not enlarge upon the dangers of such subterranean activity—subterranean through no fault of the people themselves. The terrible flare-up in the witchcraft trial of 1931 is a lesson not easily to be forgotten. A remedy? I have suggested one above, couched modestly in a footnote: bring these channels into the open daylight; let the people themselves elect, periodically, at least in Bida town, their official representatives—Town Councillors in official nomenclature, People's Representatives in a wider sense. 178

That the people are equal to this task I need not elaborate further; nor would the group of likely candidates be too large and thus render an election difficult. The dangers involved in the solution which I suggest —the dangers of faction politics and intrigues—would be easily controlled once the whole network of relationships lies on the surface. However, one might object to my suggestion on the ground that it tends to keep alive the serf-like link of patronage which should rather be discouraged. To this I would reply, first: the personal link of patronage, little as it may appeal to the modern moral conscience, is for the present the only link of political representation that promises success. For the masses of the Nupe people as they are to-day, unenlightened, only too conscious of their weak position, economically and socially, it would be futile to attempt to find representatives in their own midst—they would be puppets in the hands of the experienced and infinitely better equipped ruling group. And second: a solution such as I have suggested would be most easily adapted to improved social conditions, that is, to a community with a universally higher level of enlightenment. Much more easily, in fact, than a system with carefully selected representatives whose position of confidence among the people is never put to a test. For the solution here suggested looks towards the future; it embodies one of the most vital elements on which the social achievements of the native peoples will finally depend, namely, political education—that training in political responsibility to the achievement of which the colonial policy of this country is irrevocably pledged.

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CHAPTER XI

ECONOMICS: RESOURCES

121 ALFRED MARSHALL, discussing possible definitions of Economics, says: 'The less we trouble ourselves with scholastic inquiries as to whether a certain consideration comes within the scope of economics, the better.'[1] If any student of society is entitled to follow this practical advice it is the anthropologist. Clearly, his working definition of economics must be as wide and fluid as possible. In his field every fact referring to what Marshall would call the 'business side of life' must claim his attention; even apparently irrelevant details in the technique of production, exchange, or consumption may be significant because new and not hitherto examined under the aspect of economic problems. Such a wide definition of economics must do justice to three realms of facts: (1) the primary resources, in the sense of the physical substratum on which all productive activity ultimately depends; (2) the technical processes and forms of group organization which make up production in the narrow sense, i.e. which actuate and bring into existence the resources; and (3) the specific needs that exist in a society and on the satisfaction of which the efficiency of a productive system must prove itself.

This, then, will be our definition of the realm of economics: the utilization of resources for the satisfaction of culturally (or socially) standardized needs. The description of the needs themselves, elements of culture as they are, is part of the general description of the society. The relation between resources and the satisfaction of the needs will be examined under the heading of Economic Balance. In the description of the technical processes, however, we shall have to limit our field. In accordance with the general theme of this book we shall be concerned more with the group organization involved in production than with technology proper; we shall view productive labour under the aspect of human occupation rather than under the aspect of technical development. The description of the primary resources and their distribution will form the subject of this first section. It will examine above all that primary and ultimate resource of every productive system, savage or civilized, land.[2]

[1] A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1930, p. 27.

[2] For various reasons I have thought it better to omit from this book a discussion on hunting and fishing. Hunting is indeed of little importance in the present-day productive system of the country; it has been reduced everywhere to a secondary additional activity in the nature almost of a leisure-time occupation. In some parts of the country (e.g. in Bida and surroundings) hunting has disappeared altogether. Fishing stands in a different category. It is of paramount importance in the riverain area. But a description of the greatly varying fishing techniques in use in Nupe country, and of the very specific forms of labour organization involved in fishing, would lead too far. For the economic system of the country at large fishing becomes important in so far as it produces one of the most highly valued trading-goods of the country both in local and export trade. This aspect of fishing will best be discussed at a later stage, in the chapter on trade.

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POSSESSION OF LAND

In the discussion of the rights to land obtaining in Nupe two facts must be borne in mind. First, the Fulani conquest, which resulted in the appropriation of part of the vacant tribal land; and second, the very low birth-rate and sparse population of the country. These two factors limit each other's effectiveness; moreover, they affect different parts of the country in different measure. We have seen that the appropriation of tribal land took place only in the area east of the Kaduna (Cis-Kaduna).[1] In the area west of the Kaduna (Trans-Kaduna),[2] land-tenure on the traditional tribal or village basis still obtains, and here the population factor shows itself effective in that it eliminates almost all pressure on the land and all more severe competition for landed possession. Owing to the political factors the opposite is true of Cis-Kaduna, and here a complex system of land ownership and land transfer, which in the extreme case amounts to outright purchase for money, reflects the attempts of the people to counteract the pressure on the land. That land disputes are extremely rare in Trans-Kaduna, but very frequent in the 'conquered' territory, is evidence of the same development. One exception may be mentioned at once: the especially valuable marsh-land groves and plots near river-courses, which the Nupe call *bata* (the Hausa *kurmi*). Disputes about this valuable kind of land occur now and again even in the land-rich Trans-Kaduna, and they are fought with special bitterness in Bida and the crowded 'conquered' territory. The following figures may be quoted in support of this statement: in the years 1934 and 1935 24 cases of land litigation came before the *Etsu*'s Court in Bida; 21 referred to Cis-Kaduna and 3 to Trans-Kaduna; of the latter none was a land case in the narrow sense of the word—one was a dispute about trees, and two were disputes over marsh-land plots.

The description of Nupe land-tenure may start most profitably with an enumeration of the various methods by which a man, stranger or native of Nupe, may acquire land or has been able to acquire land in the past. It must be said first of all that under traditional conditions only men can hold or claim possession of land. The dynastic policy of the Nupe kings has first led to women being invested with fiefs and landed property. Mohammedan law, besides, is inclined to confirm land holding by women in their own right. But the holding of land by women is still extremely rare, and limited to Bida and the surrounding districts I have come across one case only—a court case in which sons and brothers of a recently deceased woman contested the inheritance of her landed property. Needless to say, none of the parties concerned were peasants; the land had been acquired first through the channels of clientship, and the present claimants—Bida Mallams—wanted it only in order to sublet it for profit.

To return to traditional land-tenure. For a Nupe man who comes

[1] The territory between Kaduna and Gbako river, i.e. Beni country, and the districts east of the Gbako river, i.e. Badeggi and Kacha districts.

[2] Trans-Kaduna is the literal translation of the Nupe name for the area: *Lanuakpá* (*Lovun* being the Nupe name for the Kaduna river).

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425 from farming stock, that is, whose family is holding land already, the usual way to acquire land is to exercise his claim to a parcel of the land that is held jointly by the family group, and which is administered and apportioned by the family head. This would be the procedure, for example, in the case of a young member of the family who had founded a family himself and now requests land for a farm of his own. More or less the same situation would arise in the case of a stranger, a native of Nupe though not of the particular village, or even a native of Nigeria (a Hausa or Yoruba) though an alien in Nupe, who, having been adopted into a household, may request land on which to settle. There is, however, the possibility that the family land available at the time is insufficient; or there might be a man desiring land whose family had not held land previously or had lost the claim to the land, e.g. through overlong absence. Here two main methods offer themselves: first, the man desir-
[621] ing land can exercise his right as a member, native or adopted, of the village community to request land (possibly additional land) from the chief, which may be either land that has been under cultivation previously but has fallen vacant, or virgin land within the village territory.
427 Second, he can acquire new land through an arrangement with an individual landlord (using the term here in the widest sense); in other words, he can lease land temporarily for a rent in kind—a method known in Nupe as *aro*, 'borrowing'. In both these methods the land thus acquired is inalienable.

A third method closely related to borrowing is a lease for life or for an indefinite period, in most cases against a single payment in money to which is added a fixed rent in kind. This arrangement, which definitely recognizes the money value of land, may be tantamount to real purchase. Fourth, there exists hereditary tenantship, which gives the tenant absolute right over his land, including the right to dispose of it again or sublet it. This tenantship I shall call (for reasons which will become clear presently) *secondary* tenantship. It implies not a fixed rent but a share in the produce—a form of métayer system.[1] Finally, there exists a *primary* tenantship, in which a landlord who himself owns the land by the right of conquest or appropriation may cede complete and absolute rights over land to another person, Nupe or stranger, in recognition of (political) services rendered; here again a share in the produce is implied. The last two methods form part of the feudal organization of the Nupe state.[2]

425 We have thus five methods of land acquisition, which fall in two main
427 categories: (1) Acquisition in virtue of membership of a group (kinship

[1] See A. Marshall, op. cit., p. 643.

[2] Different from these traditional methods of acquiring and transferring land is the method of land-tenure under the Native Land Ordinance Act, which, adjusted to modern requirements, involves the lease of native land to non-natives, i.e. non-Nigerians (a merchant who plans a trading-station, a missionary who intends to build a school or church, &c.). In such cases application for a lease of a parcel of the land that has been retained as Crown land must be made to the Administration. This method, and all questions entailed in it, will be disregarded in the following. It is, in fact, of very little significance in Nupe country where no commercial utilization of land and no settlement of non-natives exist.

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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna. 425 427

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*latí*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cikã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'. 021 423

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village 621 361 [343]

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociźi wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-e*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

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621 'colonies' or *tunga*. The *tunga* thus possesses land in its own right, but at
361 the same time pushes its territorial possessions further into no-man's-land.

Access to Village Land

621 There is no general rule for the distribution, within the area of village
423 land, of the farms belonging to the various family groups and individuals. Roughly one may say that the small individual plots (called *bucá*—a term to be explained presently) are situated near the village and the larger family plots (*efakó* plots) farther afield. When old men own plots of their own they, too, are given plots near the village so that they should not have to walk too far. The different plots which belong to the group of people living together in the same house (as a rule, a single family group), whether the plots are worked jointly or independently by the various household members, do not necessarily lie together, but are frequently scattered. Nor have the people who live together in the same *efu* their land on adjoining sites, or in the neighbourhood of the part of the village where they live. We may add that, again, there exist no special signs or boundary marks to distinguish the property of different farmers. A narrow path, a border of shrubs, or a tree, serve as landmark.[1] But the different cultivation that may be practised on the different fields, or the different stage of cultivation which the different fields may represent (fallow land, land that has been worked for one year, or two years, &c.), make these boundaries more obvious to the eye.

This irregular distribution of farm-plots appears to be due to a variety
242 of causes. To some extent it is entailed in the complex agricultural tech-
423 nique of the country, with its many different types of cultivation and its regular system of rotation of crops. Every farmer owns a certain number
621 of fields—some under cultivation while others are lying fallow—which he tries to distribute over different sites so that he can utilize different types of soil, e.g. the marshy sites near watercourses for the cultivation of rice or sweet potatoes, dry sandy soil for ground-nuts, heavier soil for yam and cotton, and so forth. This arrangement also has the advantage of distributing more evenly the risks of failure. You often find farmers complaining that one site on which they have a farm is less good than another, or has perhaps suffered special injury that year through birds or through thieving baboons, or has been washed away by a flooded river. But the irregular distribution of farm-plots is also a result of the very method of Nupe settlement: it could not be otherwise with the farm-land lying in a circle round the large villages in which a numerous population is concentrated. There would not be room enough for all family groups in the village to have their lands arranged in compact blocks in equally favoured positions, both with regard to the distance from the village and to the quality of the soil. Moreover, some plots more heavily worked than others 'tire' sooner and must be replaced by virgin land lying farther afield; and growing families must provide more land for their

[1] A characteristic exception are a few marsh-land plots near Kacha, which are properly fenced in—'because of the many disputes' that arise over this kind of land.

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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed 423
to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is 621
to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that 423
a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a 621
junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect 423
to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of 622
his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift [431]
to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The
annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid 423
to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the 622
chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three 651
bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nisa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

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423 622 [651] *albárka* (lit. blessing), a gift meant to express the 'blessing' that lay on the land which the family received from the chief.

Another expression of the chief's control over the reapportionment of land is that all land of families or branches of families which have died out, and similarly the land of families who have emigrated, falls back to the common fund of land reserve administered by the chief. The period within which the land of emigrants still remains theirs is fixed everywhere in Nupe as three years. After that time the chief is entitled to reapportion the land. Should an heir from the emigrated group return after a longer period, he could (like any other stranger) claim land in the village, but not as a rule the same land that his family had held previously. The dying-out of a family, or a branch of a family, seems a fact not easy to establish and always open to doubts in a social system in which small sections repeatedly split off the main body of the family. There is always the chance of an unexpected or belated claimant turning up, representing a distant branch which chief and elders may no longer have reckoned as likely to identify itself with the original family. But this is mainly a theoretical speculation; there occur few such cases in Nupe —none in Trans-Kaduna, where land is plentiful and vacated plots unlikely ~~to be much competed for.~~

[597] In Cis-Kaduna I witnessed an interesting case of this kind. A family head in Doko had died, leaving a small boy, who was then adopted by a childless brother of the deceased, living in a *tunga* on a farm of his own. The boy grew up on this farm and lived there contentedly until recently, after more than twenty years, the chief reapportioned the apparently unclaimed land that had belonged to the boy's father to two elders of high rank, the *Lile* and *Shaba* (both of the chief's family). Not until then did the young man return to Doko and make a formal claim for his ancestral land. But political motives rather than economic interest were behind this move; the parties in this case were, again, the chief of Doko and young Ndakó Gana, the 'dispossessed' descendant of the line of original chiefs. The chief had reapportioned the land in order to blot out the last visible connexion between the 'pretender's' family and the chieftainship of Doko; and the young man disputed the reapportionment on these very grounds. In the end he received back some of the original land and other new land in addition.

Here we discover a new significance in the apportionment of village land—its connexion with the bestowal of rank or office. This is not surprising in the communities (such as Doko) where the village ranks, like the land, remain in the possession of one 'house'. Later, we shall see more clearly, in the discussion of inheritance, that the Nupe kinship system tends indeed to couple attainment of family headship (which goes with rank) with inheritance of ancestral land. Considering, however, that the ordinary village land does not differ widely in quality and productive value, we can understand that this political aspect of land ownership is rather obscure—save in a case such as the one just quoted where political aspirations have attached to a specific property more than its proper share of symbolic significance. The political aspect becomes more prominent in connexion with a natural resource that shows this

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difference in quality and value to a much greater extent, namely, fruit-bearing trees. 423 621

In most districts the chief has a special title to certain economically valuable fruit trees wherever they grow, on vacant land or on people's farms. In Doko and Shebe this special chief's tree is the locust-bean, in Kutigi and Wuna the oil-palm. In Mokwa there exists another regulation, namely, that all shea-nut and locust-bean trees inside the town belong to the chief, while the trees outside are the full property of the man on whose ground they stand. Also there is in many places the general rule that no fruit tree on village land may be cut down without the special permission of the chief. Sometimes family heads exercise a restricted right to the 'chief's trees' growing on their land, i.e. they return two-fifths of the crop to the chief and keep the rest. But the chief may also grant the full possession of these trees as a separate right; thus he bestows the property of a certain number of valuable trees on an individual—young or old—as a recognition of higher civic status, together with the promotion to rank and title. The right to the trees, coupled with the rank, remains the property of the 'house', conditional upon the renewal of the appointment (to the same or a similar rank) after the death of each holder.[1] The shea-nut trees—to-day of considerable commercial importance—occupy everywhere in Nupe a special position. The trees on vacant land (virgin village land or no-man's-land) are common property. The women who collect the fruit go out in small parties and share the crop among them. The shea-nut trees on occupied farm-land belong to the owner of the farm.[2] In either case the exploitation of the crop is the exclusive prerogative of the women. [554] [562]

A few words may be given to a special variety of village land, the plots that are situated in the village itself, round the compounds and between the village *efu*. This land is owned by the people who live in the compounds adjoining the plots. Its inheritance and apportionment is ruled by the same regulations as the inheritance and apportionment of the houses themselves and will best be discussed in a later section. The land inside village and town differs only in one respect from the village land without: it is never left uncultivated. Manured as it is by the refuse from the houses it can be used continuously without the necessity of being left fallow for a period. If the owner of such plots leaves the village or the town and does not return for some time, leaving no one behind (which has happened frequently in Bida during the last twenty years), the neighbours will use the farm-plots; they are always ready,

[1] A certain complication arises when the modern official Village Head is not identical with the traditional chief, for the former may assume control over the land only, not over trees—he may indeed not possess any 'chief's trees' himself, at least not at the time of his appointment. There is no evidence as yet to show how this contradiction will be solved in the course of time—except an indirect evidence to be mentioned presently (see p. 189, n. 2), which tends to show that this separation of land- and tree-rights is allowed to last for several generations.

[2] The facts mentioned here will correct the statement made by some students of West African agriculture, that 'shea-nut trees are generally regarded as entirely common property' (O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, *West African Agriculture*, 1933, p. 27).

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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may
621 return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on
425 request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have
621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to
[431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the
[431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who
609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now
621 the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted
425 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first
651 *dzanká*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who
[177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankd* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankd* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsozi*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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423 No junior family member, even when already holding *efakó* land in his
622 own right, may claim any share in the produce of the fruit-bearing trees. Only succession to the family head's position implies the usufructory right to the trees that stand on his or any other parcel of the family land.

Borrowing of Land

427 Land can be borrowed only for limited periods, as a rule for periods from two to five years, that is, in order to help a temporary shortage of land. The family heads or other 'landlords' arrange the transaction between themselves, not necessarily informing the chief, but always in the presence of witnesses who should be able later to testify to the nature of the transaction. Every landowner who has enough land is ready to 'lend' it in this way. In Trans-Kaduna the transaction is regarded as a friendly act, a 'helping out', quite natural between neighbours or fellow villagers. The borrower pays annually a fixed rent in kind, as a rule one bundle of millet or sorghum. In Cis-Kaduna the transaction gains a definite commercial significance: the borrower pays a small sum of money down, varying with the quality of the land (from 8*d.* for about one acre of ordinary land to 2*s.* for a much smaller plot on valuable marsh-land—the highest amount paid I found to be 6*s.*), and again the annual rent of one bundle or the equivalent in money.[1] In one case I found that regular farm-work for the owner of the land had taken the place of the annual rent in kind.

427 A landlord is free to cancel the lease before it has lapsed if the tenant is not working the land—as happens frequently; the court would con-
425 firm his right to do so, only ordering him to return the initial payment. But it may also happen that the landlord dies or emigrates while the lease is still running, or that for some other reason the lease is not recalled. In such cases the lessee often continues to work the land, although he has naturally ceased to pay the annual rent; he even comes to regard the land as his own whether he is working it or not, till one day it may be demanded back by the original owner or his heirs. In Trans-Kaduna, where no long-term transfer of land exists, any evidence as to the nature of the original transaction will at once settle the case. In the conquered areas of Cis-Kaduna, where land is let and sublet, and where short leases and leases for an indefinite period coexist, it is often difficult to establish clearly whether temporary or permanent lease had been arranged originally, specially when the witnesses of the original contract have died. What type of lease was originally intended is shown by the amount of the initial payment, whether it was high or low, that is, a 'real' payment, or only a *kyutá*, a gratuity. The latter, combined with a repeated rent in kind, establishes the nature of the temporary lease, the *jī aro*, 'borrowing'. But the continued working of the 'borrowed' land, and the failure of the original owner or his heirs to call in the lease, clearly alter the situation considerably. The attitude of the court in such

[1] Characteristically this annual rent is called in Bida—quite logically—*dzankd* 'tithe', but in the villages *kyutá*, 'present'.

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disputes is this: if the original owner or his heirs had allowed the rent to lapse without calling in the lease, and if the other party can prove that he has worked the land for a long period, this is generally considered sufficient evidence that the original owner has abandoned his claim to the land, whether the new owner is at the time actually working the land or keeping it as reserve. Long occupation is thus recognized as tantamount to ownership. In summing-up a land case in 1935 the *Etsu* Nupe said: 'We do not agree that a man should be evicted from the place which he has been working for a long time.' And in another case, heard in 1934, the claim of the new 'borrower' to the land was confirmed by the court 'because of the many years the farm had been in so-and-so's hands'. 427 425

Litigation about 'borrowed' land comes up constantly before the court in Bida. This is a typical case: A. suddenly demanded back two farms which his grandfather and father had 'lent' to another man, because A. was going to be married and needed the land for himself. He based his claim on the fact that only *aro* had been intended, although the rent had been allowed to lapse. Evidence of the original transaction was difficult to obtain, so the court suggested the following compromise: the transfer of the farm of A.'s grandfather was confirmed, but the farm which A.'s father had 'lent' to the other man the latter was ordered to return—a decision which is again based on the length of occupation. The lack of precision in the concept of land-borrowing in Bida and Cis-Kaduna is illustrated still better by the following case, not itself a court case, but, as it were, a typical potential cause for such land-disputes. A certain rich Mallam had 'borrowed' land from the *Cece*, a *bara* of L., a nobleman of high rank. He had paid 8*d*. down, and every year one bundle of sorghum as rent, for five years. The *Cece* died in the meantime, and the present owner maintained in discussion with me that the land was his and could be inherited by his sons after his death. When I discussed the case later with the *Alkali* he confirmed my suspicion that this was not so; the land could in theory be recalled any day after the five years by the heirs of the *Cece*. But the *Alkali* admitted that this may not be the case for ten or even twenty years; by then the rent would have been allowed to lapse and the details of the original transaction would be difficult to establish. [691] 427

In the course of the Fulani conquest certain farms which were at the time without a definite 'owner', the original owner having emigrated before the lease had lapsed, and the lessees having ceased work on the borrowed farms, were simply appropriated by the Fulani landlords within whose territory this 'ownerless' land was lying. 427 425

Trees are included in this short-term lease or 'borrowing'. But the strength of this regulation, in harmony though it is with the general principles of Nupe land-rights, has been weakened under present-day conditions. Economic stress has made fruit-bearing trees a very valuable resource, and farmers have in a few cases ignored the traditional practice, giver. away trees with the land, and even 'lent' trees independently of the land they stand upon. This sort of temporary transfer of trees is a simple means of obtaining money quickly (for example, for the payment 427

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427 of tax): the owner of oil-palms or locust-bean trees would sell a year's yield of his trees to another person, who in return would pay the tax for him. The issue is still more confused where the transfer of the land with which the trees go appears to be in the nature of a lease for an indefinite period. In this case the original owner or his heirs could claim that the trees, at least, were essentially inalienable, and could be transferred only temporarily, that is, could only have been 'lent' and 'borrowed'. This is itself a compromise, and the attitude of the court in these disputes constitutes a further compromise. In 1934 a farmer had ceded a farm-plot with locust-bean trees on it to another party. After the death of the original owner his heirs reclaimed the trees (though not the land) on the plea that the transfer of the trees could in the nature of things have been meant only as a temporary transfer. The decision of the court was that the new owner should share the crop, fifty-fifty, with the former owners.

Long-term Lease and Purchase

[184] 425 We come now to forms of land-ownership which are typical of Bida and the conquered areas east of the Kaduna and which are almost completely absent in the Trans-Kaduna districts.[1] Among the people of Bida town who derive their livelihood from the land, a few descendants of the original Beni population still own land under tribal conditions, that is, under the conditions described under the heading of village land. Their farms are scattered over the land around Bida—the village land that used to belong to the old, pre-Fulani Bida. But most of this land had been expropriated early in the conquest, under one or other pretext, and the former owners and their descendants had left Bida and moved into the country to other villages or *tunga* settlements, where they found vacant land. Thus of the descendants of the Beni 'town-kings' of Bida only Ndakotsu, the eldest of a number of brothers, had remained in Bida and continued to work the small plots that he had been able to keep; the other brothers had left the town and settled in the country.

Long absence, or the dying out of a family branch, too, gain a totally different aspect here in Bida, as compared with conditions in the village. For the vacated plot is as a rule at once appropriated by one of the big landlords whose lands may surround it, or possibly by one of the three royal houses on whose territory the plot may lie. The latter procedure was, as we shall see, the practice in pre-British times and in the early days of British rule. A somewhat similar case happened during my stay in Bida: a Bida man had returned to the town after a long absence and, claiming his old land, found that it had gone to another man. According to Nupe customary law he had forfeited his right to the land, having been away for such a long period. However, the customary law is not adapted to cope with conditions as they obtain in the town and in 'conquered territory': for here no spare land exists that could be offered to

[1] The exceptions are a few *tunga* settlements which some Bida noblemen have founded outside the 'conquered territory', for example on the Wuya-Kutigi road. There are no *tunga* of this kind west of Kutigi.

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the claimant in compensation for the land he had lost. Besides, the man's old land had changed hands several times in the meantime, and could not simply be taken away from the present owners who had spent work and money on it. The man was unwilling to move to a village, where he could find land, and unwilling, too, to take land in Bida for which he would have had to pay a small rent. He felt that he had been wronged, and being of a rather violent temper and a slightly unhinged mind he attacked the judge and threatened the *Etsu*, and his search for a new place where to live ended under lock and key. 425

The village ways of obtaining and securing land, rendered impossible by the social conditions obtaining in the capital and in what we have called the 'conquered territories', are replaced by a large variety of other, much more complicated—and costly—methods of land transfer. All land is in fixed hands; land cannot simply be claimed on the grounds of citizenship from the *Etsu* Nupe. Nor is land around Bida, especially the valuable marsh-land, often given away in short-term lease. But land can be acquired by the method of lease for life or of tenantship for an indefinite period. In Bida a large number of dependants of the royal household, fief-holders, former warriors, slaves, or Mallams who were attached to a noble house, possess land granted to them by the king or a powerful feudal lord. These landlords, usually not farmers themselves, are frequently prepared to let their land (or sometimes to sublet it if they themselves have obtained it by a similar arrangement) to men who are in need of land for their farms. If the landlord is of high rank the transaction is never carried out by him personally but always by an agent, who expects a small gratuity from the tenant for his services. The rent itself consists in a comparatively high initial payment in money —£1 to £2—and, again, the fixed annual rent in kind. M., a wealthy Bida man, for example, acquired two years ago a farm for his newly married son from a former slave of *Etsu* Mohamadu. He paid £1 in money, and undertook to pay an annual rent of one bundle of millet. The money was pocketed by the former slave himself, but the rent in kind went to the family of *Etsu* Mohamadu—a sign that the former owner was himself only a tenant (though a tenant of a different category). This transaction is definitely spoken of as sale and purchase of land. The lease itself is, in fact, 'sold' and 'bought'; for the original tenant has ceded all his rights, for a single payment, to the new tenant who takes over the lease from the (real) landlord. The concept of sale and purchase is emphasized further by the practice of the court rarely to bring up the matter of the annual *dzankd* in kind (although it is almost invariably implied in the transaction). The initial, single payment, and the nature of the right to the land which this payment entails, are the only points with which the court is concerned. The importance of the annual rent in kind, however, apart from the 'purchase' price, reveals itself in the practice of recalling the contract if the tenant leaves the land unworked (that is, is unable to pay the annual tithe). Also, if the tenant has for some other reason discontinued the tithe, the lease may be recalled (though here, as we shall see presently, modern court practice would not sustain the claims of the landlord). 425 427

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427 The lease is only for a lifetime—at least in theory—and has to be renewed by another payment in money if the heirs of the tenant intend to keep the land. If tenants and landlord are on good terms, or are social equals, or if the landlord is under some obligation to his tenant, the renewal is a mere formality and may be granted for a small gratuity. Thus tenants often feel justified in regarding their right to the land as implying absolute ownership, ownership *har dbada*, 'for ever'. But the [691] large number of disputes of this kind which come before the court prove that the arrangement is open to misinterpretation as well as misuse. Landlords who for any reason are dissatisfied with their tenants, or have found a higher bidder, may unexpectedly call in the lease, either at the death of a tenant or during his tenancy, or demand on the threat of eviction another, higher, payment from the tenant or his heirs. Here are two examples: A., a rich landlord, had 'sold' the same farm twice, first for 10*s*., and afterwards for 16*s*. E. transferred a farm-plot that had fallen vacant after the death of the tenant twice in two years, pocketing £3 altogether.

427 425 Like the practice itself the attitude of the court towards these cases of 'purchase' or indefinite lease is ambiguous and uncertain. Only in one respect the issue is certain: all evictions from planted land, between the times of sowing and reaping, is declared illegal on whatever grounds the eviction may be based. Every man is entitled to the fruits of his immediate work. As regards the wider issue the tendency of the court seems to be this: if the transfer of the lease has taken place fairly long ago, the fact of the long occupation (and actual working) of the disputed land is taken to entail permanent ownership; further payments of *dzankd* rent are discouraged, and thus the purchase of the land is recognized as an accomplished fact. (As already said, in cases of this kind an original short-term lease—'borrowing'—is often confused with transfer for an indefinite period or for lifetime.) In other cases, where the transfer took place more recently, the court suggested the alternative solution of a return either of the money or the land.[1] In one or two cases of this kind the *Etsu* even made it clear that he wished to discourage sale of land for money altogether. In summing up a land case that came before the court in 1934, he said that 'it was right to divide up land for the benefit of people who had insufficient land; but this should not be done for money'—a pronouncement which, though morally admirable, does not quite do justice to actual facts. For how, one might ask, can land be 'divided up' for the needy in an area where such strong pressure on land, and such multitude of vested rights in land, obtains, if no allowance is made for some sort of compensation? In the Nupe economic system, firmly based as it is on money, a monetary compensation, sale and purchase, seems the only solution, unless the Administration is prepared to repudiate the whole system of land ownership as it exists in the 'conquered territory' as well.[2]

[1] This decision, however, made no allowance for the diminished value of the land, in the sense that the man to whom it was returned might have to leave it lying fallow for a considerable period before being able to cultivate it again.

[2] In one dispute of similar nature, which came before the court in 1935, the

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It will have been seen already that the land disputes which we have just described reflect more than merely disputable, equivocal land-contracts. The landlords who 'sell' the land are without exception men of the titled classes, courtiers, favourites, or former slaves of the king or of powerful noblemen, and the 'buyers' mostly commoners, peasants who have had no other chance of obtaining additional land. To-day they are coming to realize that their right to the land which they acquire is protected by the Native Court. But till very recently, in order to obtain their rights, they would have had to bribe their way through or to find a protector equal in rank and influence to the landlord who threatened to evict them—a typical source of the institution of clientship, which we discussed in a previous chapter.[1] A final example. A certain farmer had 'bought' land from D., a *bara* of the late *Etsu* Saidu. The *Etsu*, for reasons of his own, refused his confirmation of the deal—D., being a tenant of the *Etsu*, could not transfer the lease without the latter's permission—and the tenant had only one way open: he attached himself to another, more influential, *bara* of the *Etsu* and through him made various gifts to the *Etsu*, over £3 in money, a valuable civet cat, and promised besides an annual rent of two bundles of corn.

Hereditary Land: Secondary Tenantship

Clientship, combined with a métayer arrangement, becomes a factor in land-tenure also in another respect. A commoner who desired more land, or a new piece of land, could give himself into the service or 'patronage' of a landowning overlord and thus secure land as well as political protection. The conditions were: an initial gift in kind as in all pacts of clientship, occasional presents, visits and other expressions of homage, and finally a tithe (*dzankd* again) from his millet or sorghum crop. This submission to patronage was often the only means by which the peasants in Cis-Kaduna could hope to retain their property when threatened with expropriation, and also the only means by which they could secure new land, that is, access to what under tribal conditions would have been a reserve of village land. The necessity of obtaining land and enjoying its secure possession thus constitutes another of the main roots of clientship. The lease of land obtained by these methods is hereditary, and remains in the family, a comparatively safe possession—unless political factors interfere. The tenants are rarely allowed to forget that the relationship between landlord and client implies more than merely a correct commercial relationship. Lack of respect, an apparent failure to render due homage, or behaviour suggestive of changed

Etsu himself suggested that the disputed piece of land (a river grove that was claimed by two neighbouring villages) should be bought for money by one of the parties. The purchase price fixed was 15*s*.

[1] Till very recently no peasant tenant would have dared to invoke the *Etsu*'s or *Alkali*'s help against his landlord; he would have been looked upon as somebody who had broken away from a firmly established tradition of loyalty, one-sided though it was. The tenant in the last example quoted above kept silent for fifteen years; not till 1934 did he venture to bring his case before the court and thus to obtain a final confirmation of his ownership.

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566 allegiance, suffice to make the landlord refuse a renewal of the tenancy
427 or even to cancel a running tenancy. Several cases of this kind have come to my knowledge; one even found its way to court: L., a nobleman of high rank, evicted his tenant (and this in the middle of the planting season!) because he had lacked in loyalty towards him and 'betrayed his confidence'.

427 Political changes have brought about an interesting development. To-day the initiative in this kind of tenantship has to some extent
566 passed from the tenants to the landlords themselves. The landlords were, as we have seen, mostly warriors and courtiers who, living in the
621 capital, never worked their land themselves, but settled their slaves on
567 it, and had it worked by their labour. When slavery was abolished and wars came to an end, when the 'absentee' landlords no longer needed *bara* as soldiers for their private armies and could no longer support a large household of henchmen and hangers-on in the town, they offered their land to their *bara*, and so new settlers went out into the country, occupying the land and founding new farm settlements. Sometimes the noble landowners even settled some of their relations in this fashion on the land, nephews and younger brothers, for whom no place or job could be found in town.

427 All these farm settlements, whether they were for slaves or *bara*, for peasants turned client or clients turned peasant, are called *tunga*—the
566 same name that is applied to the Nupe village 'colonies'. But the 'private' *tunga* has no name of the kind villages possess, but bears the name of the
621 noble patron to whom it 'belongs'. These *tunga* settlements are scattered all over Cis-Kaduna, and surround Bida in a dense belt. There are innumerable hamlets called Sokyara, Maiyaki, Ndeji, or similar titles of nobility—the titles of the landlords under whose patronage the settlements were founded. To our description of the village *tunga* given in a previous chapter we will add here a few examples of the 'private' *tunga*.

Etsu-Kolo (about four miles south of Bida), consisting of two compounds, two families which are distantly related. Called after the founder of the *tunga*, the father of the present family head. This Etsu-Kolo had been, like his father before him, a *bara* of the *Cekpa* in Bida. Later, however, Etsu-Kolo transferred his allegiance to the then ruling Emir, *Etsu* Mohamadu. The change of allegiance proved good policy: *Etsu* Mohamadu procured for him the position of a Village Head for the whole district with its many *tunga* settlements. Since then the family had remained faithful to *Etsu* Mohamadu's house, even after the Village Headship had been abolished again; they are still paying their regular *dzanká* to his successors, at present to the *Shaba* in Bida.

Emi Bwori ('House of Bwori', one mile north of Bida), called after a certain Bwori, the head of the guild of Bida butchers, and a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. This Bwori settled his own slaves in this *tunga*. The present owners of it regard themselves as *bara* of the descendants of Bwori, but have abandoned paying *dzanká* to them; but they still go to 'salute' them whenever they come up to town.

Lumanen (four miles west of Bida), a group of very prosperous *tunga* settlements, founded at different times by relations and noblemen attached to the royal house of *Etsu* Masaba. One settlement has been built by the

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father of the present *Maiyaki* for his *bara*, and is accordingly called *Maiyaki*. A second settlement is called *Emi 'tsu Saba*, and was founded in the time of the father of the present family head, who was a slave in *Etsu* Masaba's house. A third settlement was built recently, by the present family head, who was a *bara* of the present *Etsu* Saidu (also of the Masaba dynasty). All three settlements still pay their regular *dzankd* to their patrons. This year's *dzankd* amounted to one bundle of corn and ten yams.[1] 427 566 621

Makū (one mile south of Bida), consisting of three compounds, called after the noble patron of a certain Ndatazi, a peasant who had had a farm somewhere else first and then moved to the present site, obtaining the land with the help of the *Makū*. He lives in one of the compounds; of the other two one belongs to his brother, and one to a distant relative by marriage, who left his old farm and came here, where the land is better, also becoming a *bara* of the *Makū*. Each of the three houses pays an annual *dzankd* to the present *Makū*. It amounted this year to three bundles of corn and ten yams per compound.

Saci (three miles east of Bida), called after the *Saci* of Bida (a nobility rank). It consists of five compounds; in one a son of the *Saci* is living—the other members of his family are living in Bida—in the other compounds *bara* of the *Saci*. They have discontinued paying their *dzankd*, but still pay regular visits to their patron in town.

One word about the economic arrangement obtaining in the *tunga*. The slaves had worked the land entirely for their masters; that is to say, they had no *efakó* (family) land of their own, but were fed and clothed by their masters, and were also allotted smaller, *bucá* plots, which they were free to work for themselves. The arrangement between the landlord and the *bara* whom he settles on his land is the same métayer system which also regulates the tenantship of the free peasant who accepts clientship in order to obtain land. To-day, the difference between former slaves and *bara* has disappeared; for to most of the freed slaves their change of status meant only a promotion from slave to (free) client. Both, in a good many cases, still acknowledge this form of dependence and, as we saw, still return the annual tithe from their crops to the patron, or at least still pay their respects dutifully. The *dzankd* is no longer a compulsory tribute, and would not be upheld by the court. It is a voluntary gift which confirms the relationship of patronage and protection—a relationship which is as real to-day as it was in former times: political protection for oneself and one's children is bought cheaply with a bundle or two of corn a year. 566 567

Hereditary Land: Primary Tenantship

The acquisition of land through clientship follows the general pattern of the Nupe feudal hierarchy. A man who obtains land as a *bara* obtains it from a man of higher rank, either a royal prince or nobleman who holds the land in his own right, or from a rank-holder or titled slave or a king's *bara* who has himself obtained the land from another landlord higher up on the hierarchical scale. These 'primary tenants', however, have acquired their land by a different method, namely, through certain 566

[1] This census was taken in 1934, when *Etsu* Saidu was still alive.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family 425 appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikâ*, the uninhabited bush; also all village 643 land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because 471 of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzankâ* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders 423 and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. 643 This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Maliki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'corporate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esoži*, where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esoži* is placed under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esoži* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esoži* has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch with his *esoži*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esoži*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esoži* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil.

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family
241 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
643 land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the
modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family
427 estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankd* arrangement.
But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become
his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the
old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu*
[242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family
estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and
466] demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work
carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own
fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the
produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is
used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which
clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-
building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore
smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All
these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like
the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the
ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they
313 need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
438 rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of
the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*);
other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-
making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are
found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen
who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the pro-
curing of the raw material thus gains independent commercial signifi-
cance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men
who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of com-
parative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to
collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a
little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a
313 slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of
land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpã* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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233 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evi-
178 dently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and
233 from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the
471 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappearance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap
177 labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readi-
231 ness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s*. to 15*s*., according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	Goats	Horses	Donkeys
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XII

AGRICULTURE: PRODUCTION

COUNTRY AND CROPS

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BY far the largest proportion of the Nupe population work on the land. In the purely agricultural districts in Trans-Kaduna 9,000 out of a male population of 11,000 are farmers. Even in Bida town, the centre of crafts, industry, and trade, more than a quarter of the population earn their livelihood on the land.[1] This shows clearly the predominant position of agriculture in the productive system of the country. We have already spoken of the rich and complex character of Nupe agriculture, due both to the favourable configuration of the environment and to the advanced civilization of the people, who were always ready to adopt and introduce advantageous techniques of production from other groups. The wide scope and the complexity of Nupe agriculture enables the people to rely in their nutritive arrangements on a large variety of crops which, as we shall see, is well distributed over the year.

But these facts must be correlated with the facts of local distribution and specialization of agricultural techniques. The most important local specialization refers to marsh-land farming. The marsh-land comprises only perhaps one-tenth or less of the total land under cultivation. The intensive cultivation, however, and the concentration on certain specially valuable crops (above all rice) make it a most important factor in the productive system of the country. Other forms of specialization which, on a smaller scale, influence the productive and nutritive balance of Nupe, are due to differences in the quality of the soil and, indirectly, to population factors and conditions of landownership. Thus cotton and ground-nuts thrive specially in Trans-Kaduna, the most fertile region of Nupe. The comparatively poor selection of crops round Bida is due both to the more exhausted soil and the comparative scarcity of land in this most densely populated area. Less yam, for instance, is grown round Bida than elsewhere, as yam demands a new plot every year (see p. 209). Nor is bulrush-millet grown near Bida, although in this case the reasons put forward by the people are different: it is no good, I was told, to try planting this early crop near a large town; the multitude of birds would devour the crop as soon as it appeared. The difference in the quality of the land in Beni country and in Trans-Kaduna is also reflected in the varying length of the period during which a plot can be kept under continuous cultivation. In Mokwa a plot is generally worked for four to five years; round Kutigi for six to seven years; in Doko, in Beni country, only for three to four years. In this last district, with its heavy population and its restricted land-resources, a rudimentary system of animal manure, with horse- and goat-dung, is practised by the people. Asked to explain why it was that only this one section of Nupe was practising animal manuring, the people said: 'Look for yourself; you will see that

[1] Of a total of 7,714 Bida men 1,664 are farmers. The figures mentioned here are taken from a local census taken in Bida Division in 1930.

[p.205]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241 we have little land, much less than people in other parts of the country. We even have to make our farms up on the hill-side since there is no vacant land left in the valley.' This is true enough. When I visited Doko on my second expedition I saw that a few enterprising men had started farming on the steep stony hills at the back of the village—a thing nobody dreamed of doing when I stayed in Doko on my first expedition two years before.

241 The appreciation of manure has led in Beni country to an interesting
231 co-operation between the population of a village, or a certain landlord, and the groups of nomadic Fulani herdsmen who come down regularly in the dry season to find pastures for their herds. The Nupe landowners invite the head of such a nomadic group, and sometimes induce him by presents of food or assistance in the building of the camp, to make his camp on their fallow land. This procedure is repeated every year with a new plot of fallow land. The year after the land has been thus manured it is taken under cultivation. I have myself seen the enormous difference in the growth of the crops between a plot on which the Fulani had made their camp and other, ordinary farm-plots.[1]

241 Cultivation is also to some extent carried on inside the villages and
311 even inside Bida town. In the villages, where large open spaces separate the different *efu*, the cultivation inside the village is fairly extensive, and one grows there the main crops, millet, guinea-corn, ground-nuts, &c. In densely populated villages where there is little open space left, and in Bida town, the people still grow a few things. Something will be planted, in fact, wherever there is room, all along the town walls, round the compound wall, on any open space in front of the house and even inside the house. Here are grown chiefly greens and vegetables, beans, sorrel, red pepper, also sweet potatoes, cassava or maize, and hemp. As a rule the small plots in or near the house are planted with crops which are easy to tend, and this work is left to the old men who can no longer walk long distances and do heavy work. Even inside Bida there exists a certain specialization; on the small stretch of marsh-land that runs through the town, and in the thick groves on the banks of the two streams, typical marsh-land crops are grown: sugar-cane, rice, and bananas.

241 In this large variety of crops cultivated in Nupe not all are, of course, of equal importance from a nutritive or general economic point of view. Again, it is impossible to give a simple formula. The staple crops, the crops on which the food supply of the people primarily depends, are millet, sorghum, yam, and, to a lesser extent, rice. From the point of view of trade the most important crops are rice, ground-nuts, cotton, but also sorghum and yam and a few lesser crops. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes (grown inland) are of secondary importance only. This is shown clearly in the attitude of the Nupe farmer towards these crops. The pride of the farmer is always his millet, sorghum, and yam farm. Cassava and maize, the Nupe would say, grow anywhere, and anybody, farmer or no farmer, can grow them. A man who would rely on this

[1] Among the Bida landlords it is an accepted arrangement to place one's fallow land at the disposal of the Bororó previous to leasing it to a new tenant. The landlord can then obtain a much higher price for his land.

1: Nadel E.5 (1934-1936) 1942
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type of cultivation only would lay himself open at once to the criticism of his fellow farmers. As regards cassava, it is known to have little nutritive value—'only yam or millet or sorghum make a man strong'. Both crops may, however, provide a useful stopgap for the time between the harvest of the main crops. 241

We have said earlier in this book that the complexity of the agricultural system of the Nupe is due partly to the close contact they have had with other cultures, in particular with neighbouring groups. We realize here that this was more than an occasional contact, and more also than some obscure process of diffusion. It was to a large extent part of that assimilation and cultural 'learning' that goes hand in hand with intensive political unification of long standing and all that it entails—regular intercourse, a wide net of transport and traffic, and an ever-extending economic co-operation. As the kingdom brought together peoples from the marsh-land and from the inland forests, farmers from the 'yam countries' and farmers from the 'millet districts', it made them learn from each other and at the same time utilize each other's special resources. Assimilation and specialization are both features of an expanding economic area. We have, in fact, a threefold correlation; for these two features involve another, third, factor: a large-scale system of organized distribution, that is, trade and marketing. 241 178

FARMING TECHNIQUE

Like most African tribes the Nupe practise hoe-agriculture. They use two kinds of hoes, a large heavy type called *zuku*, and a small type called *dugba*. The *zuku* has a heavy handle, about 16 in. long, bent somewhat like a hook, into the angle of which the broad shovel-like blade (8 in. long) is fitted. The *dugba* has a straight handle, 20 in. long, with a less broad, slightly bent blade inserted at the end. The heavy hoe is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, the lighter hoe mainly for weeding and other less heavy work. The Nupe also use a long bush-knife, *gada* (now mostly of European manufacture), for cutting grain stalks or digging out yam. 241

When using the heavy hoe the farmer stands across the ridge he is making, with legs wide apart, the body bent forward, and, gripping the handle of the hoe with both hands, he lifts it to the level of his head and shoulders and brings it down again between his legs, with one swing digging up the earth and throwing it behind him on to the mound or ridge he is preparing. When the mound or ridge has reached the proper height, he moves a few steps forward to repeat this action, until the ridge extends to the edge of the field. Having finished one ridge, the farmer turns round to throw up the next, parallel, ridge.

Nupe cultivation works both with large round mounds and low long ridges; the mounds are 2–3 ft. high and about 3 ft. in diameter, and are arranged in long rows; the mounds are spaced (measured from top to top) about 4–5 ft. in the same row and 6 ft. from row to row. The ridges are 1 ft. high and are drawn, more or less straight, right across the field in parallel lines about 3 ft. apart. The two types of cultivation are used

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241 for different kinds of crops. Ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and certain vegetables are always planted in ridges, yam always in mounds. As regards the other crops, the rule is that in a first cultivation, that is, on a plot planted for the first time after having lain fallow, mounds are thrown up; in the subsequent year the mounds are turned into ridges, as a result of the practice of 'shifting' the ridges and interplanting in the second half of the planting season. The throwing up of mounds is by far the heavier and longer work. 'Lazy' farmers—in the eyes of the people—thus sometimes prefer the easier job of making ridges even in a first year's cultivation.[1] Big trees are always left standing on the farms and cultivation is carried out round them. The Nupe farmers appreciate the shade of big trees during the heat of the day. Small trees on the farm-land which do not bear fruit are lopped or cut about 4 ft. from the ground. This becomes important in the period of lying fallow; for the tree-stumps and undergrowth which the farmer leaves standing on his fields help to put the fallow land under a growth of 'bush' rather than grass, thus assisting and speeding up the regeneration of the soil.[2]

241 The cultivation on the marsh-land farms is adapted to the conditions of a natural annual irrigation by the flooded rivers and watercourses.
312 The irrigated area is divided into square plots, approximately 6 ft. by 9 ft., each consisting of from four to six ridges running parallel and two ridges at right angles on the upper and lower end. The ridges are flat and narrow; they do not connect at the corners, but leave small channels open; by means of these ridges the water from the flooded river is distributed evenly on the cultivated plots, and at the same time kept standing there.

241 In the lay-out of the Nupe farms the aesthetic aspect is strongly pronounced. The farmers pay much attention to drawing their ridges nicely
517 parallel and as straight as possible, and to distributing their mounds symmetrically over the field. The nice rounding-off of the border of a field is specially appreciated. Frequently one finds ridges and cross-ridges arranged in a symmetrical and even conspicuously ornamental pattern. Similarly, the [illegible] and keenness of the farmer is judged by the clean look of his farm, with all weeds, leaves, and brushwood cleared away. An overgrown, untidy looking farm invariably elicits the comment: *za-gá de kokari à*, 'that man makes no effort'.

ROTATION OF CROPS

242 The Nupe system of agriculture is based on shifting cultivation combined with a well-worked-out rotation of crops. Plots are kept under cultivation for from four to seven years (see p. 205), i.e. till the land 'grows tired', and then abandoned temporarily. The individual farmer does not, however, always wait until failing crops have warned him of

[1] The mounds represent the more thorough cultivation, utilizing a deeper and, I believe, also heavier layer of the subsoil. This is shown in the fact that yam, which demands a heavy and more humid soil, is always grown on mounds, while ground-nuts, for which light sandy soil is best suitable, are invariably grown on the low ridges. (Cf. Faulkner and Mackie, op. cit., pp. 147–8.)

[2] See op. cit., p. 44.

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the 'tiredness' of his farm-plot, but as a rule simply follows the general routine obtaining in his area, varying the standard period of cultivation occasionally by one year, in accordance with the special requirements of his farm-land. For the abandoned field a new plot is taken under cultivation, while the former is left to lie fallow, until eventually it will again be fit for cultivation. The period of lying fallow, dependent as it is on local conditions of land-tenure and individual land-holdings, varies much more widely than the period of cultivation—between four and fifteen years. 242

During the period of cultivation a strict rotation of crops is observed. There exists a comparatively large number of different types of rotation, of which I shall mention only the most important. The rotation depends on the crop which is planted first on a plot taken under cultivation. The following chart illustrates the most common types of rotation:

Table of Four-Year Rotation

	A	*B*	*C*	*D*
1	Yam	(Bulr.-mill.) late millet and sorghum	Ground-nuts (and cassava)	Cotton
2	Maize and sorghum or bulr.-mill.; late millet and sorghum	" "	(i) bulr.-mill., (ii) maize, late millet, and sorghum	Bulr.-mill., late millet, sorghum
3	Bulr.-mill., late millet and sorghum	" "	" " "	" "
4	" "	" " or fallow, or cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans	Cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans	Cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans

The main rules in this rotation are these: yam, cotton, and ground-nuts are 'one-year crops', i.e. they are invariably the first crops in the cycle of rotation and are not as a rule planted a second time on the same plot. On the contrary, it is well known that millet and sorghum do particularly well planted as a second year's crop after cotton, ground-nuts, or—in a less common rotation—red pepper. Where the rotation starts with millet and sorghum bulrush-millet is sometimes left out in the first year and added later, as it does not do very well as a first crop on a new field, especially if the rains happen to be late. Also it is sown mostly only where there are a number of neighbouring fields under cultivation; on isolated fields the danger of birds picking the crop is too great. On the other hand, land on which the two millet kinds and sorghum are planted in succession may 'tire' sooner than land planted with varying crops and thus have to be abandoned after only three years. The alternative choice, finally, after a first crop of ground-nuts (C (i) and (ii) in the table) depends mainly on the energy and keenness of the farmer; the crops listed under (i), i.e. the combination millet-sorghum,

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242 though more valuable, involve the heavier work, namely, a complete re-hoeing of the ridges.

Jebba Island, which is half marsh-land, is the only area where I found yam planted twice on the same plot. This type of cultivation necessitates a different system of cropping: between two yam crops sorghum alone is planted, without the additional two millet crops, which is said to exhaust the soil far less than does the mixed cropping. Even so, the field supports only three successive crops, and is left fallow after the three years. Before the second yam crop, i.e. after two years' cultivation, the operation of 'shifting the ridges' takes place, which we shall describe later in detail, and which, in the normal rotation, has to be carried out every year. As an alternative the people of Jebba Island practise a five or six years' rotation with four or five sorghum crops succeeding a first year's yam crop, the 'shifting of the ridges' being again inserted after two or three successive crops.[1]

The table shows further that certain crops are planted together on the same plot. This combined cultivation is much more extensive and much more varied than is shown in the table. The practice of 'interplanting' certain crops between others is one of the most characteristic features of the intensive and economical farm technique of the Nupe. The people speak, in fact, in connexion with this interplanting of *ewo banza*, 'useless ridge', meaning here the furrow between ridges or mounds; it is the 'useless ridge' that is utilized in the interplanting. This combined cultivation constitutes at the same time one of the most complicated aspects of Nupe farm technique because of the wide range of variations which it permits. These are the main combinations:

Simultaneous Interplanting. In the purely agricultural districts the two millet kinds and sorghum are planted together on the same mound, sorghum on the top and bulrush-millet and late millet on the flanks of the mound. The three crops are not planted quite simultaneously, bulrush-millet being sown a little before the other two crops (see chart, p. 213). The farmers near Bida practise various other combinations, e.g. late millet-sorghum, maize-sorghum, or late millet-sorghum with ground-nuts interplanted in the furrows.

Yam and okra are frequently planted together, yam on the top of the mound and okra at the foot.

Ground-nuts and cassava may also be planted together, ground-nuts on the top of the ridge and cassava in the furrow between the ridges. The same arrangement obtains with sweet potatoes and cassava.

Successive Interplanting. After the reaping of bulrush-millet or maize beans are sown in their place, i.e. on the same ridges or mounds, between the still growing late millet and sorghum plants.

Melons are frequently planted irregularly between various crops.

Cassava may be interplanted with any crop, e.g. yam or millet and sorghum, and at any time.

On the farm-plots close to the compounds, which are manured with the refuse from the house, no rotation is practised. Nor does such complicated rotation exist on the irrigated marsh-land farms. Here the same

[1] In Yoruba country, where the soil is much richer, three or four successive yam crops are said to be the rule.

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plot can be cultivated for ten years or even longer. The cultivation follows every year the same pattern: two alternating root-crops, cassava and sweet potatoes, and, after they have been harvested, on the same plot, rice. On certain marsh-land farms in the Kaduna valley two successive crops of maize are grown. Other marsh-land farms again (on the rivers Gbako and Kaduna, and on a smaller scale near Kutigi) are devoted to the cultivation of onions and partly sugar-cane. Farmers in inland areas who possess a field close to a watercourse plant rice in addition to the usual inland crops.

To return to inland cultivation. Of the four types of rotation listed in our table (A B C D) the farmer selects a certain combination. Most farmers, as we shall see presently, cultivate two or three crops at the same time, the most frequent combination being ABC, ABD, and AAC (D), i.e. a rotation which includes the maximum proportion of staple food crops, millet, sorghum, and yam, together with one or two commercial crops. By a judicious overlapping arrangement, starting the different series of crops in successive years, the farmer secures an even distribution of these crops. This is an example from Mokwa, recorded in 1936.

	Plot 1	*Plot 2*	*Plot 3*	*Plot 4*	*Plot 5*	*Plot 6*
1935	..	Yam	Sorghum, millet	..	..	..
1936	Yam, ground-beans	Maize, sorghum, beans	Sorghum, millet	..	Ground-nuts	..
1937	Maize, sorghum	Sorghum, millet	Sorghum, millet	Yam	Cassava	Ground-nuts
1938	Sorghum, millet	Sorghum, millet	(?)	Maize, sorghum	Cassava	Cassava
1939	Sorghum, millet	..	..	Sorghum, millet	?	Cassava
1940	..	..	..	Sorghum, millet	..	Cassava

The main problem in determining a suitable system of rotation are the 'one-year crops'. It can be seen that, allowing for a minimum period of four years for lying fallow, a farmer must have at least four different plots under cultivation in order to obtain one of the one-year crops in every year of the rotation, or eight plots, in order to secure a continuous, uninterrupted, cultivation of these crops. Where such an extensive subdivision proves impossible, the number of one-year crops will vary from year to year, in accordance with the progressive stages of the rotation. In 1936 I found that of thirty-seven farms on which one or more of the three 'one-year crops' were grown only two farms combined all three, six combined the cultivation of yam and ground-nuts, seven of yam and cotton, and of the remaining twenty-two the cultivation was restricted to one of these three crops.

The selection of crops on which the farmer eventually decides and the cycle of rotation which he will accordingly adopt will thus depend primarily (ignoring here the question of the quality of the land) on the size of his farm-land and the possibility, or profit, of subdividing it into plots for different cultivation. Evidently, land cannot be subdivided indefinitely to make room for a large variety of crops. I have found that

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242 the farms under cultivation in Nupe varied in size from 2 to 10 acres, according to the number of men who are working together; the average size of farm corresponding to one able-bodied male adult is from 2 to 2½ acres. A farm of this size (i.e. a one-man farm) can still be subdivided into two or three plots, for the cultivation of different crops; larger farms can be subdivided into three or four different plots for cultivation. In addition to the field cultivated at a given time the farmer as a rule possesses from one to three fallow fields of the same size to which he turns when it becomes necessary to take a new field, or new plots on this field, into cultivation.[1] The following examples, which were collected in Lemu, a prosperous village north of Bida, may illustrate the relation between size of farm and selection of crops. These examples represent, of course, only stages in the four-year rotation, which explains the reason for the absence of certain one-year crops in the selection of crops which were grown that year.

1. Five men working together; total land under cultivation approx. 9½ acres. Grain (millet and sorghum), 6 acres (half of this plot was under yam cultivation the previous year); red pepper (formerly ground-nuts), 1½ acres; cotton, 2½ acres.
2. Three men working together; total land under cultivation 6 acres. Grain, 5½ acres; rice, ½ acre.
3. Two men working together; total land under cultivation over 4 acres. Grain, 2 acres; yam, 2 acres; ground-nuts, ¼ acre.
4. One man working; total land under cultivation under 2 acres. Grain, 1½ acres; rice, ¼ acre; red pepper, ¼ acre (½ acre under yam cultivation the previous year).
5. One man working; total land under cultivation over 2 acres. Grain, 1 acre; yam, 1 acre; rice, 200 sq. yds.
6. One man working (a young man, recently married); total land under cultivation 1 acre. Grain, ¾ acre; red pepper, ¼ acre.

These examples bring us to a further condition determining the selection of crops and type of rotation, namely, the size of the working group at the disposal of the farmer, and the efficiency of its organization; on its co-operation depends the carrying out of the complicated and at times overlapping schedule of planting, weeding, &c., without any of the crops being neglected. Finally, the selection of crops is also determined by the prospect of return, i.e. by the satisfaction of specific wants which the farmer may expect from the different forms of cultivation. We will for the present ignore this last point and concentrate on the second condition. In order to understand fully we must study more closely the agricultural calendar of the country. In the attached chart I have tabulated the schedule of Nupe agricultural activities. It will be best if I supplement it with a description of the more important agricultural activities as I have observed them in actual cases. First, however, a few comments are necessary.

[1] It can be calculated that for the continuous cultivation of two one-year crops, e.g. yam on 1 acre and ground-nuts on ¼ acre, in addition to an ordinary crop, e.g. grain on 1 acre, a total land possession, i.e. worked as well as fallow land, of 9–10 acres is necessary. The figures quoted above show that actual practice falls considerably short of this standard.

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The Agricultural Calendar of Nupe

As mentioned elsewhere (see Appendix, p. 411)[a] the Nupe peasant calendar counts 12 lunar months starting from the month which sees the beginning of the rainy season. It will be realized that the various dates given in this synoptic chart cannot be fixed exactly. To simplify the chart it is assumed that the rains start punctually on the 1st of April, and that the planting cycle thus begins with the first month in native counting. Needless to say that in practice the whole time-table will frequently be found to have moved forward or backward by as much as a fortnight or three weeks as the rains set in earlier or later than our key date. Besides, there occur certain other variations in the time sequence which are due to local conditions or the varying efforts of individual farmers; these variations have only partly been included in the chart. 241

Calendar		*Planting operations*			
Europ.	*Native*	*Inland farms (incl. irrigated plots)*	*Marsh-land farms*	*Trees*	*State of food stores*
April	1st month	Belated preparation of yam plots and planting of yams by farmers who have left it till the new season. Sowing of bulrush-millet and maize. Sowing of late millet and sorghum. Sowing of ground-nuts. Interplanting of okra, melon, and cassava.	Planting of cassava or sweet potatoes.	Fruit of locust-bean tree picked, also mango.	
May	2nd month	First weeding (takes 2–3 weeks). Short period of rest (5–7 days). Yam is sprouting leaves, bulrush-millet and maize a ft. high.		Locust-bean harvest finished.	
June	3rd month	Second weeding. Sowing of cotton. Planting of sweet potatoes, rice, and red pepper. Also of cassava grown on separate plots. Latest date for planting ground-nuts.		Shea-nuts picked and dried.	Yam and late millet begin to give out.
July	4th month	Harvesting of bulrush-millet and maize. Interplanting of ground-beans and late beans. First yam harvest. Picking of okra.	Harvesting of cassava and sweet potatoes; sowing of rice. Sowing of first maize crop.	Shea-nut harvest finished.	
	5th month	Third weeding, and 'shifting the ridges'. (This operation may be postponed by a month.)		Preparation of shea-butter.	Fresh sugar-cane. Scarcity of rice.
August		Beginning of first ground-nut harvest.			Fresh ground-nuts for food.
	6th month	Fourth weeding and transplanting of late millet and sorghum.			
September		Sweet potatoes and melons harvested.	Transplanting of rice.	Second mango crop.	Bulrush millet finished.
	7th month	Some farmers carry out the 'shifting of ridges' now instead of two months earlier. Harvest of early maturing rice.	Harvest of first maize crop.		Sorghum giving out in certain districts. New rice.

[a] [Errata — should be p. 409. — Analyst.]

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Calendar		Planting operations		Trees	State of food stores
Europ.	*Native*	*Inland farms (incl. irrigated plots)*	*Marsh-land farms*		
October	7th month	Second yam harvest. Harvest of ground-beans, sweet potatoes, and cassava grown on separate plots.			New yam, from second harvest, for storage. New sweet potatoes and cassava.
November	8th month	Preparation of new yam-plots and planting of yam (may be postponed for 2 or 3 months). Second ground-nut harvest begins. Harvest of late millet.	Sowing of second maize crop.		Yam from first harvest finished. Sorghum giving out.
December	9th month	Harvest of sorghum. Picking of cotton and red pepper. Harvest of late beans.	Harvest of rice (late maturing crop).		Sorghum and late millet for storage.
January	10th month		Harvest of second maize crop.		
February	11th month	End of ground-nut harvest. Burning of farms. Some farmers prepare new yam plots now instead of 3 months earlier.		First mango crop begins, also harvest of locust-bean.	
March	12th month	Burning of farms goes on.			

Selection of Species and Varieties

Most of the crops enumerated in the chart occur in more than one variety. Yam is the only exception; although grown in a large number of different varieties in Southern Nigeria, it is known only in one variety among the Nupe, which is incidentally another proof that Nupe is not a 'real yam country'. Sorghum (*eyi*) was originally grown in Nupe in a number of varieties. I could collect names for three main sorghum varieties: *kiyi*, *dindórogi*, and *ekpā*. Of these three varieties *kiyi* has [386] disappeared almost completely, and *dindórogi* is fast disappearing. The latter variety was formerly specially valued for the black and red dye that was obtained from the stalk. The importation of European dyes has reduced considerably its importance, so that to-day *ekpā* is grown almost exclusively. *Ekpā* is also agreed to be the finest and best tasting of the three varieties; its survival thus appears to reflect a certain growing fastidiousness with regard to food, which may well have influenced market prices and demands, and thus indirectly the policy of the sorghum growers.

Two varieties of rice are grown: the 'sweet' rice, a six-months' crop, in the river marshes, and a variety which matures in ninety days, on the less well irrigated inland farms. Till six years ago only the native variety of maize was cultivated. To-day the American variety (brought from Europe), which is sweeter and has a softer husk, is more and more widely adopted by the natives. This new variety is easily recognized since it is grown as a separate crop, in separate ridges, while the indigenous variety is interplanted through millet and sorghum or yam. The two millet varieties, finally, bulrush and late millet, have been mentioned already.

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The proportion of maize and the various other millet and sorghum varieties in the productive scheme of one household is illustrated in the following typical example: on a farm which produced a total millet and sorghum crop of twenty bundles the different varieties were distributed as follows: 241

Bulrush-millet . . .	2 bundles
Maize	2–3 ,,
Late millet	8 ,,
Sorghum	10 ,,

Sorghum and late millet are clearly shown to be the main staple crops as compared with bulrush-millet and maize, the importance of which, as we shall see later, lies in their subsidiary, 'stopgap', character.

Some enterprising farmers, and farmers in certain districts of Nupe, have added to this table of crops certain special, commercially valuable, plants or have given over a large portion of their farm-land to the cultivation of plants which normally would play only a secondary, unimportant, part. Thus we find henna (*lali*) cultivated in many parts; indigo (*eci*) is collected and prepared especially in the districts of Sakpe and Kutigi. Recently farmers in Lemu, north of Bida, have started the cultivation of red pepper (*yaka*) as a main crop, in the place of groundnuts. The first two kinds of produce have a considerable marketing value in the country, the last kind is meant for European export. [439]

Clearing

The dry season is not completely a season of leisure. Many Nupe farmers will visit their fields more or less regularly even during that time, perhaps once a week, to 'look over the farm' as they say, to see that animals have not done damage to ridges and mounds, or to collect brushwood for fuel, or leaves for which there is always use in the Nupe household.

In the dry season comes also the first agricultural activity of the year, the *nwa tsaka*, the clearing and burning of the farms. On farms (fallow or virgin land) which are to be taken under cultivation for the first time, grass and shrubs are cut and afterwards the farms are burned. Old farms also are cleared summarily by burning the dead stalks, leaves, and undergrowth that have been left there from last year. Later the first rains will wash the ashes into the soil, thus completing the process of 'green manure', which the Nupe farmers consciously utilize (see p. 221). The burning of the farms takes place at any time between January and May; new plots, the clearing of which involves the heavier work, being as a rule burned earlier in the season, cultivated plots (on which the stalks and leaves are given ample time to dry and rot) towards the beginning of the rains. The heaviest and lengthiest work is the clearing of virgin land. If carried out early it will curtail seriously the short leisure season of the Nupe farmer, and if left till late will add to the work of an already very busy time of the year. Clearing virgin land is, in fact, considered so heavy and inconvenient work that the farmers, especially those who cannot count on the assistance of a large working group, make all efforts to avoid taking virgin land under cultivation.

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241 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[825] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [825] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [241] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from [482] the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [857] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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gourd or his straw hat, keeping a ready supply in his left hand. In his right he carries the light hoe used for planting. With it he scratches the top or flank of the mound, while with his left, almost simultaneously, he throws the seeds into the newly made hole. The hole is then flattened out with the back of the hoe. Thus the farmer proceeds from mound to mound and row to row, working with amazing speed and ease: one man is able to sow about one acre in from five to six hours, with hardly any rest. This is the method used for sowing on mounds; sowing on ridges is even easier and quicker. No hoe is used, and the farmer can make use of both hands for the sowing, the seeds being pressed into the soft soil with the heel. The distance kept between two plants is a little over 2 feet. The sowing of one field with millet or sorghum is invariably done in a day or two, and is nearly always carried out single-handed. Where normally a larger group would be working together—brothers or a father and sons—the rest of the team would be occupied on another field, carrying out ridging, i.e. work for which co-operation is more urgently required. But when for one reason or another a farmer falls behindhand with his planting, ridging and sowing may have to be done at the same time. Once I saw a man and his two sons of 10 or 11 years carrying out this combined and hurried work: the boys were hoeing, preparing the ridges; the father followed in their tracks, sowing. After every ridge they had completed the boys waited for the man to catch up with the sowing. The ridges were crooked, irregular. 243 [857]

In these first days of the planting season the Nupe keep short days: they start comparatively late, about 8 a.m., and rarely return later than 2 or 3 o'clock. As the season wears on their working day extends. They start at daybreak and often do not return till 5 or 6 in the afternoon. They have their midday meal out on the farm, some bringing their own food, others having it brought out to them by their wives or daughters. At that time of the year, when fresh leaves and herbs are plentiful on the farms, the men rarely return home without a fair supply of various kinds: broad leaves which the Nupe women like for wrapping food in, or a special kind of aromatic leaf which the women use for their bath, or occasionally medicinal herbs used for various purposes. The men tie the leaves round their straw hats, and thus pleasantly and ornately attired wander home. A bath, a change of clothes, and afterwards the evening meal concludes their day. 243 512 [824]

To return to sowing. A day or two after bulrush-millet has been sown, maize is planted in very much the same fashion, again mostly in one day. Then one has to wait for another heavy rainfall before the next crops on the list, late millet and sorghum, can be sown. As a rule all four crops are sown within a week or ten days. These voluntary or involuntary waiting periods have their use: for often it becomes necessary to get one's tools repaired, perhaps a new blade fixed to the hoe, or to find new tools for the young boys who will, this year, join their fathers for the first time in the farm-work. By the time sorghum is planted the rains fall fairly regularly, and there is no need for further waiting. 243

The farmer turns directly to the planting of ground-nuts, which is reckoned to take from five to ten days. Ground-nuts must be planted on 244

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a new plot, and new ridges must therefore be prepared. The planting itself is also a slow process, the seeds are placed into the soil with the fingers and the earth then stamped down with the heel.

The planting of yams demands no less skill and patience. Yam is likewise planted on a fresh plot and involves the preparation of new mounds—the work of several days. The planting itself is also spread over a number of days, one man needing two or three days to plant one acre. Half a tuber is used as seed (called *ebu*). The planter carries the seed yams in a cloth tied round his waist; he inserts the tuber about 1 foot deep into the loose earth of the mound, and then pats the top of the mound back into shape either with his hands or with the light planting hoe. Having covered a section of the field, he goes over it again and places a grass cap over the top of each mound, weighting it down with earth; the grass cap protects the young plant from the sun and at the same time provides a convenient sign by which the planter can distinguish planted from unplanted mounds. About two months after planting stakes 4 feet high are put up on the side of the mounds, which will serve as support for the vine; sometimes a conveniently placed tree may be used for the same purpose.

Now, assuming that planting has started early in April, our time-table has taken us to the end of the month or the beginning of May. It is by then high time for the first weeding, which is to clear the ridges for the growing plant and to remove roots, leaves, and undergrowth which the burning of the farms has but imperfectly destroyed. Not until after this weeding, which takes the best part of three weeks, will the farmer be able to enjoy a short period of rest, between five days and a week. It reaches as a rule into June, and into the short break in the rains which is known as the 'little dry season'. The period of rest inaugurates a more leisurely period of work. In June many farmers work on their large farms only two days in succession, and rest on the third day, or devote it to the lighter work on the garden-plots round their houses. The 'second weeding', which takes from five to ten days, and is to clear the young millet plants of the high grass, is also a task allowing of comparative leisure, except when it coincides with the planting of cotton, a delicate and lengthy operation, which falls in the same time. Farmers who possess marsh-land plots are sowing rice in June; on inland farms cassava is planted—but cassava can be planted at any time, and needs little skill or attention: cuttings of the stem are simply put into the ground; one person can plant a half-acre field easily in a day. The beginning of July heralds a period of increased activity. It starts with the reaping of bulrush-millet, to be followed immediately by the sowing of beans and another, third, weeding. Let me illustrate the change from comparative leisure to renewed pressure of work by quoting a few entries from my diary for 1936.

Doko, 15 May.—Bulrush-millet 2–3 feet high. Yam vines fairly long. Yam stakes are being put up. Cassava and sweet potatoes are being planted.

Doko, 1 June.—The people have begun to sow cotton, and some farmers also rice. Grass on millet-sorghum farms very high. Weeding ('second weeding') in progress in many places.

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Kutigi, 5 June.—Cotton is planted, weeding of millet-sorghum farms going on at the same time.
Kutigi, 15 June.—Weeding still in progress.
Kutigi, 5 July.—Harvesting of bulrush-millet and maize begins.
Kutigi, 12 July.—Bulrush-millet harvest finished; crop all dried and stored. 'Third weeding' in progress. Beans are sown.
Kutigi, 18 July.—First yams dug out.

Weeding and Transplanting

Let us for a moment interrupt our description and examine in more detail the technique of weeding and certain related farming operations. The Nupe practise four main weedings or hoeings, each of which is known by a special name. The first weeding, called *gongi* ('small grass'?), is carried out three or four weeks after the first planting and serves, as mentioned already, to clear the ridges from roots and undergrowth left on the farms from last year. At the same time the ridges which have not been newly made this year are re-done and put in proper shape. The second weeding, *nwũ*, follows about three weeks later, 'when the bulrush-millet is arm-high', and clears the millet plant of the newly grown grass. The third weeding or hoeing is called *sa wo gi*, 'making small ridges'; it combines a thorough cultivation with an operation best termed the 'shifting of the ridges'. Carried out shortly after the harvest of bulrush-millet, it consists in hoeing away the original mounds or ridges and throwing them up again on the side, in what used to be the furrows. Late millet and sorghum, which after the bulrush-millet harvest had been left growing from the flanks of mounds or ridges, are thus transferred to the new position, in the furrows between the new ridges. The *sa wo gi* is a delicate operation which may easily damage the growing plant. When it is carried out the original mounds are already much reduced in size by the rains, and when they have been shifted they have the appearance much more of long ridges than of separate mounds. The shifting of the ridges besides weeding the maturing plant provides fresh surface soil for the new ridges, which are then left, all prepared, for the next planting season.

The fourth weeding, called *mu ya* ('pulling out'), consists mainly in a thinning out and at the same time transplanting of late millet and sorghum. It is carried out four or five months after sowing, when sorghum is about 4 feet high. From the eight to ten shoots which grow from the seed about half are pulled out, their leaves are cut and the shoots transplanted either to a separate plot, if sufficient farm space is available, or to additional ridges thrown up along the edges of the original plot. Another method is to interplant the shoots through the original ridges or mounds, which in this case have been spaced specially wide apart. The transplanted shoots soon surpass the mother-plant in growth. The rice planters in the river marshes, I may add, who cultivate the late maturing variety, also practise thinning out and transplanting, three months after sowing.

An operation somewhat akin to the 'shifting of the ridges', which, in fact, is often referred to by the people as a 'fourth hoeing', is the *sa ci wo*, the

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241 'making yam mounds'. Many farmers will try to prepare their new yam plots soon after the yam harvest, or at any rate before the beginning of the dry season.[1] They clear new plots, throw up the mounds, and plant the yams at once, thus having everything prepared for next year. In Nupe opinion one obtains bigger yams if one follows this practice, plants yam early, and leaves the seed yam in the ground through the whole dry season.[2]

The early preparation of ridges or mounds offers, on the other hand, two very concrete advantages: first, it means comparatively easy work, carried out as it is in the soft soil; second, it enables the farmer to start his planting without further delay as soon as the rains break. In the case of yam, particularly, this early planting removes one difficult crop from the already crowded time-table of sowing and planting.

Reaping and Harvesting

Our description of the agricultural activities of the year has taken us to the second phase in the farming cycle: harvesting. A fortnight after the harvest of bulrush-millet, following closely upon the third weeding, the first yam crop is dug up, and shortly afterwards the first ground-nut crop. There are two yam harvests. In July the farmers dig out yam for the first time, cutting one tuber from the plant and leaving the rest in the ground to sprout farther. This young yam is considered a delicacy; unlike the late yam it is eaten 'mashed'. Only a little of it is sold; most of it is consumed by the household. The fresh yam, however, lasts only a short time; the second yam harvest, in October–November, is the main harvest, at which the remaining tubers (three or four in each mound) are dug out.[3] Ground-nuts, too, are harvested twice. The first ground-nut crop is dug out between mid-July and the end of August, and used for [439] food only; the second ground-nut crop, dug out between the end of December and the end of January—a much drier crop than the first—is used exclusively for sale to the European trading companies.

There is hardly any pause between the end of the first yam harvest and the fourth and last weeding. After this, however—it is by then the end of August or beginning of September—there is a certain lull in the farming activities, at least if the time-table has been kept fairly strictly. Till the next big item on the list, the second yam harvest, the farmer can enjoy a short respite of three or four weeks, during which he can take his work more leisurely. Even so, he remains fully occupied: he is still going regularly to the farm to clear away leaves and brushwood; those who have planted rice or sweet potatoes as additional crops harvest them now; the women pick the melons which have been interplanted with yam or corn. Certain farmers who were pressed for time earlier in the year have postponed the important third weeding until now. The lull continues to some extent after the second yam harvest. Now is the time

[1] In Bida this operation is often postponed till January or February.

[2] I cannot say how far this opinion is substantiated by fact. Agricultural officers whom I consulted on this question were unable either to confirm or to refute this native theory.

[3] In Leaba, in the extreme north of Nupe, i.e. close to the line which marks the northern boundary of yam cultivation, yam is harvested only once.

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when 'keen' farmers prepare the yam plots for the next year, and re-hoe the yam mounds into ridges to be ready for next year's planting. 241

The harvest of late millet, which falls in November, is the signal that the last 'rush-period' of the year has begun. Let me first describe the harvesting of millet—the method is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. The millet and sorghum varieties cultivated in Nupe grow to a height of 6–8 feet. To reap the corn, the stalks are broken and cut close to the ground, and then laid in bundles in the furrows, where they are left for from five to seven days to dry in the sun (an exception is bulrush-millet, which may have to be dried artificially). Afterwards the heads of the plants are cut off with the bush-knife and carried home in large bundles, 50–60 lb. in weight, while the stalks are left on the fields. These bundles, called *epa*, are the Nupe unit of reckoning for calculating the yield, and also the standard 'load' (*kara*) used in the marketing of unthreshed grain. [804]

The harvesting of late millet almost coincides with the beginning of the second ground-nut harvest. A fortnight or so later sorghum is brought in. Then follows in rapid succession, frequently overlapping, the picking of red pepper, cotton, and beans, while the ground-nut harvest is still going on. Lastly, grass on fallow farms is cut; when the last batches of ground-nuts are dug out, at the end of January, the agricultural cycle is completed.

Let us return for a moment to the harvesting of millet and sorghum. I have mentioned above that the dead stalks of millet and sorghum are left on the farms. Some of the stalks are retrieved after a fortnight, and used for mat-making (see p. 239). The rest, however, is left lying in the fields, till they are destroyed later in the 'burning of the farms'. The same applies to the stalks of maize, the cut-off vines of yam, and the leaves or stems of other plants. Thus the dead plants are allowed to rot on the fields, and fertilizing substance is washed into the soil by the rains which may fall in the weeks or months between the harvesting and the following dry season. This is the native system of 'green manuring' to which I have referred before. The Nupe are well aware of this effect, and say that these stalks and leaves *ẽe taki*, 'become dung'.

The time-factor in reaping and harvesting is less sharply defined than in sowing and planting. Harvesting activities are spread more irregularly over a longer space of time. Certain crops, e.g. yam, cotton, sweet potatoes, and rice, are harvested in stages as the individual plants or batches of plants mature. During the (first) yam harvest, for example, I saw the farmer open two mounds only to close them again, having discovered that the fruit inside was not yet ripe. Again, the picking of certain crops, e.g. ground-nuts, cotton, red pepper, and beans, is a very long-drawn-out operation. But it may be speeded up—and a quick harvest of the 'cash crops' (cotton and ground-nuts) may be an urgent necessity in times of financial stringency—if outside help can be enlisted. The picking of beans, which involves no such motives, is often left till the very last, and carried out leisurely by the family after all the other crops have been brought in.

The harvesting that falls in the middle of the agricultural season, on the other hand, must be carefully fitted into this schedule of farm-work.

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241 For example, cassava and sweet potatoes grown on the marsh-land farms must be dug out quickly as rice is planted on the same plots almost immediately. The harvesting of bulrush-millet and the first yam harvest, if delayed, may interfere with the planting of cotton, and the third weeding. A quick harvest, for a different reason, is imperative also for late millet and sorghum; here it is the danger of monkeys and birds damaging the standing grain which forbids delay. The Nupe have various ways and means to combat this danger: they put up scarecrows and erect high platforms on the fields from the top of which boys try to scare off monkeys and birds, by shouting, throwing stones, brandishing long sticks, or swinging long ropes tied between the platform and a near-by tree. In districts where the danger is very great the farmers may have to spend the night on the farm shortly before the harvest to guard their fields from these unwelcome guests.

It is interesting to supplement this large-scale survey of the agricultural cycle with a view from closer range which could do justice to the varying individual arrangements. To illustrate this aspect of Nupe farming I have compiled the farming diaries of three Kutigi farmers for two typical weeks—one between the end of May and the beginning of June, when the work is temporarily easing off, and the second towards the end of June, when work is at its highest. These farming diaries show the scope of the individual variations of the general time-table. We shall see that they are fairly considerable—in details; but in general lines the activities of the three farmers conform closely to a common pattern. During the more leisurely season all farmers are ready to interrupt their work, and rest for two or three days in succession; but during the busy season only a very weighty reason will make them stay at home and leave their fields even for a day. Indeed at that time of the year you will find the Nupe villages deserted from early morning till about 3 or 4 in the afternoon, save for women, children, and old men. Another interesting fact emerging from the diaries is the disregard, under pressure of work, for the traditional day of rest, Friday. To work six days and rest [461] on the seventh is a common practice in Nupe (in fact a practice said to have been common already in the times before the spreading of Mohammedanism). But a farmer who knows himself behindhand with his work will disregard the rule. Finally, we see that in labour groups consisting of several people the family head may sometimes enjoy a short rest while the young men carry on the work; or that if one of the workers is called away, for example, by some social obligation, the work of the group goes on unimpaired. An arrangement of this kind is evidently impossible in the case of the farmer *K.*, who works on his own.

N.	*M.*	*K.*
Labour group: father and three sons	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
31.5.1936		
Goes out to farm about 8 a.m. Eats midday meal on the farm, and returns about 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm together with *N.*, whose farm is close to his own. Also returns with him.	Is away from Kutigi; went to a neighbouring village for the funeral of his sister.

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N.	*M.*	*K.*
Labour group: father and three sons	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
1.6.1936		
As previous day.	As previous day.	Returns in the evening.
2.6.1936		
Stays at home, together with sons.	Stays at home, and visits *N.* in the evening.	Goes out to farm about 10 a.m., and returns at 4 p.m.
3.6.1936		
Stays at home. Sons go out to farm in the morning, but are back at 2 p.m. in time to attend the market, which is held to-day.	Stays at home, works on garden-plots round the house. Son goes out to farm.	Stays at home; says he is tired from the journey.
4.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal; sons stay longer.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after midday meal.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after midday meal.
5.6.1936 (Friday)		
Stays at home, together with sons. Attends mosque in the afternoon.	Stays at home. Visits *N.* in the evening.	Stays at home. His brother, who lives in a hamlet, comes on a visit.
6.6.1936		
Stays at home, says he is tired. Works on garden-plots, but will go to farm to-morrow. Sons go out to farm.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal.
22.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns at 4 p.m. One son goes to Sakpe to attend wedding of a friend.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.
23.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal. He hurt his hand and cannot work properly. His sons stay on; one son still in Sakpe.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.
24.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., but returns early as his hand hurts. Son who went to Sakpe returns in the evening.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Stays at home as he is tired and has stomach trouble.

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N.	*M.*	*K.*
Labour group: father and three sons	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
25.6.1936		
Stays at home, his hand not yet well. Sons go out to farm.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 5 p.m.
26.6.1936 (Friday)		
Stays at home.	Stays at home.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.
27.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns at 5 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns for mid-day meal.
28.6.1936		
Stays at home because tax clerk of chief had summoned all elders. Sons go out to farm.	Stays at home for same reason as *N.* Son goes out to farm.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., but returns early to meet the tax clerk.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this chapter I have stressed the technical aspect of farming rather than its sociological context; I have laid particular emphasis on the time-factor. Nupe agriculture, complex and ambitious as is its scope, depends for its success on a very high degree of technical efficiency, both with regard to the organization of labour and individual skill and efficiency. The most conspicuous gauge of this efficiency lies in the successful use of the intricate and finely cut schedule of planting, weeding, and harvesting. This may not appear too easy: in Kutigi I learned—from the best farmers of the country—that the careful sowing of cotton may interfere with the second weeding, which is particularly important for late millet; this competition of two main crops for the attention of the farmer has often forced the planter to choose between them. Another complication in connexion with the growing of cotton is that the careful tending of cotton may hinder the yam harvest and the immediate preparation of the new yam-plots—an operation which appears preferable to many. But even the most rigid schedule of work must allow for a certain latitude. I have already given a few examples showing this. However, the essential point is that these deviations from the 'standard' times are recognized as such; there *is* a 'standard' schedule of farm-work and of its existence all farmers are equally aware, those who follow it as well as those who avail themselves of the latitude allowed in it. At every phase of farming operations a farmer will be able to tell whether or not he is 'on time'. The consciousness of the ideal time-table is clearly expressed in the common distinction between what 'good' and what 'bad' farmers do or are expected to do. The latitude which the ideal time-table allows carries its own corrective with it, be it merely

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moral or of a more concrete order. Ground-nuts, for example, may be planted at any time between the end of April and the end of May; but the late planter, as all agree, will be 'late for the tax money'. In Bida I watched farmers making new ridges for millet-sorghum in a field that had been already under cultivation the previous year rather late in the season; when I asked why they did not use the 'shifted' ridges, they explained that they had not performed the 'shifting of the ridges' the previous year, adding rather apologetically that they, the Bida people, were not as keen and efficient farmers as the country people, who as they well knew would rarely omit that operation.

Thus there is at least a moral premium put on the keeping of the delicate time-table and the overcoming of its various difficulties. Pride in farming achievements, publicly recognized and applauded, becomes a stimulus for attaining that high degree of efficiency on which Nupe agricultural production depends in so high a measure. Its final compensation lies, of course, in the concrete success of its ambitious scheme. Well carried out, it promises to satisfy the nutritive as well as the commercial demands of the community.

Here we are brought back to the third of the three conditions which appear to determine the Nupe farmer's agricultural planning and his choice between different crops and systems of rotation, namely, the consideration of the return—adequate return—which he may expect from his cultivation. If in his efforts to combine the cultivation of a certain number of crops the cultivator must take into consideration the efficiency of the labour at his disposal, he must, conversely, also consider how far the exercise of that highly efficient labour organization, or its direction to a particular task, is warranted by the prospects of an adequate return. The role played by considerations of this nature in Nupe agricultural economy is shown in the following examples. In 1934, the year of the 'slump', the majority of farmers in the ground-nut-growing districts declined to dig out the second ground-nut crop of this year as no sales were possible and it seemed hardly worth while to undertake the long and (since outside help would have to be called in) expensive task without the prospect of monetary compensation. Again, in 1936, a far better year, I learned that a number of Bida farmers who for various reasons had to carry out their farming single-handed were selling their harvest of ground-nuts together with the seed ground-nuts which they ought to have kept for the next planting season. The explanation was that one man alone could not grow any quantity worth selling. What they did therefore was to grow ground-nuts every second year only, and to buy seed ground-nuts in the intervening year, thus concentrating their modest 'labour-organization' on food crops and commercial crops alternately.[1]

[1] In figures this calculation works out as follows in the case of one of my informants: to have sold ground-nuts exclusive of the seeds would have brought him 1*s.* 6*d.*; instead of which he sold the lot for 4*s.*, and bought back ground-nuts for seeds the next year, from profits made on mat-weaving, for 2*s.* 6*d.* This might not look a very convincing calculation to us, but one must realize that 4*s.* was almost half the tax money in his case (9*s.* 6*d.*), while a sum of 1*s.* 6*d.* would only have been a negligible contribution towards that most important expense.

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241 It is natural, though from a certain point of view unfortunate, that today examples of this kind will almost invariably refer to modern commercial crops. The consideration of 'adequate returns' is thus given a narrower, and very specific, meaning. It cannot be denied that the extensive cultivation of these modern crops has accentuated the element of economic calculation in Nupe agricultural planning. Not only has the introduction of these crops considerably complicated the planting schedule, but it has also immensely emphasized the monetary aspect of the question of adequate returns. The 'all-or-nothing' viewpoint, or in the language of the economist, the 'marginal' considerations, which our examples have revealed, are no doubt due to its influence. I have said that these modern influences have 'accentuated' the element of economic calculation—they have not introduced it for the first time. To be satisfied with what the Nupe call, by a stereotyped formula, farming 'for the mouth only' is characteristic only of those sections which practise agriculture on the most modest scale, as a secondary occupation in addition to a craft, a trade, &c. We shall learn presently that even in its original form, before modern economic influences were brought to bear on it, Nupe agricultural production included a large measure of production for marketing and exchange.

DISPOSAL OF CROPS

Storage

241 343 We find both storage on the farm and in the house. Yam, sweet potatoes, cassava, and in some places the portion of millet and sorghum meant for sale are stored on the farm, either in the small huts (*evu*) which serve the farmers as temporary shelters, or in special store-huts (*kpyakpya*) built of sticks and branches put up, tent-like, against a tree and covered with leaves or grass. Inside, the fruits are heaped on a raised platform. The yam fruits are stored whole, and the fruits needed for food or marketing are collected from time to time, about twice a week, mostly by the men. The storing arrangement in this stick-and-branches structure is adapted to the need of the root crops for a drier and more airy storage than the clay granaries in the houses could provide. As regards the grain crops intended for sale, they are stored in these huts only for a short time, being disposed of very soon after the harvest. In the districts where little yam is grown, especially in the country round Bida, all crops, including yam, are stored in the house. Of cassava only small quantities are stored; as fresh cassava does not keep, it is first dried in the sun. But as the harvesting of cassava is not bound to any special season it is frequently dug out and used for food at odd times throughout the year; often in fact, dug out and eaten raw, it serves as a convenient 'quick lunch' to the farmers while they are working in the fields.

In the granaries in the house are stored millet, sorghum, maize (so far as this crop, grown in small quantities, involves any special storing), beans, ground-nuts, and all greens, each crop being kept in a separate granary. These granaries, called *edo*, are distributed between the living huts of the compound. Of egg-like shape, about 7 feet high and 4 feet in

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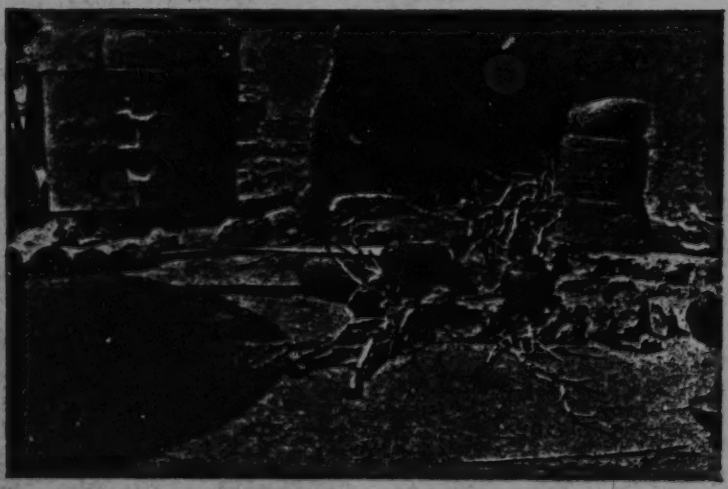
A FAMILY HEAD REPAIRING HIS GRANARY



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GRANARY AND COOKING PLACE IN A VILLAGE COMPOUND

[facing p. 226]

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343 diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-
251 like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid. [358] At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

251 Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These 251 ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of 354 millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

The seed plants are as a rule at once divided up from the crop. The 251 seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

[1] This is actually the almost universal method of grain storage in Northern Nigeria. An indirect testimony to its efficacy I chanced to obtain from Hausa settlers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whom I had occasion to visit in 1939. Chiefly for lack of proper building material for the construction of the Nigerian type of clay granary, these settlers have adopted the Sudan method of storage, i.e. storage of threshed grain. They all agreed that this method was inferior to the Nigerian, and preserved the grain much less satisfactorily.

[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the [177] Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.

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251 of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used [231] as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

251 The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list 439 complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not [415] for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

251 Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural 438 produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

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rice, and partly ground-nuts) or after it has undergone a rudimentary 'refining' process (such as the threshing and milling of grain, the shelling of ground-nuts, &c.). Side by side with this trade there exists an extensive local trade in the 'finished' product, which means various kinds of prepared food. I cannot attempt a detailed description of the intricate and varied art of Nupe cooking. I will only enumerate the more important products of this native 'food-industry', which, like most food preparation, is in the hands of the women. It is of considerable importance for the economy of the Nupe household. There are three main kinds of such prepared food which are sold everywhere in the markets and streets of the towns and villages of Nupe: (1) a gruel of millet or sorghum, made with water, and called *ekwa* in the more jelly-like and *zambú* in the more solid form. It is eaten for breakfast or lunch, and nicely done up in banana leaves, bought by labourers, canoe-men, travellers, and sometimes farmers going out to their fields—men who are unable to have their meals with their families or to have food brought out to them from home. (2) *Yisá* (Hausa, *fura*), bread-like balls made of late millet or sorghum and rolled in flour. Men and women attending markets are fond of buying this food and eating it with milk which they buy, there and then, from the Fulani women. (3) *Masa*, *kuli-kuli*, *bánkuru*, and *kara*—savouries of different kind, made of beans, sorghum- or millet-flour or ground-nuts, fried in shea-butter and prepared with various spices. They are eaten at any time of the day, practically by everybody who can spare an *amini* (a tenth of a penny).

To turn to the food crops proper. Our chart has established the even distribution of food crops over the year's cycle, a distribution which should, normally, leave every household well provided with food from harvest to harvest. Old yam should last till the new yam is dug out, sorghum and late millet till the new sorghum harvest—or at least till bulrush-millet—is reaped. I have found that June and July are the critical months: yam may begin to give out by the end of May or June, about six weeks or two months before the new yam harvest, and late millet and sorghum may become scarce by the middle of June. But bulrush-millet, which is harvested about that time, and maize, both from inland and marsh-land crops, make the transition easy.[1] So do also fresh ground-nuts, new potatoes, and partly the new rice, all harvested before the late main crops; I have mentioned already the 'stopgap' character of cassava.[2] A dry year, a late or failing harvest of early millet or first yam, may, of course, upset the balance temporarily in a district—till imports from the river areas where yam matures earlier, or other districts, which have fared better, set it right again.[3] But the nutritive balance of the country must always remain dependent on the contribution of trade and markets:

[1] See p. 213.

[2] Cassava-flour as a substitute for grain-flour appears on the Nupe markets only for about two months, during July and August. Corn-gruel, a daily food in many Nupe households, can be made with rice-flour instead of sorghum- or millet-flour, if the latter has become scarce. This substitute is more expensive than ordinary corn-gruel, and is also said to be less pleasant to the taste.

[3] In 1936 the first yams appeared on the river markets on 6 July, while inland the first yams were dug out a fortnight later.

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262 yam, maize, and early millet are not grown everywhere; special crops
438 are cultivated on marsh-land and inland farms; and besides, there is the
241 large population of Nupe which does not live on the land and can obtain its food only from the markets of the country. The Nupe agricultural system, as we have realized already, is adjusted essentially to a highly developed system of exchange and marketing. The surprisingly small number of crops grown exclusively for household consumption is perhaps the most striking proof.

241 The degree to which the individual farmer, and the farmer in the
438 different districts of the country, adjusts his planting to the principle of exchange economy varies considerably. In the marshes of Niger and Kaduna almost the whole production of rice is intended for sale and export. But at the other end of the scale we find farmers who, able to cultivate a few crops only, have just enough to provide food for their families. We have already examined some of the conditions determining this changing balance between trade crops and food crops. Ultimately it only reflects that greater fundamental balance that underlies Nupe peasant economy: between the need of food for the group, and the need of commodities which are obtainable only by means of exchange, that is, money—which can itself be obtained only from the sale of farming produce.

TREE CULTIVATION AND FRUIT INDUSTRY

245 As stated in the first chapter, most of the fruit-bearing trees in Nupe are wild growing. Only two or three kinds are cultivated: the kola-nut tree, *ebi*, and to much lesser extent the banana, *yaba*; to these two indigenous plants we must add to-day the European imported mango tree, *mangoro*. In the case of trees the main productive activities refer therefore not so much to the planting and tending of the plants as to the collection of the fruits and the preliminary manufacturing process of the same order as that described in the preceding section. Only in a few cases can the fruits of the trees be utilized directly—for food, cooking, or marketing. Most fruits have to undergo a special 'refining' process before they become marketable or ready for use.

Banana

Only in Bida, Patigi, and Laboži did I see real banana plantations. They are small and of little importance, for bananas have little commercial value in Nupe; they are sold for an extremely low price (a bunch of about twenty for ½*d*. or less)—if they are sold at all. Bananas are eaten raw, and play in Nupe a part comparable to our occasional eating of fruit. In the banana plantations the plants are arranged in a circle of about 6 feet in diameter. The important thing is to plant them very deep in the ground (from 3 to 4 feet), and the whole circle has thus to be excavated to that depth. It is this heavy and slow work—unprofitable work from a commercial point of view—that, according to my informants, discourages the Nupe farmer from growing bananas. In Bida, where the soil is poor, the banana plot has to be manured with animal dung; in the bush plantations and in the forest groves where the banana grows wild the

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leaves are allowed to fall off and rot on the ground—an efficient system of natural fertilization, though not, apparently (unlike the 'green manuring' practised in agriculture), applied consciously. 245

Kola-nut

We have had occasion already to speak of the Kusopa, the kola-nut planters in the forest groves of Laboži. The Kusopa of Laboži and the neighbouring districts devote the larger part of their agricultural work to the cultivation of the kola-nut tree, growing little else besides—only a little millet and sorghum. The method of kola-nut cultivation is interesting. The trees are planted at the beginning of the rains. They flower for the first time after five years, about July, and after six years bear fruit, towards the end of October. The fruit is picked in February. From every harvest a gourdful of nuts is kept to be used as seeds, for nearly every year new trees are planted to replace old and barren ones. When planting a new tree the seed is buried hand-deep in the ground. To protect the seed the place where it was planted is covered with twigs; moreover, four banana plants are planted around it, in a square, about 6 feet by 6 feet. As the banana grows faster than the kola-nut the four banana plants provide shade for the tender young tree, and at the same time secure the necessary distance between newly planted trees. When the kola-nut tree reaches a certain height and no longer needs the shade of the banana plants, the latter are dug out and removed. The tending of the young kola-nut tree involves constant weeding—in which no hoe is used; only the 'bush-knife', so as not to hurt the delicate plant—and much watering. During the dry season the seedlings must be watered every four days. The need for humid soil explains the fact that the kola thrives only in the most humid part of Nupe, in the thick forest groves of Kusopa country.

This environmental factor is fully understood by the people. The failure of kola-nut cultivation in other districts of the Emirate (on which we shall have more to say presently) is partly attributed to the less favourable soil. But the traditional monopoly of kola-nut planting in Laboži is not, in their eyes, fully explained on such empirical grounds. A legend that has grown up round the cultivation of the kola-nut tree which tells about the discovery, by a Laboži woman, of the secret of kola-nut planting, supplies another explanation more convincing to their way of thinking. Let me quote this legend in full.

A woman was threshing grain for beer when a Hausa from Borgu, on his way back to his country, happened to pass. He crossed the threshing-ground and put down the load he was carrying. The woman went into the house to fetch water and to cook porridge for the guest. She brought the food and gave it to the Hausa. He ate the porridge and liked it very much. He opened his load, took out two kola-nuts, and gave them to the woman to thank her for the food. At that time there were no kola-nuts anywhere in Nupe country. The woman took the kola-nuts and put them on the threshing-ground. Later, when she took the grain into the house, she forgot the kola-nuts and left them lying there on the threshing-ground. One day, when she came out to the threshing-ground again, she saw these kola-nuts. She said: 'Look, the nuts which the Hausa gave me have come 245 539

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245 539 up.' She went and told the men of the house. They all came and looked. They cleared the ground around the young plants; they had two kola-nut trees then. After three years the trees bore fruit. The men picked the fruits and took them home. They broke the nuts open and ate them. They picked out the kernel, took it into the bush and planted it. When the kola-nut trees bore fruit again the men picked the fruits and took them to the king. This was the beginning of the kola-nut in Nupe. When they had taken the fruits to the king, he said: 'They are very nice indeed.' But the following year the trees did not bear fruit. So the men went to see the soothsayers. They said that the trees would not bear fruit again unless they sacrificed a human being. So the men went and told the king, and said: 'If we do not sacrifice a human being our trees will never bear fruit again.' Therefore the king gave them permission to take a human being and sacrifice it. They did so, and the trees bore fruit again. This was the beginning of human sacrifices in Nupe, with the permission of the king.

245 As the legend explains the origin of kola plantation in the country of the Kusopa, certain magic rites which are practised by that group—and by that group only—emphasize the unique position of the kola-nut planters. Only with the knowledge of that special magic can the success of the difficult and precarious cultivation be assured. The Laboži people practise two kinds of this professional magic. At the time when the kola trees are in bloom every planter will collect the dead leaves on his plantation, place them in a mortar, and pound and then burn them on the plantation. There is no spell or special ritual linked with this act, but by it, as by a magic act, the planter believes he will ensure a rich harvest. The second magic connected with kola-nut planting is performed for the whole group by the *Majī Tsuba*, the Master of Threshing (in the legend the first kola-nuts were growing from the threshing-ground), the village priest of Laboži. Annually, about two months before the picking of the 782 kola-nuts, he performs a sacrifice in front of the hut in which, as the legend has it, the woman lies buried to whom the Kusopa owe the knowledge of kola-nut planting. To-day a white ram and cock are sacrificed, the blood together with some beer is poured on the threshold of the hut, and *Sokó*, God, is invoked that he may let the kola trees thrive. Formerly this sacrifice is said to have demanded a human victim. (See p. 90, n. 2.)

This connexion between planting technique and mythical and magic ideas, common all the world over, needs no special explanation. But in the case of the kola-nut planters it gains an additional significance. The special nature of the rite, its infrequent occurrence, correspond to the special monopolized technique. In the eyes of the people who, not kola-nut planters themselves, accept the existence of these special rites, it confirms and endorses the exceptional position of the Kusopa as the masters of a unique craft. About fifteen years ago the Administration planned to introduce the cultivation of kola-nuts into the other districts of Nupe. A few expert planters from Laboži were sent round to teach the farmers in places where the soil looked promising the almost secret art of kola planting. These efforts met with but meagre success. Local conditions were to a large extent responsible: the soil in the other districts seemed capable of producing only the inferior kind of kola, and

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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return. 245

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwõ*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top. 386 363 412

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to 245 252

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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

249 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe,
438 which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets
[438] only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add
388 the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

9 [i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa. 388 [177]

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men. 249 386

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who 386 439

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
185 who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing
177 trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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to check the attempts to extend kola plantation in Nupe. Whether or not it will check other attempts at agricultural innovations one cannot say.[1]

Often in discussions of this kind the reluctance of a native group to adopt a certain innovation is summarily dismissed as being due to the inveterate, almost proverbial, 'conservatism' of the native races. Clearly, such an explanation does not meet the case. As regards the Nupe we should have to contrast their alleged 'conservatism' with respect to trees with the readiness with which they adopt new crops and agricultural techniques. Evidently, to adopt a new crop which shows results in a year's time, and which is easy to tend, often easier than the traditional crops (as in the case of maize or cassava), and to take up the difficult work of planting trees which may not bear fruit for six or seven years, is an entirely different thing. One can be easily fitted into the framework of established agricultural activities while the other involves a complete readjustment of the productive system. The Nupe are, within limits, extremely progressive people, and keen on trying out new things. These limits are determined by two factors: first, by the time that an ordinarily crowded working year could allow for additional tasks; other work, or precious leisure time might have to be given up for the sake of the innovation—a change that may or may not appear worth while to the Nupe farmer. The second factor is the measure of change which a readjustment of the native production would entail in this closely knit economic system, with its exact balance of specialization and exchange. Every radical change in the production, such as the adoption of tree-cultivation in a district, may upset this balance; it may, in other words, make the innovation less profitable. The fact that the Nupe farmer is go-ahead with respect to certain farm techniques and 'conservative' with respect to others is not due to any tribal or racial 'conservatism', but reveals itself as a clear instance of the working of free economic choice.

TECHNIQUE AND KNOWLEDGE

So advanced a technique and so conspicuous a standard of husbandry must involve a body of theoretical knowledge which goes far beyond the counsels of peasant lore, and could avouch statements of very nearly scientific authority. This is no doubt the case in Nupe farming. The understanding of the basic principle of manuring, the fixed rules with regard to rotation and lying fallow, the practice of thinning-out the growing plants, which is correctly explained as being intended to give the plant more space, they all confirm this.[2] Moreover, while in many African

[1] Rev. Ira W. Sherk, the head of the U.S. Mission at Mokwa, has been successful in making the people of a small neighbouring village adopt the cultivation of grapefruit. This innovation, carried out on a very small scale, and involving hardly any difficult readjustment of the native productive organization, bears out what is said later in the text about the limits that are set to all such innovations.

[2] I must record that one of my Bida informants, an experienced farmer, denied the value of ashes and the burning of fields as manure. He held that animal manure (with the regular use of which he as a Bida farmer was well acquainted) was the only effective manure. This critical attitude only emphasizes the element of empirical knowledge in Nupe farming technique.

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2+2 communities rulings on agricultural technique and the organization of agricultural labour appear in the guise of magic devices and rituals, there is none of this in Nupe agriculture, which remains matter-of-fact and consciously based on empirical knowledge.[1]

In a productive organization of this kind special emphasis must be laid on the position of authority of the old and experienced farmer. It can be studied in action whenever groups comprising both older and younger men co-operate in farm-work. In family work as well as in non-family co-operation the older men always lead the work or supervise the [868] work of the younger men; they point out mistakes to them and teach them the important rules of farm-work. I have frequently seen men scold boys for damaging a plant when weeding, or for planting seeds too close. Boys are made to work on the farms from the age of 6 or 7, first with toy-like light tools, later with the real heavy hoe, in order to learn through practice and under constant supervision. In Nupe farming very little is left to chance. I have, for example, never heard of anyone starting farm-work too early or too late in the season and thus wasting the seeds—a mistake not uncommon among more primitive agriculturalists. The quasi-scientific aspect of Nupe agriculture is made most evident in the 'theoretical' rulings which the people themselves are always ready to lay down. Thus informants formulated the following rule: there exist two kinds of rice, one taking 90 days, the other 180 days to mature; or this: the latest date for the planting of ground-nuts is the beginning of the third month (counted from the beginning of the planting season). Not all such rules are fully convincing to the European agriculturist—we remember the rule about planting yams before the dry season in order to make them grow bigger. But, on the other hand, there is plenty of evidence to show that the existing body of native farm-knowledge admits of experiment, and is constantly assimilating newly gained experiences. There is, for example, the new 'rule' about cotton and red pepper being excellent first crops before millet and sorghum. Experiment has besides been forced upon the native cultivator by the introduction of modern crops or varieties. Thus the people have tried with varying success to grow cotton on different kinds of soil; cotton-growing has also caused new difficulties with regard to the distribution of agricultural work, which can be solved ultimately only by experiment.[2]

Long experimenting, however, which does not lead to the incorporation of the new experiences into that solid body of farming-knowledge

[1] The one exception is the magic linked with the cultivation of kola-nut trees, which itself represents an exceptional form of cultivation. Apart from this magic there exist only the annual fertility cults which set the spiritual framework for farming activities in general, and certain varying, unsystematic forms of magic—charms applied to hoes, or a specific magic performed over a field—which are to ensure success in individual cases.

[2] In 1936 the Agricultural Officer of Bida Division travelled round the district to instruct personally the cotton-growers in the more important centres about the proper date for planting cotton—information which, coming many years after cotton-growing had been introduced in this area, only confirmed a point of technique which the people had already discovered for themselves.

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easily turns into discouragement. In Kutigi and Sakpe I have spoken to 242
many farmers who, discouraged by the increasing difficulties that appear to accompany cotton-growing, seemed determined to give it up altogether. We may, I think, draw a valuable lesson from this. If new agricultural schemes are to be introduced they must be brought in already well tried-out and fully adapted to the existing conditions. The adoption of a new crop or technique is to the native in itself a large-scale experiment; to make the people adopt a technique which has not been fully tried-out means to double this element of experimenting. It will prevent the new knowledge from being absorbed quickly in the 'body of Nupe farming-knowledge' on which the people feel they must be able to rely, and may eventually give them over to disappointment and discouragement.

BY-PRODUCTS OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and forest-cultivation produce as by-products certain raw 241
materials which are used in Nupe home industries and handicrafts. Thus the grain-stalks which are left on the fields after the harvest are used for the making of fences, doors, and bedsteads: cut in fine strips, grain and maize stalks are used for mat-making; a vegetable dye, black and red, is gained from the stalk of a certain species of sorghum (*dindórogi*). Small trees which do not bear fruit are occasionally cut down by the owner of the field on which they stand and used as timber for house-repairs and suchlike. In all these cases it is the cultivator and his family themselves who use the plant or tree; the by-products of agriculture have no marketing value. This is different in the case of firewood and grass for thatching which, as I have mentioned already, is collected or cut by the Nupe women and marketed by the men (see p. 200).

It is frequently quoted as a characteristic feature of African agricul- 241
ture that every part of a plant or tree that can be used in any way is 463
actually utilized by the people. This is only partly true in Nupe. Only a small proportion, for example, of the grain-stalks is used in the various ways just described. A great many farmers are either unskilled in the craft which makes use of these by-products, or devote their spare time to other, to them more attractive or profitable, occupations. This comparative failure on the part of the Nupe farmer to utilize to the fullest possible extent the products of his land appears to be connected with the complexity and specialization of the productive system of the country. As we shall see later, only certain groups or individuals have specialized in mat-making, the making of bedsteads, or dyeing. The influence of specialization involving a clear-cut division between the agriculturist and the craftsman who utilizes the by-products of agriculture is most conspicuous in this case; big trees, when not fruit-bearing, may also be cut down and used as timber. But no farmer would ever attempt to cut a big tree himself for fear of bungling the job and being injured or even killed by the falling tree. He calls in the professional wood-cutter, who possesses both the necessary skill and experience and the special magic which alone can prevent the spirit of the tree from revenging himself on

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the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

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CHAPTER XIII

AGRICULTURE: ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR

LABOUR organization in Nupe, in every field of economic activity, is characterized by a twofold principle: the distinction between individual work and family work or, in native terminology, between *bucá* and *efakó*. As the division of labour implied in this distinction also involves a corresponding division of income and property, our discussion of the organization of agricultural labour must at the same time be a discussion of the forms of property that obtain in relation to agricultural production. The terms *bucá* and *efakó* have, in fact, this wider meaning. Every kind of work done individually, its products and the income—individual income—derived from it, are *bucá*; and every work done jointly, in collective family work, producing output and income over which the family group or a section of the family group exercises joint rights, is *efakó*. Thus we find two different kinds of farm property: *efakó* farms which are owned and worked jointly by the family group, and *bucá* farms worked and owned by individuals. Similarly there are *efakó* granaries to hold the produce from the family farms, and *bucá* granaries to hold the produce which the individual members of the family group own and utilize. The family group or, more precisely, the section of the family group which forms the *efakó*-unit, owns from ten to twelve granaries which are as a rule placed close to the centre of the house. Every *bucá* owner has, besides, his own granary, which is usually found close to the wall of the compound. Obviously, in a system of labour based not on wages but on joint work and a share in the proceeds, the discussion of the labour organization cannot be treated separately from questions of ownership and land-tenure. On the other hand, a co-operative group consisting of a section of the kinship group cannot be described without constant reference to kinship organization. Frequent cross-references, and overlapping with other sections of the book, are thus unavoidable.

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INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WORK

Let me begin with the *bucá*, which can be briefly described. Every male member of the family owns a *bucá*, with the exception of the family head who being the administrator of the *efakó* has no *bucá* himself. For his personal requirements he is entitled to draw on the *efakó* income. Young boys of 8 or 10 already possess *bucá* farms of their own. *Bucá* farms vary considerably in size, and grow with their occupants. The largest *bucá* farm which I found was about one acre, i.e. about half the size of the plot of land which on the family possessions is proportionate to every adult worker. The average *bucá* yield I found to be between one-third and one-half of the individual adult's share in the yield of the family farm. The *bucá* owner can work on his farm only 'out of business hours', when he is not needed for *efakó*

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work. Two different arrangements exist. The one found more frequently is this: every man works on the *efakó* farm from early morning till 3 or 4 in the afternoon; after that he is free to work his own individual plot. The second, less frequent, arrangement requires married men to work five days in the week, and bachelors six days in the week on the *efakó*, and allows them one or two days—including the weekly day of rest, Friday—on the *bucá*. The selection of crops which are grown on the *bucá* is of necessity very much simpler than that grown on the *efakó*; moreover, no collective work, not even occasional help, is possible for *bucá* work. Thus farmers grow mostly only the staple crops, sorghum, millet, or yam, on their *bucá* farms but sometimes, though rarely, also cotton or ground-nuts. The income from the *bucá* farm is used entirely for personal expenses, for clothes and additional food which are not provided by the family, such as savouries or kola-nuts, beer or palm-wine; for contributions to parties of friends, certain personal gifts, and so forth.

Bucá farm-work is not practised everywhere, and not even in every farming community. *Bucá* work and income of some kind, however, always exists. In certain areas where other forms of production (e.g. certain handicrafts) are practised besides agriculture—mostly forms of production involving less heavy work and higher money-return—these additional productive techniques supply the *bucá* work to which the men turn 'after hours'. Thus we find in Kutigi, the centre of Nupe mat-industry, mat-working adopted as *bucá*; in Mokwa, indigo-dyeing; while on Jebba Island, which is inhabited by the mixed farming and fishing community of the riverain Gbedegi, fishing with the drag-net (carried out in the evenings, i.e. after the day's farm-work) replacing the farming *bucá*.

The joint work on the *efakó* farm is carried out by a section of the household group, i.e. by a section of the family group which lives together in the same 'house' or compound. Only once have I found an *efakó* group comprising individuals who were living in different compounds. It was a transitional arrangement which had occurred in the course of the expansion of one household group, a section of which had split off and was preparing to take new land, farther afield, under cultivation. The 'emigrants' had already built a house in the new locality but were still, for the time being, working with the rest of the original household group on the old land. The whole household group, with its twenty-five to thirty male members, has most probably never formed a single *efakó* group, although informants, here as in so many cases only too ready to idealize the past, will often give exaggerated accounts of the size of the groups that formerly used to work together. Their estimates vary widely, between thirty and a hundred. However, even reliable informants put the size of the *efakó* group in pre-British days at a figure considerably higher than that observed to-day, namely, at from ten to fifteen. The average *efakó* group to-day numbers only two or three adult members. There is no doubt, then, and this is borne out by the evidence of genealogies, that the size of the *efakó* group has been steadily decreasing for some time. These are the figures relating to

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the size of the *efakó* working group in the case of fifty Nupe households which I have analysed (non-adult members of the working group are ignored in the table):

Number of men working together	1	2	3	4	5	6	Over 6
Number of cases	17	13	11	6	2	1	..[1]

The smallest *efakó* group, of one man, has obviously lost all the essential characteristics which distinguish it from the *bucá* group. In these extreme cases the *bucá* itself disappears, and we have single individual holdings, worked by one man, helped only perhaps by his boys who will stay with him until they are grown up, when they too will demand farms of their own.

The normal *efakó* group consists of a number of close relations—brothers and sons who are either unmarried or only recently married, and have one or two small children—working under the headship of the senior man, a father, father's brother, or eldest brother. Older men who are childless may also remain in the *efakó* group. In larger *efakó* groups and especially in groups the head of which is an old man, the family head may not himself join in the actual farm-work. He supervises it, he makes frequent tours of inspection to the farm, and he lays down the arrangement and order of the work for the day. As a family head he stands more aloof, and is free to use his leisure in his own way. The team-work which the *efakó* implies is of two kinds: actual working together, or co-ordinated working on different plots performing different tasks. Actual working together on the same plot is practised in the tilling of the soil and the preparation of ridges, in transplanting and harvesting. In this team-work a strong stimulus is embodied: the more experienced workers set the pace, and the others follow as well as they can, always conscious of the element of competition and display of efficiency embodied in the joint activity. The leader of the team is not, as we have seen, the head of the *efakó* group himself but the member next in seniority, in the traditional arrangement usually the younger brother or eldest son of the family head. Sowing, ordinary weeding, and the regular tending of the plants may be done by one or two workers of the group only, while the rest may be assigned tasks on other plots or sometimes a different kind of work altogether, such as the task of helping in the house, or taking farm-produce to a distant market.

Whatever the actual division of work, the consciousness of the individual share in the common labour is strongly pronounced, and with it the competitive element in the co-operation. Every co-worker in the team is aware of the number of ridges, for example, which stand to his credit in the common tilling; similarly everyone, at least among the adults, is able to describe precisely his share in the yield produced on the

[1] The proportion of *efakó* groups comprising more than four adults is in reality much smaller than is indicated in the table. A more superficial census of over 100 households, designed specially to ascertain the occurrence of large *efakó* groups, produced the same three instances of households with *efakó*-units of five or six adults.

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241 common land. The system of individual *bucd* work which runs parallel
592 to the family work no doubt fosters such reckoning; no doubt also that this form of reckoning, essentially competitive as it is, must enhance the energy devoted by the individual worker to the common task. But such an attitude must also foster the tendency to split up and eventually dissolve the working-unit. In a small hamlet near Bida I discovered an interesting form of transition between full co-operation, which yet recognizes the individual share in the common work, and complete dissolution of the working-unit into independent agents. In the case to which I am referring the *efakó* group was divided into two working-units, each being engaged permanently on different fields although the yield produced by the two sections was still collected as the common *efakó* yield. The *efakó* group was formed by a father—a man of over 50—and his two married sons—of about 25 and 30. The father was working one group of plots and the two sons, together, another. The two groups of plots incidentally produced equally large crops, which was due to the fact that the old man could enlist outside labour on his farms and thus equalize the difference in working capacity between himself and his two sons.

MAINTENANCE OF LABOUR

The produce of the *efakó* is handed over *in toto* to the family head. It is stored in the *efakó* granaries, and only the family head has the right to dispose of it. We shall discuss later in detail the various uses to which he may put it. But let me describe here one aspect of the employment of the *efakó* income, namely its use for the benefit of the *efakó* members themselves who helped to produce it, speaking more generally, for the maintenance of the labour organization. The question of maintenance of labour has, first, a strictly material aspect, namely, the supply of the means of production—the agricultural tools. The main agricultural instruments used in Nupe farming, as we have seen, are two kinds of hoe, bush-knife, and axe. They all have to be bought from the blacksmiths or, in the case of the bush-knife, from the European store, and must be repaired periodically—expenses which are by no means negligible. A heavy hoe costs between 1*s*. and 1*s*. 6*d*., a light hoe be-
[435 tween 6*d*. and 1*s*., axe and bush-knife between 1*s*. and 1*s*. 6*d*.; repairs may amount to between 3*d*. and 4*d*. each time, that is, perhaps 1*s*. a year. Now, as long as the individual worker remains in the *efakó* group, the head of the group supplies new tools and pays for repairs. A man who leaves the *efakó* group to work on his own may take away the tools which he has been using—they have become 'his' tools—but from now on he must himself pay the cost of all repairs or the purchase of new tools.

The second, human, aspect in the problem of maintenance of labour is the maintenance of the workers themselves. They are housed, clothed, and fed by the family head. The head of the *efakó* group is responsible for all expenses that occur in connexion with the repair of the house and the huts in which his co-workers live; he provides their clothing and food—the section of the family group which is regularly

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eating together and constitutes one *ménage* coincides in fact with the *efakó*-unit. The *efakó* head further pays the tax for his co-workers and is also expected to make himself responsible for establishing them socially when they have reached full adulthood, i.e. he will enable them to get married, by paying their bride-price. By allotting to the co-workers from earliest youth an individual plot for *bucá* work or allowing them the time for other *bucá* enterprises, he also puts them in the position of earning an independent income. They use it, as I have said, for their personal wants over and above those catered for by the family head—what we may call the small luxuries of life. When they desire to leave the *efakó* group and set up for themselves the family head finally provides the members of his group with the necessary 'capital' in the form of the tools which they may take with them, food for the first year while their new land does not yet bear crops, and, above all, in form of the parcel of family land which he allots to them as their own property. In order to do all this the family head must be able not only to draw on regular supplies of agricultural produce from the family land but also to avail himself of certain commodities of exchange and that universal medium of exchange, money. He must plan his money expenditure and accumulate reserves which can alone enable him to pay the large bride-price (which is always in money) when the time comes. The resources of the family working-unit thus gain the significance of capital proper, invested in the maintenance of labour; without it, without the prospect of fulfilling all these economic obligations towards the members of the working-unit, the *efakó* group cannot be maintained satisfactorily.

Here we come back to the decline or disintegration of the family working-unit under modern conditions which we have outlined in the beginning of this section. Now, every co-operative group must to some extent reckon with a periodical and temporary disintegration, that is, with the necessity of periodically readjusting its body of workers, replacing those who have died or are too old or who for other reasons desire to leave the group and to admit new, young members in their place. This is done through the twofold mechanism of inheritance and succession, and of release with regard to members who leave the group to work on their own. We shall examine inheritance and succession later; here it will suffice to say that in the Nupe system of inheritance the family farm goes to the relation next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son (in the classificatory sense). As regards the release of members from the group, the rule used to be that junior members remained in the *efakó* until they had more than two wives and more than two or three children. In the last five to ten years, however, many large *efakó* groups were dissolved after the death of the family head, and the family land, instead of being worked jointly by the remaining members of the family under the new head, was divided up among the various individuals who now work independently each on his own land. Moreover, nowadays young men who have just married frequently decline to stay in the *efakó*-unit and demand to be given a separate farm. I have noted many cases of this kind, in all parts of Nupe, in which the dissolution of the *efakó* group occurred between six and ten years ago.

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241 How are we to explain this comparatively sudden change? Viewing it from the general economic point of view all the advantages seem to be 592 on the side of a large labour-unit: our discussion of the agricultural 178 technique of the country has taught us that a large labour group represents, in Nupe, the only means of cultivating a large variety of both useful and profitable crops. Moreover, a large *efakó*-unit assures a certain measure of leisure to the family head and the old men in general, by enabling them to leave a large proportion of the actual work to the younger generation. It assures also a better distribution of responsibility, counting more adults among its members than does the small working-unit. It utilizes more fully the important incentive of competition and is, finally, of great educational value; for only in large labour-units are the young boys likely to work regularly in the company of others of their own age.

241 But if from point of view of group efficiency and security the large 592 working-unit appears superior to the small (say) one- or two-men 178 'group', it is not necessarily so when looked at from the viewpoint of the individual. Take the question of leisure and distribution of responsi- 461 bility. In one of the instances in which I found a large *efakó*-unit having been dissolved recently (six years ago), after the death of the family head, I was given this as the reason of the change: the new family head, the eldest of five brothers, had availed himself liberally of the privilege of leisure which his position implied, and frequently went hunting while the others were working on the farm. Now, while they had accepted the same arrangement under the old family head, their father, they declined to accord this privilege to their eldest brother, and preferred to dissolve the whole unit and work each for himself. To-day, working on their own, the individual family members have a comparatively larger measure of freedom and leisure, which they are free to use as they like. They can use their own discretion in planning the farm-work: of the five brothers two have taken to spend their spare time in making mats, a leisure-time occupation which, they assured me, is financially very advantageous to them; one has left the village; and the family head himself can still spend part of his time in hunting. Against the considerations of group efficiency thus stand individual considerations of gain, which provide another, and in some respects very different, standard of appreciation by which to measure the value of the large labour-unit. The word 'gain' should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Freedom of movement, freedom to choose a different profession (we remember, for example, the openings which the political life of the capital offered to young men of adventurous spirit), even freedom to enjoy one's leisure independent of the dictates of family requirements—these spiritual values appear under certain circumstances as tempting to the younger generation as does the prospect of material gain.

The two standards of appreciation will coincide where the *efakó* group is in a position to guarantee the satisfaction of all needs and demands which the group-members might feel. Nupe family co-operation in farm-work, once apparently more satisfactorily adjusted, is now failing in this respect. This failure can be attributed to two different develop-

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ments: to an increase in the needs and demands on the part of the individual members with which the system of family co-operation failed to cope; or to a decline in the efficiency of the group to maintain its former standards of maintenance. The Nupe *efakó* system has, in fact, failed on both accounts. As regards the first, a large variety of new needs and wants, temptations and values have spread, primarily from the town, and have begun to transform the original peasant culture; as regards the second, the family head is to-day frequently unable to meet out of the family income two financial demands which are regarded as essential to the *efakó* concept, the payment of the bride-price and the payment of tax for the individual members of the *efakó* group.

Certain of the influences which have thus led to the decline of the large working-unit are no doubt due to factors of modern culture change. Yet it would be wrong to regard the change in the structure of the working-unit merely as a result of the outside influence of culture contact. The structural change forms part of a much wider phenomenon; it is the result of an intrinsic economic development, namely, the readjustment between productive organization and needs existing in the society. If the change were due exclusively to culture contact we should expect to find the larger working-unit preserved only in backward, 'unsophisticated', districts. This is not the case. The table on p. 243 showed that three households out of fifty had working-units composed of more than four adults. Of these three households only one belongs to a backward area—the household of the chief of Doko. The two other examples come both from one of the most progressive places in Nupe, Lemu, and from a group of farmers who, as mentioned before, have but recently undertaken the cultivation of a new commercial crop, red pepper, to replace another commercial crop, ground-nuts, which had not proved an economic success. A large working group is essential to the cultivation of this new crop. In these two households the young men have remained in the *efakó*, content with their position, while the family head, in turn, is able to provide bride-price and tax-money. Here, then, culture contact so far from being responsible for the dissolution of the large working-unit has on the contrary supplied a type of production which enables the large working-unit to maintain itself; paradoxically, culture contact has placed the *efakó*-unit in a position to satisfy those very demands and needs which culture contact has newly imposed upon the society. However, these instances from Lemu are exceptional: neither in Mokwa, the centre of ground-nut cultivation, nor in Kutigi, where cotton is grown on a comparatively large scale, has the large *efakó* group survived. The exceptional cases which I have discovered are too few to warrant a more far-reaching, systematic explanation. Moreover, whereas in this case attractions and temptations appealing to the younger generation are partly responsible for the social change, individual differences must play a considerable part. We can only tentatively point to a certain negative evidence: the absence of some of these 'temptations' in Lemu which have made the younger generation in Mokwa and Kutigi claim an early economic independence. Lemu is neither a centre of native trade, nor does a profitable alternative

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occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supplemented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

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EFAKÓ WORK ON A FARM NEAR BIDA

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FARMING *EGBE*

[Facing p. 248]

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561 working party follow the musicians, the rest meet later out on the farm.
When all have assembled the young men start work. They work in a
476 group of ten or twelve, starting on the same side of the field, leaving
241 plenty of space between each other. Everyone is working his own ridge and, having finished one, he turns to the next with hardly any pause. The drummers and flute-players walk alongside the field abreast of the workers. Older men stand at the side, watching, criticizing, commenting. Often you can hear them call one of the workers by name, exhorting him to ever greater efforts, or shouting impatiently: 'Quicker, quicker!' When one field is finished some of the young men, the captains of the age-grade association among them, will execute a short dance, balancing their heavy hoes in the air and heavily stamping on the tilled field, while the drummers are arrayed behind them, beating the rhythm of the age-grade *take*.[1] Then workers and audience—and every *egbe* attracts a large audience—move on to another field, while some of the older men may stay behind to sow the newly tilled plot. On another occasion I saw the young men working in two groups of about equal strength, each under its own leader—one of the captains of the age-grade association. The groups started on opposite ends of the field, working towards each other. Now and again a worker would get up, survey with one glance the work which his group had been doing, and cry out in a long high-pitched yell; others were shouting with deep hoarse voices at every stroke of their hoe. The speed with which they worked, the whole atmosphere of the *egbe*—the constant drumming, the shouts from the audience—had something deeply exciting, almost feverish. I have seen a team of fifteen young men, the oldest between 19 and 20, the youngest 14, clear and till a farm-plot of one acre in two and a half hours.[2]
561 The *egbe* work still more than *efahó* work is animated by an intense spirit
476 of competition. The worker who has quickly finished his ridges will
241 stand up and look round, proudly showing off his splendid work; he will
554 chaff his fellow workers about their clumsy progress, their crooked ridges; he executes a little dance, singing, and shaking his hoe to show how leisurely he can work and still beat the others. When all the work is finished the whole party, musicians, workers, and onlookers, repair to the house of the owner of the farm. Here the feast which concludes the *egbe* is celebrated with plenty of food, corn-beer, and dancing, and much boasting and prancing of the young men, who are the heroes of the occasion. Nor is their boasting and prancing without significance. In the village communities where the traditional age-grade system is still practised, one of the important side-issues of the *egbe* is that it represents a regular test in which the young men establish their qualification as farmers. From *egbe* to *egbe*, every year, their skill and their achievements are watched, compared, and judged by the older people. In the last *egbe* of the season, or some other outstanding *egbe* (e.g. on the farm of the chief),[3] the results of this competition are made known and the young

[1] See p. 395.
[2] In another case I saw six young men clearing a densely overgrown bush-plot for yam-cultivation of about a third of an acre in one hour.
[3] An *egbe* of this kind near Bida at which new titles were bestowed was

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561 farmer who did best is given by his age-grade association the title *Sode*, the second highest title that can be bestowed on young men. A man who 476 is once made *Sode* keeps his rank until some other claimant snatches the 241 title from him, or if he had no competitors, until he joins the 'old men' 554 and retires from the arena of the *egbe*. In the urbanized age-grade associations of Bida this title and the whole usage have disappeared. In other large places which follow Bida fashion, the title *Sode*, though still in existence, has become a title of minor importance, a long way down the list of age-grade ranks.

241 The primary advantage of collective farm-work lies evidently in the time-saving which it makes possible. The second weeding, for example, 476 which normally takes from five to ten days, can be done by *egbe* in one day. But this valuable help must be paid for. The cost of an *egbe* of from fifteen to twenty workers—the cost of food and drink for the guests and the pay of drummers and musicians—is between 6*s*. and 8*s*. *Egbe* work, then, implies a calculation of investment and return, cost and profit. To-day, farmers try to lower the cost of *egbe*. In an *egbe* near Bida (the *egbe* just described, in which the workers were grouped in two teams) the owner of the farm contributed music and food for thirty people, but no beer or palm-wine. The fare was simple—no meat or fish—but plentiful: porridge cooked in palm-oil for the men, half a bowl per head (1 lb.), and corn-gruel for the women. This cheap *egbe* cost only 4*s*. yet proved still sufficiently attractive to make a large group of workers attend.

Yet there is one element of 'profit' in this calculation which cannot be put down in shillings and pence, and which is of utmost sociological significance. *Egbe* work is performed only on family farms, i.e. on the farms of family heads and old men in general. Younger people, whether they still work under the family head or have made themselves independent, are not entitled to the help of the *egbe*. Thus the *egbe* provides a twofold balance, in favour of the old men who cannot work as efficiently as the young, and in favour of the sociological head of the family group who, though perhaps no longer able to command the services of a large body of co-workers, can still command the assistance of collective farm-work.[1] How real this balance is was illustrated in the example given before (p. 244) of an old man, the family head, cultivating fields equal in size and yield to the fields worked by his two adult sons. With the splitting-up of families and the reduction of the *efakó* group, with the disappearance, that is, of the clear-cut distinction between family and individual farms, the significance of the *egbe*, too, must weaken. Information gained from a large number of independent witnesses testifies to the gradual loss of importance of *egbe* work in Nupe productive life. Once practised regularly on every farm it has now been

performed on the new experimental farm of the Agricultural Department which was tilled in collective work.

[1] Recognition of this privileged position of the sociological head of the group in a wider sense is expressed in the traditional rule, still valid in most peasant communities in Nupe, that the first *egbe* of the season is performed on the chief's land.

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reduced to a system of merely occasional assistance. According to my informants the change is due primarily to the high cost of the *egbe*, which to-day few farmers can afford. This is no doubt true if we understand 'cost' in the relative and not in the absolute sense. In the very closely balanced budget with which most Nupe farmers must reckon to-day the comparatively large single outlay for the *egbe* may prove an insuperable difficulty. But this is not the whole picture. A cost is high only measured on the profit it can realize. And here we have seen that one of the most essential kinds of profit—moral profit—which the *egbe* can realize, namely, its assurance of the economic balance between the generations, has itself lost much of its significance in the life of the community.

The second type of collective work, the *dzolo*, is less important than the *egbe*. It is practised only for harvesting of those crops which demand a large working team (ground-nuts, cotton, and beans) and consists in the arrangement among a number of farmers to work in turn on each other's farms. The host provides the meal after the work. But there is no drumming or dancing, nor is any competition involved in the work of the *dzolo*. Neither is the mechanism of the age-grade associations utilized for this collective work, which is carried out on a much smaller scale than the *egbe*, and only between friends, i.e. families whose heads are friendly with one another. In the *dzolo* the tie of friendship evidently supplies that incentive to collective work which, in the *egbe*, is entrusted to the appeal of music and dance and the stimulus of competition.

WAGE-LABOUR

Assistance in farm-work by means of paid labour plays on the whole (we must add as yet) an insignificant part in Nupe production at large. It is called *kantsú* in Nupe but is often referred to by the Hausa name *lada*, i.e. wages. It is employed by the owners of farms who are not themselves farmers or who for other reasons cannot themselves look after their land. Paid farm-labour is a new thing in Nupe. It has no place in the traditional system of land-tenure and *efakó* work. Characteristically, it is almost completely absent in the rural districts; it is employed mostly in the large commercial centres in which a considerable proportion of the population belongs to the well-to-do 'professional classes', such as Kacha, Jebba, and, above all, Bida.[1] Let me give you a list of the cases I recorded in which wage farm-labour was employed. The employers were a number of traders in Kacha who had bought some land a few years ago but did not work it themselves; a number of traders in Bida; two Mallams in Bida; a Mallam in Jebba whose health did not allow him to work on the land (he was employing wage-labour for the first time); Native Administration officials in Bida—a few policemen, and teachers at the Bida Middle School; and lastly, the village chief of Kacha (who is at the same time District Head) whose time is taken up by official

[1] One of my Bida informants, himself a well-to-do member of the 'intelligentsia', estimated that six out of ten farmers in Bida employ wage-labour. Though I should regard this estimate as much too high it is significant for the outlook of the urban *bourgeoisie*.

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241 work, and whose relations also assist him in this work as messengers and the like.

464 The labourers are all young men, mostly the sons of farmers, but occasionally also sons of impoverished *bourgeois* families (one of the labourers on my list was the son of a Mallam, another the son of a Bida *saraki*). Some labourers come from far away to the place where they expect to find employment: thus I found a young man from Lapai working in Jebba, and one from Bida working in Ilorin. Their working day is from early morning till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, the normal working day of the *efakó* worker. They get 2*d*. or 3*d*. a day and food; they work mostly for from four to ten days, some for a longer period, till they have collected a substantial sum of money. In no case has wage-labour in Nupe become a permanent, exclusive occupation. These young men seek only temporary employment and return after or in between their engagements to the family farm, where they carry on with the ordinary work of the season. Even a temporary absence of this kind may, of course, render the management of the family farm difficult and even precarious. For instance, the labourer from Lapai whom I have just mentioned, was working in Jebba as late as June, and could not return home before July when all the early planting and weeding would be completed. However, the need of money seems to outweigh all other objections. The main motive in undertaking wage-labour is invariably to obtain money for tax—either for oneself or as contribution to the parental household; next in importance is the motive to obtain money for bride-price.

It must be said in conclusion that though wage-labour represents a comparatively recent growth in Nupe society, the situation which created the need of wage-labour is not. Nor is the system of employed, i.e. non-family, labour the product of a recent development. Part of the social stratification of Nupe was, as we have seen, the creation of an upper class which owned land but did not work it. The labour which this class had to employ was of three kinds: slave labour, the labour of pawns, and, to a lesser extent, of clients. The first and the last kind of employed labour, both involving a social and political significance far beyond the aspect of labour, we have discussed already in a previous section. The second kind—labour of pawns—we will discuss later when analysing the concept of wealth.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (1)

462 The role which the women play in the agricultural production of the country lends itself to a simple formula. With very few exceptions the women do not perform any primary productive activity: they do no farm-work; they do not help in cultivation except occasionally when assisting the men in the harvesting of cotton or beans or the digging out of cassava—the easiest crop of all. Their sphere of work is, first, the 'refining' of agricultural produce to make it marketable, and secondly, the marketing itself. If the general formula is simple, the details of the division between 'primary' and 'secondary' productive activities, one

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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and 462
intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later.

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking 462
for the household. In our general description we have reached the point
when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and 252
stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a 592
certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuka* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell [432]
it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook.

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income 462
which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to 592
undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women 443

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462 are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops
intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of
592 crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he in-
tends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immedi-
443 ately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the
462 Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of
592 the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are
assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-
422 bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

462 The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women
also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the
476 women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the
system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another
461 form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people them-
533 selves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front 462
and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the
women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the 476
egbe: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing— 461
the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs
(no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's 533
dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small [851]
girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between 462
the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contribu- 562
tions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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462 *Women*: 'Yes, but *only* the grain. We have to contribute *kula*, *kuha*, salt, pepper and palm-oil.'

562 *I*: 'Surely you have locust-bean trees and red pepper in Leaba?'

Women: 'No, there are no locust-bean trees here, nor pepper.'

One woman: 'This is not true, we have pepper.'

Another woman (rather defiantly): 'Well, there still remains salt, *kula*, and palm-oil for which we, the women, have to pay.'[1]

[1] Another example of the clearly defined economic rights of the women is this: in the Nupe communities in the forest groves on the Niger, where there are no shea-nut trees, the banana is the property of the women and supplies them with fruits which they can dispose of in their own right.

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CHAPTER XIV
INDUSTRIES

ORGANIZATION OF CRAFT-GUILDS

IN the Western world Nupe native industries would fall under the heading of 'home industries'. They are carried out in the home, or in workshops connected with the home, and their labour organization is to a large extent composed of members of one household or a number of related households and families. All the industries are carried out by men. But we find a certain differentiation with regard to the organization of labour, between industries carried out in individual work and industries based on co-operative group production or, in other words, between individual crafts and guild-organized crafts. For the co-operative organization is of a specific type. It represents a closed group, the membership of which is to a large extent hereditary in a number of families; outsiders can join it only through a formal adoption into the profession, after a period of apprenticeship. The group, moreover, is defined not only with regard to the productive pursuit but also socially and politically, as a specific social group, almost an artisan class, which enjoys official recognition and certain political privileges. Its internal organization, finally, is marked by a certain hierarchy of grades and ranks. These crafts thus present a picture closely resembling the organization of craft-guilds in Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages.

Of the native industries in Nupe the following are organized in craft-guilds: blacksmith work and the mining of iron ore; the craft of brass- and silversmiths; glass-making; weaving; bead-work; building; wood-work and carpentry; and, lastly, the profession of butchers. Tailoring and embroidery, leatherwork, indigo dyeing, straw-hat-making, mat-making, and basketwork are practised as individual crafts. The majority of Nupe crafts, especially guild-organized crafts, are concentrated in the town. But even where these crafts occur both in town and village (as in blacksmith work and weaving), they appear in their most typical form only in Bida, and are indeed symptomatic of the civilization which evolved in the capital of the kingdom. I cannot attempt here to describe in full all these native industries, neither from the technological point of view nor with regard to the details of their organization. I shall deal only with the most typical and, sociologically, most significant crafts.

It will be best, however, before entering into the description of the various crafts, to anticipate certain general features common to all of them. I have called their productive organization 'co-operative group production'. But co-operation in these crafts exists in two different forms and on two different levels: we have, first, co-operation of the group at large, i.e. the guild or guild section; and, second, co-operation in the narrow sense, i.e. the actual working together, of the individual labour-unit. We shall leave the description of the former to the sections dealing with the various specific industries and concentrate here on the

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467 latter, narrower, group co-operation. We shall see that it varies widely in scope and closeness, owing partly to the different nature of the productive technique and the varying demands upon co-operation which it entails, and partly also to extraneous factors, not involved in productive technique. The labour-unit in craft-work is called *efakó*, i.e. by the same name as the labour-unit in farm-work, to which, in fact, it corresponds in all essentials. Again we find a section of the family group working together under a senior relative who, as the common head, directs group co-operation, supplies the means of production (tools and raw material), and disposes of the proceeds from the group work. He also undertakes the other *efakó* obligations of paying tax for his co-workers, providing them with food, clothing, and bride-price. At the death of the *efakó* head the group member next in seniority takes his place. If old age disables the *efakó* head for active work he can retire from the labour-unit without giving up his position as the head of the group, i.e. without abandoning his control over the group income. Old men who have not reached the position of an *efakó* head when they are forced to retire will be supported by the labour-unit. The old men of the group are, 467 moreover, often allotted a little farm-work close to the house, which 888 allows them to make their contribution, even in old age, to the group income. We can see already that the ability of the group to 'pension off' their old men and late leaders depends essentially on the size of the labour-unit; a very small labour-unit is clearly incapable of making the necessary provisions, and we shall find that in the case of these labour-units the support of the old men is undertaken, rather irregularly in fact, by their family as a family obligation, and no longer forms part of the regular services of the labour-unit towards its members or ex-members.

467 With regard to the junior *efakó* members we find, again, the practice of releasing from the *efakó*-unit adult workers who desire to make themselves independent and to set up a separate labour-unit. The question always entailed in the release from the labour-unit, namely, of the acquisition of new means of production, is complicated in craft-work by the fact that here the means of production are to some extent immovable (e.g. the blacksmith's furnace and anvil, the glass-maker's furnace, the weaver's loom, &c.). It appears to be due to this difficulty that the release from the labour-unit in craft-work does not invariably involve withdrawal also from the workshop in which these means of production are fixed, but that, on the contrary, there is the tendency to stay on and share workshops, furnaces, and so forth, with the ex-fellow-workers. Only if the workshop is overcrowded will the worker or workers who are leaving the *efakó*-unit look round for another place, for example, a vacant furnace in another workshop, or the entrance hut of a compound, or (more rarely) build themselves a new workshop, with the assistance of family and fellow craftsmen. The withdrawing workers will be allowed to take with them the (movable) tools which they had been using, and will also be supplied as a rule, by the old *efakó* head, with raw material for the start. This setting-up of independent workers is in craft-work as in farm-work the last act of the functioning *efakó*.

The co-operative organization of *efakó* work also enables the group to

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The co-operative organization of efaké work also enables the group to /

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train its adolescents and to bring them gradually into the system of co-operation. Young boys are employed first in easy auxiliary work, such as working the bellows in blacksmith and glass-work, or the spooling of cotton thread in weaving; sitting all day long in the workshop they learn a good deal from watching; when they are old enough they are given more serious work, which they carry out under the guidance and tuition of the *efakó* head till, eventually, they become fully fledged members of the labour-unit. In most cases the *efakó* work is supplemented by special individual, *bucá*, work. The relation between the two varies widely, with the specific nature of the craft and its productive technique.

BLACKSMITH WORK

The blacksmiths are called *tswata* in Nupe, or sometimes *tswata gbagba*, 'heavy smiths', to distinguish them from the *tswata muku*, the brass- and silversmiths. Nearly every village in Nupe possesses at least one or two blacksmith workshops. In Bida we find three groups of blacksmiths, whole blacksmith 'wards' in fact, each with its cluster of workshops, and each situated in a different *ekpã* of the town. According to tradition the three blacksmith groups are of different origin. One, in the old centre of Bida, *ba nin*, claims descent from the original group of blacksmiths which was established in Bida when it was still a Beni village. At that time the head of this group, the *Majĩ Tswata*, the Master of the Blacksmiths, is said to have held authority over all the blacksmiths of Beni country. The blacksmiths living in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter, the smallest of the three groups, came to Bida comparatively late, from Trans-Kaduna. The largest blacksmith group in Bida, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, traces its descent to the blacksmiths of Rabá, the former capital of the kingdom. They came to Bida together with the king and court when Bida became the new capital of Fulani Nupe. As we shall see later, this last group has established itself as the supreme guild authority over the blacksmiths of Bida and all Nupe. The craftsmen of this group call themselves *dokodzaẽi*, after their head, who bears the title *Dokodza*.[1]

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Technology

The blacksmith wards of Bida are of very different size; the smallest contains two workshops, the largest seven. In some cases the entrance-hall of the compound in which the families of the craftsmen are living serves also as workshop or forge. But usually the forge is in a separate hut which stands by itself a small distance from the compound; with its three or four wide doors, and the many small window-holes let into the wall to serve as passage for the smoke from the forge, the workshops can be easily identified. Inside are two furnaces, each screened in by an angular mud wall, about 3 feet high. On the inner side of the screen, facing the open fire, sits the blacksmith himself; on the other side of the

[1] It is interesting to note that the modern Emirate of Patigi, where the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty are reigning to-day, also possesses its group of 'royal blacksmiths', under another *Dokodza*. They came to Patigi together with the family of the present rulers, from Gbara, the ancient residence of this branch of the Nupe dynasty.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 screen another man is sitting, who works the bellows. The bellows are of the split-bag type common in Northern Nigeria; they are made of two bags of goatskin which end in a clay tube and are worked with sticks fixed on the top of each bag. The clay tube is buried in the ground and, passing underneath the screen, ends in the shallow furnace on the other side. In this furnace charcoal is burned, which the blacksmiths make themselves. They also forge their own working tools (apart from a few European tools, hammers and files, which have strayed into some of the blacksmiths' huts): a club-shaped hammer, a long pair of tongs, and a few chisels and pointed rods. The anvil, too, is of their own production; it is a solid piece of iron, shaped like a toadstool, the foot of which is buried in the ground. Of other working implements there is a bowl of water in which the red-glowing iron is tempered, and a heap of fine ashes in which the finished product is left to cool.

The technical process is simple. The bulk of crude iron is held over the fire until it becomes red hot and pliable. It is then placed on the anvil and gradually hammered into shape. The change from furnace to anvil is repeated several times, until the object has been given its final shape. Sometimes it is finished off with the help of files and chisels. The main products of the Nupe blacksmiths to-day are blades for hoes, bush-knives and crude axes, big nails and hooks for the big plank doors of the Nupe houses, and small brackets used in canoe-building. Sometimes the blacksmiths also make the wooden handles for hoes and axes; sometimes the customers prefer to buy only the blade and to make their own handles. One man, I found, can produce two hoe-blades a day, working from 9 a.m., with a pause for the midday meal, till 4 p.m., when the Nupe working-day finishes.

Iron-work thus involves four subsidiary forms of production: the manufacture of the bellows, of charcoal, of the tools, and finally of the raw material used in blacksmith work, i.e. the mining of iron ore. With the exception of the last all are undertaken by the blacksmiths themselves. The blacksmith buys the goatskins on the market and sews them together into the skin-bags used as bellows; he also produces the mouthpiece of clay for the bellows. Ordinary tools, such as hammers and tongs, are made by every worker individually; should it become necessary, however, to replace the anvil, the whole group of blacksmiths in the quarter (forty in all) would have to work together.

326 In charcoal-burning two or three men who share the same workshop
372 work together, and produce a store which is to last the whole workshop for some time. Charcoal is burned in a clearing in the thick bush at some distance from farms and habitations. Wood of two different kinds may be used. Pieces of timber of about arm's length are piled 3 feet high. A thick layer of grass is placed on the top, and the whole heap is covered with sand, leaving only a small hole open. A dry piece of wood is lit and pushed into the opening to kindle the fire inside, after which the hole, too, is covered up, and the heap is left to burn for five or six days.

326 The production of the raw material of blacksmith work deserves special description. Formerly all iron used in blacksmith work was

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mined and smelted in the country. The production of native iron ore has been greatly reduced in recent years. To-day a large proportion of the crude iron is bought from the European stores—the Nupe call it *kansana*, 'dry iron', to distinguish it from the native mined *nyenkpa ziko*, 'black iron'. The competition of cheap European iron has made the upkeep of the large native foundries unprofitable; many have been abandoned and allowed to fall in disuse, and even where they are still in use only two or three out of perhaps six furnaces are still workable. But in the busy season, shortly before the rains, when everybody needs hoes and axes, the supply of European iron frequently runs out, and the resulting shortage has to be relieved by calling on the supplies of native-mined iron ore. Nupe iron-smelting can, in fact, no longer meet heavier or more regular demands, although many Nupe farmers still prefer a hoe made of native-mined iron—it is stronger, and lasts better, they say; European iron is fit only for repairs, for patching hoe-blades, &c. The tools of the blacksmiths and, above all, the anvil, are invariably made of native-mined iron. 326

The iron-ore miners, called *edudaciši* (meaning 'workers in the deep'), form a professional group distinct from the blacksmiths, although some of them are blacksmiths as well as iron-ore miners. The mining is done on the slopes of the low flat-topped ferriferous hills of the country. I have heard of five different mining places: near Mokwa, near Shari, near Patigi, near Kutigi, and near Pichi (about 8 miles from Bida). I have seen only two; one in work, though on a reduced scale (near Pichi), and one abandoned (near Shari). The iron-ore foundry near Pichi is the largest in existence. Like the blacksmith groups in the districts round Bida the iron-ore miners of Pichi submit to the authority of the guild-head of the blacksmiths in Bida. His authority goes so far that, five years ago, he could order two additional furnaces to be built in order to increase the Bida supply of iron ore; these new furnaces, however, are no longer in use. 316 326

The ore is scratched off the surface of the hill or dug out of shallow pits. Close to the hill-side are the furnaces in which the iron ore is smelted. Three furnaces are placed side by side under a large grass roof which protects workers and 'machinery' from sun and rain. It will be best to describe the very elaborate arrangement by means of two diagrams, the first of which represents a bird's-eye view of the furnaces, and the second a vertical section through a furnace. We have first, a large pit, 6 feet square and 6 feet deep. On one side a pot for water is let in the ground; on the other the furnace proper is erected. It consists, above ground, of a kind of chimney (*a*) made of thick clay, 5 feet high, built over the mouth of an airshaft (*b*) which serves both as ventilator and as opening for the fuel and the iron ore. On the other side of the chimney are the two bellows (*c*), clay tubes formed somewhat like horns, the wide mouth of which is covered with goatskin. The narrow bottom ends of the bellows tubes are joined, under ground, with a long straight clay tube (*d*), a little over 5 feet long, which is fixed in position by means of wooden wedges. It opens into a cave-like space which forms an extension of the square pit. On the bottom of this space the iron ore is 325

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FIG. 1

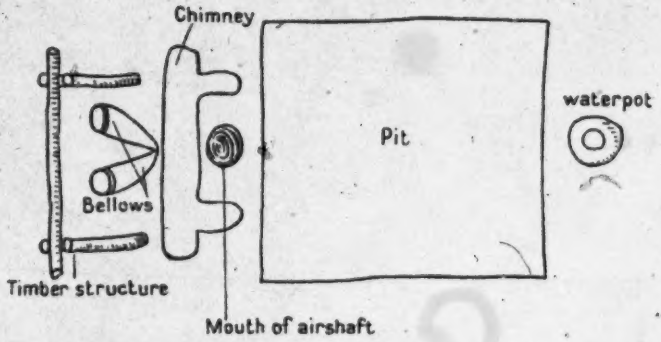
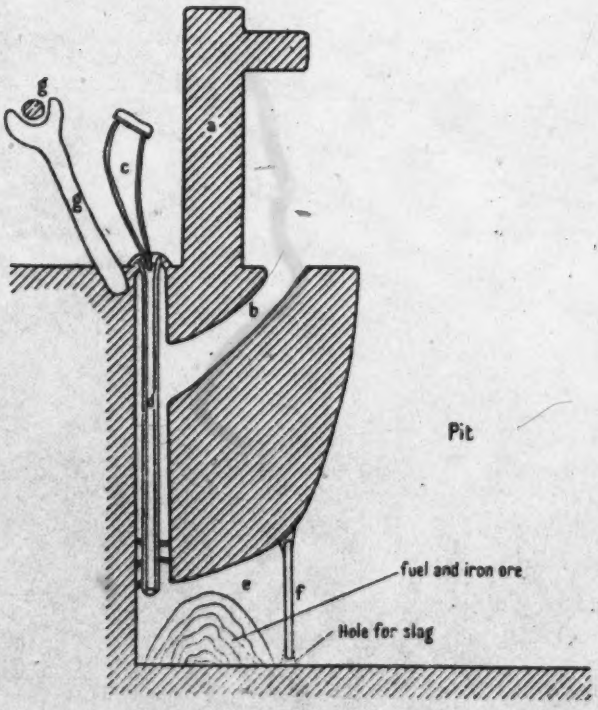


FIG. 2



[p. 262]

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placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work. 325

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit. 326 467 592

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out. 326 592 857

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

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326 the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His
592 younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A
326 blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s.*; this quantity is
434 sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at
435 the price of 6*d.* and 1*s.* a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d.*). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d.* and 3*d.* In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d.* in the dry season fetches 8*d.* in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s.*

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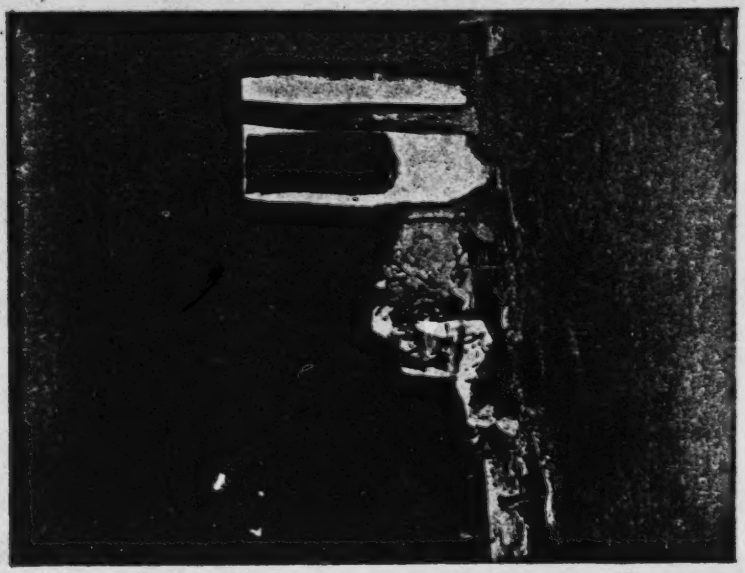
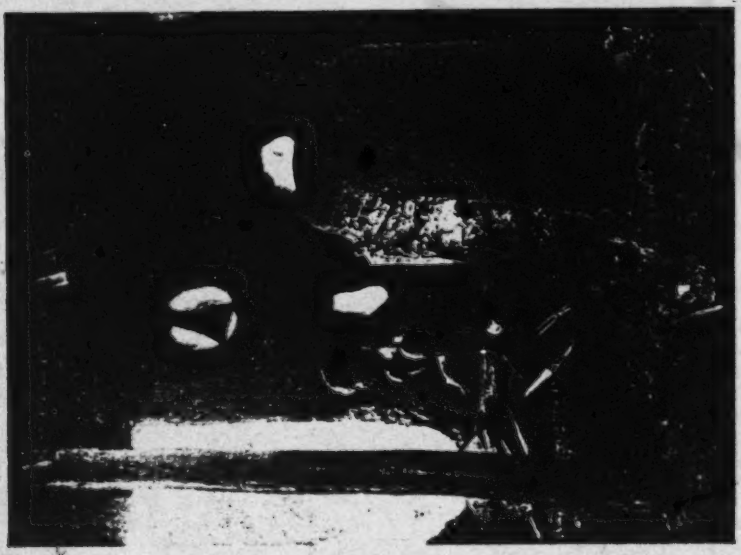


SILVERSMITH



BLACKSMITH

[facing p. 264]

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
437 Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

326 The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
467 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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the allegiance to a common head, the master of the *Dokodza* section in Bida. As this group of Bida blacksmiths is associated, historically, with Nupe kingship its head also holds his rank and position by appointment of the king of Nupe. The *Dokodza* claims that the blacksmiths in the whole of Nupe 'must obey him' in all matters concerning the profession. As an external expression of this allegiance he receives annually, at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*, a gift of crude iron ore from the various blacksmith groups of the country. Although this gift has now been abandoned the village blacksmiths still acknowledge (at least in theory) the supreme position of the guild-head in the capital, and never fail to pay their respects to him when they are in Bida. In return they count on his help and influence if they are in need of official intervention in the capital or at the court. The closeness of the co-operation under the guild-head, and the efficiency of his control over his fellow craftsmen, increases with the nearness to Bida, till, in the town, it takes the form of guild organization in the strict sense of the word.

The most effective unit, however, is not the guild at large, but the single guild section. The people of each group are of one *dengi*, one kinship group, related both by descent and frequent intermarriage. Every male born into the group is expected to become a blacksmith—'how can he become anything else', said my informants; 'we know no other job'. But, on the other hand, they would maintain that no man from outside could become a blacksmith. When I asked the *Dokodza* people why this should be so, they answered with a laugh: 'How can anyone who was not born a blacksmith become one?' Nevertheless, in another part of the town I discovered a man who, born of a family of traders, had adopted the profession of a blacksmith. He seemed to have been a rather more unruly youth than the rest of the family; for he had firmly declined to become a trader, like them; he had first studied the Koran and thought of becoming a Mallam, but later changed his mind, and decided to become a blacksmith: he 'liked it better' than either trading or studying. Certain maternal relations of his were Beni blacksmiths in a village near Bida. There he went, stayed with them for some years till he had learned the trade, and then returned to Bida, where he is now keeping a little workshop of his own in the entrance hut of the house of his paternal relations. Among the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I was told that formerly apprentices were taken regularly. The pupils came mostly from villages near Bida, and returned to their home as fully fledged craftsmen. The training took from three to five years, during which time the apprentice lived in the house of his master. No money was taken for the tuition, but after the completion of the apprenticeship the parents of the pupil sent a present of food and kola-nuts. Adoption into the profession went hand in hand with adoption into the guild, and the new craftsman would regard himself as a member of the guild section in which he was apprenticed. However, there have been no adoptions into the craft for many years now.

Each guild section has its own titled head and, besides, one or two other ranks which are bestowed on the family heads of the other large family groups in the section. The position of the head of the guild

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section is taken in rotation by these families, the 'second-in-command' succeeding to the position of the head at his death. Among the *Dokodza* people we find a threefold elaborate hierarchy which settles the succession even to the rank of the 'second-in-command': *Dokodza*, *Dokpa*, and *Shaba Dokpa* (lit. Successor of *Dokpa*). The smaller blacksmith section of the Bida Beni possesses two ranks: *Maji Tswata* and *Shaba Tswata*. The blacksmith groups in the villages, and also the groups of iron-ore miners, have similar rank systems.[1] The heads of the blacksmith groups, and to a lesser extent the other guild ranks, are respected, and their orders are obeyed by all co-workers. The main significance of their position lies in the fact that it is their task to organize all co-operative work within the group.

Co-operation and mutual assistance within the section takes many different forms. If the people of one workshop, for example, are unable to fulfil a certain order, they pass it on to another workshop; or if the occupants happen to be absent when a customer calls, their neighbours will always be ready to take the order on their behalf. When the workshops ran short of iron ore, the guild-head used to send messengers to the iron-ore miners to bring back a sufficient supply for the whole group; this form of co-operation, however, no longer exists, and to-day each workshop procures its own raw material. Co-operation of a more far-reaching order is concerned with the various tasks which we have placed under the heading of 'maintenance of labour'. We have already seen that these tasks involve co-operation and mutual assistance on a scale which transcends in varying degree the *efakó*-unit. Thus the division of labour in the preparation of charcoal implies co-operation of the whole workshop group. When it becomes necessary to forge and put up a new anvil an even larger group must co-operate in active work. We may add that the upkeep of the workshop itself, or the building of furnaces—especially the large furnaces used by the iron-ore miners—demands a co-operation much larger than that which the *efakó* group can provide. In none of these cases is the co-operation recompensed with a share in the profits (as is the case in *efakó* co-operation); nor is this co-operation organized on the basis of collective work of the *egbe* type; nor can it be explained, finally, by the fact that the co-workers may belong to the same family and household. Rather is it a co-operation based on membership of the same professional union—the guild or guild section—and mobilized by the appointed head of the group.

The head of the guild section is also responsible for maintenance of labour in a wider sense. His professional advice may be sought by all workers in the group if they have some difficult or unusual work in hand. He will also occasionally lend his people money if they need it for professional purposes (e.g. the purchase of crude iron ore), in other words, he provides them with the necessary working capital. Certain similar services towards the group are vested in the position of the *Dokodza* alone, that is, of the head of the guild at large. He arbitrates in all internal disputes among the blacksmiths of Bida, and is thus able to

[1] See chart of Village Ranks, p. 57.

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326 467 prevent friction in his body of workers. He is also the agency through which important large orders reach the group. On a smaller scale this task also falls to the heads of the other blacksmith groups. But in the case of the guild-head it gains special significance; for these 'royal blacksmiths' worked for the largest customer of the country, the Nupe court. They could be certain of a constant large demand, e.g. for tools for the farm-hands working for the king, or various iron implements needed in the royal household, for horse bits and stirrups for the king's horses, or flint-locks for the guns of the bodyguard. These orders are given by the king or court officials to the *Dokodza*, who then distributes the work among the craftsmen of his group according to their capacity and skill, or, if the order proves too large, among the workers in other guild sections as well. The *Dokodza* also receives the payment for this work, and keeps the largest share; the rest of the money is divided equally among the whole guild section, whether they have been working on this particular job or not.[1] These royal orders have been greatly reduced recently, not only because many of the implements needed are obtained nowadays from the European stores, but also because many of the requirements of the royal household are now catered for by the Public Works Department in Bida. But when the present *Etsu* built his new house, in 1935, he ordered nails and brackets for all doors from the *Dokodza* people.

326 467 178 The part played by the guild-head (and to a lesser extent by the sectional heads) in providing labour and capital for his group explains the authority which he exercises over his fellow workers, and also his ability to act in certain circumstances as their 'financier'. On the other hand, the close co-operative organization of the guild section reveals itself as a device to meet these regular demands upon the production of the group. Here we can attempt to explain why the smaller guild sections in Bida (and similarly the village groups of blacksmiths) have suffered more severely under modern economic changes than did the *Dokodza* group. The size of the groups is itself significant. Only the privileged group of the 'royal blacksmiths' evolved a large-scale professional organization; the other groups, which did not have the same access to constant large-scale demands upon production, remained small, and more loosely organized. Now, we can assume that these smaller groups also obtained formerly a sufficient demand for their products from various sources. It may also be that their sources have failed sooner, and more completely, than the source with which the *Dokodza* people could reckon—the continued orders from the royal household are evidence of this. But these unequal changes are less significant in their direct effect upon production (which may be negligible)[2] than in their indirect effect,

[1] How, on the other hand, the authority of the guild-head can be adapted to new situations is illustrated in the following instance. When I went to inspect the furnaces of the iron-ore miners near Bida, I had to obtain a guide through the *Dokodza*. On our return to Bida the guide at once showed the money which I had paid him to the guild-head; though he was allowed to keep it he could not have done so without first informing the guild-head, who could have deducted a part of the money.

[2] The order for nails and brackets for the royal house which we mentioned above brought in only 2s. and a gift of food.

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through the medium of labour organization. The royal orders, though at present small and irregular, still mobilize the group organization of the *Dokodza* people in the traditional way. The general weakening of the guild organization brought about by recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild-head and sectional heads, has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller, and already weaker, guild sections. In their case the group organization has, in fact, been reduced beyond the margin of safety. We have seen that Nupe blacksmith work demands comparatively large group co-operation for a successful maintenance of labour (in all its aspects). In a weakened organization, a markedly reduced co-operative group, maintenance of labour becomes increasingly difficult. This is what happened in the case of the smaller blacksmith groups. And this difficulty, while not sufficient in itself to disrupt the labour organization, would yet weaken its resistance to the effects of economic change—a decline in trade, the competition of European goods—effects which (at least for the time being) have passed by the larger and more strongly organized section.

We can quote several instances of this: the division of labour which enables a workshop, say, of four men, to continue work while two of the men prepare charcoal is impossible in a small working unit, and a valuable working day, possibly in the busiest time of the year, must be sacrificed. Or a workshop may have to interrupt its work when iron ore runs out and new raw material has to be fetched from the iron-ore miners—a task which, in large-scale co-operation, can be performed by one man for a number of workshops without deranging the work of the group. I have even witnessed cases in which work had been interrupted, or reduced to small repairs, because the workers had no money to buy raw materials; in a large co-operative group money would have been found more easily, especially with the help of the guild-head. In Kutigi I saw one of the two local blacksmith workshops left dilapidated for a whole year because the workers could not muster sufficient labour. The most conspicuous example of all is that of the iron-ore miners who had let their means of production, their furnaces, fall into disuse.

BRASS- AND SILVERSMITHS

The Nupe brass-smiths—*tswata muku*—reside almost exclusively in Bida. The only place outside Bida where brass-smiths have settled is Kacha, the rich trading-place, where these craftsmen from Bida hoped to find a profitable market. There are two groups of brass-smiths in Bida, one in the quarter of *Etsu* Masaba and one in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. The latter has lost its former importance. In technical skill both groups are equal, as I could test for myself; as regards work and design of the traditional type the group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter seems the more efficient. Yet its decline, unmerited though it was, is not difficult to understand. It was partly due to political factors. The group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter flourished during the régime of *Etsu* Bello, who was of the dynasty associated with this part of the town, and also under *Etsu*

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326 Mohamadu before him, whose royal residence was not far from the brass-smiths' quarter. Here, as in many other instances, the invaluable royal patronage was extended primarily to the craftsmen living in the part of the town traditionally associated with the dynasty. With the change of the dynasty the royal patronage changed also, and under the late *Etsu* Saidu, of the house of Masaba, the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter captured the largest and most lucrative trade. A contributory cause lies in the lay-out of modern Bida. The motor-road to the centre [361] of Bida and the big market leads through the street of the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter, while the other brass-smiths' group is situated in an obscure corner of Bida, away from roads and markets. Now, the brass- and silver-ware manufactured in Bida consists to a large extent of ornaments for men and women and other 'luxury' objects. A large pro- [439] portion is intended for export, and certain goods are even made specially for tourists and European 'curio'-hunters. In either case the nearness of the big trading centre and the main thoroughfare of the town, with its opportunity for display and for attracting customers, must prove an advantage which is denied to the other, almost inaccessible, group of craftsmen.

The character of this luxury industry also explains its concentration in Bida. Its products find their way to villages and peasant districts as well. But a constant and large-scale demand exists only in the capital. Moreover, the concentration of this industry is, in sophisticated Nupe, a trade-mark of refinement and value, and a guarantee that its products express the latest fashions.

The technical equipment of the workshop of the brass-smiths differs 326 in certain important details from that of the blacksmiths. The work- 531 shops of the brass-smiths, with their smaller and less smoky furnace, are more often housed in the compound itself, i.e. in the entrance hut. The tools are less heavy and adjusted to the finer technique. European hammers, chisels, and files are used to a much larger extent. The main products of the Nupe brass industry are sword-hilts and daggers,[1] horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles of various kinds, made mostly of beaten brass or copper; bangles and rings, which are cast in open clay moulds of bars of brass or silver or (nowadays) aluminium and then bent and twisted into shape; also hairpins and silver chains. Artistic decoration, especially ornamentation of the surface of these various objects, plays an important part. From old Nupe brass- and silver-work preserved in Bida and in European museums we learn the different styles in decoration which have succeeded each other in the course of the last hundred years. The style in fashion to-day is ornamentation in *pointillé* technique.[2]

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

[1] The blades are old, mostly of German or Austrian manufacture, and have been traded for centuries to Nigeria and Nupe, across the desert, from North Africa.

[2] The oldest style appears to be a fluted design which I have seen on certain brass bowls; a later style which flourished at the end of last century, consisted in embossed ornaments which made special use of the flower motif. The *pointillé* style appears to have come in about 1910.

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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one er 326

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and such-like. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgiži*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s*. for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d*. apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d*.; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d*. Silver bangles are sold for 12*s*. a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s*., and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d*. to 1*s*. Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s*.; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s*. 6*d*., and the profit per

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326 434 435 day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

326 Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relations work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

326 467 The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of
467 which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny. The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large
431 bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the
467 whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after
173 them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass
323 and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of
438 raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

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certain type of glass, black in colour and of rather crude texture, which is bought widely in Nigeria, is made exclusively by the traditional method. I have had opportunity of studying this traditional technique of glass-making—a technique which is kept a secret by the glass-workers and which has never yet been recorded. Several writers on Nigeria, in fact, maintain that it has long since fallen into disuse and is even no longer remembered by the people. This native glass is called *bikini*, as against the glass gained from smelting down bottles, the name for which is *kallaba*, 'bottle'. The process of glass-making is long and complicated; it takes from three to five days according to the quantity of glass made. The glass can be made in the ordinary glass-maker's workshop, but the furnace must be re-dug especially for the purpose, since the furnaces used normally for glass-smelting are too wide and too shallow. The same men who ordinarily work in the workshop also carry out the making of glass. The glass-maker's workshop is built somewhat like the Nupe smithy, but has only one round furnace in the centre of the hut. For the purpose of glass-making the furnace is dug 5 feet deep and 2 feet wide. Throughout the process its mouth is covered with potsherds and broken calabashes which leave only a narrow passage for the smoke. As good Mohammedans, the *masagá* invariably start their glass-making on Friday afternoon, after their return from the mosque. The various ingredients have been collected and arranged inside the workshop: earth (the same earth that has been dug out of the furnace),[1] soda (*kanwa*) of the kind that is brought by Hausa caravans from Lake Chad, water in pots, and a vast quantity of firewood. The soda, which has been pounded to a fine powder, is mixed with sand and a little water till it gains a mud-like consistency. The mixture is placed on the bottom of the furnace, with firewood and a layer of grass for the lighting of the fire on top. The fire is lit, and the furnace is kept ablaze, day and night, till the process is finished. The men work in shifts so that there are always four workers tending the furnace; adding fuel, and occasionally probing the bottom of the furnace with long iron rods. The heat is so intense that the workers have to put up mat screens as protection. Six or seven hours after the lighting of the furnace large quantities of water are added, together with a handful of slag from a blacksmith's forge. After another twelve hours the substance in the furnace becomes liquid, *ke nuwā na*, 'like water', and after eight hours again the process is completed. The glass, a red-glowing semi-liquid mass, is fished out with long iron sticks and left to harden and cool on the sand outside. The cooling takes five to six hours, after which time the glass is ready for use in the other furnaces, where the finished products—bangles and beads—are manufactured. The colour of the raw glass is a deep glossy black. The *masagá*

[1] The sand is called *jthana*, which is the Nupe name for ordinary sand. The glass-workers informed me that the sand everywhere in the locality was suitable for glass-making. When I returned from Nigeria I brought with me samples both of the Nupe glass and the ingredients used in glass-making. Thanks to Professor Seligman the Courtauld Institute in London undertook to test the glass and the glass manufacture, by attempting to produce glass from these ingredients. The attempt was fully successful. For a fuller report on this experiment, and also on the technique of Nupe glass-making, see *Man*, 1940, 107.

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323 have never possessed the art of colouring their glass. They have to do it indirectly, by mixing it with coloured bottle-glass. They also ornament their dark glass with dots, lines, and circles in various bright colours: the red colour is obtained by smelting down thin iron sticks, other colours by smelting down coloured glass or coloured glass beads (Venetian beads mostly).

Glass is, as a rule, made only in one workshop at a time, while the other workshops carry on the ordinary routine work. Men from other workshops who need new glass contribute soda and sometimes also firewood (or else pay in money for their share in firewood), and receive a proportionate quantity of raw glass. They pay the men who were tending the furnace in kind, returning to them a small quantity of the newly made glass.

The further treatment of the raw *bikini* glass corresponds in every detail to the treatment of bottle-glass, except that the latter has to be crushed into small pieces before being used. It is smelted down, again, over the ordinary furnace, until it is semi-liquid and can be formed into beads and bangles of different shape and size. This finished glass is called *karuwa*. The furnace in which the raw glass was made is later rebuilt and adapted for this new work. It is made a little wider, banked up with a mud wall 1 foot high, and provided with bellows.

Nupe glass-making implies a strict organization of work and a well-planned distribution of the various tasks among the whole community of glass-makers. The assignment of tasks varies from day to day, according to when a particular workshop has completed the work in hand. The *masagá* quarter numbers thirteen workshops, and each workshop performs its assigned tasks. In one hut you may perhaps find the making of *bikini* glass going on, while in another molten glass is formed into black bangles; in a third workshop coloured bangles are manufactured, or small black beads; another workshop, again, may specialize in blue and red beads that day, and so forth. The workers, four to six in number, sit round the furnace. One of them, as a rule a small boy, is blowing the bellows. The raw glass is thrown into the furnace, where it is left to liquefy. The glass-worker sticks small lumps of the semi-liquid glass upon the point of a long thin iron rod. Gripping the rod in his right hand, he holds it over the mouth of the furnace and, while the glass liquefies further in the heat, he rotates the rod rapidly, throwing the glass lump with quick, calculated movements into any shape he wants. A second rod, held in the left hand, helps in the process, and is used to produce the width of the bangle or to tap a bead into shape. In the single workshop the work is, again, carefully divided up: while one worker prepares the liquid glass, another shapes it into bangles or beads, and another adds the coloured ornaments.

The scheme of collaboration may change from day to day; every worker, frequently even including the man or boy at the bellows, is, in fact, a fully fledged all-round craftsman. The trained worker performs his tasks with ease and rapidity and, thanks to the smooth co-operation between the workers, the whole workshop equally maintains a very high speed of production. It takes one worker between three and four

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily 323
output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles.

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, 323
are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in
large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the 444
masagá quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of 439
their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work [527]
regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen.

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the 323
case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among
the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also 471
forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who 592
organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, 474
controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new
arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) [465]
which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production,

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciši*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpã* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker
[427] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became
[357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and
28b there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven
[804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except
443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

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cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucd*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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288 apprentices. This source of income, formerly quite considerable, dis-
592 appeared when weaving became less profitable. Young boys of about
467 10 years, mostly sons of farmers, were the pupils; they stayed with the weaver for from four to five years, and the work which they produced during the time of their apprenticeship belonged to their master; when their training was completed the parents of the pupil would bring one bundle of corn as payment.

288 The loose organization of the labour-unit has its counterpart in the
467 organization of the profession at large. Among the weavers no co-operation on a larger scale exists. We have even seen that individuals are quite ready to abandon the profession for other, more attractive, work—an attitude unprecedented among blacksmiths or glass-workers. Yet the symbols of guild organization, the guild ranks, are still preserved. Each group of weavers has its titled guild-head: the head of the Salu (Yagba) weavers is called *Majī*, and the head of the Yoruba weavers *Leshe*. He is also regarded as the head of all *konú* weavers in Nupe, and used to receive from them small annual gifts or tributes. But this common allegiance and co-operation reflects less the professional union than the tribal and cultural unity of these scattered Yoruba groups in Nupe country. The head of the Nupe group of weavers in Bida has no official title but is called simply *Ndakó*, Grandfather. The position of the group-head carries to-day none of the influence and authority which characterizes the guild-heads of other crafts; he neither receives gifts from the fellow craftsmen nor is he expected to advise or help them in their work. As in all other guild-organized crafts the official position of the guild-heads of the weavers was based originally on their role as intermediaries between the king and the craftsmen of Bida. But this role has lost very early all practical importance—earlier than it did in the other Nupe crafts. To quote the guild-head of the Yagba weavers: '*Etsu* Masaba still used to come to our workshops and order cloth personally from the *Majī*. But *Etsu* Umaru, who came after him, already bought what he needed on the market, and so did all the later kings of Nupe.'

BEADWORKERS

306 As a last example of guild-organized industries I will describe the organization of the beadworkers in Bida. Their craft shows certain specific features which make it specially interesting and distinguish it from the other crafts of Nupe. Beadworking represents, first of all, a typical refining industry, which involves a system of re-exportation comparable only to the most complex forms of economic enterprise found in Western civilization. It involves further the use of money capital and credit operations on a scale unparalleled in Nupe industry. It is, finally, a pure luxury industry, producing more expensive goods than either glass- or brass-work. These various factors have contributed to making the beadworking industry of Bida extremely vulnerable; it has suffered more than the other crafts from the economic stress of the recent years and, a significant result of this, presents the picture of a complete disintegration of co-operative production.

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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306 time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
442 the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
439 with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
306 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
442 in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'mainten-
467 ance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Majī*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the *Majī* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in
[434] this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

306 All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
467 the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
178 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry. With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

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has also disappeared. The result is a complete disintegration of the guild system. The guild-head, no longer able to act as financier and contractor, has lost his position of authority; as his contribution to the productive organization of the group was concerned exclusively with these financial and credit operations, the very *raison d'être* of a guild-head has disappeared. This is evident in the manner in which the *Majī* is treated by the other craftsmen; no one pays the slightest attention to him. Since he is too old now to earn money, he is supported by his son —but this is entirely a family matter, and in no way concerns the professional group at large. He receives no gifts or shares in the profits, not so much as an occasional present of kola-nuts, which even in the greatly weakened guild organization of the weavers still marks the privileged position of the guild-head. If I have called this change in the productive organization of the beadworkers a decline and disintegration, it is also felt as such by the people themselves. To them, it appears as the sad decline of a once highly respected and well-organized craft: as one of them said, 'the beadworkers to-day live from hand to mouth; their *Majī* has no longer any authority; theirs is an unlucky trade' (*gwa ẋi*, lit. an unlucky hand).

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CHAPTER XV

INDUSTRIES (*continued*)

INDIVIDUAL CRAFTS

463 THE guild-organized crafts represent, as we have seen, a specific
467 social group or class—the class of skilled artisans—which only occasionally enlarges its membership by adopting individuals from other professional or social groups. The individual crafts, on the other hand, present a vaguely defined and ever fluid group which recruits itself from every stratum of Nupe society, the peasant class as well as the 'intelligentsia', slaves and clients as well as members of the nobility. We shall see presently that men of the titled classes who have lost their former sources of income frequently adopt an individual craft as a new means of livelihood. The technical conditions which contribute to make the guild-organized crafts into 'closed groups', organized on the lines of more or less intensive co-operation, are absent in the industries which are carried out as 'free professions'. Tailors, straw-hat makers, or mat-weavers need no workshops; they can work anywhere, in any part of the house, in sleeping-huts as well as in a corner of the *katamba*. Some craftsmen even wander from place to place and practise their work wherever there is a prospect of trade. Many Bida tailors, for example, have made a practice of visiting neighbouring villages on the market days or at the time of the annual ceremonies and festivals, when they can be sure of finding plenty of work. Nor does their work involve co-operation, or necessitate the use of expensive tools. Mat-weavers work with their hands, straw-hat makers use a block of clay or wood (called *ekugi*) over which they shape the crown of the head, a tool which they can easily make themselves. Tailors, embroiderers, or leather-workers need, in addition to the material, only needle and thread.

Although there exist, specially in Bida, experts in these crafts
463 who practise them as their only profession, the technique itself is simple enough to be learned by anyone in a very short time. We remember the farmers who carry out a handicraft as *bucá* work in their spare time. People in the town similarly practise these handicrafts as leisure-time occupations, in addition to other work, or as a lucrative pastime. Many learned men and students of the Koran do a little tailoring beside. Embroidery, a more delicate work, involving taste and a certain skill, has become the pastime occupation of many members of the 'intelligentsia'. Of hat-making, on the other hand, the Nupe say that it is the ideal occupation for 'lazy people', who can do nothing else, meaning particularly those impoverished 'people of quality' who are neither skilled nor resourceful enough to find other means of livelihood.

463 The varied demands of the Nupe markets have also called into being
868 various other, minor, handicrafts, some of which are so easy that young boys of 10 or 11 are encouraged to take them up as a first *bucá* occupa-

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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285 the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for 435 from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

434 If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household 463 groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and 592 houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Eṣakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

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294 They make as much as 1s. or 2s. on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4s. Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d*. to 4*d*. a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-
[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

435 You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-
294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his
593 mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never
[431] more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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MAT-WEAVERS ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE FARM

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A MACHINE TAILOR

[facing p. 290]

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MEANING AND FUTURE OF GUILD ORGANIZATION

467 In examining the different industries of Nupe we have met with co-operative organizations of widely varying degrees of closeness and intensity. The individual crafts appear in this respect as one extreme, the zero point, as it were, of this scale of intensity of co-operation. What, then, are the conditions determining the degree of closeness in productive organization? Or, more specifically: Why are certain native industries guild-organized, and others left to independent individual enterprise?

We can discover four conditions of the closeness of productive co-operation: (1) The nature of the productive technique and the measure of actual working together which it entails. In this respect the work of glass-makers and iron-ore miners must be placed at the top of the list, and the work of bead-makers or individual craftsmen at the bottom. (2) Special skill and experience involved in the productive technique. The glass makers, with their jealously guarded trade secret, again, top the list; the individual crafts represent the other extreme, of techniques which can be easily acquired by anyone. (3) The regularity of the demand for the goods produced by an industry, and thus, indirectly, its economic success. The work of glass-makers or brass-smiths presents one extreme, the work of bead-makers or weavers the other. (4) The comparative unimportance of originality and inventiveness on the part of the individual craftsman. In this respect brass-smith work shows the most 'individualistic', and blacksmith-work, the most closely integrated, form of production.[1]

The balance which, in the actual case, is achieved between these four factors determines the final structure of the productive organization. The issue is, however, complicated by the fact that different factors bring about similar results. Thus both a high degree of 'individualism' (as among brass-smiths) and a low measure of economic success (as among beadworkers) tend towards a dissolution of the co-operative organization. On the other hand, we find a certain closeness of organization visible in the tendency of craftsmen to work together in the same locality and perhaps in the same workshop, when most factors are pressing towards dissolution. Thus beadworkers of different families and households still tend to share a common workshop and to live together in the same quarter although their technique of production does not necessitate actual working together, nor the economic success o their craft favour co-operation. This qualified co-operation appears to be due to the advantage of keeping in close contact with one another for the purpose of profiting from each other's experience, and of keeping abreast of fashions and new styles.

467 Efficiency in group production appears, then, as the main motive for co-operation on a guild scale. But while the first and third condition 433 refer to efficiency in the narrower, technical, sense of the word, i.e. ease, speed, and economy of production, the second condition reveals a more

[1] With the weavers we find an additional motive for closeness of co-operation in the tribal and cultural unity of these alien, 'Nupe-ized', groups. We can disregard this type of co-operation, which is not limited nor peculiar to labour organization.

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467 specifically social and cultural aspect. Efficiency in this sense means
433 continuity of the craft and of craft knowledge; it means the ability to raise, through the medium of an hereditary, imperceptibly changing labour group, successive generations of craftsmen. If in these respects production is planned for an unchanging future, the agency of the third factor must expose it to the disruptive effects of time and change. For it may appear as if modern economic changes directed their most destructive attacks against this third condition of closeness and co-operation, which is dependence upon regular demand. This influence is especially visible in the gradual disappearance of orders from the main customer of the country, king and court.
467 The Great *Sallah*, once the occasion for numerous orders from the
177 court, which kept the workshops of Bida busy for weeks, is now an occasion for making purchases at the stores that trade in European
433 goods. At the *Sallah* of 1935, the first *Sallah* of the newly installed *Etsu*, the traditional royal gifts of kola-nuts were sent out, not in ornamental brass bowls of native make, but in newly bought enamelled teapots; the king's bodyguard, newly equipped, wore, not Bida gowns and turbans or native-made straw hats, but red blankets and Trilby hats; and many notables who would have appeared formerly on horses with costly trappings and gorgeous saddle-cloths, rode in on new, shining bicycles. Conspicuous though the competition of European goods appears, it is not the only reason for the decline of Nupe craft-guilds. The very organization of guild-organized crafts has contributed to lowering their resistance to outside pressure. The inertia inherent in the rigid group-organization with its traditional standards of production prevents the craft-guild from readjusting itself to new demands with the same ease as the individual craftsman, who is free to change his mode of production and to gain success by new methods. The decision of the younger men among the weavers to abandon the traditional production and to turn to the more profitable production of cap-making, the success of the most 'individualistic' of all crafts, brass-work, are instances of this.

435 But readjustment involves in reality two different and independent
433 processes: adjustment to modern conditions may mean both adjustment in price and cost of production, and adjustment with regard to the kind of goods produced. A close examination of this question is of special interest as attempts to preserve and help native arts and crafts are to-day officially sponsored by the educational departments in many African colonies. In these attempts the second type of adjustment is frequently taken into account exclusively, the first being either ignored or artificially eliminated by turning native crafts into tourist and 'curio' industries which can command prices quite out of proportion to the native economic system. That the Nupe crafts themselves have adjusted prices to demands is clearly shown in the general fall in prices which has taken place during the last five or ten years.[1] Thus mats of the best quality were sold, nine to ten years ago, for 3*s.*; in 1934 for 9*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936,

[1] In the two years I spent in Nupe country—two years which saw a partial economic recovery—I witnessed a corresponding slight rise in prices of native craft products.

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after a slight recovery, for 1*s.* 3*d.* Straw hats ten years ago fetched 435
2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.*; in 1934 8*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936 5½*d.* and 1*s.* 3*d.*; embroidered
gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 433
30*s.* or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has 433
never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies 567
which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the 471
Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fall short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

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433 We can now place the two systems of industry side by side and compare their respective assets and defects. Against highly efficient co-
467 operation and mutual assistance embodied in the guild organization we have to set the free play of competition allowed in individual crafts. Against the principle of continuity and planned training we have to set higher adaptability and larger scope for individual initiative and inventiveness. Broadly speaking, it cannot be doubted that uncontrolled, 'individualistic', industries stand a higher chance of developing production, possibly on new lines, and of achieving technical progress. Moreover, efficient training and continuity of craft knowledge can, to some extent, also be assured in the narrower form of co-operation vested in the small labour-unit; this is shown in the village groups of blacksmiths and weavers. The question which we have asked at the beginning of this section thus still stands: Why has Nupe society chosen, of these two possible methods of organizing industrial enterprise, the method that assured group efficiency and continuity on the largest scale, and group efficiency rather than progress and individual initiative?

467 The main reason lies in the political system of the country. The guilds are, as we have seen, built closely into the political framework.
656 Let me recall the main facts: the guild-head is the agent of the king in all matters concerning the group; like the members of the nobility, he is the holder of an official rank, and is admitted to the *nkó*, the King's Council. The guilds themselves enjoy a privileged position in the Nupe state in that they were exempted from tax and were assigned a social position superior to that of other commoners, peasants, or traders. Yet they were, in other respects, very much controlled; they were bound to their profession and could not freely change it. They were even bound to the locality in which they practised their trade and could not move from it without permission of the guild-head. If a village chief desired to have a certain Bida craft represented in his village, he had to apply to the guild-head in the capital; this happened some years ago in Kutigi, when the chief requested the guild-head of the carpenters in Bida to send him a craftsman to settle and practise in his village. The craftsmen, then, are the king's craftsmen. Not only are they dependent on the king for their prosperity, but they are also controlled and supervised by him and his official agent, the guild-master. This organization of the craft-guilds amounts to a full control of the political system over all the more important industries of the country. We may even go further and say that this control was dictated by the needs of the state: based on constant warfare, committed to uphold the splendour of a huge court, the political system has to guarantee a dependable, uninterrupted supply of all that is needed—arms, tools, clothes, saddles, as well as the many symbols of wealth and status. Upon this dedication of the craft-guilds to the service of the state the seal is set by the discriminative social appreciation which the Nupe people extend to the different crafts.[1] The noblest craft is that of the brass- and sword-smiths, for they, as an informant put it, are 'the makers of arms'.

[1] See p. 103.

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft. 462

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d*. to 3*d*. per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and 462 386 563 476

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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

462 Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages. Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the
323 river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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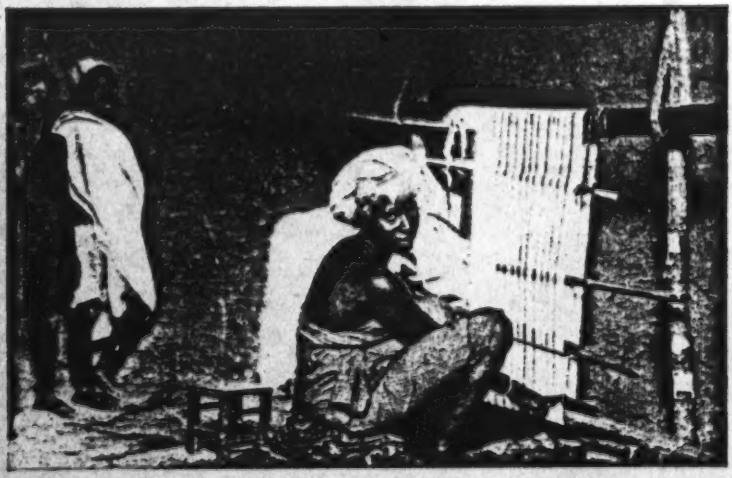
AN OLD POTTER WOMAN



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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

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462 three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single house-
323 hold. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular
462 section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving.
565 The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide),
285 which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have
177 had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts.
[435] One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s.* to 15*s.*, the material costing 5*s.*; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d.* and 3*d.* This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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CHAPTER XVI
FREE PROFESSIONS

463 IT is not surprising that a rich and complex culture like Nupe should possess its clearly defined *artes liberales*—its professional scholars, scientists, and artists, or, in a terminology more akin to the native conception, its Mallams, barber-doctors, and drummers and dancers. I will leave the discussion of the profession of Mohammedan scholars for the chapter on education, and deal here with the last two of these 'free professions'.

BARBER-DOCTORS

'Free professions' in the sense in which we are using the term here does not necessarily mean 'individualistic' professions or professions unattached to any organization or co-operative unit. If what I have said in the preceding chapter about the meaning of guild-organization is correct, we may expect to find it developed also in the field of these native *artes liberales*. In fact, we do find it, adjusted to the new field of activity, in the barber-doctors of Nupe. We can no longer speak here of home industry; nor is the element of co-operation and mutual assistance the same as in the industries. But the other factors that tend to call into being a closely co-operative organization are clearly visible: we find again the necessity of long, specialized training, even to the degree of adoption into a trade secret; we also find the existence of a constant 'market' for the products and services of the craft; and lastly, we find a close relation between the group of craftsmen and the political system of the country.

305 759 As in medieval Europe and the Orient, the barber of Nupe, *gozan*, is also doctor and surgeon. His activities are numerous: he cuts the hair of men, women, and children; he shaves the head and cuts the tribal marks of newborn babies at the name-giving ceremony. For a tenth of a penny he cuts finger- and toe-nails: a few barbers have specialized in tattooing. The barbers also dispense medicines (mostly worthless[1] infusions and charred powders made of herbs) for every known disease; they perform certain minor surgical operations—circumcision or blood-letting—and administer the *tugare*, a potent inhalation of the smoke from certain medicinal herbs. Certain barbers know the secret of contraceptive medicines, others know cures against barrenness; others, again, are experts in the treatment of lunacy. This far-reaching competency is the most characteristic feature of the craft of Nupe barber-doctors. Leaving aside the ordinary routine work of the barber and certain simpler operations such as the cutting of tribal marks, we may say that every barber

[1] This judgement is based on an analysis in the Wellcome Research Laboratory in London, for which I am greatly indebted to this institution, of certain drugs made by the Nupe barber-doctors which I had brought home from Nigeria. The discussion of the more specifically medical questions I must leave for a future publication.

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpā* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciři* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciři* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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305 larger group, the guild section or guild). The work of the barbers is
759 organized on the familiar lines of *efakó* and *bucá*. Although their work
592 does not entail actually working together, a certain kind of work is regarded as a concern of the family group as such and as falling under the rules of *efakó*. The *efakó* principle itself is interpreted in an unusual sense. In the work of the barbers orders or summons do not usually reach the individual barber directly, but come to him via the head of the household, who allots the various tasks to the different family members. The proceeds from all work carried out on these lines are divided among the whole *efakó* group, in accordance with a certain schedule which takes
305 into account the seniority of the different family members. The tasks
759 which come under *efakó* rule are the most highly paid jobs: the shaving
553 of the hair and the cutting of tribal marks at the name-giving ceremony,
592 and the circumcision of boys. The first task is performed at the occasion of an important household feast, and the barber-doctors rarely fail to benefit from the generosity that goes with festal mood. These simpler operations are executed by the younger men of the family, but the family head and the older men will also be present, as guests quite as much as in their professional capacity—which latter may reveal itself in no more than an occasional hint thrown out to the young colleague. The barbers will all sit together, and in front of them there will be a bowl into which every visitor is expected to drop a coin, the largest contribution coming from the parents of the newborn child. Let us follow the fate of a shilling dropped into this bowl of the barbers at a name-giving ceremony in a Bida house: 2*d.* is retained by the grandmother, who held the infant during the operation; 1*d.* goes to each of the five junior members of the *efakó* group (including the young man who performed the operation); 1½*d.* each to two older men of the family, the family head and his younger brother; and 2*d.*, finally, to the head of the guild section.

305 All other work of the barbers is regarded as *bucá*: ordinary haircutting
759 and shaving as well as medical treatment.[1] The latter, more lucrative, work is a prerogative of the older men, who alone know herbs and drugs and can perform the *turare*. The younger men will be taught these craft secrets when they reach a certain age. And thus another principle of family work is realized in the organization of the Nupe barber-doctors, namely, the balance in favour of senior family members which we have observed in the organization of farm-labour and native industries.

305 We have seen that in the distribution of *efakó* income a certain con-
759 tribution goes to the head of the guild section. This, then, is a first instance of economic co-operation of the large professional unit. This co-
467 operation is visible also in another, external, feature of this professional organization. In each of the three day-markets of Bida there is a special barbers' 'hall', a spacious open hut, where all the barbers (specially the family heads) meet in the afternoon, and sit and wait for clients and summons. This hut is built and kept up from a common fund. The existence of this common fund is itself evidence of a close co-operation in the financial field. Into this fund, which is called *dashi*, every barber

[1] The barbers are usually paid in money; but when the Bida barbers tour the country villages they often take firewood or food in lieu of payment.

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ONE OF THE *ETSU*'S *KAKATI* PLAYERS

A PROFESSIONAL SINGER WITH HER BAND

[Facing p. 300]

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305 759 467 pays a small amount of money at regular intervals; the fund is administered by the guild-head; he deducts from it money for possible common expenses, and pays out the rest in full to every member of the guild section in turn, after every pay-day. This financial arrangement is fairly common in Nupe, specially among traders and labourers, and we shall discuss it in more detail later. The barbers, however, are the only professional group which has embodied it in its professional organization and utilizes it as a system of mutual financial assistance vested in the craft-guild.

The guild organization is restricted to Bida town. In the villages, even in the larger places, one or two barbers are sufficient to meet the normal demand. Besides, the medicine-man of the pagan districts would constitute a serious competition to the Bida doctors. But so far as barbers and barber-doctors are wanted in the country, the organization in the capital supplies them, either permanently or temporarily. Certain Bida barbers, for example, have settled in villages; others tour the country regularly, stopping in this or that place for longer or shorter periods. Even in these tours of the country districts round Bida, the barbers keep to the territory of 'their' royal house, i.e. the royal house on whose land in Bida their home stands. Although it clearly cannot be said of the barber-doctors that they 'serve the state' in the same way as blacksmiths or leather-workers, this arrangement is a striking evidence of the fact that their association with the political structure of the country is as strongly marked, and that they, again, are in certain respects the 'king's craftsmen'.

DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

533 467 The drummers in Bida, true to the more 'advanced' urban conception of art, are individualists; in the village, where the art of drumming belongs not only to the recreational side of social life, but also forms part of the organization of ritual and ceremony as well as production (we remember the part drumming plays in the farming *egbe*), it is less an 'art' in the modern sense of the word than a 'craft', working for well-defined institutionalized demands, and charged with responsibilities of a graver order. Drumming in the village thus moves in the framework of a close organization on guild lines. In every larger Nupe village we find a special group of drummers and musicians who, though belonging to different families and houses, yet recognize the authority of a common head, the *Etsu Dzã*, the King of the Drummers. Certain other, subordinate titles, are distributed, in guild fashion, among the other members of the craft. The art of drumming remains in the family and is handed on from father to son. You may see small boys practising [868] drumming on little toy-like instruments under the eye of the father. They will go with him wherever he is called to perform, watching him and, when they are sufficiently advanced, accompanying him on their own drums. Sometimes boys from other families desire to become drummers. Their father will then get in touch with the head of the drummers, and give him his son as apprentice. The young apprentice will visit the drummer's house every day for his lesson. In the beginning

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533 he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy him-
467 self a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the wood-
[322 workers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable
435] wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever
533 taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain
467 bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be
178 paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a side-line.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of
533 limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic
545 style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

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whose patronage they seek. Often the patron may order special compositions from 'his' drummers, for example, a personal drum signal, called *take*, for a new acquired nobility rank, or a song of praise on himself, or a friend or relation. 533 545

Between these different groups there is no co-operation. Each group is, economically, a closed unit. All earnings are divided equally among the members. This division of the income has no bearing on factors of family or household organization. Individual group-members may contribute to the expenses of their own families; but the 'company' is purely a professional association, to which the categories *efakó* and *bucá* do not apply. Professional and family concerns are, in fact, kept strictly separate, occasionally the two overlap, and we find a woman singer and a drummer of the same 'company' who are man and wife; but just as often a drummer has a wife, and the woman singer a husband, who are not members of the 'company', nor even of the profession.

Drumming in Bida is a full-time occupation (sometimes a drummer practises a little farming besides, but this is very infrequent). Each company regularly adopts new members as old ones retire. The novices serve their apprenticeship as minor performers of the 'company', until they become fully fledged members of the craft. Sons of drummers mostly follow the paternal profession; but many singers and dancers do not come from families whose women have practised this profession previously. Music and dancing in Bida is a vocation rather than a profession. The free competition of talent and individuality rather than family tradition determines professional success, and thus the professional association in which the craft organizes itself. Indeed the profession of Bida musicians and drummers represents the only instance in the economic organization of the country of a free association purely on a business basis, and without the support of the framework of kinship and hereditary tradition.

With regard to the profession of drummers and musicians town and country have exchanged roles: we find the closed and hereditary professional group (though of much smaller scale than guild organization proper) in the village, and the detached individual groups of craftsmen in Bida. But the principle of hereditary craft organization has remained essentially the same. We need only read village chief for king, and village community for state, and we understand the new situation. For the drummers, as we have seen, are as essential to the corporate life of the village as are the craftsmen proper to the political life of the state. In town-life, on the other side, drummers and musicians have no traditional duties assigned to them which concern the common interests of the group at large. Indeed the more varied social life of Bida, and the appreciation of new fashions and special styles typical of the cosmopolitan town, foster that spirit of originality and inventiveness which here as in all craft-work counteracts efforts at a closer co-operative organization. 533 545 369

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CHAPTER XVII
INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

464 177 THE influences of modern culture contact which we have seen at work in almost every field of Nupe production gain their fullest expression in this most recent native occupation. The employer is the Bida Native Administration; the employees are recruited from certain specific sections of the Nupe people, and the nature of this selection is deeply significant of the structure of the society.

We must distinguish two different categories of paid industrial labour: skilled permanent, and unskilled temporary, labour.[1] Skilled labour is employed in the workshops of the Native Administration Public Works Department, and comprises blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers, i.e. occupations which (with the exception of the bricklayers) are closely associated with the traditional native crafts of the country. Temporary unskilled labour is employed partly in addition to permanent labour in the N.A. Workshops, but mostly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labourers such as construction work of various kinds. The term 'temporary' must be understood in a very loose sense; men who have been working as 'temporary' labourers, off and on, for ten or fifteen years figure prominently on my lists. Some [167] move from place to place, wherever there is a chance of finding employment. As there are large numbers of alien, non-Nupe, labourers among those engaged in temporary work in Nupe country, so we also find Nupe workmen in other districts and provinces of Nigeria. A few of these labourers have never even had another, more or less permanent, profession, but have adopted their present occupation in earliest youth. None of them, however, are skilled and specially trained labourers. By far the largest proportion of temporary labourers go home and return to whatever their original profession was when their temporary employment comes to an end. In the sense, then, that their work as labourers constitutes an alternative to some other original occupation, they can all be classed under the heading of 'temporary labourers'.

464 The data on which are based the statistical tables which follow were compiled in and near Bida in 1936. It was a fortunate coincidence that at the time a large building programme was being carried out—the construction of new office buildings in Bida, and the rebuilding of a big bridge on the Badeggi road—in which a large body of labourers was employed. My census of temporary labour was taken among the workmen who were employed in this work. I have placed bricklayers in the same category with temporary labourers, although, technically, they represent a group of skilled, permanent, workmen; but the technique of

[1] To be quite precise we should distinguish four different classes of labour: permanent and non-permanent, and skilled and unskilled. As, however, all skilled labour is permanent, and all non-permanent labour unskilled, and as unskilled permanent labour represents only a small minority (8 individuals) it is simpler to deal with the two sub-divisions as one.

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their work is in no way connected with a traditional trade or craft, which means, that they all had to abandon another, original, occupation (either of themselves or their families) and that their present work constitutes an alternative profession in the sense just explained. 464

TABLE I

Temporary Labour

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Home	No alternative occupation	Alternative occupation	Seasonal labour	Length of employment as labourers				Totals
				Under 2 years	2–5 years	5–10 years	Over 10 years	
Bida	6 (3)	30	2	5	16	10	7	38
Country	1	3	15	10	5	3	1	19
Totals	7	33	17	15	21	13	8	57

Under 'No alternative occupation' I have listed in brackets the labourers who are studying the Koran in their spare time, but without intention of practising the profession of Koran teachers. The heading 'seasonal labour' refers to farmers who, for various reasons, seek work as labourers only in the dry season and return to their farm-work in the rains. It is natural that their number should be much larger among people from the country than among Bida men. All peasants, incidentally, who have become labourers during the last two years belong to this class of seasonal labour. Our figures further show that their number is greatly on the increase. Labourers pure and simple, as might be expected, come almost exclusively from Bida. The only exception is a man from Badeggi, the village on the urbanized railway, twelve miles from Bida; he is also the only country man who has been a labourer for over ten years. Under 'alternative occupations' I had to list a great many different occupations; Table III will show the various original, or 'alternative', occupations of temporary labourers. In Table II we shall examine the professional groups from which skilled permanent labour is recruited. 464

TABLE II

Permanent Labour

Occupation of the labourer	Occupation of the labourer's family							Total
	Guild crafts		Individual crafts	Farmers	Mallams	Traders	Nobility	
	Same	Different						
Carpenters	6	..	..	1	1	..	1	9
Blacksmiths	5	1	..	..	2	..	2	10
Total	11	1	..	1	3	..	3	19

The large majority of skilled workmen come, as we see, from families which have practised the same crafts on indigenous lines both in Bida and in the villages. The few 'outsiders' appearing in this group come mostly from families with no specific occupation, such as Mallams, and nobility.

The largest contingent of country people among the labourers is, naturally, composed of farmers and farmers' sons. Comparing Table III

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TABLE III

Temporary Labour

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		Home	*Farmers*	*Guild craft*	*Individual craft*	*Mallams*	*Traders*	*Nobility*	*No altern. occupation*	*Total*
Occupation of father	Bida	4	1	13	9	1	11	..	39
	Country	10	..	..	6	..	2	..	18
	Total	14	1	13	15	1	13	..	57
Alternative occupation of labourer	Bida	4	1	20	8	..	..	5	38
	Country	16	..	..	2	..	..	1	19
	Total	20	1	20	10	..	..	6	57

with Table I we can see that of the 16 farmers who have sought work as labourers only 1 has abandoned farming permanently for labourer's work, while 15 remained seasonal labourers. Turning to the Bida contingent we see that among the different professions which contribute to temporary labour individual crafts come first and Mallams second—the most loosely organized occupational groups thus contribute most heavily to occasional labour. The occupations of the families of which these labourers come appear in a slightly different order of importance: individual crafts are, again, first, with 'nobility' second and Mallams third. 'Nobility' means here mostly the lower political ranks, above all 'household' and *bara* ranks. Their share in the contribution reflects the great political and economic changes that have deprived many members of this 'leisure class' of a livelihood mainly derived from warfare or political attachment.

461 But what are the incentives which led the men from the other occupational groups to give up their previous occupation or to undertake
464 the work of labourers in addition to their ordinary profession? This question is answered by the data of the last table.

TABLE IV

		Married	*Unmarried*	*Tax as reason*
Permanent labour		9	12	..
Temporary labour	Bida	9	13	4
	Country	6	9	5
Age 20–5		4	10	..
" 25–30		3	8	..
" 30–5		4	4	..
" 35–40		4	..	..

The majority among permanent as well as temporary labourers is unmarried—although many of the men, as we can see, have reached, and partly passed, the age at which it is normal for the Nupe man to marry. The work as labourers in their case was undertaken with the intent to obtain money for the bride-price, a plan which did not always materialize as our figures show, especially in Bida. For there are many other uses for money, and some, as we shall see later, may interfere with the laudable intention of working for one's bride-price. In a number of cases the reason for becoming a labourer was to obtain money for tax,

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either for oneself or for one's family. One young labourer from the country gave his father 5*s.* out of his weekly wages of 7*s.* to put by for his bride-price; another kept 2*s.* to 3*s.* a month for himself, and gave the rest to his father. Many Bida labourers, on the other hand, used the whole money for themselves; some explained that they had become labourers because there was no money in their old profession, others because they wanted to be independent and because their fathers or elder brothers could not give them as much money as they liked to have. 461 464

To summarise: as one would expect, paid labour, especially temporary labour, does not represent a 'real' profession in the sense of an occupation involving special training and selection of workers. It is essentially a stopgap occupation chosen to supplement or replace a failing normal source of income. Owing to the specific composition of Nupe society the new profession is being adopted by certain social groups and strata more than by others. Yet in some respects paid industrial labour must be regarded almost as a modern continuation of forms of occupations which, in the traditional society, bore the same supplementary and stopgap character. As such it appeals strongly to the individual craftsman, to Mallams, and *bara*, who depend for their livelihood on similar forms of unskilled and partly temporary work. It differs from these other occupations, however, in that it is carried out on the road and in the workshop yard instead of in the home, and that it represents heavy manual labour, and not light work which it is easy to combine with a dignified social status. The labourers, unlike the individual craftsmen, can no longer pretend that they belong to the leisured class. If they receive better and more regular pay, they also lose caste. This explains why of the many hundreds of men who, once members of the privileged classes, are to-day men 'without occupation',[1] gaining a precarious livelihood from occasional work, only those coming from the lowest grade of the 'upper classes' have chosen the profession of labourers. [558] [565]

In the case of the peasants we can no longer speak of any inherent congruity between their work and the new temporary occupation. To them, especially to the peasants who do not practise a handicraft beside agriculture, paid labour in addition to farm-work, a form of labour, moreover, which keeps them for months from their homes, must appear as something quite new and unprecedented. If to-day paid labour is gradually attracting the peasant class as well, twenty or thirty years ago the (very prosperous) Nupe peasants had to be coaxed by all available means to undertake temporary paid labour, for example, in railway construction. The more 'sophisticated' Hausa and Yoruba were already then flocking in large numbers to work of this kind. Missionaries who knew Nupe country at that time told me that it was often impossible in the peasant districts to obtain even porters to carry loads; the promise of money did not attract them sufficiently to make them leave their homes even temporarily, to upset their whole routine of work or forgo their well-earned leisure. In certain backward and prosperous districts this 464 464 464 482

[1] An unofficial occupational census of Bida lists 1,130 men under the class 'no occupation'. They belong without exception to the titled leisured classes of the Emirate.

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464 [483] attitude has still survived: when I trekked through the country round Sakpe in 1936 I found myself in the same predicament, and although it was in the dry season and farming was at a standstill, I had eventually to agree to women carrying my loads as men were not available for this task. That the appeal of paid labour as a seasonal occupation for peasants is rapidly gaining ground cannot be doubted. The stopgap occupation can, in fact, be said to satisfy a definite want in present-day peasant economy.[1] The strength of its appeal still varies greatly locally. The large majority of the peasants whom I found employed as labourers in the construction of Badeggi bridge were local men or men from the neighbourhood of Bida. Of 19 labourers 14 came from Badeggi itself, 3 from hamlets near Bida, 1 from Kacha, 1 from a village farther afield (Jima), and none from Trans-Kaduna. The local selection does not merely reflect varying degrees of progressiveness or 'sophistication'; it also reflects the varying urgency of the wants for the relief of which paid labour is undertaken. The nature of these wants we shall discuss in detail later.

[1] To-day many Nupe peasants are ready to try any kind of paid labour, but will abandon it quickly if it falls short of their expectations of a regular and substantial income. Thus the Nupe of Leaba tried their luck in gold-washing, which [316] is carried out on a considerable scale in that district. They had heard from Hausa labourers that one could make as much as 9*d*. or 1*s*. a day in this work. They had not realized, however, that the payment was not per day, but depended on the amount of gold which the individual worker can produce. As the Nupe were rather clumsy and slow, unlike the experienced Hausa labourers, their pay was small and irregular, and, gravely disappointed, they soon gave up gold-washing.

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CHAPTER XVIII

WEALTH

THE examination of the problem of labour may be fittingly concluded with a discussion of the role played by wealth, free capital, in Nupe economy. It is in keeping with Nupe production in general, with its emphasis on individual property and money profits, that the concept of wealth should be clearly pronounced. The principle of accumulation of wealth as free capital pervades Nupe economics and, in particular, serves to define the economic (and, indirectly, social) stratification of the society. 556

MONEY CAPITAL

The appreciation of wealth figures prominently in the educational conceptions of the people. Young boys of 8 or 10, when they are given a separate *bucá* plot to farm, are at the same time taught the value of money income and money capital. Mothers will help them to market their small produce for money, or will buy their produce directly from them. And fathers and mothers, as we have seen, equip their children with a first diminutive working capital, a penny or two, to start a profitable trade (see pp. 286–7, 331). These profits enable boys and girls to defray the expenses of the social obligations incumbent upon this tender age, namely, contributions to the costs of the age-grade associations of which they are members. Money expenses, partly involving the accumulation of reserves, accompany Nupe men and women all through their lives: money to meet the costs of kinship rituals—birth, weddings, and funerals—money for the maintenance of labour, the purchase of tools, &c., or for personal wants and the luxuries of life. Money also frequently forms part of the inheritance left by men or women. 556 867

Farm produce or gifts in kind in general cannot fully replace money expenditure. This is shown clearly in the nature of the universal gift in Nupe—kola-nuts. Gifts of kola-nuts are more or less regularly exchanged between friends and relations; a gift of kola-nuts serves as the traditional announcement, and invitation at the same time, extended to kinsfolk at the occasion of forthcoming kinship ceremonies. Gifts of kola-nuts also represent the traditional expression of political allegiance. And, with the insignificant exception of the kola-nut growers, the donor of the gift has to buy the kola-nuts on the market for money. The largest single expenditure of Nupe economy, finally, bride-price, is paid entirely in money (see the discussion of bride-price in Chap. XX). It involves, moreover, accumulation of money reserve, or, if the bride-price is paid in instalments, as it frequently is, careful planning of money expenditure over a considerable period. 431 437

Although none of the larger forms of traditional money expenditure were ever replaceable by gifts or contributions in kind, it is also true that the practice of money expenditure has been increasing with the spreading of cultural influences from the town. It is natural that Bida society,

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with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated? One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

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bearing enterprises ('interest' understood here in the widest sense). The 454
nature of the enterprise varies with local conditions, and differs above all in town and country. Peasants mostly invest their money in livestock (see Chap. XI). We have seen that Nupe inventiveness is always on the look-out for new opportunities promising a higher 'interest', even in the narrow field of stock-breeding as they know it: we have mentioned the buying and selling of ostriches, and the isolated experiment in horse-breeding of one village chief—incidentally the chief of a typical backwood village, Sakpe. In the town, and in the large trading-centres of the country, money is invested chiefly in trade, even by men and women who do not personally engage in trade. They would trust a certain sum to a trader of their acquaintance for a particular purpose, e.g. to help him finance a trading expedition to Kano or Bornu. The trader will use their capital together with his own, and will return it to them increased by the profits which it has brought when his business has been successfully concluded. The trader, of course, also derives a certain profit from these investments, as they enable him to enlarge the scope of his enterprise and to secure more favourable prices. Many most highly placed notables in Bida, not excluding the king himself, use this profitable method of investment.

Certain traditional and formerly highly important methods of investment, above all war and slavery, have disappeared under the new political order. I have described in an earlier chapter the contributions of the houses of the Bida nobility to the wars and military exploits of their country and have also discussed slavery and slave trade. It remains to discuss the closely related traditional form of investment in 'human capital' which has become a thing of the past only quite recently, namely, money investment in human pledges (*sofa*, in Nupe).

PAWNING

Besides the pawning of human pledges, ordinary pawning—pawning 426
of valuable goods—also occurs. My information is that beads, costly 735
gowns, a sword, or saddle, all things of silver or gold, are frequently pawned as security for a loan. No interest is paid on the loan itself, and the transaction is regarded purely as an act of friendship. I have, however, not discovered any actual instance of this practice. My impression is that it is not, and has never been, very widespread. Pawning of people, on the other hand, has grown to enormous dimensions. When pawning of human pledges was finally suppressed in Nigeria, in 1933-4, 3,000 pawns were released in Bida Emirate alone.

As slavery reflects the insecurity of the political rights of the conquered subjects of Nupe kingdom, pawning reflects the economic insecurity under which a large proportion of the population of the Emirate lives. The lack of flexibility, more particularly, in their economy tends to foster such radical means of escape from financial difficulties. Under the pressure of unexpected demands or certain imperative heavy expenses which cannot be matched by normal efforts—payment of bride-price; a heavy fine; money with which to bail a family member or bribe

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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
735 procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other
558 household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of
426 money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for
735 which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[577] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

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trained, slave; for a pawn, with his restricted usefulness, one might have to pay more than twice the amount. There is no doubt, then, that the institution of pawning represented not only a profit-making, 'capitalist' investment, but also, to some extent, a 'humanitarian' duty linked with status and prestige, a crude attempt at alleviating the hardships involved in the unequal distribution of wealth. Well-educated Nupe men, themselves members of the wealthier classes, with whom I discussed pawning, even went so far as to explain pawning (at least on a moderate scale) as an institution of considerable educational value enabling the sons of the poor to study farm-work and husbandry in the houses of prosperous and enterprising men. They would admit drawbacks only in the excessive practice of pawning, which, they maintained, was a recent development, brought about by rising prices and rising cost of living. These drawbacks, as they saw them, were that with the increase in their numbers, the pawns, many of whom frequently worked together in the same household, grew lazy and irresponsible, and showed openly their resentment at having to work for strange masters. The complaints of my informants were thus that in the combination of material and moral rewards which the people of wealth and status expected from the institute of pawning, the material rewards had completely to give place to moral rewards.

A similar combination of material returns from invested wealth with benefits of a more abstract order—status and prestige—is also characteristic of the institution of clientship (already explained in Chap. VIII). The share of the 'abstract' benefits becomes larger the closer we approach forms of expenditure and investment bound up with social status: display of wealth in household arrangements, festivities, the equipment of one's retinue, and so forth. To this and similar questions we shall return later.

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CHAPTER XIX

ECONOMIC BALANCE: EXCHANGE

12/ IN the discussion of economic balance we approach a group of questions which modern economic theory regards as the principle subject-matter of economics, viz. the relation between means which exist in some degree of scarcity and their alternative uses for the satisfaction of needs and wants. We shall examine 'balance' under two aspects: first, the relation between means and their uses in a wider sense, as they exist and are balanced in the economic system of the society at large. In this sense economic balance can be equated with exchange and exchange-mechanisms. Secondly, economic balance can be approached from the angle of the economic unit, and understood in the sense of the relation existing between means and wants in the narrow compass of individual or group economy. Economic balance here can be equated with the relation between capacity to produce and the ability to satisfy existing wants, i.e. between income and expenditure.

Although the two aspects refer to the same phenomenon, and are thus clearly interdependent, it is necessary to point out that the relation between the two does not invariably lie on the surface. Certain wants which greatly influence individual economy do not enter openly into general exchange relations. I refer here to wants which flow from specifically social sources—the dictates of religious obligations, of etiquette, status and prestige, political interests, and so forth. Over and above the overt exchange-mechanisms which we study under the first aspect of economic balance we shall have to introduce, in the discussion of the second aspect, a certain 'invisible' exchange—exchange against such imponderables as moral values, or forms of social appreciation. We will examine these two aspects of economic balance in the order in which we have enumerated them.

CURRENCY, MEASURES, AND PRICES

436 The description of Nupe production has clearly established the nature of Nupe economy as a highly complex exchange-economy based on money. A discussion of exchange-mechanisms may thus profitably begin with the examination of the units of exchange, the currency, and certain fixed measures used in trade.

Before the adoption of British money cowrie-shells constituted the currency of the country. Its use still lingers—not in the currency that is actually used (although this, too, has been mentioned),[1] but in an abstract sense, in the native methods of reckoning money. Certain standardized amounts, e.g. bride-price, certain traditional gifts and payments, are expressed more often in cowrie-shells than in modern money. In the country figures in cowrie-shells are quoted commonly, and in connexion with every kind of payment, including food-prices and suchlike. Cowrie-

[1] See p. 310.

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Cowrie-shells are a clumsy currency: you have to carry them about in bagfuls, and to count in thousands and tens of thousands. The numerical system of Nupe is fully equal to this task. Its elaboration and lucidity is not the least contribution to the efficiency of the exchange system of the country. Its scope is practically unlimited. A figure like 3,600,000 is expressed by this comparatively simple symbol: *gba kpotwani* (lit. two thousand times eighteen hundred, or, in more detail, two thousand times two hundred times nine). This facility in forming large numbers is due to the existence of a number of simple root words and multiples which are easy to handle. Omitting here the simpler figures 1–9, we find root words for 100, 200, and 2,000, multiples of 100 and 1,000 being formed by a simple multiplication of the root figures. For example, 400 is 200 . 2, i.e. *kpa gúba*, contracted to *kpoba*; 600 is 200 . 3, i.e. *kpa gúta*, contracted to *kpota*; 4,000 is 2,000 . 2, i.e. *gba gúba*, contracted to *gboba*; 6,000 is 2,000 . 3, i.e. *gba gúta*, contracted to *gbaotá*; 10,000 is 2,000 . 5, i.e. *gba gútsũ*, contracted to *gbotsũ*; and so on. A new unit is introduced as an alternative symbol for 20,000 cowries in the form of the *gura*, which is the name for the grass bags in which cowries were formerly packed. Thus 200,000 cowries (the traditional bride-price) make 10 *gura*; 400,000 20 *gura*, and so on.

The exchange rate between cowries and British money appears to have undergone some change. The original exchange rate, which I ascertained from the account of bride-price and tribute paid formerly, was 8*d*. for 2,000 cowries. Later the exchange value of cowries rose to 1*s*. for 2,000 cowries. This exchange rate is applied to-day when figures are quoted in cowries. Although cowrie-shells represented a currency in the strict sense of the word, they were used also for certain other purposes beside exchange, and had, above all, a certain value as ornaments. Gourds, bags, and musical instruments were formerly ornamented with cowries; but this practice has fallen into disuse.

To this elaborate system of units of exchange corresponds an almost as well-defined system of measures applied to commodities. We have spoken already of the *kpere*, the 'arm-length', a standard length used in measuring cloth; 10 *kpere* give, as we have seen, one full-length cloth. The measures used in selling agricultural produce are even more interesting, as quantities of these commodities do not lend themselves easily to simple forms of standardization. The unit for unthreshed grain is the bundle, *epa* (from *pa*, to tie up) or load, *kara*. It weighs very nearly 60 lb., but its size and weight vary a little according to the quality of the grain: of poorer grain there would be a larger quantity in the bundle, of better-class grain a proportionately smaller quantity, the main point being the equality in the value. Threshed grain is sold in large or small gourds, for which to-day tin bowls and basins are usually substituted. A large basinful of grain, *evo* (lit. gourd), contains twelve small bowls, *kpana* (the latter taking a little over one pound). One bundle of unthreshed grain is reckoned to correspond to one *evo* of threshed grain. With maize five to six cobs are reckoned to give one small bowl of maize-flour. Rice is sold in large gourds (*evo*) or, more frequently, in small bowls, ten of which as a rule give one gourd. Beans are calculated in

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804 baskets (*kasa*); fruits and ground-nuts in *kasa* or *kara* (loads). The [435] calculation is fairly precise, one 'load' of shea-nuts, for example, being reckoned to bring 2*s*., or one load of locust-beans 3*d*.

These examples suffice to illustrate the clear conception which the 435 Nupe have of measures and marketable quantities. Combined with the universal use of money they result in a well-defined system of market prices. The calculation of market prices in Nupe corresponds closely to variations in supply and demand, above all, to seasonal fluctuations. We have already given instances. I will add here a few more which refer to the staple produce of the country.[1] In April and May 1936 one bundle of unthreshed sorghum was sold for 6*d*., in August and September for 9*d*. to 10*d*., and in certain places even for 1*s*. During the same time the price of bulrush-millet rose from 6*d*. to 1*s*. 6*d*. In April ten yams were sold for 6*d*.; at the beginning of June the price rose to 10*d*., and in July, shortly before the yam harvest, to 1*s*. 8*d*., to fall again in August to 6*d*. In the case of bulrush-millet and yam, the cultivation of which is restricted to certain districts, the fluctuations of price are markedly greater than in the case of the universal food-crop, sorghum. For rice, on the other hand, an expensive foodstuff for which there is only limited demand, and new supplies of which appear on the market three times a year, the price remained unchanged at 2*d*. for a small bowl.

These prices refer to village markets. Prices in Bida are always higher. When grain in the country sells for 6*d*. a bundle, the Bida price is 8*d*.; when the highest price in the country is 10*d*., it will reach in Bida 1*s*. and 2*s*. When yams are sold ten for 6*d*. in the country, the Bida price is ten for 9*d*., and so forth. Industrial products manufactured in Bida, on the other hand, are dearer in the districts, as the middlemen add a certain amount to the original price (between 1*d*. and 2*d*. in the shilling). Goods produced in the country which pass through the hands of the Bida trader on their way to Bida market or to markets abroad become markedly more expensive: thus Kutigi mats produced locally for 11*d*. are sold in Bida for 1*s*. or 1*s*. 2*d*., and abroad, for example in Lokoja, for 1*s*. 6*d*.

These regular variations and fluctuations in price must, to some extent at least, be based on a systematic common knowledge of the conditions which determine supply and demand in the country and which can thus sustain definite expectations of price developments at a given moment. Such a body of common knowledge indeed exists in Nupe. It is embodied in the universal experience that certain commodities are always plentiful in the dry season and get more and more scarce towards the close of the rains. It is also reflected in the generally accepted fact that prices are higher in the capital, which has to import a large proportion of its food-supplies, and which is also wealthier and possessed of a higher standard of living than the rest of the country. These considerations imply a further important fact viz. that distance between area of production and market, and the additional labour and loss of time involved in

[1] Certain fluctuations are determined by increased consumption during the festival season. Thus one sheep fetched 5*s*. in January and 10*s*. to 15*s*. in March, i.e. shortly before the Great Sallah, to fall again to 5*s*. during the rains (see p. 203, n. 1).

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transport, enter into the calculation of price and profit.[1] Finally, the economic significance of 'waiting' is fully recognized, and goods sold are at a proportionately cheaper price when they can be disposed of in larger quantities. I found, for example, that a trader on the market would sell two bowls of grain for 1½*d.*, but one bowl for 0·8*d.*; a large *evo* (containing 12 small bowls) of the same grain could be had for 8*d.* One large *evo* of rice (containing 10 small bowls) is sold for 1*s.* 6*d.*, while a small bowl would be priced at 2*d.* The factor of 'waiting' plays an important part also in the economy of the individual household. When money is urgently needed, or when for other reasons the whole crop is sold in one, the seller must be prepared to accept a less favourable price. A farmer in Lemu sold his whole crop of bulrush-millet and late millet for 4*d.* a bundle, in order to have sufficient money in hand for certain urgent household expenses (the marriage ceremony of one of his sons). With his sorghum crop he could afford to go more slowly, and obtained for it prices varying from 6*d.* to 9*d.* per bundle. Another farmer, near Bida, had to sell twelve bundles of late millet and sorghum for 1*s.* per bundle, as he was pressed for money for tax, well knowing that if he could afford to sell his grain in smaller quantities he could easily obtain 1*s.* 6*d.* a bundle.

This common knowledge of price-conditions seems also to explain the lack of haggling in Nupe marketing—to the student of African peoples a rather surprising feature. Cooked food, all victuals including grain, rice, palm-oil, &c., as also the common products of tailors, blacksmiths, mat-makers, and so forth, have 'fixed prices', and buyers will never try to bargain. They might, when buying yams or fish, a mat or a hoe, poke about in the goods displayed for sale till they find the biggest or nicest-looking specimen offered at the price they are willing to pay. Real haggling and bargaining is common only with expensive, more rarely sold, commodities, the price of which is always more or less fluid, and commodities the quality and perfection of which show many gradations: embroidered cloth, a woven gown, and all products of artistic value.

The common knowledge of price-conditions is limited by existing communications and forms of economic contact. Thus we find a uniform regulation of prices only within the area in which regular contacts of this kind exist; outside it the calculation of prices and profits, and productive planning in general, is determined by the varying local conditions of supply and demand. The most striking instance of this lack of co-ordination is perhaps the backward village of Sakpe to which I have referred in a previous chapter, where the people were unaware of the fact that the kapok from their silk-cotton trees had a money value in Bida. The following example, though referring to an exchange connexion going beyond Nupe country, is no less significant: in the same village, Sakpe, I met two men from Igbira country who had come to

[1] It is not unnecessary to mention especially this aspect of Nupe economic knowledge. For it is frequently found in more primitive societies that the economic value of time is not recognized and that native producers sell their goods at a distant market for the same price as they would locally.

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435 Nupe to sell dogs, and were greatly disappointed to find that dogs had no market value in that country. It need not be stressed that modern development of communications has greatly enlarged the area in which common price-conditions obtain. Railways, steamers, and road transport have become regular factors in native marketing and in the planning of native production.[1] The stores of the European trading-companies, which are the centres for the marketing in commercial crops, have helped to expand further this framework of common economic conditions. But these last factors have at the same time introduced a new element of insecurity into the body of native economic knowledge. The new, wider, framework of reference includes conditions of supply and demand which go far beyond those embodied in the native productive system, and calculations of price which are no longer accessible to the experience of the native producer—the conditions of supply and demand, and the calculations of price, determined by the state of European or American markets. The erratic and, to the native, incomprehensible fluctuations in the price of ground-nuts or cotton are typical instances; we have seen how, in the extreme case, they may completely upset native agricultural planning. The price policy of the trading-companies may also place a certain native productive area in a more unfavourable position than others: thus the price for ground-nuts paid by the United Africa Company in Nupe (that is Niger Province) was 5*s.* 6*d.* per ton as against 11*s.*, for an inferior quality, in Zaria or Kano. The conditions in cotton marketing were, till recently, similar.[2] Many enterprising native traders avail themselves to-day of the modern facilities of transport to visit these various towns and centres of trade: how can they be anything but bewildered by that unwarranted difference in price; or rather, they have learned to accept it as one more of the many incomprehensible arrangements brought in by 'the white man', and find a ready explanation for it in the fact that 'money is more plentiful in Zaria and Kano'.

We must consider here the relation between commodity prices and labour. The prices for the products of native industries given in an earlier chapter reflect, within limits, the varying amount of labour necessary for their production. The lowest daily profit with which the various Bida industries reckon is, as we have seen, between 1½*d.* and 2*d.* It is interesting to note that this amount corresponds to the lowest cost of living per day of an adult in Bida (see below, p. 342). The highest profits, on the other hand, may be determined not only by the amount of work, but also by the skill and artistic qualities which the work involves. We have seen that the artistic work of embroidery is paid more highly than ordinary tailor's work. If we compare, however, the average profits made in blacksmith work with the profits with which brass-smiths

[1] A Nupe trader known to me bought £5 worth of cheap kola-nuts in Lagos early in the season, stored them for 6 months, and then transported them by rail to Bida, where he sold his stock for £10.

[2] I was informed that this discrepancy in price was due mainly to the monopoly position of two large trading-companies in Niger Province, while in the north several companies have to compete with one another. The recently adopted control of the cotton markets by the Administration tends to maintain cotton prices at approximately the same level in the whole of Nigeria.

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reckon, we make the somewhat surprising discovery that here the more refined work is not only not more highly paid but partly even worse paid than the cruder industry. Both as regards profits per day and profits per article produced the brass-smiths work on the whole with lower profits than the blacksmiths.[1] Why, then, does the calculation of price and profit allow for an appreciation of the specific artistic qualities of the work of tailors and embroiderers but not in the analogous instance of brass-smith work? But is it an analogous instance? In the case of tailors and embroiderers both the cruder and the more refined technique belong to the same class of production: they are both what we may loosely call luxury industries. In blacksmith and brass-smith work we have fundamentally different industries, one supplying necessities, and the other a typical fashion and luxury industry. The explanation thus seems to be that indispensability may equal aesthetic value; and that where these two diverse types of industry compete side by side the factor of necessity may balance or outweigh the appreciation of artistic qualities.

MARKET AND TRADE

We have had frequent opportunity to speak of the complexity of Nupe economics and of the far-reaching specialization of Nupe production, which must express itself most forcibly in the wide scope of trade and marketing. In a wider sense Nupe country itself is one big market. For Nupe is a country which exports and imports, and represents, besides, an important station on the route of transit-trade across Nigeria. The ancient trade-routes have to some extent been adjusted to-day to the new forms of communication, motor-roads, steamers, and railways. But to a large extent they have remained the same, for now as of old a large proportion of this transit-trade is carried to, and by, the water-way of the river Niger.

The following are the traditional trade-routes through Nupe. They run mostly roughly from north to south. One, coming from Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi, goes through Kontagora and reaches Nupe north of Mokwa; from here it goes either west, crossing the Niger at Jebba (formerly at Buka, five miles up the river) into Yoruba, or east through Laboži, Sakpe, to the Kaduna, which it crosses at Gbara, then south to Muregi and, after crossing the Niger, on to Yoruba and Kabba. A second route from Kontagora reaches Nupe Emirate north of Kutiwengi, passes through Dabbā and Kutigi, and crosses the river Niger at Ogudu, on the way to Ilorin. An alternative to this route branches off at Dabbā, crosses the Kaduna at Wuya, and ends at Bida. A third trade-route passes through Birnin Gwari and Wushishi, and reaches Bida via Gbangba. There are three routes from Bida to the south and south-east: one through Jima and Dokomba, down the Kaduna by canoe to Muregi,

[1] The profits of blacksmiths per object are: 3*d.*, 3½*d.*, 6*d.*; per day, 6*d.*, 7*d.*, 1*s.* The profits of brass-smiths per object are: 1½*d.*, 2*d.*; per day, 3*d.*, 6*d.* Higher profits are only realized in the casting of bangles in precious metal, in the casting of brass figures for tourist trade, and also in the production of ladles in the modern cheap material, aluminium.

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where the route crosses the Niger and goes on to Ilorin and Yoruba; a second, to Badeggi and Kacha, where it crosses the Niger to Eggã and Yagba country; the third route goes from Bida to Kacha, or Giddi, farther down the river, where the trade-goods are loaded on canoes on their way south to Lokoja, Idah, and Onitsa. In addition to these land routes we have also an 'all-water' route, the north terminus of which used to be at Rabá or Ogudu.[1]

Let me summarize the main facts concerning the 'international' commerce in Nupe. Nupe country exports a certain proportion of its agricultural produce, especially rice and Laboži kola-nuts, smoked fish, and a large variety of its industrial products. It imports various foodstuffs, especially palm-oil and European salt, cheap southern kola-nuts, potash, and live stock. It re-exports potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, European salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. This commerce follows certain interesting traditional patterns. A simple export trade from Nupe to another country is the exception: of this kind is the trade in smoked fish from the riverain districts of Nupe by rail to Ilorin and Ibadan, or the trade in Nupe glass, beads, brass, and silverware, which goes by canoe to Lokoja. In the majority of cases the import or export trade in a certain commodity is combined with a definite return trade in another commodity. Here we find the following regular 'patterns': donkey caravans from Hausa bring beans to Bida and return with kola-nuts (either the local Laboži nuts or the cheap southern variety). Other donkey caravans go north from Nupe; they are loaded in Kacha with palm-oil and salt, which arrive on the Niger Company steamers from the south, and return from the north with *kanwa* (potash) from Bornu. In Kacha the riverain Kakanda buy Nupe-grown rice, which comes down by canoe from Patigi and the Kaduna, and take it south to Onitsa, whence they return with palm-oil. Hausa traders from Kano bring horses and sheep and goats to Bida, to return to their country with Nupe straw hats. Another exchange pattern between Hausa and Nupe is the trade of potash against Bida embroidered gowns. In this trade the imported goods are invariably first sold for money, with which the goods for the return voyage are then purchased. All the variations that are theoretically possible in this threefold export and transit-trade are found to occur in practice. In other words, the Nupe merchant plays three different roles: he is either the local broker who arranges the sale of goods between importer and exporter; or he acts as wholesale trader and buys himself the imported goods to re-export them (himself supplying the transport) to their eventual destination; or he acts as retail trader and sells the imported goods either directly to the customer (on the Bida markets) or to other retail traders, who will dispose of them on the various village markets of the country.

We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

[1] To-day the 'all-water' route goes to Jebba, the new railway and steamer station, and even farther north, the water-way north of Jebba having been made navigable for canoes. I have described this river-trade more fully in 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria' (in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 165).

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We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

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study of the village market. No Nupe town or village is without its market and its regular market-days. Larger places hold their markets once a week; smaller villages every fifth day (irrespective of the seven days' week). This arrangement, illogical though it may appear, is well adjusted to the needs of the country, where local transport is still to a large extent by porterage. It enables more people, and people from more distant places, to attend the markets in the bigger villages. I estimated the attendance of the big market at Kutigi, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, at from 400 to 500. The distance from which people come varies considerably. Kacha market, the largest market after Bida, attracts men and women traders from the capital, forty miles away. In Kutigi I met women traders from Lemu, which is thirty miles from Kutigi, who were selling pots made in Gbari country, another fifty miles north. Professional, full-time traders, men and women, regularly attend all the larger markets in the country, stopping in one village for five or six successive market-days, and then moving on to another place. The peasant women, on the other hand, who practise trade only as a 'side line' and whose marketing is concerned chiefly with the disposal of the produce from their houses and their husbands' farms, rarely attend markets which are more than six or ten miles from their home. These small circles of inter-village exchange form no less part of the comprehensive marketing scheme of the country than do the extensive journeys of the professional traders. For the system of local exchange areas is partly subordinated to the main axes of trade and traffic. We find an organization almost of relay stations, half-way houses of exchange, situated all along the main trade-routes of the country, above all on the roads leading to the capital.

438 [482] 442 438

On the western road to Bida from Wuya (which is 12 miles from Bida) there are three such 'relay stations', used for the different kinds of produce of which Bida is constantly in need. Duzko Wuya (lit. Market Wuya) on the right bank of the Kaduna is used by the women of Batati, a village fifteen miles inland, for trading their cotton to Bida traders whom they meet at this place. Zantica, six miles from Bida, and Lumanla, four miles from Bida, serve as exchange places for agricultural produce and firewood, which goods are brought to these places by the local women, and then bought and carried to Bida by traders from the town. A similar arrangement, with regard to yam and other farm-produce, obtains on the northern road to Bida from Lemu; the 'relay station' is a tiny village half-way between Lemu and Bida, the only importance of which lies in its use as an exchange market.

Similar relay systems which exist in the river area, following and branching out from the water-ways, serve as centres for the extensive trade in smoked fish. Here the local exchange circles are primarily determined by the varying conditions of transport. Thus the wives of fishermen on the lower Kaduna take their fish (already smoked) in their small canoes to the nearest riverside market, e.g. Jima or Muregi. Here a wholesale trader from Jebba buys up fish in large quantities, takes them, again by canoe (this time a large river-going canoe) to Jebba market, and sells them to another wholesale trader who will transport the fish (by rail or lorry) to the final destination—the inland markets of Bida,

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Ilorin, Oshogbo, or Ibadan. Another method is that the wholesale 438 trader who buys up the smoked fish at the local riverside markets also trades them directly to Bida, Ilorin, &c.; certain enterprising traders with plenty of capital may also charter canoes and, travelling from place to place, buy up the local produce before it comes to the riverside markets.[1]

438 I have emphasized on various occasions the close correlation between markets and specialization of production. Here is the place to state the 477 case once more. Generally speaking, trade and transport which bring the products of one area within reach of another involve competition, and through competition the elimination of inferior forms of production. Trade and transport must thus tend to foster (as they are in turn fostered by) local specialization. Certain developments in the agricultural and industrial production of Nupe reveal the effectiveness of these influences also in that culture. The people of Jebba, for example, do not grow sugar-cane or onions on their land, although on a similar type of land in Rabá and Ogudu these crops are cultivated. They explain this situation as being due to the fact that they are farmers on a less extensive scale, spending much time on fishing and (formerly) hunting; they prefer to import onions and sugar-cane from these other places. For certain handicrafts our evidence is even more striking, for here competition owing to an expansion of trade has only comparatively recently replaced an indigenous craft by imports from another area. The women of Leaba [323] formerly practised pottery; but when the regular canoe traffic, which used to stop farther down the river, was brought up to Leaba, and pots made in Jebba and Gbajibo reached Leaba market, the Leaba women gave up their craft; their own pots, they explained, were inferior in quality to the imported product, owing to the inferior potter's clay found locally.

443 In small villages no trade is done, and markets are deserted, on days other than market-days. In large villages the markets do a little trade—in food only—also on ordinary week-days. On the day after a market there is often quite considerable trade in goods which did not find a buyer the previous day. On market-day the people begin to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The market is in full swing by noon, and from 1 to 3 is the busiest time. After 4 the attendance begins to scatter, and soon after that the traders remove their goods, and the market is left empty. Every kind of trade and craft is represented even in the smaller village markets. In the roofed booths which every market possesses the more valuable goods are displayed—products of native industries as well as European goods. Tailors and leather-workers work in open huts. In the open square framed by these booths and huts agricultural produce, food-stuffs of every kind, live stock, pots, and tools are offered for sale.

[1] Lately the wives of the fishermen have attempted to break down the 'relay system' and to dispense with the services of middlemen, having begun to market their fish directly in Ilorin and Ibadan. A place like Ogudu, on the road from the river to Ilorin, which formerly formed an important exchange place, has now lost this transit trade in fish. The chief of Ogudu, to whom I owe this information, remarked regretfully that the women have 'begun to understand' (lit. 'have seen light').

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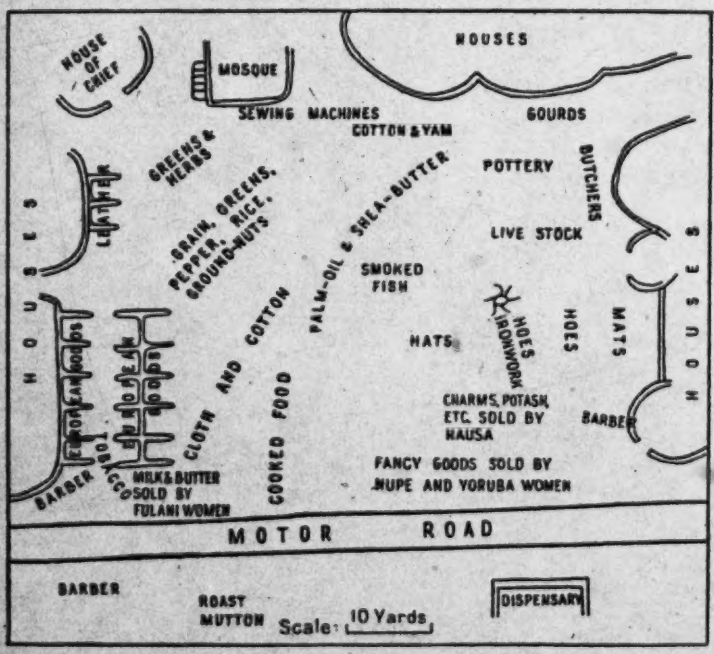
In one corner of the market barbers put up their open-air shop. In another corner butchers sell their goods, a drummer endlessly repeating the same rhythmical *motif*—the signal that the butchers have slaughtered that day—to attract the attention of the crowd. 443

SKETCH-MAP OF KUTIGI MARKET



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Markets in the wider sense of the word, places for exchange and trade, grow spontaneously with the needs of the country. But markets of the kind just described, with permanent buildings, booths, and stalls, have to be built and laid out specially. Moreover, provision must be made to guarantee the protection of the large attendance, especially of the traders from other districts and countries. The element of planning is clearly visible. The villages which decide to have a market of this kind will go to work methodically; formerly, they appealed first, through the royal delegate in their district, to the king, who would designate some of his private slave police to take charge of the supervision of the market. In the Mohammedan and semi-Mohammedan villages a well-known Mallam would be summoned to consecrate the market and thus ensure its prosperity. This practice is said to be still in use. Certain markets become, in fact, known by the name of the Mallam who dedicated them. [625]

A sketch-map will best illustrate the well-planned arrangement of a typical village market—the market of Kutigi, to which I have referred

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443 above. A census of the same market will give quantitative data with regard to the attendance of the market and the goods which are offered for sale on an average market-day. The figures quoted, which are of necessity elastic, were compiled from a large number of regular observations during the months of February and March. The kind and quantity of goods traded on the Nupe markets reflect the seasonal fluctuations in supply and demand. It must be understood, therefore, that at other times of the year, especially in the rainy season, the composition of the market will be somewhat different. In a large centre like Kutigi, however, which can count throughout the year on imports from distant places, these changes remain within more narrow limits than in a small market which relies largely on local supplies. For the purpose of comparison I have also added the corresponding figures referring to ordinary week-days.

The chart shows that, in marketing, certain goods are regularly com-
443 bined. The same women who sell grain also sell rice, red pepper, *kuka*,
441 and partly palm-oil and shea-butter. The sale of yam is regularly combined with the sale of cotton, and sometimes of gourds; or cotton is sold
438 by the traders in native cloth. Such goods as smoked fish, native tobacco, or cooked food, on the other hand, are always traded separately. The combination of goods offered for sale does not invariably betray the character of the seller, whether she is a farmer's wife, marketing his produce, or a professional trader or 'middleman'. The two categories, in fact, overlap to some extent. As a rule the women who sell grain, rice, *kuka*, red pepper, yam, and cooked food are only 'occasional' traders, i.e. are marketing produce from their husbands' farms. In the case of the women who combine the sale of grain, red pepper, rice, and palm-oil, grain and red pepper may well come from the farms of their husbands, while rice and palm-oil may have been bought by the woman from someone else. Or the woman who sells cloth and cotton may be selling her husband's cotton together with cloth which she purchased in Bida. The women, on the other hand, who sell tobacco, smoked fish, and various Bida goods are invariably professional traders or 'middlemen'.

443 The distinction between seller and buyer is no less difficult to elicit from the chart. The two roles are often combined in the same person.
571 Many women who come to the market to sell agricultural produce or cooked food, or men who bring live stock or hoes, at the same time purchase various goods from other traders. But the market, in Africa as well as Europe, is more than merely a business institution. The people who attend it, whether they come to buy or to sell, also come for the sake of company and entertainment. In the market they meet friends and acquaintances with whom they can gossip and exchange news. There also the sexes meet, girls and their suitors. Rarely will there be a market-day on which drummers and musicians do not turn up also, and young men or girls join in a dance. This 'social' aspect of the village market must appeal more to the local people, than to the professional traders from Bida or other more distant places. It presupposes common interests, a familiarity and intimacy of long standing. The group of peasant men and women who are brought together regularly on market-

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Census of Kutigi Market

Goods	Attendance and quantities of goods: On market-day	Attendance and quantities of goods: On ordinary days
Fulani butter and milk	4 Fulani women from camp in the neighbourhood, each with 1–2 gals. of milk and 1 lb. butter	2–3 Fulani women
Grain, rice, red pepper, *kuka*	30–40 women, each with 10–12 *kpanu* of grain and rice, 1 lb. of red pepper and a small bowl of *kuka*	2 women
Palm-oil, shea-butter, and salt	50–60 women, partly the same as those who sell grain and rice, each with 2–4 gals. of palm-oil (in old petrol tins)	2 women
Cotton and yam	10–12 women, each with 4–5 heaps of yam, each containing 6–8 yams. Quantity of cotton very variable	2–3 women
Smoked fish	30–40 women, each with one basket containing 15–20 fish	3 women
Various greens and herbs (partly used as medicine)	15 old women	..
Native tobacco	5 women	3 women
Live stock	Men with 4–5 sheep or goats	..
Pottery of different size	10–15 women, each with 10–15 smaller or 4–5 larger pots	..
Gourds	7–8 women, partly the same as those who sell cotton	..
Hoes	1–2 men, each with 4 hoes	..
Mats	Very variable, 2–10 mat sellers, mostly men	..
Cooked food (pastries, corn-gruel, corn-water, &c.)	20–30 women, the same as those who also sell grain or palm-oil, each with 2 pts. corn-water, 20–25 packets (in banana leaves) of corn-gruel, and 10–15 pastries	4–5 women
Meat	3 butchers, average 2 sheep or sometimes 1 bull or cow	They slaughter every second day
Straw hats	5 men	..
Cloth, various fancy goods	5 men in the booths, and 15 women (Nupe and Yoruba) in the square	..
Tailors	6 men, in the booths	..
Barbers	4 men	..
Leather-workers	4 men, in the booths	..
Charms, medicines, and potash	4 men, two of them Hausa	..
Roast meat	1 man, sitting on the road-side opposite the market	..

days indeed constitute a substratum of community life at large. The social life at the village markets utilizes, and creates or revives, at the same time the contacts and social relationships which characterize the 'area of common life'. It is no accident that this circle of five to ten miles radius from which the local attendance of village markets is recruited coincides with the area which is covered by local knowledge and interest in each other's affairs,[1] and within which intermarriage between different villages takes place.

[1] See p. 38.

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I have described already at some length the markets of Bida so that there is little to add here. Bida possesses six markets, three main day markets close to the 3 royal houses, two small day markets—one near the west gate, one in the strangers' quarter—and one night market. In the distinction between day and night market the village distinction between the restricted trade on ordinary week-days and the extensive trade on market-days is in some respects repeated.[1] Multiply by ten the largest village market, and its attendance and the quantity and variety of goods displayed, and you have the Bida night market. Its average attendance has been estimated at 6,000, and as regards the goods which are bought and sold, I can only repeat that there is practically nothing that cannot be obtained there, from kola-nuts to beams for roofing, and from native-tanned goatskins to watches, scissors, or bicycle spare parts. Besides, there are scribes who will write letters for you, Yoruba money-changers (who charge a commission of one penny in the shilling), cooks who roast small pieces of mutton over the fire and sell the meat on wooden skewers to passers-by, drummers, barbers, tailors, loungers, not to forget the policeman who regulates the traffic and keeps watch (not always a sinecure) on disturbances of the peace.

In certain respects, however, marketing and trade in Bida differ essentially from their counterpart in the village. A first difference concerns the local distribution of marketing. Bida possesses, in addition to its four markets, also more or less regular shops which are open all day, such as the wayside shops in the street of the brass-smiths, where the womenfolk of brass- and silversmiths display the goods manufactured by the men, or the permanent shops in *lálemi*, the crowded strangers' quarter. Many traders, moreover, who will attend the night market keep during day-time little wayside stands on cross-roads or busy thoroughfares. The wide local distribution of shops corresponds to the typical demands of a large, decentralized town, in which the groups of potential customers are concentrated in widely scattered localities. At the same time it expresses a keener spirit of competition, and that doctrine of 'seeking out the customer' which is familiar to all more advanced systems of marketing. Two new stands which have only appeared during my stay in Bida will illustrate what I mean. One wayside shop established itself opposite the workshops of the Public Works Department, and its customers were the labourers, who would come out to buy food, sweets, and cigarettes; the other was installed close to the Bida Middle School, and catered for the occasional wants of schoolboys and teachers. In both cases two or three young women had joined forces and were keeping shop together. These wayside shops and stands do not pay rent; street corners and cross-roads are free to everyone; nor have any quarrels over claims to a particular spot arisen—as yet. But this is essentially a fluid process; and it is not unlikely that quarrels or litigation of this kind might arise in the future if competition becomes

[1] The day markets reflect the different needs of the large town as compared with the village markets. Firewood, for example, which is never seen on village markets as the women collect their own firewood on family farms, appears in large quantities on the day markets of Bida.

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more severe and the advantageous positions secured by the enterprising first-comers are threatened by later recruits of the 'seeking-out-the-customer' movement. 443 366

Wayside shops also line the road leading from the north gate to the two large European stores—'canteens' in the popular idiom. Here the inventiveness of Bida traders has seized upon a new device to attract and 'seek out' the customer. Many peasants from backward villages who come to Bida to buy certain essential European articles, such as salt or sugar, either want to buy them in very small quantities—smaller quantities than they could obtain at the store—or are too shy and frightened to enter the stores themselves. These are the customers of the little stands outside the 'canteens': for here the peasants can buy the same articles in the smallest quantities and without having to undergo the ordeal of a purchase in the unfamiliar, forbidding, store.[1]

MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

The last example brings us to another essential difference between the marketing system in Bida and in the village. The large volume of native trade in European goods and the close business connexion between native traders in Bida and the stores of the trading-companies have introduced certain completely new factors into Nupe marketing. They are visible in local trade on the smallest scale as well as in the large-scale enterprises of wealthy Bida merchants. Trade in certain European goods allows a more rapid turnover and more certain profits than any branch of native economy. The native trader or middleman can, as we have just seen, turn to his profit the fact that he can make certain essential and highly valued goods accessible to the consumer by retailing them in such small quantities that their price (though relatively high) is low enough to be within the means of peasants and small craftsmen. It is, for example, a regular practice of Bida women traders to buy tins of 50 cigarettes at the 'canteen', and to sell them singly (or even cut in half); to buy boxes of matches, and sell them in little bundles of five; packets of sugar, and sell the sugar a piece or two at the time; or to buy 4-gallon tins of paraffin, and sell it in pint bottles. It is hardly surprising that the profits, though absolutely small, are relatively high, up to 100 per cent.[2] 443

[1] This fear is really a compound of shyness and suspicion—one is suspicious just because one is shy and unfamiliar with the ways of these modern institutions. A most characteristic instance, concerning a Bida man who, one would think, would hardly need to be shy or afraid, is the following: a Bida Mallam with whom I was very friendly came to see me one day and asked me if I would do him a favour and order spare tyres from the 'canteen' for a lorry belonging to a friend of his. His friend, he explained, disliked ordering them himself, for he knew he would be cheated and given the wrong kind of tyres. What had happened was that his friend had some time previously ordered tyres without, however, knowing that it was necessary to quote the exact size. He had been given tyres of the size most frequently found on the lorries running in the country, but unfortunately they did not fit his lorry. 157

[2] One tin of 50 cigarettes costs 1*s.*; one cigarette is sold for 0·3*d.*, allowing a profit of 3*d.* in 1*s.* One box of matches, containing approximately 50 matches, costs 1*d.*; five matches sold for 0·2*d.* give a profit of 0·8*d.* in the penny. One 435

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442 It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials
452 from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run
[494] lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an extremely low price—in certain cases only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

439 The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and,
177 generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

435 4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7*s.* 6*d.*; one bottle is sold for 6*d.*, giving a profit of 8*s.* The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips. 441 574 484

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course 441 167 484 571 [191]

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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

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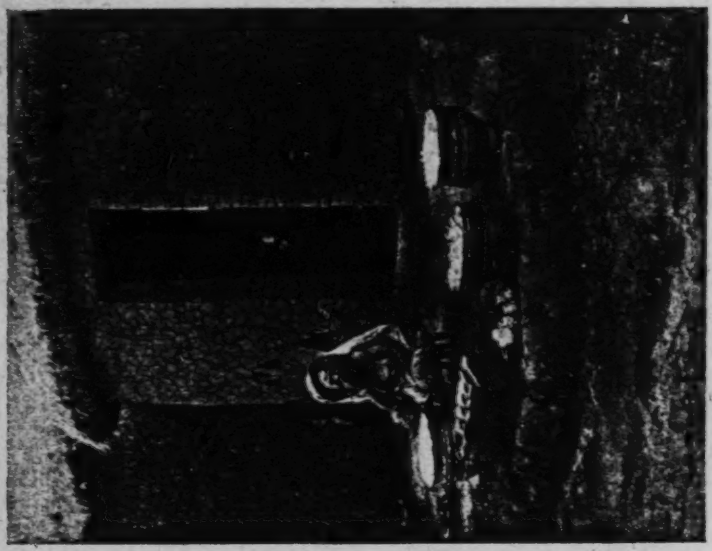

A WOMAN TRADER SELLING HER HUSBAND'S SILVERWARE

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A FOOD MARKET

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[facing p. 330]

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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts,
although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong
441 the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains,
ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the
carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of
women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the
women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses),
indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and
pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods
produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes,
axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by
both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and
certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always
marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by
women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women
as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6
441 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which
868 they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins
filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their
mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to
the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough,
carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will
assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or
they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk
through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while
the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an
interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old
and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of
14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will
soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small
store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the
capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case
in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been
summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about
a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy
it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid
only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people
in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as
the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become
real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and
when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the
art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be
entitled to inherit her property.

593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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593 makes the women the main traders of the country that the women can as
562 a rule command more liquid capital than the men. In this sense, referring to the liquid resources, it can be said that the Nupe women are on the whole wealthier than the men. This does not mean that their financial position is entirely unaffected by the limited resources of the husband. The wives of small farmers and craftsmen or, generally, impecunious husbands, have little scope for their commercial activities, and may be unable to derive from the household resources the necessary working capital for a profitable independent enterprise. Where there is little to sell there can be little profit; and this small profit may be swallowed up by the normal household expenditure. Even the utensils and goods which constitute the wife's dowry may disappear gradually in a household where there is no money with which to replace the stock of pots, clothes, and ornaments—the woman's initial 'capital' (see p. 351). The household of a diviner in Bida, whom I knew well, was a typical case. The man was of poor health, unable to do any serious work, and had to rely entirely on his income from divining, which was small and irregular. The wife maintained the household, poor and simple as it was. She was about 40 years old; she had nothing left of her dowry save the few rags which she wore, and a few damaged pots. Every day she bought grain for 6*d.* on the market, made corn-gruel and corn-water, and sold this food in the mornings in the street, with a total profit of 2*d.* With this money she kept herself and her husband and a small child.

But usually the wives even of men whom one would hardly call prosperous attain an impressive degree of solvency. Solvency in this connexion is a relative term, as the pecuniary demands which the wives have to meet are much smaller than those which devolve on the men as the heads of the household. Yet in many cases the women come to the succour of their men even in expenses of the latter kind. It is by no means rare, especially in Bida, to find families in which a mother undertakes to pay the bride-price for the sons. Much more widespread is the practice of wives lending their husbands money, for example, for the payment of tax. Of this practice we shall hear more later. Let me emphasize here the dependence of the husband on his wife with regard to these monetary obligations—a dependence which must increase as the independent economic enterprise of the women, commerce, is increasing in scope. This fact is essential for the understanding of certain moral issues involved in the expansion of women's trade in Nupe.

441 I have stated earlier that the line of distinction between professional
462 and occasional traders is much more fluid among the women than among the men. Wives of farmers, craftsmen, Mallams, noblemen,
562 traders, officials—they all are, or may be, traders. The enormous variety in the trade which is carried out by the Nupe women, and in the degree of their 'professionalization', cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The woman who sells every morning two or three dozen packets of home-made *kanu* (corn-gruel) for a tenth of a penny each, and the woman who buys £5 worth of rice, kola-nuts, or European cloth, do not really differ in anything except in the amount of capital they can lay their hands on. The difference in the distance which they cover when

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disposing of their goods—the peasant woman who walks eight to ten miles to the nearest local market, and the professional woman trader who travels to Lokoja or Ilorin by canoe or train—may seem but an external feature. Yet this factor of distance possesses a deeper significance. The essential difference between the professional and the occasional woman trader is embodied in the extent to which their trading and marketing becomes an independent, self-contained, and self-centred enterprise. Both the occasional and the professional trader are out for profit. But only the latter has adjusted her life fully to this aim. 'Proper' trade necessitates a freedom of movement, a full-time devotion to the task, which only women who have made themselves independent can afford. It means extensive journeys, and long absence from home. Obviously, the wife of a farmer or craftsman who must look after the house is less able to do this than the wife of a trader or a man of the leisured classes.

But the profession demands even more than comparative leisure. The long absence from home, the life on the road, in foreign villages and countries to which none of the normal contacts of the community stretch, means ultimately a dissolution of the bonds of marriage, household, and family. The disappearance of all moral control of the husband over his wife, or the local community over its women, expresses itself in the sexual licence claimed by these women. Female trade and immorality are in Nupe conception two things closely related. The women traders who go on these long expeditions and stay away from home for weeks, months, or even years, are commonly regarded as 'loose' women, as women who cannot help leading a 'loose' and 'immoral' life. The women traders prostitute themselves for money in the villages and towns where they stop on their trading expeditions. The money which they make is regarded by the people as legitimate a form of earnings as that gained from trade itself. When they return to their homes husband and family will receive them without question, and no blame would attach to them for the life which they had been leading while away. Public opinion, though outspoken in its general condemnation of moral laxity, yet countenances the sexual licence of women traders and accepts it almost as an institution. If people—men, as the spokesmen of public opinion—express their indignation at this danger to matrimonial morality, they attack, not the practice itself, but its disproportionate growth in recent times.

We have, in a previous chapter, discussed the social significance of this qualified admission of sexual licence in a certain limited social domain (see Chap. IX). Let me recall the salient facts: female trade, closely associated as it is with licentious living, provided the scope for that socially condoned sexual licence which other social forces seem to have made necessary. Thus female trade became in some respects a closed profession, the entrance into which was made dependent on the qualification of sterility. We may add here that, not unnaturally, women who were past child-bearing age could also legitimately join the profession of women traders. By means of these two qualifications an occupation which harboured some danger to common morality was limited to

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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

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CHAPTER XX

ECONOMIC BALANCE: MEANS AND WANTS

THE PROBLEM

IN the discussion of economic balance in this new sense we meet with certain methodological difficulties. The wants on which resources are expended form part of culture—they reflect customs, conventions, tastes, fashions. The ideal solution would obviously be to include here a description of the whole culture, political life, social organization, law, religion, education, recreation, and so forth, from the economic aspect. Yet even if this were possible the question would remain whether we could not produce an arrangement more adequate to the present problem than this enumeration based on the qualitative contents of the different domains of culture. As we are dealing here with questions of equilibrium, 'the more adequate' arrangement would clearly have to be in the nature of a weighted or graded order, i.e. a scale of economic values. |2|

How are we to build up this graded order of values? Economists agree that economic incentives can be arranged in an order of intensity.[1] Yet economics can express the intensity of incentives only in terms of the concrete efforts expended on their satisfaction. Broadly speaking, the existence or intensity of wants is derived from the fact that they are satisfied, and that certain wants are satisfied rather than others.[2] This circular argument precludes the possibility of studying wants apart from their concrete satisfaction. As anthropologists, having defined economic relations as relations between means and the satisfaction of *culturally accepted* needs, we must presuppose that the scale of values has to some extent at least an existence *per se*, that is, is of some permanence, and is buttressed by cultural factors independently of actual demands. Without this theoretical separation of wants and their concrete satisfaction we could never attempt to frame such questions as why certain forms of satisfaction are highly in demand while others appear to be neglected although their 'value' is recognized by the society. We could never point out that certain needs may be highly valued in themselves, and may yet be disregarded because of an insufficiency of means. These are questions of the rationality of bonds, of the motives behind wants, and of the efficiency of socio-economic systems in general (the main manifestation of which is the distribution of poverty and wealth). These questions, though admittedly beyond the scope of economics in the strict sense, deeply concern the student of society.[3]

We cannot demolish the circular argument of economics, which is, in

[1] L. Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, 1935, p. 86.
[2] D. M. Goodfellow, *Principles of Economic Sociology*, 1939, p. 28.
[3] The concept of poverty and wealth depends on the possibility of comparing the magnitude of incomes and forms of satisfaction secured by the income of different individuals. An inter-individual comparison of this kind is not admitted by theoretical economics. See L. Robbins, op. cit., pp. 137–40.

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121 fact, intrinsic to all generalizations about human behaviour. But for the purpose of sociological analysis we must attempt to extend this circular argument over as wide a range of interconnected phenomena as possible. Wants are discovered in the way people behave; but in this discovery we are, unlike the economist, not bound by statistical evidence alone, but can with the help of our field methods study the actual behaviour of individuals in all its aspects. Behaviour comes to include also verbal behaviour and expression of beliefs, convictions, and ideals. Verbal behaviour may thus also supply us with evidence of the intensity of incentives. We are driven to admit the existence, side by side with 'concrete' evaluations as revealed in economic decisions, of diffuse 'theoretical' or 'moral' evaluations which may be at variance with the former.

We are, then, operating with a two-dimensional system of wants and values. It has, I admit, no validity in the economic universe of discourse.[1] Seen from the economic point of view the 'theoretical' evaluation merely represents the weaker incentive which, in the eventual economic decision, has been subordinated to the stronger and thus relegated to the sphere of ineffectual theoretical concepts. But the acceptance of the two-dimensional scheme is indispensable to the adequate description of human conduct. The reality which it defines is primarily of a psychological nature: it embraces the motivations and repressions behind the economic decision, and the significant attitudes and responses which accompany it—hope and regret, disdain or resentment, expectations of betterment or the consciousness of failure. Yet every one of these psychological reactions may become a concrete determinant of conduct and thus a potential drive for readjustment either in the narrow sphere of social mobility, i.e. in attempts of individuals to improve their position, or in the wider sphere of collective attempts to bring about (by force, if necessary) changes in the socio-economic system. We need say no more on this point: it is illustrated abundantly in the history of society.

We will make two further admissions: first, that the divergence between theoretical and actual evaluation is frequently the symptom of a merely temporary lack of adjustment, and thus of social change; and second, that the divergence is partly due to a certain ambiguity in the concept we are using of 'wants' or 'needs'. The first does no more than underline the significance of the phenomenon to the student of society. As regards the second, the following examination of the nature of the divergence will show that the ambiguity in the concept of 'wants' is due, not to inexact formulation, but to the nature of society. The divergence between actual and theoretical evaluation occurs in three different forms.

(1) The simplest and most familiar form of this divergence is that owing to time-lag. The actual evaluation frequently takes account of changed wants, while the theoretical evaluation still maintains pre-change standards.

[1] I suspect, though, that this dual definition of 'concrete' and 'theoretical' evaluation forms a parallel to a similar distinction made by economic theory, namely, between the 'real value' of commodities and their 'exchange value'.

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(2) The divergence may be due to a differentiation within the structure of the group whose economic decisions we are studying. To put it schematically: individuals act always as members of groups; but every individual is at once member of different groups of progressive inclusiveness—family, kinship group, local group, tribe, state, &c. His conduct may thus be influenced by possibly conflicting standards of evaluation obtaining in the different groups. His economic decision may follow one standard of evaluation, while he relegates an alternative standard which he is either unable or unwilling to carry into action to the plane of 'theoretical' values. We may then find that the 'concrete' values adopted by individuals as members, for example, of the narrower group, appear as 'theoretical' values in the larger, comprehensive, group, and vice versa. Disregard of the alternative standards of evaluation owing to inability is typical of most forms of class stratification and, potentially, of class consciousness (in the economic sense). For here we see groups act according to evaluations derived from the sufficiency of means in their section, but yet remain conscious of wants and satisfactions obtaining in other, more fortunate, strata of the group at large. Disregard of alternative standards of evaluation owing to unwillingness, on the other hand, will mostly be found to indicate differences in social insight, which varies with position in the social group, with age, and experience. Thus the young labourers who preferred to purchase clothes and other temporary attractions rather than save money for marriage acted according to the ideals of the younger generation and disregarded the value which, as members of the kinship group, they should have recognized—values, moreover, which are upheld by the executive organs of the group, the elders and the family heads. We shall base our examination of the Nupe scale of values mainly on the widest range of social insight and (unless expressly stated) shall assess economic wants from the viewpoint of the family head.

(3) A final, most elusive, divergence is that between felt wants and abstract needs.[1] We must realize that the social significance of organized human conduct, shaped as it constantly is by convention and custom, is not exhausted in the attainment of a certain single satisfaction (which alone was aimed at), but normally implies the effectiveness of other wants and needs besides. Their satisfaction is attained, as it were, automatically, with the satisfaction of the conscious want, and may be embodied in the very conventional form which the satisfaction must take. Radcliffe-Brown has shown that the paramount ubiquitous need of this kind is that inherent in the structure of society itself, of integration and stability. Now, concrete evaluation may in certain cases run counter to that need, which would be relegated to the ideological validity of theoretical wants. These social needs are rarely present in the minds of individuals—except in those of far-sighted individuals acting as executive organs of their group. Rather the student of society hypothesizes their existence; for to him they reveal their existence and effective-

[1] Goodfellow assigns the study of 'wants' to economics proper, and the study of 'needs' to a separate discipline, which he calls Social Economics (op. cit., p. 275).

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121 ness indirectly, through certain significant changes in the stability of social life.

With these methodological viewpoints in mind, we may now attempt to build up our scale of values. We cannot hope, of course, to make it exact in every grade or detail; but we can trace its outline which gives us the extremes of the scale—its maximum and minimum points—and, between them, certain well-defined marks. I propose to adopt a threefold approach.

(1) We find the 'minimum point' of our scale in the demands upon resources which refer to the satisfaction of the physiological necessities of life—'primary needs', in Malinowski's terminology—above all, nutrition and shelter. With Malinowski, we realize that these needs never exist as such in society, that is, in the form of undisguised elementary impulses, but already appear in a certain conventionalized form, shaped and elaborated by culture.[1] Closely linked with these wants is another group which we may call, with Malinowski, 'derived' wants, in the sense that they refer to the maintenance of the productive organization by means of which the 'primary needs' are satisfied.[2]

(2) On this second stage we shall examine certain more or less fixed demands upon resources which are involved in institutions and customs and which are accepted with little variation, irrespective of status or wealth, throughout the society. Typical instances of these demands are bride-price and taxation.

(3) We study the wants and forms of satisfaction apparent in the conduct of the recognized *élite* of the society. They define the 'maximum point' of our scale, and we may take them to represent the ideals and generally desirable things—the things 'one ought to be able to afford'—in the opinion of the society at large.[3] I must add that this last assumption is justified only if we can prove that no rift runs across the ideological framework of the society separating the desires and tastes typical of the various social strata. We must reckon with the possibility of individuals of the lower social strata being well content with their 'station'; or of tastes and desires of higher social strata showing a caste-like exclusiveness. We shall see later that one of the main characteristics of Nupe society lies in the absence of a self-limitation of the former kind; the latter kind of rift, on the other hand, is negligible, and is restricted mainly to the prerogatives of royalty, for example, to the traditional insignia of rulership, the rules of dress and food of the Nupe kings, &c. In modern Nupe even these caste-like prerogatives have mostly disappeared.

[1] I cannot argue here the question whether or not sexual satisfaction should be included among these 'primary needs'; I have put sexual desires in the second group of wants mainly because they are subject to a much more complete cultural 'elaboration' and institutionalization.

[2] It will be seen that this definition is narrower than Malinowski's definition of 'derived needs', which can, in fact, be extended over the whole field of culture.

[3] In this assumption, which is justified by the stratified structure of Nupe society, we differ from Dr. R. W. Firth, who states that 'there is no final organization in primitive societies in the sense of a single individual or ruling group of individuals who are in a position to dictate all choices' (*Primitive Polynesian Economy*, p. 24).

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But we must reckon also with another ideological rift in tastes and desires, which would affect all three stages of our investigation, namely a rift which might be involved in the complex and composite nature of Nupe culture. It would separate, not social strata, but different sections of the population, different cultural groups within Nupe society. A rift of this kind does, in fact, exist with respect to the different cultural standards valid in town and country, in the Mohammedanized capital and the pagan or semi-pagan districts. 121

STANDARDS OF LIVING: NECESSITIES OF LIFE

The extent to which the economy of an individual or a family group is able to incorporate into its 'balance' wants placed lower or higher on the scale of cultural values gives us what is generally called the 'standard of living'. We shall find that it is possible to arrange these varying standards in certain well-defined groups or grades, and to embody them in a comprehensive economic stratification of the society. 511

It will be best to begin with concrete illustrations of the economic balance achieved in Nupe households. Out of fifty household budgets which I have recorded I propose to select five representative examples, taken from different localities and differently organized household groups, in which we can study the main variations that occur. All these examples refer to peasant households. Unfortunately I found it impossible to work out budgets of this kind also for craftsmen and 'free professions' (with two exceptions to be quoted later). Their extremely fluid economy presented great difficulties; to reduce, in their case, income and expenditure to exact figures would have demanded much more time than I was able to devote to this task. However, just because these types of economy are more fluid and more easily adjustable to varying wants, they are of less interest to us than the more restricted and more rigid economy of the agriculturist.

Let me say a few words about the method by which I arrived at these records of Nupe household economy. I have examined households in Bida, Doko, Lemu, and Kutigi. The figures referring to the total farm-yield, and to the proportion of the produce kept for consumption or set aside for sale, were ascertained by inquiry. The nature of Nupe agriculture—the series of successive harvests, and the widely varying arrangements with regard to storage and sale of produce—precluded any more direct approach (e.g. by measuring the yield or the stores). However, there were important safeguards: first, as we have seen, the Nupe farmers are well acquainted with the use of standard measures, and indeed themselves use them to calculate their yield. Moreover, after a number of preliminary inquiries (in which I was helped by reliable informants) I could already form an opinion as to likely averages and individual deviations. Finally, whenever any dubious figures emerged I could verify them by independent inquiries of other household members. In this respect the tendency of the Nupe farmers to keep track of the contributions of the various family members to the common store proved of considerable assistance. 511 124

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Household A

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: one man. Family of four

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	5 loads	All	..	Mat-weaving, for 9*d.* apiece. Total earnings 5*s.*
Late millet	3 ,,	,,	..	
Sorghum	8 ,,	5 loads	3 loads for 2*s.*	
Beans	v. little	All	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	..	All, for 3*s.*	
Cassava	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 1*s.* 3*d.*	

	s.	*d.*
Income from farm produce . . .	6	3
Total income	11	3
Money expenditure: Tax . . .	9	6

Household B

Bida. Labour unit: father and boy. Family of three

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Occasionally straw hat-making. Borrowed 1*s.* from relations for tax.
Late millet	6 loads	All	..	
Sorghum	6 ,,	,,	..	
Beans	?	..	All, for 2*s.*	
Yam	6 loads	All	..	
Rice	31 gourds	10 gourds	21 gourds for 3*s.* 6*d.*	
Locust-beans	..	..	Sold the whole tree for felling to the Bida brick-works, for 4*s.* 6*d.*	

	s.
Income from farm produce	10
Total income (incl. money loan) . . .	11
Money expenditure: Tax	11

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Household C

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: father (old) and married son (invalid). Family of five

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Sold 2 young goats for 3*s.* each, in order to obtain the rest of the tax.
Late millet	10 loads	..	9 loads, for 9*s.*; 1 load given as *dzankd* to *Makū*	
Sorghum	5 "	1 load	3 loads, for 3*s.*; 1 load given as *dzankd* to *Makū*	
Beans	7 "	..	All, for 5½*d.*	
Locust-beans	9 "	..	All, for 3*s.*	

	s.	*d.*
Income from farm produce . . .	15	5½
Total income	21	5½
Money expenditure: Tax . . .	21	0

Household D

Kutigi. Labour unit: father and two sons, one of them married. Family of seven

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	20 loads	All	..	Family head: occasional hunting. Hides sold for 2*d.* to 4*d.* apiece, total earnings 1*s.* 3*d.*
Late millet	15 "	13 loads	2 loads, for 1*s.* 4*d.*	
Sorghum	20 "	10 "	10 loads, for 7*s.* 6*d.*	
Yam	7 "	All	..	Sons: mat-weaving, for 6*d.* apiece; total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a. (i.e. *bucd* income). Each son contributes 3*s.* towards the family tax.
Cassava	?	"	..	
Beans	2 loads	"	..	
Ground-beans	1 load	"	..	
Sw. potatoes	little	"	..	
Ground-nuts	5 loads	Only seed	Rest, for 3*s.* 6*d.*	
Bananas	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 1*s.* 3*d.*	
Palm-kernels	?	..	All, for £1 or 25*s.*	
Kola-nuts	5 loads	..	All, for 6*s.* 3*d.*	

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Income from farm produce	2	4	10
Total income (incl. contribution from sons)	2	12	1
Money expenditure: Tax	1	13	0
Egbe work		6	8
Final instalment of bride-price for younger son		10	0

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Household E

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Lemu. Labour unit: father and four sons, two of them married. Family of ten

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	50 loads	20 loads	30 loads for 15*s.*	Family head: trade in rams and sheep. Total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a.
Late millet	30 ,,	10 ,,	20 loads for 10*s.*	
Sorghum	40 ,,	20 ,,	20 loads for 13*s.* 6*d.*	Sons: *bucd* farm-work. Total earnings approx. 4*s.* p.a.
Beans	6 ,,	All	..	
Yam	?	A little	8 loads for 4*s.*	
Cassava	?	Eaten at once	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	,, ,,	..	
Cotton	10 loads	..	All, for 15*s.*	
Red pepper	4 ,,	..	All, for 8*s.*	
Locust-beans	6 ,,	..	All, for 4*s.*	

		£	*s.*	*d.*
Income from farm produce		3	9	6
Total income	approx.	4	0	0
Money expenditure: Tax		2	7	0
Egbe work			6	6
Name-giving ceremony for grandchild			8	0
First instalment of bride-price for younger son			17	0

511 The construction of these household budgets is designed to show the main division of resources into those which are utilized in kind, i.e. for food consumption, and those utilized for exchange, i.e. for the acquisition of commodities and the satisfaction of other, non-nutritive, wants. We have said that the latitude in satisfying wants beyond the 'minimum level' gives us the standards of living and economic stratification.

Now, it is characteristic that Nupe society, which is so conscious of its
511 class stratification, is equally conscious of its economic stratification and
262 the varying standards of living. Even the principle of the 'minimum point' of the scale of values, the existence of a minimum cost of living, is clearly understood and, what is more important, generally accepted. I have worked out questionnaires referring to this minimum standard of living and collected answers from twenty men in Bida and the villages, of different classes and different degree of wealth. They all were in agreement on the essential points. Expressed in agricultural produce, i.e. staple food crops, calculated for a small family of four, the minimum annual cost of living amounts to 12 to 15 bundles of grain (of any variety) or 90 loads of yam, if the household relies on one of the two staple food crops; or, if both are combined, 6 to 8 bundles of grain and 40 to 50 loads of yam. Expressed in money, 1½*d.* per day is the lowest cost of living per adult. But this food, as my informants added, will hardly be nutritive, it would only 'make the belly swell'. With more nutritive food, the lowest cost of living is 3*d.* per day. Even this is not yet a high standard, for it excludes *na ma re na*, things 'that taste nice', e.g. sweetmeats, savouries, and suchlike. For a family of four or five I was given

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the following daily 'menu' corresponding to a standard of living slightly above the minimum: 511 262

Morning meal:	corn-water or gruel with 'bread' (*fura*)	1½*d.*
Midday meal:	cassava, beans, or rice	3*d.*
Evening meal:	corn porridge	1½*d.*
Total cost		6*d.*

If fats, shea-butter, or palm-oil are added in form of sauce, the bill increases by another 1½*d.*; meat or fish, the addition of which would raise the meal to a much higher 'standard of living', cost 6*d.* a day extra. For example:

Morning meal:	corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	1½*d.*–2*d.*
Midday meal:	corn porridge	1½*d.*
	palm-oil, greens, and spices	1–2*d.*
	fish	3*d.*
Evening meal:	rice	4*d.*
	palm-oil, &c. (partly left over from midday meal)	0·3*d.*
	meat or fish	2–3*d.*
Total cost		1*s.* 1·3*d.*–1*s.* 3·8*d.*

Calculating the cost of food for a family of this size for a week and taking into account that the morning meal often consists of food left over from the previous day, and that meat, fish, and certain savouries are only bought occasionally, we arrive at the sum of 8*s.* 9*d.* per week, or 1*s.* 3*d.* per day.

These figures refer to the cost of living in Bida, where the majority of the population have to buy their whole food. But in the village, food other than the staple crops—including fats, fish, and meat—has also to be bought for money. On the other hand, cost of living in the villages is slightly cheaper, as is shown in the following example, which is again calculated for four or five persons, and corresponds to a fairly high standard, comparable to the elaborate Bida 'menu' just quoted:

Morning meal:	corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	0·8*d.*
Midday meal:	corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices	4*d.*
Evening meal:	the same	4*d.*
Total cost		approx. 9*d.*

The standards of living in the village are also lower than in Bida: an average standard in the village would correspond to a low standard in Bida. Dried fish rather than meat is the main item on the menu, meat being eaten not more than once a week or, in poorer households, once in several weeks. Rice, which appears fairly regularly on the Bida menu, is rare in the village; sorghum-beer, on the other hand, which may replace a regular meal in the village, does not figure on the menu of Bida households. But if the very high standard of living characteristic of the Bida upper classes does not occur in the peasant households, the same is true of the other extreme, the very low standard of living; for although I have found many households in or near Bida which live on the very minimum level, these very low standards seem absent in the village.

Let me give a few concrete examples to illustrate the food economy in

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511 262 typical Nupe households. They are taken from four households in Bida (Nos. 1 and 2) and in the country (Nos. 3 and 4). 'Menu' No. 1 is that of a wealthy noble household, No. 2 that of an average trader's household, No. 3 that of a prosperous peasant household in Kutigi (household D in the list of household budgets given above), and No. 4 that of an average peasant household in the same village. All four examples were obtained about the same time, the end of May and beginning of June. B = morning meal (i.e. 'breakfast'), M = midday meal, E = evening meal.

No. 1

19.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Rice and fish.
E. Rice and meat with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Rice and meat with shea-butter, onions, and spices.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and chicken.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with greens and spices.

22.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and fish.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

23.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

25.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

No. 2

18.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

19.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Cassava with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.
B. Beans cooked in thick palm-oil, with salt and pepper.
M. Boiled cassava, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.
B. Bean-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, &c.—left over from previous day.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

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22.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil and spices.

23.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.
B. Hot corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Sweet potatoes and palm-oil.
E. Corn porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

Note that ground-nut cakes, though eaten repeatedly for the morning meal in this household, are absent in Menu No. 1. In the latter household it was explained to me that ground-nuts were 'out of season', and no longer good for making cakes—a culinary distinction which the less well-to-do (and less sophisticated) households do not follow.

No. 3

31.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

1.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

2.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Corn-porridge and meat, from previous day.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

3.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Boiled yam, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

4.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Beans with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

5.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

6.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Boiled yam, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

No. 4

13.6.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Cassava.
E. Porridge and fish, with palm-oil (no greens).

14.6.1936.
B. Corn-porridge, from previous day.
M. Corn-porridge, left over from morning meal.
E. Fresh corn-porridge with greens (no fish).

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15.6.1936.
B. Corn-porridge and very little fish (bought for 0·1*d.*), with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
M. Sorghum beer.
E. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.

16.6.1936.
B. Nothing.
M. Raw cassava.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

17.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

18.6.1936.
B. Hot corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Corn-porridge.
E. Corn-porridge, left over from midday meal.

19.6.1936.
B. Cold corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Cassava boiled in water.
E. Corn-porridge and palm-oil (no fish).

511 In examining the budgets from the viewpoint of food economy, we find that in this one domain of wants they are already representative of widely varying standards of living. Measuring the produce available for food consumption in the various households against the standard of 12 to 15 bundles (loads) of grain per family of four, or 3 to 4 bundles of grain per head, we obtain the following relations:

Household A: family of four—13 loads, or over 3 loads per head.
Household B: family of three—12 loads, or 4 loads per head.
Household C: family of four—1 load, or ¼ load per head.
Household D: family of seven—43 loads of grain (also yam), or over 6 loads per head.
Household E: family of ten—50 loads, or 5 loads per head.

In other words, we find poverty, i.e. 'insufficiency of means', a certain marginal sufficiency, and also ample and prosperous, standards of living.

We can correlate the prosperity in this sense with certain other social factors.[1] The most prosperous households are found in Trans-Kaduna and in the country north of Bida (e.g. Lemu) where land is fertile and plentiful. Households with a large labour-unit are invariably more prosperous than households with a small labour-unit. The budget which expresses real poverty and insufficiency (C) comes from Bida, and from a small labour group whose efficiency was abnormally reduced: one of the two men who formed the labour unit was old and past work in age, and the other an invalid. I have spoken on different occasions of the detrimental effects upon production of the spreading dissolution of the large labour-unit. That a situation such as this could occur, that this prima facie inefficient productive arrangement which leads an old man and

[1] It will be understood that in this as in similar general statements I am referring not only to the selected examples, representative though they are, but to the whole material which I have examined.

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an invalid to work on their own, could at all be tolerated, reveals most conspicuously the inherent weakness in present-day labour organization. 511

We turn now to the examination of the money surplus achieved in the various households. Here we find the same wide variations as in the examination of the output which was retained for food. But the two ranges of variation do not run parallel; which means that the Nupe peasant does not divide his above-minimum-output equally between nutritive wants and wants demanding money surplus. He may accumulate food-supplies up to what we may regard as the maximum at the cost of the money surplus (as in D); or he may go below the maximum in food-supplies in order to obtain a higher money surplus (as in E); or he may be forced to fall even below the minimum standard of food-supplies for the sake of a certain necessary money surplus (as in C). In order to understand the full significance of this we must anticipate here another demand upon resources which, though not expressing 'primary needs', possesses in native economy the same urgency and inevitability—tax. This demand was, in fact, already embodied in the budgets which we have drawn up. For when measuring 'sufficiency of means' with regard to the primary necessities of life we measured not ability to reach an adequate level of production, but ability to retain an adequate supply of produce after this other rigid demand had been met. Normally, every farmer would retain at least the necessary minimum supplies, which is easily achieved in the ample husbandry of prosperous households, but may prove impossible in the households which keep close to the margin. Here the free planning of the balance between essential food stores and produce for sale may be restricted by the necessity of providing the money 'surplus' for tax, even (as in C) to the degree of reducing food-supplies below the minimum level. Only after deducting the tax can we thus speak of 'real' surplus, in the sense of money resources that can be applied freely to wants, and only with respect to this final surplus can we speak strictly of sufficiency and prosperity.

With regard to surplus in this sense the correlation between large labour-units and high degree of 'sufficiency' is no longer true. In household D the family head could secure a money surplus only by claiming contributions from the *bucá* work of his sons—against the rules of *efakó* collaboration. In a great many cases (not recorded here) large labour-units, though able to produce a large surplus output, could not secure a corresponding money surplus. The explanation lies in the low market-price which ordinary agricultural produce commands. If large quantities have to be sold at once—as they must be where a large sum of money (e.g. for tax) has to be found by a single producer (i.e. the head of the labour-unit)—the price will be even more unfavourable. Only where the production comprises commercial crops, or generally crops commanding a high market-price, will it be possible to combine both aspects of surplus. We find, on the other hand, that households in which a handicraft is practised in addition to farm-work attain a higher measure of prosperity than households of farmers pure and simple. A profitable handicraft can procure ready money for certain urgent expenses, above all, tax, and thus free the household from the necessity of selling a too

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511 large proportion of the produce, or selling it in a hurry, at unfavourable prices.

From nutritive wants we proceed to the wants involved in the 'primary 511 need' of shelter. The upkeep or building of houses represents a want 356 which, occurring at much longer and more irregular intervals, does not figure conspicuously in the annual household budget. In the village, upkeep and building of houses is mainly a question of co-operative labour, involving little or no money outlay. Smaller house repairs, above all thatching, become necessary every three to five years; more complete repairs, such as rebuilding of huts or of the compound wall, are reckoned to occur every ten to twelve years. The small repairs are carried out by the household group, and take rarely more than two or three days. For larger repairs the help of neighbours and relations must be enlisted on *egbe* scale; they last much longer, according to the body of workers that can be mustered, and the work may often have to be interrupted for a day or two if the workers have other tasks in hand. Most building work in the village is left till the beginning of the rains, when the ground (from which the clay for building is dug) is soft, the grass for thatching not too dry (such grass is said to last less long), and when the people are still free from more urgent farm-work. We may add that the building of more elaborate houses of the kind that is found in the town and also in certain villages entails the employment of expert labour, and thus money expenditure, which varies widely with the style and scale of the work.

Finally, we add the 'derived wants' involved in agricultural produc- 511 tion. Under this heading we include repairs and purchase of tools and 241 the financing of *egbe* work. In the same category falls the payment of a fixed land rent in kind which obtains in the area round Bida (as in our example C). I have only partly been able to include these wants in the household budgets. However, the widespread efforts to economize, for example, on the cost of *egbe* work, or the neglected appearance of many of the sumptuous Bida houses, reveal the difficulties which many households find to-day in coping with these wants.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

511 The next step in our inquiry is to ascertain the demands embodied in cultural standards which the Nupe peasant has to meet out of the surplus (if surplus there be) derived from his production. We can group these demands under three headings. (1) Demands implied in kinship duties. In so far as the household or kinship group coincides with the labour-unit these demands overlap with those we listed under 'maintenance of labour'. (2) Demands implied in duties towards the community—religious, political, or social. (3) Certain personal requirements which are regarded, by convention, as essential, and even indispensable.

Under the first heading we list the expenses of kinship ceremonies and feasts—the name-giving ceremony for a new-born child, wedding feasts, and burial and funeral ceremonies. These expenses are borne primarily

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by the family head in whose house the ceremony is performed; but he can also count on contributions from the various relations and friends who attend the ceremony as guests of the house. We have noted the modern tendency among peasants to replace the traditional gifts in kind with contributions in money, which are customary in Bida. These expenses vary widely with wealth and status. The minimum costs—which interest us here—amount to about 3*s.* to 5*s.* in the name-giving ceremony and 8*s.* to 10*s.* in marriage and funeral ceremonies. In the case of junior family members this group of kinship expenses also includes certain occasional gifts in kind to elder relatives, especially the family head. In one Doko household (not quoted among our examples) a young farmer who worked on his own gave his whole produce of beans (worth 2*s.*) to his father and elder brother. In another household, in Bida, a man shared his crop of maize with his elder brother, who was the family head. Family heads, on the other hand, have to provide for the costs of education of their children or younger brothers (so far as it involves expenditure), e.g. the apprenticeship in the workshop of a craftsman, or the attendance at a Koran school or the Government school. They must bear the expenses that might be caused by illness—the purchase of medicines or of the services of diviner or barber-doctor. 'Pocket-money', finally, for children or junior family members is, as we have seen, supplied in the form of *bucá* work, which they are encouraged to take up.

Bride-price

The largest item under this heading is the payment of bride-price, which devolves, in traditional practice at least, on the head of the family section that is united in the labour-unit. I have pointed out already that the bride-price also involves the accumulation of wealth, and comparatively long-range planning and saving.

The bride-price is always reckoned in money, although it may be paid partly in kind; the gifts in kind, however, which may form part of the bride-price, such as cloth and beads, all have a definite money value, and must be bought for money. The Nupe bride-price, called *ewó yawó*, 'money of marriage', comprises a series of payments of varying amount, each of which is known by a special name: we have, first, the gift of the Greeting; we have further two gifts called Small Thanks and Great Thanks, respectively, the latter which represents bride-price proper, being sometimes referred to by the modern Hausa-Mohammedan term *sadeiki*; then there is the Money for Henna, to buy the henna with which the bride will adorn herself for the marriage ceremony, the Money for Pots, with which pots and cooking utensils will be bought, and finally a small gift to the bridesmaids who accompany the bride when she enters her husband's house for the first time. In the country these last two gifts are a comparatively recent introduction, having originated and spread from Bida. In addition to these various 'part payments' there is an annual gift of produce which is presented by the father of the bride-groom to the father of the bride during the period between the formal betrothal and the final marriage ceremony. The whole bride-price is

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511 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, 583 the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks		10	0
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of [56] the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3)—which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

	£	s.
Gba (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or *gbaata* (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks	2	10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

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of living. To-day a distinction which did not exist in former times is universally recognized, between bride-price entailed in ordinary marriage and bride-price paid in the case of *yawó dengi*, marriage in the family: the latter commands a lower bride-price, approximately £3, i.e. the original uniform bride-price. In every case in which I examined the relation of 'marriage in the family' to outside marriage my informants emphasized that there were more family marriages to-day than formerly because it had become so difficult to pay the high bride-price. We see, then, that the bride-price was not simply reduced in amount uniformly; rather a certain context was introduced—invented almost—in which a lower bride-price could be legitimately accepted. The lower bride-price, which would run counter to traditional cultural standards, was thus given a certain qualified sanction by the society. However, even the low bride-price cannot always be provided by the family head. And here we find another adjustment to the lower standards of living, namely, the spreading practice to pay bride-price only for the eldest son, while younger sons must either contribute to, or bear themselves, the cost of their bride-price. The traditional duty of the family head is expressed only in a symbolic transaction: the young man who has to contribute his own bride-price in many cases still hands over the amount to the family head, who will then take all the necessary steps and carry through all the negotiations.

To the bride-price we must add its counterpart, the dowry which the bride brings into marriage and which is paid by her father. Though paid over in one, immediately before the marriage ceremony, the dowry like the bride-price also implies accumulation of wealth over a long period. The amount of the dowry used to correspond exactly to the low, traditional bride-price. Although it fell short of the exorbitant bride-price of recent years, it has been adjusted to the level of a moderately high bride-price (as represented in our example), which proves clearly the underlying intention to balance it against the bride-price even to a degree of mathematical exactitude. Unlike the bride-price, the dowry does not consist in money payments, but in various gifts and contributions in kind. It is reckoned to provide the young bride with cooking utensils, pots, and clothes, sufficient to last her for the first four or five years of the marriage; it also provides food—very excellent food—for the newly wedded couple, so that for the first month or two they are independent of the earnings of the husband or contributions by his family. This is the dowry that corresponds to the example of bride-price quoted above:

	£	s.
10 large pots, costing 1s. each, representing a value of		10
Beads, to wear round the waist, worth	1	15
5 pieces of cloth, worth between 5s. and 7s. each, representing a value of	1	10
Two months' food-supply, worth	1	10
Total	£5	5

Let us for the moment interrupt this description and examine the economic and sociological significance of the changes in bride-price. The question of the sociological significance or 'function' of bride-price

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511 583 has greatly engaged the attention of anthropologists. Yet the various answers which have been found, showing no little disagreement, mostly disregard the fact that institutions never subserve one single purpose, but rather combine ('amalgamate' as Malinowski puts it) a number of social purposes in their structure. The overt purpose of bride-price is clearly that of securing to a man the various legal rights over a woman which are embodied in marriage. Marriage marks the end of certain rights held over the woman by her own kin, above all, her parents, and their replacement by the new rights vested in the husband and his kin. Bride-price in this sense is adequately defined as 'an indemnification for . . . a . . . surrender of rights'.[1] However, as the bride-price is not supplied and received by bridegroom and bride themselves but by their parents or other senior family members, the transaction also has the two-fold social significance of actuating existing kinship bonds (between the bridegroom and his relations who provide the bride-price for him, and similarly between the bride and her family), and of confirming new kinship bonds which stretch, not between the two individuals, but between their families and kinship groups. The transaction of bride-price in this sense has the significance of a contract, to which the two families are the guarantors. The same applies to the parallel transaction of the dowry. Finally, a bride-price, or dowry, of considerable dimensions necessitates the accumulation of wealth and careful economic planning. Bride-price can thus also be said to provide a stimulus for production and economic enterprise in general—one of the motives which every society provides, and needs, to impel it to 'produce, to muster, to count, and publicize its wealth'.[2] This last aspect of the purposefulness of bride-price is, of course, not present in the conscious thought of the people themselves. It expresses a purpose or need read into the facts by the student of society. The first two purposes of bride-price, on the other hand, represent conscious motives of conduct, and the degree of their consciousness becomes evident in the changes which bride-price has undergone in Nupe.

Now, in the traditional Nupe bride-price the aspect of 'indemnification' is greatly overshadowed by the other two aspects. As we have seen, wealth was not 'given' but merely exchanged in the strict sense of the word, the bride-price being balanced exactly against the dowry. When bride-price increased disproportionately, far outstripping the dowry, the element of indemnification and payment as such came to the foreground. The people themselves link this surprising rise with the new economic and political development under British rule: 'Prices were high, and everyone had money.' To some extent this was no doubt due to an increased demand, the greater prosperity showing itself in a rising scale of polygamy. Partly also the motive of 'indemnification' gained a new, additional, significance, that of display for the sake of prestige. But the higher bride-price also showed the effectiveness of the third, economic, factor: for in the highly stimulated economic system the traditional stimulus embodied in the bride-price had to be increased in order to keep pace with the new, higher, level of production and expenditure.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935, p. 295.
[2] D. M. Goodfellow, op. cit., p. 132.

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This interdependence of bride-price and level of production also explains the limited success, among the more prosperous sections of the population, of the attempts of the Administration to fix the bride-price at a lower and, as it were, arbitrary figure. 511 583

Indeed the development of bride-price under the economic stress of the last decade shows how firmly the new 'want' of higher bride-price had struck root. The solution which the people themselves worked out left the 'indemnification' and the 'economic' aspect of the bride-price intact; it achieved the necessary adjustment by reassessing the 'sociological' or kinship aspect. The contribution of the family to the bride-price of its junior members was reduced to the symbolic transaction of the family head acting on behalf of the bridegroom who must himself provide the bride-price; above all, the new rules allowed a reduction in the bride-price in family marriages, i.e. marriages in which the marriage ties do not establish new, but utilize already existing kinship bonds.

We may mention here certain marriage rules customary among the upper classes of Nupe in which an outwardly similar result is achieved by a somewhat different process of reasoning. We have learned that bride-price is kept low in class endogamous marriages among the nobility; a man of status may also marry his daughter to one of his *bara*, and himself put up the bride-price, so that in effect no exchange of wealth takes place; and there is, finally, the custom among the upper classes to marry their daughters with a very low, nominal, bride-price to Mallams—the remission of the bride-price being regarded as a pious act. In these cases the bride-price is kept artificially low in order to ensure that the women of the aristocracy should all be married to men of the same class, or should marry certain men whom they would be unable to marry if the bride-price were high: the political and religious gain balances the material sacrifice.

The institution of bride-price in Nupe gives us an exceptionally clear picture of the multitudinous structure of institutions. It also illustrates the discriminating action of economic evaluation, which, out of the number of social purposes subserved in the institution, fastens upon certain specific purposes for transformation into concrete economic wants. Yet those that are not thus transformed need not be purposes which have lost their significance entirely, but may reveal it indirectly, in the form of 'theoretical values'. We recall the disintegration of the institution of bride-price in present-day Bida, in the case of those young labourers who spend their money among other things on 'women' instead of saving it for bride-price. Let us realize that in a society like Nupe, in which traditional morality forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse, the 'indemnification' aspect of bride-price also implies the purchase of legitimate sexual satisfaction. Now, these young labourers have discovered that to-day sexual satisfaction can be bought more cheaply, and without incurring the obligation of marriage. Short-sightedly, they perceive only this one need and disregard the other aspects of marriage and bride-price—the need of founding a family, of establishing new kinship bonds, and of ensuring continuity of the group. They admit these other needs—in theory; yet these needs are present, concretely, in 511 583 936

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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can change one's profession and try new means of livelihood, these 'minimum' wants can be studied most profitably in the individuals who have abandoned their original occupation in order to better their standard of living. When discussing with labourers the reasons for their change of profession, I was given this as a typical reply: 'We are Bida people, not peasants; we are not satisfied to live as peasants do. We are not content with one gown and one cap; we want to go to the evening market and spend money; we want to make presents at the feasts in the houses of our friends, and we also want women.' Over half of these men were unmarried. Although their wages were comparatively high (7*s.* a week), they could not save enough for the bride-price—'our money disappears at once', they said.

The examples of household budgets from Bida which I have given above must then be interpreted with these viewpoints in mind. I will add here two more examples, of typically urban households, i.e. non-farming households, one of a weaver, and the other of a hat-maker, in Bida. The scope and money surplus of these budgets does not differ essentially from that of the peasant households. But even where the surplus seems larger, in figures, it is in effect more restricted. Note that the more prosperous of the two men, the weaver, is as yet unmarried. The less fortunate of the two, the hat-maker, had moreover given up hat-making this same year, and had become a labourer. It is not a paradox to say that the poor in Bida are poorer than the poor in the rural districts.

Household F

Bida. Profession: weaver, aged 30, unmarried

Output	*Income*	*Additional income*
48 pieces of cloth p.a., sold for 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.*	Profit per cloth 8*d.* to 1*s.* 2*d.*	Farming on garden-plots close to the house, producing about a quarter of the annual food consumption.

Total earnings . . £2. 8*s.* p.a.

Money expenditure:	£	*s.*	*d.*
own tax		11	0
contribution to tax of father (shared with brother)		2	6
contribution to costs of food and clothing of father		4	0
minimum cost of living for himself		8	0
Total	£1	5	6

Household G

Bida. Profession: hat-maker, aged 35, one wife

Output	*Income*	*Additional income*
Approx. 50 hats p.a., sold for 8*d.* each	Profit 5*d.* per hat.	Borrowed 2*s.* from wife

Total earnings . . £1

Money expenditure:	£	*s.*	*d.*
tax		9	6
minimum cost of living		12	0
Total	£1	1	6

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511 369 It is impossible and unnecessary to reduce to £ *s. d.* the multitudinous forms of expenditure which fall under the heading of 'cultural requirements'. We have already seen that most often the surplus which can be derived from the main occupation is not large enough to cover them all. The various attempts to reduce or avoid expenditure, or to discover additional sources of income, are convincing evidence of this. To us, the most essential question is the selection and order of preference of expenses on which the hard-pressed household decides to economize. Individual differences play, of course, a certain part. In the quarter of the Bida beadworkers, for example, I saw among a number of dilapidated and neglected houses one whose excellent condition and nicely ornamented *katamba* spoke of the care which the inhabitants devoted to its upkeep. The financial position of the different families in the quarter was the same, yet one, to use the familiar Nupe expression, had 'made an effort' while the others had let things drift. Nevertheless, individual variations appear to be of little account in the general picture. The main differences occur, not between individuals, but between groups, that is, between the urban and rural population. I have just spoken of the young men of Bida who will forgo marriage (involving the bride-price) rather than the pleasures of town-life; they will spend money on dresses and feasts rather than contribute to the cost of the repairs of the family home. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this attitude was the utterly neglected state of the house of the guild-head of the carpenters and builders. Although the family numbered eight adult men apart from the old family head (two of whom had jobs in the workshops), and although house repairs were their profession, the men did not devote more than the absolutely necessary time and labour to the upkeep of the house, keeping the sleeping-huts in repair but letting compound wall and entrance hut go to rack and ruin. With a little money in hand, most Bida men will insist on a sumptuous marriage feast or naming ceremony for child or grandchild rather than save it for other expenses. I have twice attended such lavish feasts in neglected houses, in families whose income I knew to be small and precarious. But even the men with large and secure incomes will live above their means. Certain highly paid officials of the N.A. were heavily in debt to local traders and the European stores, having spent lavishly on dresses, luxuries, gifts to friends, and various forms of entertainment.

If in Bida expenditure on ostentatious display and on social obligations conforming to the standards of living which spread downward from the top of the social scale takes precedence of the more sober demands of bride-price, maintenance of the house, or saving in general, the villagers take the opposite view. In a small pagan village, for example, an annual ceremony had been postponed for three months for lack of money; in another case the same ceremony had been performed for three years in succession on a very small scale, owing to 'bad times'. Economies of this kind occur even in prosperous households: in the family whose budget I have quoted above under E the marriage feast of the eldest son had been postponed for one year so that it could be celebrated together with the naming ceremony of the first child, thus

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

[1] It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.

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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase 556 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-
554 price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the
595 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of
554 Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the
565 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank
484 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

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rulers, with whom they stay as honoured guests, and whom they will repay, one day, by similar hospitality extended to their young relations. (I have mentioned, in a different context, how I met two princes from Sokoto whose Grand Tour had taken them to the court of the *Etsu* Nupe in Bida.) The noble tourists enjoy their travels and enjoy—as they put it—'seeing the world'. But this incentive of travelling for travelling's sake with which their education and cultural background inculcate them also serves, indirectly, the political purpose of fostering personal contacts and ties of friendship between the ruling families of Nigeria and, more specially, the widespread Fulani empire.

We must now ask ourselves to what extent these wants and incentives apply to the society at large and determine (more or less) the economic decisions of the people. We must ask, more particularly, whether there do not exist 'upper limits' by which the economic ambitions of the various classes are bounded—whether by choice or of necessity. Such limits exist in the form of objects and values which have come to be regarded as fixed symbols of political status and which, like status itself, are excluded from free economic choice, being attainable only by the ladder of social promotion. As fixed symbols of status, much as a uniform or decoration in our society, the glazed turban of the nobility, or the right to carry a silver sword, cannot be coveted as such. This limitation has also been accepted with respect to the recent innovation, the clock in the glass case carried by the body-servant of a noble master: the people outside the ranks of the nobility have not attempted—as well they might—to possess themselves of this new emblem of rank.

But though promotion to political status and acquisition of its paraphernalia represent things that 'cannot be bought' (we shall discuss certain exceptions later), most of the features characteristic of the social life on these more exalted planes are, in theory, of the nature of universal economic wants. Beautiful clothes, costly turbans, and the possession of a horse are widely desired and can be acquired by anyone who can afford the expense. Even wants which are so far beyond the means or labour which commoners and peasants can muster that for this reason alone they seem unlikely to become concrete ambitions outside the *élite* of the country, represent yet common wants and ideals. Thus we find the ornate high-gabled square or round entrance hut which is typical of the large houses of the Bida nobility also in certain villages, put up by chiefs or prosperous family heads. Beautifully ornamented houses of a more modest type, moreover, are found everywhere, in every section or stratum of the population. Now, one of the most convincing proofs of the universality of these economic wants is the absence of all unfavourable comments, especially in the form of ridicule, with respect to individuals reaching out for goals not normally attained in their station of life. This is a significant illustration: in the small village of Doko I observed one house built in an unusually sumptuous style—with coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the walls of the *katamba*. It belonged to a musician, an ordinary 'commoner', who had been very successful in his profession. The people who told me about the house and its owner admitted that he was neither a titled elder nor in any way

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511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he
554 should have built himself such a pretentious house. We shall also hear later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale poly-
554 gamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even
595 be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status. Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they express the effectiveness of this incentive.[1]

511 We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog-
554 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant
594 households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly, they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer in-
461 vestigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest' borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept. In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time represents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe, as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid. The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure, members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers, craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the spreading of the Mallam profession.

[1] It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such questions of historical truth.

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WANTS AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Let me repeat that all these wants and incentives which are realized in the social *élite* also represent common incentives of the society at large, and of every social stratum, unattainable though they may appear in actuality. They remain 'ideals', and the inability to realize them is regarded as a failure, a shortcoming in the socio-economic system. There exist, however, certain exceptions: instances of that divergence, or rift, in the appreciation of certain wants and incentives which divides town and country. Though few in number, they occur in widely different domains of social life—nutrition, recreation, sex morality.

Certain instances concern the form of a want, the conventionalized taste in which it appears, rather than its essence. I have spoken in an earlier context of the different taste in intoxicants typical of town and country. The Bida people prefer palm-wine to the sorghum-beer which is drunk commonly in the village. Palm-wine is the native drink in the oil-palm countries of Southern Nigeria; we also find it, side by side with sorghum-beer, in certain riverain districts of Nupe where the oil-palm is cultivated. Bida itself imports palm-wine from these districts and the south. The adoption of this, as it were, alien drink by the people of Bida was explained to me as being due to the demands of Islam, which forbids fermented drinks like sorghum-beer, but permits palm-wine—at least in the eyes of the Nupe followers of the Prophet. I do not know how far this vindication of palm-wine will pass muster with Mohammedan scholars. But I think we may accept the negative feature of this interpretation, namely, the condemnation on religious grounds of sorghum-beer, which, as we shall see presently, represents a drink closely associated with pagan religious rites. Or I might quote the instance of the different styles of dance and music appreciated in Bida and in the peasant districts: in the town we find the dance of professional women-dancers who are watched by an appreciative audience; in the village the dance of peasant men and women who are performers and public in one.

In other tastes and wants town and country differ fundamentally. Let me quote two striking examples: the attitude towards sexual licence (about which I need say no more here),[1] and the attitude towards travelling. What I have said above about the appreciation of travelling in the social *élite* of the country could be extended to apply to the whole of Bida. To have travelled widely, to have 'seen the world', helps to establish the social standing of the townsman. The interest in travels even outweighs other, similar, interests. When I was collecting Nupe folk-lore I met with almost complete failure in Bida, although the villages had proved a most fruitful field. And this was the explanation which my Bida informants gave me: 'You must go to the villages to hear folk-tales. We Bida people have forgotten them all. No one wants them now. Why? Because when we tell stories, in the evenings, we like to hear about travels, and about other towns; we listen to the people who

[1] See Chaps. IX, XIX.

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184 can tell us about Kano, Zaria, or Lagos.[1] The widespread familiarity
369 with travelling, indeed the love of travelling, which characterizes the
484 Bida people, has no counterpart among the peasants.[1] We have heard
517 that even journeys to another district are rare and of little appeal to the villagers.

184 How are we to explain this negative form of culture contact? Why did
369 cultural assimilation stop short of these few traits while so many other incentives and wants are spreading from the capital to the rural districts? When we examined, in a previous chapter, the different sex morality in town and country, we discovered its close functional interrelation with other social facts. Behind the divergent attitude we perceived the effectiveness of political and economic factors. This also points out the answer of the present problem. Sex morality can change only together with those other social determinants. Let me recall the main facts. Negative facts, such as the absence in the village of the 'double morality' of the capital, and also the absence of a large floating population which proved one of the incentives for the creation of semi-professional prostitution in the town. Positive facts, such as the more closely knit village life, which forbids the open and condoned matrimonial laxity characteristic of Bida; the efforts of peasant family heads to provide bride-price for an early marriage of the men, and thus to maintain the labour-unit; the conditions of labour in peasant households which tend to preclude sexual promiscuity among the women. The 'negative' culture contact which we are observing does not, then, represent a failure of assimilation in certain specific domains of culture, but the inertia of a cultural whole which cannot suffer changes in these domains without undergoing far-reaching changes itself.

The same is true of the incentive of travelling. In Bida, travelling serves the political interests of the ruling group; it is helpful to the productive enterprises of the town population; and it follows the political interests converging in the capital of the kingdom. None of these factors exists in the village. On the contrary, productive organization, political and religious life, move in a narrow compass beyond which the community affords no protection or promise of attachment.

In the case of the other, minor, instances of cultural divergence, which refer only to the form which a particular satisfaction takes, one might argue that the essential similarity of the wants themselves must tend to retard a more complete assimilation. But here again we must view the situation under the aspect of the cultural whole and the close integration within the whole even of apparently ephemeral traits. The appreciation of a certain kind of drink or a certain style of dance is indeed built firmly into the framework of village culture. Thus all religious rituals involve a libation of beer. The temptation to replace it with palm-wine would have to break down, not only an existing nutritive habit, but also, partly, the spiritual background against which the people (consciously or unconsciously) must regard their traditional beverage. The alternative solution of admitting palm-wine, and having different drinks for ritual and profane purposes, would involve an equally radical change in other

[1] See p. 39.

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respects: not only in the productive arrangements which, in these circumstances, would no longer supply the ritual beverage as a matter of course, but also in the psychological attitude, which would have to admit a ritual beverage largely emptied of what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'social value', i.e. which would be nothing but a ritual beverage, completely removed from the habits of ordinary life. The village dance, again, is an expression of group co-operation and coactivity in the recreational sphere. Like the traditional occasions themselves on which it is performed—kinship feasts, *egbe* work, religious ceremonies, and so forth—the dance mobilizes and intensifies group sentiments. We might even go so far as to say that the unitary nature of the group which is thus mobilized forbids a division into neutral performer and aloof lookers-on. The correlation between professionalized performance and differentiation within the group is indeed clearly visible in Bida. An aloof aesthetic appreciation of professional dancers and musicians appears to represent the only form of entertainment acceptable to a society in which class prejudices and motives of status and prestige dominate all gatherings and festivities. Class prejudice has fostered a conception of dignity set against public exhibitions of this kind. The explanation is, I believe, that it would obliterate, even though only temporarily, the demarcation of rank and status. It is, in fact, quite inconceivable for a man of status to join in a dance, even in his own house, for example, at a family feast—to dance, that is, together with, and in front of, people who must invariably include persons of lesser station. Yet in the villages old men, even titled elders, commonly join in the dances of the younger folk, without danger to their dignity. To assimilate, then, the village dance to the performances which appeal to the 'sophisticated' people of Bida would mean assimilating the complete social organization.

For the sake of the theoretical argument I have stated the case of this negative form of culture contact a little more strongly than is warranted by actual conditions. Throughout this book we have found evidence of the gradual closing of the rift, and of the advancing assimilation even in these domains of culture. But indeed our argument is supported by this development. For the assimilation does not advance by the narrow channels of confined, specific, cultural changes. Rather these changes are carried by the tide of a far-reaching cultural adjustment which is transforming the whole productive system and the organization of labour as well as the social life at large in the Nupe village. The breaking up of the family labour-unit, and the appearance, in the country, of professional Bida musicians as spokesmen of what I have called the 'propaganda for the kingdom', are two convincing instances.

WEALTH AND STATUS

Hitherto we have been using the terms 'status' and 'prestige' as meaning one and the same thing. It becomes important now to distinguish between them. By 'status' we understand a more or less fixed place on the social ladder; 'prestige' represents a more fluid form of social recognition, gained by certain services or deeds in accordance with the

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556 accepted code of society. Status in Nupe is determined by descent or formal promotion to rank and office. One of the accepted and most im-
554 portant means by which prestige can be gained is wealth. This raises the question of the closeness of the relation between status, and prestige gained through wealth. In other words, we must ask to what extent prestige gained through wealth tends to facilitate the attainment of status, and may even come to be regarded as its equivalent, or, conversely, to what extent high social status can be reached and maintained without adequate financial support.

556 Under traditional conditions social status and wealth could hardly become separated as political rank implied far-reaching economic privi-
554 leges—the acquisition of fiefs and land, the chances of booty, profits
565 from slave-trade, and so forth. Even assuming that considerable wealth could be accumulated also by groups outside the recognized social *élite*, such as traders and craftsmen, it is clear that their highest income could not rival the resources vested in a privileged political position. In present-day Nupe traditional political ranks and wealth are no longer inseparably linked. High social status does not invariably guarantee the demands of prestige also. The members of the *élite*, no longer in a position to combine the satisfaction of the more concrete wants with that of the demands of prestige, will have to choose between the different forms of expenditure. Yet here we find, rather surprisingly, that the expenses for the sake of prestige can be very considerably reduced without affecting the conception of status. The fixed symbols of status, the glazed turban and the silver sword, are either comparatively cheap or are heirlooms. The house, also inherited, may have to be left in disrepair; but its layout would still betray the status of its owner. Polygamy can be maintained to a certain extent thanks to the practice of marriage in the family, with low bride-price, which is customary among the *élite*. Horses, new dresses, ornaments, lavish hospitality—they all have to go. But travelling and leisure need not disappear. The former is satisfied by claiming hospitality from relatives or friends in distant parts, or even from social inferiors, who would not think of refusing such flattering requests. The latter manifests itself in the choice of profession of impecunious noblemen: very few have taken to farming or tried to learn a craft; theirs are mostly the unskilled 'free' professions of the leisured class. Thus even on the decline, the social *élite* secures the satisfaction of certain wants which to the lower orders of the society are permanently unattainable. Nupe society built up a strong defence of the prerogatives of status in the form of class-obligations and the utilization of inheritance. With its help the social *élite* of the country can hope to weather at least temporary difficulties and set-backs.

That this defence of class prerogatives has not yet lost its strength is evident in the hesitant attitude of the people towards accepting the new evaluation of wealth as independent of traditional status. The issue is by no means clear; it is confused by various concomitant factors, specially by the introduction of the new official ranks and positions under the N.A. some of which are vested in the old ruling class, while others have been bestowed on 'new men' from outside the traditional *élite*. But

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there is convincing evidence to show that high social status still attaches to traditional ranks, though they may no longer command their former financial reward, rather than to wealth alone. Evidently this is only a transitional solution. In a society in which high status is so closely identified with a definite standard of living the separation of the two cannot be maintained indefinitely, at least not without some radical change in the whole concept of the *élite*. Theoretically, had their ranks not been divided by the appointment of some of their members to modern official posts, the Nupe aristocracy could have chosen the diehard solution of reinterpreting the whole concept of status and making it independent of economic advantages. As it is, the old *élite* must either win back its economic supremacy (which is impossible, though the attempts have never been given up), or else admit the new nobility of wealth into its ranks. We can observe this new conception taking shape. The respect for the traditional values is only strong enough to maintain an external continuity—the continuity of the symbols of status. And the 'new men' are the first to submit to this rule which allows them to legitimatize their position: they buy the titles which are the only passports to acceptance among the social *élite*. Here then, we have a final, and most modern, use of capital investment, for the sake of social advancement in its purely abstract and symbolic form.

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CHAPTER XXI

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

565 556 558 THE lack of tangible data makes it impossible to formulate any theory about the extent to which economic mobility, i.e. movement between the strata, was a reality in pre-European days. We can only make a few statements based on social and historical facts the economic significance of which we can, with some certainty, assess. Economic betterment in every society depends on the possibility of increasing one's hold over resources and means of production. The Fulani conquest, and the exploitation of land which followed it, restricted, for one part of Nupe at least, mobility with regard to the main resource, land. The restriction could, however, be circumvented by means of political allegiance, i.e. by becoming the client of an influential landowner. There is also evidence that certain peasants and craftsmen have owned slaves and taken pawns, thus acquiring interest-bearing capital, and so rising above the average level of a peasant's or artisan's livelihood. In the ruling classes and among their dependants careers involving increased economic opportunities were the normal thing, whether they were expressed in a share in booty and slave-trade or in rewards to warriors and political followers 'for services rendered'. The reverse process, loss of economic opportunities, and in the extreme case the loss of all possessions, was no less marked. In the life of the peasant, such changes occurred in the course of wars and raids involving the destruction of homesteads, farms, and stores. The peasants in Nupe kingdom proper, though safe from slave-raids, were still exposed to similar attacks: punitive expeditions which, directed against a rebellious feudal lord, were fought on their land, or the visitation of armies which marched through and foraged from their farms. In the ruling group economic downfall could mean only one thing: political disgrace, often accompanied by confiscation of their property.

565 To-day the risks of war and raids have disappeared, together with the exploitation and one-sided source of income which they represented. Thus the new rule has to some extent levelled down the old economic inequalities. Clearly this levelling-down cannot have been equally welcome to every section of the population. Let me quote here the very frank and, in fact, typical statement of one of my most honest informants, an influential village elder of Mokwa. He admitted the great benefits of the present rule, thanks to which the *tálaka*, the poor man, enjoys safety from wars, raids, and political abuses. But then he added (rather heatedly in fact): 'But you have turned us all into *tálaka*.' This view, coming as it does not from a member of the ruling class but from a typical Nupe peasant, makes it necessary to review more closely the economic effects of the new order.[1] All our data tend to show that, although trade

[1] It incidentally supplies further evidence of the fact that a rise to superior economic position also occurred in the peasant classes.

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and commerce have greatly benefited from the new development, the position of the peasants and craftsmen has not improved to the extent of enabling them to accumulate reserves and increase their resources to any considerable extent. The introduction of commercial crops, the cultivation of which is officially encouraged, represents a policy designed to open to the native cultivator the way to economic betterment. Yet the insecurity of these new resources may defeat their own ends. A more recent move to improve the economic position of the farmers was the launching of a policy to introduce mixed farming into Bida Emirate. Mixed farming, which had been adopted some years previously in certain northern Emirates, was started in Nupe towards the end of my second expedition. At that time only the demonstration farms of the N.A. and certain stretches of land belonging to the Emir, all worked by wage-labour, had been put under the new cultivation. While it is thus too early to describe actual results, it is possible to outline, from the study of the underlying principles, certain probable effects of this agricultural policy on the economic and social system of the country. They are sufficiently far-reaching to warrant here a more extensive examination.[1]

This policy envisages a gradual transformation of the whole of Northern Nigeria into arable country cultivated on Western lines, on the basis of individual landholdings. The working team should consist of one man and a boy. The 2 acres per head which have hitherto corresponded to an individual worker would be extended to 12, and eventually to 20 acres. The manure gained from the draught cattle would do away with the necessity of shifting cultivation and would allow practically unlimited cultivation of the same stretch of land. A four-field scheme of rotation is suggested, with one field manured, and the following crops grown on the different fields: sorghum and millet (on the manured field); cotton; ground-nuts; cassava and small crops. The most prosperous farmers in a district are to be persuaded to take up mixed farming first, thus giving an example which, it is hoped, many others will soon follow. The total cost of the draught cattle (two bullocks and one cow) and plough is £7 for an iron, and £5 for a wooden, plough. Farmers who are unable to buy the equipment outright will be given an advance on future profits of £1 to £1. 10s., or can pay an 'entrance fee' of approximately that amount, being expected to pay the rest, viz. repay the advance, in four yearly instalments which include a hiring charge of 5 per cent. The greatly increased yield should make these payments easy: it has been calculated that the farmer will be able to increase his production eightfold by the new method.

The scheme, admirable though its intentions are, may easily be wrecked if certain inherent dangers and difficulties are not carefully considered. Let us take the example of the most prosperous and progressive farmers of Lemu whose landholdings we have examined in an earlier chapter (see p. 212). We found that the total land under cultivation in the case of a working group of five and three men was 9½ and 6 acres,

[1] I am greatly indebted to the Superintendent of Agriculture in Bida for having allowed me access to the departmental files on mixed farming.

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respectively. The larger group possessed one, the smaller two, fallow fields of the same size as the field under cultivation. Their total landholdings, including both cultivated and fallow fields, thus amounted to 18 and 19 acres. Now, under the new scheme one individual would take under cultivation very nearly the whole landholdings of the family group. The other adult members of the family will have to obtain new land or (only too probably) they will give up farming. In Trans-Kaduna, with its large land supplies, new land might be found with no great difficulty from vacant or virgin village land. But even under these favourable conditions the fourfold increase of landholdings entailed in this development must lead, if not to actual land shortage, to serious competition for land. For one thing, farm-land for ploughing should lie closer together than it does now. The Nupe farmers will soon find it profitable to exchange their scattered ½ acre or 1 acre fields for larger and compact areas, an exchange which, involving a discriminative appreciation of land, must invariably lead to land purchase and land sale. In Cis-Kaduna, with its limited land resources, land sales are, as we have seen, already practised on a small scale. Here, in the country of the big landowners, land purchase and land sale will increase rapidly under the new scheme.

The redistribution of land resources will go hand in hand with far-reaching changes in the economic stratification of the country. The prosperous peasant who was able to take advantage of the new scheme will in a few years' time command considerable resources. No doubt, the obvious way to invest the newly won capital will be in more ploughs and more land.[1] The more unfortunate farmers who, for reasons of poverty or lack of enterprise, are not able to avail themselves early of the new scheme will be hopelessly outdistanced by the rapid development. The increased agricultural production, of which a half will be for internal consumption, must lower the price of food crops in the country. The small farmer, who relies on food crops more than on commercial crops, will be compelled to sell his produce at a price so low that he may be unable to pay his tax or to maintain his labour costs. Sooner or later he will succumb to the temptation to sell or let his land to those who, having benefited from the new scheme, will be anxious to acquire new land, and he will be forced eventually into the position of a landless labourer on the farms of the new landowning class. The Emir, on whose estate mixed farming has been established first, will be foremost among the new landlords of the country.

The levelling-down of economic inequality which accompanied the establishment of British rule in Nigeria will thus be replaced by a new, much more defined stratification. Poverty in the present productive system of the country is due, as we have seen, mainly to inadequate labour (disregarding here the factors of land shortage and tax), that is, to such factors as age, illness, misfortune or ill-planned labour-

[1] This is not a mere hypothesis. The tendency to accumulate land is already noticeable in the northern Emirates where mixed farming was introduced earlier, and has led more than once to official attempts to keep landed property within certain limits.

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organization, all of which—in theory at least—can easily be remedied. Poverty in the new scheme will be due to a fundamentally different inadequacy, the inability to secure the necessary means of production. It is a permanent, and even progressive, inadequacy, which must get worse with the continued process of production. For the same process that leads to accumulation of capital (in the modern sense of the word) in the hands of the owner of the adequate means of production will render more and more remote the chances of their acquisition by the people who are as yet without them. Economic inequality in its most extreme form, *latifundia* existing side by side with a landless proletariat, will be the final result.

These grave consequences can be avoided, and the valuable elements in the new policy saved, I think, by slowing-up the transformation of the agricultural system of the country until a corresponding transformation of the labour organization can be achieved. The increase in the cost of the means of production must be met by widening the basis of the co-operative unit which makes itself responsible for the maintenance of labour in this sense into co-operative societies. Co-operative societies, which could buy the new means of production from common funds, and would jointly own ploughs and cattle, would enable also the less prosperous farmer to profit from the technical improvements. A co-operative society which would include, for example, all the owners of adjacent fields would also be able to utilize ploughing to the fullest advantage without incurring the danger of large-scale land-exchange. The increase in the extent of cultivation would be gradual and well controlled, and the traditional labour-unit not rendered useless overnight; it would still be useful for supplementary farm-work (in the traditional fashion) at times when plough and cattle are employed on the field of a fellow member of the farm co-operative.[1]

RISK AND INSURANCE

Every productive organization must include in its calculations the factor of risk and insurance against risk. Certain risks are over and above the normal in that they are due to accidents outside the productive system itself, and beyond the range of foresight which the producers

[1] When I discussed this question in a lecture given at the Summer School for Colonial Studies in Oxford, in 1937 (see the *Summary of Lectures*), I was attacked by a member of the audience for attempting to 'boost poverty'. Now, this is a serious charge. However, I hope to have made it clear that my attempt was not towards fostering poverty or pampering backwardness, but towards avoiding a development which would create, and make permanent, the most dangerous form of poverty and economic dependence. To organize the less prosperous so that they should not be left behind in economic progress does in no way imply putting obstacles in the way of the more enterprising. 'The rich', as the chairman, who came to my assistance in the discussion, put it, 'will look after themselves.' It is interesting to note in this connexion that when mixed farming was discussed at the Residents' Conference in 1936 one Resident suggested that it might be feasible to utilize the Hausa *gaya* (collective farm-work) for the new agricultural organization. I presume that he, too, had in mind a co-operative organization of the kind suggested above.

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456 can normally exercise. Such are wars, slave-raids, political abuses which might deprive a group of the fruits of its labour, the loss of a member of the working group through imprisonment, or—to-day—unexpected fluctuations in the market for export commodities. The insurance which the Nupe productive system can provide against risks of this kind is, of necessity, limited in scope and efficiency. I have spoken already of certain forms which this insurance took in the traditional society: clientship and political allegiance. More interesting to us here are risks which are inherent in the productive organization itself, and which represent 'normal' risks in the sense that experience shows them to be ever present. Into this category come risks due, for example, to a failure of the crop, to marketing difficulties, a temporary economic stringency, or a temporary deficiency in the labour organization owing to illness or old age of individual members of the labour-unit. With risks of this kind the Nupe productive system is well equipped to deal, either through its normal labour organization or through certain mechanisms specially devised to provide 'insurance'.

456 592 The 'normal' risks in agriculture are insured against by means of the very constitution of the *efakó*, the co-operative labour-unit. A large co-operative group is capable of utilizing fully the highly diversified agricultural technique of the country, and of spreading cultivation, both locally and with regard to the crops grown, so as to eliminate the risk of a total failure. In a large working-unit it is also comparatively easy to make up for the temporary elimination of a worker. In a group of this kind invalid or aged group members can be assigned lighter work, or can even be supported by the rest of the group without doing any work. The smaller the group the more difficult it becomes to distribute tasks in this fashion, to spare a worker, and feed an 'extra mouth'. In the small, two-men or one-man labour-unit, the retirement of a member means the end of the working group, and his support places a heavy strain on the remaining organization. A new *ad hoc* arrangement may become necessary, in which independent small labour-units have to combine to maintain the retired member. Here is an instance which I noted in a *funga* near Bida: a family of five was divided in two labour-units, one consisting of two adults, and the other of an old man, their father, who worked together with his two young grandsons. As his labour-unit could not produce enough for food and tax, the sons contributed ten bundles of grain a year towards the cost of their father's household.[1] That a situation of this kind may, in an extreme case, lead to a complete break-down of the 'insurance' scheme could be seen from household budget C quoted above, which showed an old man and an invalid still depending on their own greatly reduced working capacity. Another example is that of a farmer who had hurt his arm and, having been disabled for one year, became a temporary labourer the following year to make up for the losses he had sustained.

456 467 The group co-operation in the guild-organized crafts similarly provides insurance against 'normal' risks. The guild organization, as we

[1] An analogous example from a family of craftsmen was quoted above, in household budget F.

[See p. 344, cat. 116 — Analyst.]

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have seen, not only supplies its members with efficient training, but also guarantees, to some extent, a steady market for their products. The guild-head, moreover, is enabled by the special resources involved in his position to act as the 'banker' of the group and come to the financial assistance of individual members.

Certain other economic arrangements designed to provide insurance operate outside the labour-unit, and are thus of special importance for the individual craftsmen and the free professions. The familiar recourse to clientship is a first instance. By sacrificing part of his personal freedom as well as his earnings, the *bara* buys the patronage of an influential person. Though this patronage will be appealed to specially against the 'extraneous' risks due to political factors, it plays a part also in more 'normal' circumstances. Thus I found that a barber had recently become the client of a certain nobleman in his quarter of the town in order to secure a regular and good clientele; it is significant that the father of the barber had not been a *bara*, i.e. had not felt the need to 'insure' his more prosperous business. A young hat-maker told me that he intended to attach himself as *bara* to an influential rank-holder, with whose help he hoped to start business as a trader. I have also spoken of the Mallams and drummers, to whom clientship means the guarantee of success in their profession.

A different method of insuring against risks is embodied in the practice of borrowing money. 'Pay ning' represents the firmly institutionalized form of borrowing—an institution which provides against normal as well as abnormal risks, and in which a social relationship closely akin to that of patron and client forms the basis of the financial transaction. Other forms of borrowing occur irregularly, and with a narrow scope. No professional money-lenders exist; the individual in need of money borrows it mostly from close relations, more rarely from friends or 'patrons'. The most frequent form of borrowing is for a husband to borrow from his wife. An indirect form of borrowing money from one's wife, not uncommon in Bida, is the practice of wealthy women to contribute to the bride-price of their sons and to other expenses, which, in accordance with Nupe kinship ideas, should be borne by the father.

A final insurance arrangement is provided in a specific financial institution operating somewhat on the lines of a 'pooling club'. It is called *dashi* in Nupe (*adashi* in Hausa) and plays—or used to play—a very important part in Nupe economy. We must describe it here in detail.

The *dashi* is a pure business arrangement, a free association of a number of men and women who agree to enter this financial co-operation for a certain limited period. Each member undertakes to pay regularly (for example, every week, or five days, or every month) a certain amount of money into a common fund, as many times as the group numbers members. Each time when the contributions have been collected a different member is entitled to draw the total fund, until every member has had his share. Members may also contribute double subscriptions, and then be entitled to two 'draws' in the course of the *dashi*. The allotment of the fund does not follow a fixed rule, but is left to the head of the group to work out. A member who is urgently in need of money can

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456 request to be considered out of his turn. He can thus put his hands at once on a sum of money for which, normally, he would have had to save for weeks or months. In this, then, lies the benefit of the *dashi*. The administration of the *dashi* association is entrusted to a man of good reputation, for example, a well-known trader or the head of a craft-guild. People who decide to form a *dashi* request such a man to undertake its organization. He will summon the first, and only, general meeting of the group, at which all the important points are settled, and afterwards arrange all matters on his own. People who learn from neighbours or friends that a certain *dashi* is being formed are, up to the date of the first subscription, free to join it; after that, while the *dashi* is running, no new members are accepted. The 'chairman' of the association, the *Etsu Dashi* (King of the *dashi*) as the Nupe call him, is responsible for the collection of the subscriptions and the regular paying out of the fund. He does not himself pay into it, nor does he receive any money payment for his trouble. He is recompensed by being allowed to borrow from the fund occasionally for himself and his own business provided that the general arrangement on which the group had agreed, and the duration of the *dashi*, are not altered. Sometimes he also receives gifts from members who desire an early share without being able to show serious reasons for this request. When money is needed, for example, for a funeral, in the case of illness, or for the payment of bride-price, no gifts or bribes are necessary to secure immediate consideration. *Dashi* chairmen who have the reputation of being good organizers are in great demand, and may be continuously engaged in organizing and supervising *dashi* associations, often several at the same time. Women are regarded as specially able organizers: one of the most successful *dashi* 'chairmen' I met in Bida was a woman; she was actually living in Doko, where she had lived since her marriage, but organized a *dashi* in Bida, sending her messenger, a young girl, every Friday into Bida to collect the subscriptions.

Although the benefits of the *dashi* embrace every variety of risk and expense, its practice is limited to the professions which depend on regular money earnings and money investments. It is practised by traders and brokers, both men and women, by certain groups of craftsmen, the wives of farmers, canoe-men (who are enabled to buy their canoes with the help of the *dashi*), labourers, and officials. The schoolboys in Bida Middle School have a little 'pocket-money' *dashi* of their own, the subscription being 1*d*., paid every Friday. The farmers, although familiar with the *dashi*, do not practise it, nor have they apparently ever done so. Clearly their stores of produce are regarded as sufficient reserve, and their labour organization as sufficient 'insurance'.

456 The number of members and the amount of the subscription vary widely. The sharp distinctions of social and economic stratification are 554 visible also in the organization of the *dashi*. A well-to-do trader or nobleman would never join one of the petty *dashi* associations of small craftsmen or tradesmen in which the contribution is a few pennies. They would form a small *dashi* of their own, with a high subscription, even if they have to be content with five members only. During my stay

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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3*d.*: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4*d.* weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by NA. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10*s.* per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7*s.* 6*d.* per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years.

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8*s.* and 9*s.* from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions.

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance —borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of

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456 182 production, the present case demonstrates forcibly that it affects the very stability of the economic system of the country. We cannot claim to be able to describe exactly how the labour-unit was working under traditional conditions, and to state categorically that the scheme of insurance entailed in it operated without difficulty or friction. But on the evidence which we possess it is reasonable to assume that under certain conditions, with a smaller taxation, and protected from severe, incalculable, market fluctuations, the large co-operative group represented—or would represent—an eminently stable and successful labour-unit. The process of transformation cannot be halted. Where the large labour-unit still exists, it may, given the conditions just mentioned, be preserved; where it has disappeared, it cannot be revived. Our conclusions point to one solution only: to the creation of new institutions and labour organizations which can be made to fulfil, under existing conditions, those tasks which fell formerly to the labour organization that has disappeared, above all, the task of insurance. Such institutions can be found in co-operative organization, saving societies, co-operative marketing, and suchlike—organizations which in other parts of Africa have amply proved their efficiency.[1]

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE GROUP

602 Throughout this discussion we have dealt with family and kinship group purely in their economic aspect. We have interpreted the mechanisms which maintain the working-unit and thus the co-operation in its human substratum, the family group, in terms of economic relations only. Against this treatment of the problem one might argue that it sees only one side of it, and that the kinship and family structure must be taken into account also as an entity *sui generis*, which, within the framework of economic relations, exercises its own specific influences. One might argue, in particular, that as the Nupe *efakó*-unit is based on the family, kinship ties and kinship sentiments as such supply the binding forces of the labour group—'maintain labour', in our terminology—and that the binding forces which we have recognized, namely, commonness of material interests and benefits accruing from co-operation, are in reality mutual kinship obligations.

The double nature of economic obligations in a productive unit which happens to be a kinship-unit at the same time cannot be denied. The influence of kinship factors can, in fact, be made evident by comparing the labour-unit based on kinship, with similar labour-units in which kinship plays no part. While, in the former, co-operation is achieved by mutual obligations such as payment of bride-price, and supply of clothing, food, and shelter, labour of the latter order must be recompensed in the form of money wages. The effectiveness of kinship

[1] It has been said that our intention should always be to graft these new co-operative organizations on to existing, indigenous, organizations. The scope and the possibilities of such a scheme must not be exaggerated. Although the tasks with which the new organization is to be charged may have formed part of the traditional system, the organization itself may have to be newly created, and may, in fact (as in our case), have to replace a failing indigenous organization, rendered inadequate by modern conditions.

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sentiments in co-operation was also implied in various statements made earlier in the discussion of economics. We have seen that the craft-guilds plan their labour organization on kinship lines, and reinforce the labour group by what we have called 'professional endogamy'. But let us realize that in doing this they do not appeal to abstract kinship ties or 'bonds of blood', but merely duplicate the common labour interests by corresponding family interests, namely, the concrete interests and forms of social interdependence entailed in intermarriage. Another instance of the influence of kinship ties became apparent in the fact that to-day sons would still agree to stay in the *efakó*, while brother's sons decline to do so. Yet we have also seen that even sons desire under certain conditions to be released from the *efakó*-unit. In the case of individual crafts and trade, kinship obligations, even of sons to fathers, are no longer recognized. The dissolution of the large labour-unit, moreover, has made it abundantly clear that its size and coherence is determined predominantly by economic interests and relations. Kinship bonds and sentiments are not strong enough to maintain a labour group once its economic usefulness is impaired. Generally speaking, then, kinship bonds, in order to supply a substratum for productive co-operation, must have the support of economic incentives—material benefits and forms of compensation. Where the latter fail, the kinship bonds themselves will fail in this task.

Though we cannot thus admit the effectiveness of kinship factors as such (at least not in a decisive measure) upon the labour organization, the reverse is no doubt true. The labour organization exercises a two-fold influence upon the structure of the family and kinship group: (1) through contributing to the co-operative mechanisms within the kinship group, and (2) through accepting the responsibility for certain tasks which are vital to the continuity and stability of the kinship group.

(1) The integration of the kinship group, that is, the 'internal adaptation' of the social unit (Radcliffe-Brown), is largely determined by the scope and closeness of contacts and forms of co-operation existing in the group. Co-operation in the same labour-unit thus represents one of the most important integrative factors in this sense. We remember also that the labour-unit coincides with the household-unit, and that the individuals who agree to work together also 'keep house', eat, and live together. The constant contacts and the lasting mutual adjustment entailed in this productive arrangement build up strongly coherent units. The reduction in size, and the splitting-up into small individual units, of the large labour-unit, must detract essentially from the integration of the family group.

(2) Speaking generally, the large labour group, led by old and experienced men, is more far-sighted in its economic planning than the small one-man or two-men unit. It allows for certain group interests which the individual worker will ignore, or discount as of lesser importance; it can assess necessities and wants more objectively, with a view to the fundamental needs of the group rather than immediate individual satisfaction. Thus the family head will place foremost the necessity of finding the bride-price for the junior family members in order to

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602 establish them socially as full members of the community, i.e. as married
592 men, and, indirectly, to assure the continuity of the family group. We
182 have seen that even if the family head is unable to produce the necessary amount himself, and the young men have themselves to contribute, the family head would keep and save the money for them. The young men, left to themselves, are tempted to squander money on things which appear to them to be of greater urgency, and to disregard, to their own detriment as well as to the detriment of the group, the more distant necessity of marriage. As in the case of the Bida labourers, their money 'goes at once', and they remain unmarried even a considerable time after having reached marriageable age. In the extreme case a family head would even pawn the labour and liberty of a younger family member who is less essential to the group for the sake of keeping in freedom the elder, more important family member, or enabling him to found a family. We can go even farther than this. Older men, tending to uphold tradition, will plan labour and expenditure so that there should be money, food, as well as time available for family feasts or communal religious ceremonies. Their efforts thus serve (unconsciously) the interests of group integration at large, which the younger generation, not so fully steeped in traditional ways of thinking, may hesitate to put before more immediate attractions. Finally, by submitting to the authority of the older men in productive co-operation, the labour-unit also sustains their position of authority in a wider sense, as leaders of the community. We can say, then, that the large labour-unit is committed to the maintenance of the structure and the traditional values of the society, and that with its dissolution an important agency of social integration and continuity disappears.

796 The changes which the *gunnu* ritual has undergone recently are a con-
602 vincing instance of this kind. In its traditional form the *gunnu* con-
182 tained a certain most stirring scene which took place on the eve of the ritual, and which concerned the young men of the village especially. They were herded together in a certain place in the uninhabited bush, where they had to spend the night; they were to wait for a terrifying apparition, the spirit of the *ndakó gboyá*, who would question them about their moral conduct in the preceding year. If they were found guilty of having behaved disrespectfully towards their elders, they were flogged by their comrades at the command of the spirit. I have quoted already the article in which I described in detail the ritual and its effectiveness as a mechanism of social integration in the family group as well as the community.[1] But even from this short description we can gather the psychological importance of a ritual which uses such impressive stimuli to press home moral teaching, and to bind together periodically, in a common experience, the growing generation. Now, although the *gunnu* is still performed, the 'bush night' has been abandoned in many villages, and the explanation given was everywhere that the young men had refused to be subjected to the ordeal of this inquisition and punishment. The young men themselves were outspoken about the reasons of their refusal: 'We are now working as independently as the old men, we are paying tax for ourselves—why should we be flogged and threatened as if

[1] See pp. 25, 63.

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we were small boys?' In their own words they confirm my argument that the weakening of productive co-operation entails a weakening also of other forms and bonds of group unity.

We may for the moment reflect on the fact that this progressive weakening of group integration occurs in a society with decreasing population. Partly this development underlines the strength and urgency of the forces which are working for the dissolution of the large labour-unit, and which here foster the tendency to split and reduce in size a working-unit which is already, as it were, automatically declining. But it also reveals the significant fact that a loosening integration and progressive subdivision of units is not invariably correlated with an increase in the size of groups, and the inherent difficulty of maintaining cohesion.[1]

The present discussion has transcended the domain of economics. Where previously we have attempted to demonstrate the effects of changes in the structure of the labour-unit within the range of economic relations, i.e. on productive organization and the stability of the economic system, we are now studying the significance of these changes for the organization and stability of the social group. We can trace the influence of the changing economic organization upon social structure through wider and wider circles. Take the institution of the Nupe market. We have seen that the peasant attendance of the local village markets coincides with a local group characterized by regular social contacts, intermarriage and 'common living' in general. The market meeting mobilizes the local community, adds to the common interests, and forms an important focus for these contacts and forms of intercourse. Like the labour-unit on a smaller scale, it contributes essentially to social integration. This is no longer true of professional trade, which is carried on across community boundaries, and remains independent of established group-ties. Like the modern labour-unit, professional trade accepts solely the dictate of the impersonal profit motive.

Expanding trade connexions of this kind are only possible in a social system which provides safety and protection outside the narrow boundaries of the local community. They depend, in other words, on the large-scale political organization of the state. Like the economic relations which take place within its confines, the integrative mechanism of the state is essentially impersonal, and based on abstract principles rather than forms of co-adaptation growing from 'common living'. The transformation in the group substratum of economic relations is thus determined by the same concepts which also determine the transformation of the largest group unit, from community to state. Technically, the expansion of trade and commerce, production and exchange, would have been impossible without the corresponding expansion of political control. It would, perhaps, be going too far to say that spiritually also the former would have been impossible without the latter—without the conceptual framework which the latter provided. But we are justified in saying that the two forms of expansion reflect, materially as well as spiritually, two aspects of the same social process.

[1] This latter view was expressed, in the form of a 'social law', by Professor Radcliffe-Brown.

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CHAPTER XXII

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

871 AS education in the widest sense must be described all efforts, organized or otherwise, which tend to impart to individuals habitual forms of acting and thinking. Understood in this sense, every social institution involves educational activities by means of which individuals are led to acquire the behaviour-patterns that make up the institution. Thus our description of economic life has involved the description of certain educational techniques—the training in productive methods, the imparting of economic knowledge, or of concepts of property and wealth. But most societies also operate with more formalized methods of education, specific educational institutions which make it their business to train the rising generation in forms of acting and thinking regarded as essential by the society. We shall deal in this chapter with these formalized educational institutions, of which there are two in Nupe: the institution of the Koran school, concerned with Mohammedan religious teaching, and the institution of age-grade associations. The shortest definition of an educational institution is by the 'type' which it is meant to produce. In this sense we can say that Mohammedan religious education produces the Mallam, the Mohammedan scholar, and the age-grade associations the *zoon politikon* as understood in Nupe. We shall see that in certain respects both types of education can be identified with motives and aims underlying the political system, and thus with institutions devoted to what I have called in the heading of this chapter 'Education for Citizenship'.

MALLAM SCHOOLS

814 875 554 There are many degrees and varieties of Mohammedan learning. The title 'Mallam'—*mân* in Nupe—which one encounters so often among the Nupe, is by no means a safe guide. For the man who has gone through a few years' study of the Koran, having learned by heart a few *sura*; the sand-diviner or charm-seller who writes out verses from the Koran and sells them as amulets; the man who has acquired real learning and scholarship, and who can read and write in Arabic and possibly in Hausa—they all are called Mallam. Though the title is used indiscriminately, no Nupe ignores the essential difference between scholarship and the thin veneer of semi-learning. The Nupe distinguish two grades of learning: the lower grade is the study of the Koran (*kurani*), which consists mostly in the memorizing of prayers and whole pages and chapters from the Koran; the higher grade is called *kpikpe*, knowledge, or *kitafi* (Hausa), book, and consists in the study of Arabic and the careful reading of the Koran and the better-known commentaries. The most advanced scholars would study, in addition to these books, also the historical records of the Nigerian Emirates which have been compiled (in Hausa, written in Arabic script) by scholars of former days. Only a student of 'knowledge' can claim to be a 'real' Mallam. While there are

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hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaka*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katū*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe.

The Mallams are, above all, teachers. They teach both children and adults, the former the Koran and the latter 'knowledge'. Every Mallam may, besides, be called in to perform a marriage ceremony or to officiate at a funeral—services for which they are remunerated according to their status and reputation. A few are well-to-do and own land, which is worked by their sons and pupils or, in some cases, by wage-labour. But most Mallams practise, in addition to teaching, some other occupation, which may or may not be associated with their scholarly profession, to supplement the meagre income of a Koran teacher. Some write out and illuminate pages of the Koran, or copy Arabic manuscripts, for sale. You can buy a sheet of this sort, very beautifully illuminated, for 5*d*. on the Bida market; more ambitious scribes would sell a whole copy of the Koran and receive for it—the work of five months—£1. Students of 'knowledge' eagerly buy these copies and use them in their studies. Other Mallams, again, embroider gowns, make straw hats or saddle-cloths, or do tailoring.

The size and standard of the Koran schools varies as widely as the status and standard of learning of the Mallams. You find 'schools' with two little boys for pupils, and these close relations of the teacher; and you find others—the schools of famous Bida scholars—the classrooms of which (as a rule the *katamba* in the Mallam's house) are crowded with pupils. The teachers are very jealous of the reputation of their school. When I was a regular visitor to Bida Koran schools the Mallam of one which I had not yet visited came to me complaining that I had left out his school, and quoted as reference a Bida Mallam of very high standing who was a special friend of mine. In the large Koran schools the Mallam himself teaches only the adult students of 'knowledge', while the elementary teaching is carried out by his sons or certain advanced pupils.

[1] Bida learning has a great reputation even outside Nupe; Mallams from Bida have been given important posts in other countries, and several Bida Koran teachers have established flourishing schools in Ilorin.

[2] One aspect of this spiritual advice is divining, which, as we have seen, plays an important part even in such political activities as the election of a high officer of state or the preparation for war.

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814 Certain progressive Bida Mallams include the teaching of Hausa and elementary arithmetic in their syllabus, and many adults, traders and other native business men, attend their classes to acquire knowledge so invaluable to their trade.[1] In certain Bida schools you will find young girls being taught together with boys. They come from the families of the nobility, which, conscientious Mohammedans, insist on elementary [562] religious instruction being extended also to women. Girls, however, are only taught the Koran, and do not study 'knowledge'.

Adult students, specially those who study the Koran or 'knowledge' for their edification, following another profession besides, visit the house of the teacher only for their lessons, which take place mostly in the evenings, once or twice a week, or even at longer intervals, according to the leisure which their occupation allows them.[2] Young pupils who live in the neighbourhood attend their classes daily while living with their family. Pupils whose family live some distance away will stay in the house of the teacher as members of his household.

The teacher of the Koran may not demand special payment for the 815 tuition; according to Mohammedan principles religious instruction must 814 be free—*ebo albarka*, 'for the sake of blessing'. The wealthy Mallam, in fact, scorns all such payments as contrary to the spirit of religion. The poorer Mallam depends on what the family of the pupil offers him as *sádaka*, alms: a penny or twopence every two months, or a bundle of grain (worth 9*d*. or 1*s*.) once a year. Even these small gifts are very irregular; in the school of a Bida Mallam of good reputation, whose pupils numbered thirteen, half of the parents had sent nothing for over a year. Sometimes it happens that a boy's father dies while the boy is still studying, and his relations are unwilling to pay for his education. In this case the Mallam will continue to teach the orphan, let him live in his house and give him food and clothing, again *ebo albarka* only. Koran teachers in the country are worse off than their colleagues in Bida. In Kacha a Mallam who taught Hausa and arithmetic in addition to the Koran and 'knowledge', and who had eight young and fifteen adult students, received no payment from his students except an occasional gift of kola-nuts. If he asked for money, the students would indignantly threaten to leave and to seek another teacher. But both poor and wealthy Mallams receive a final gift from the parents of the student who has completed his studies, either money (in Bida), between 5*s*. and 10*s*., or (in the village) grain or a goat. The teachers can also obtain a certain indirect remuneration by letting their pupils work for them. School-work does not take up the whole day, nor every day in the week. In their

[1] The Education Department in Bida has arranged special evening classes for these enterprising Koran school teachers, and gives them also certain practical assistance, for example, by supplying them with blackboards. This scheme of adult education is of considerable value in the spreading of elementary education among that section of the population which has not had the advantage of education in the Government schools.

[2] Students in a Koran school in Kacha, who were canoe-men by profession, [505] attended the school whenever they returned to Kacha from their voyages, interrupting their classes for weeks and months at a time when they were out on a canoe expedition.

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spare time the boys will help in the house or on the farm, or sometimes 874
in the handicrafts which their teachers practise.

The students of 'knowledge' pay nothing for the tuition. But they 874
have studied the Koran with the same Mallam under whom they are now studying 'knowledge'; and they will send their children again to his school, or to the school of his sons. Thus reputations are built up and firm links established between families of Koran teachers and families which patronize their school. There are Mallam families in Bida which have been teaching three generations of the same families. For the sons of famous Mallams will follow the profession of their father. Many also intermarry with other Mallam families. They carry on the reputation for scholarship won by their fathers and families, and thus help to build up the dynasties of Mallams, of which there are many in Bida and Nupe.

As teaching implies so meagre and irregular an income one might ask 875
how it happens that certain Mallams become well-to-do, and even join the wealthy landowning class. These Mallams do not come from the families of the hereditary or office nobility. Although many men of this class study the Koran and 'knowledge', and proudly call themselves Mallams, they do not adopt the teaching profession, but remain amateurs, noble *dilettanti*. Sometimes a Mallam who in the past attained one of the official positions open to Mohammedan scholars has laid the foundation of the wealth of the family. Another has benefited from the close association as the 'guide, philosopher, and friend' of an influential personage—a clientship of more exalted order—and received land and wealth through the help of his patron. It is, for example, customary for all marriage services in the royal family—a most lucrative office—to be held by the Mallam who is attached to the house of the *Shaba*; or at all funeral services of the royal house the *Liman*, the head of the Mohammedan clergy, will officiate. However, wealthy Mallams are rare. Most Mohammedan scholars are poor, or at least unable to maintain themselves by their religious and educational work alone. But poverty is no impediment to scholarly reputation; nor does it detract from the honour of the profession. In fact, ordinary people will never call in a titled or even wealthy Mallam to perform a marriage or funeral service; they invariably prefer a Mallam of the *tálaka* class. A 'great Mallam is too weighty', they explain; they want a man whom they can offer a small *sádaka* as fee.

Among the Mallams of the town a certain loose economic co-operation exists, which comes into play at all such ceremonial occasions. At large marriage ceremonies or funerals several Mallams may be called in to assist the Mallam who is officiating. They will also divide part of the money which they receive for their services among their other colleagues in the same town quarter. Or the family which celebrates the ceremony will send *sádaka* to all the Mallams in the neighbourhood. This practice of communal benefits does not involve any closer or more formalized co-operation among the Mallams. The wide diversity between them with regard to social status, wealth, and standard of learning forbids any more strongly pronounced appreciation of their commonness beyond that fluid unity embodied in the fact that they all work with

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815 their brains, and represent, in a society of peasants, craftsmen, and traders, the intelligentsia. This will become even clearer when we examine the motley rising generation of Mallams.

874 Koran teaching begins as a rule in early youth, when the child is 6 or even 5 years old. The teaching of the Koran itself is reckoned to take five to ten years. Some pupils learn quicker than others, and in one school I found a boy of 13 already studying 'knowledge', while one of 17 was still worrying his way through the Koran. But on the whole this elementary stage is considered mere routine work which most students can master in the given time. The teaching of 'knowledge', on the other hand, depends entirely on talent and individual inclination. Pupils may be eager enough to try, but will give up later when they discover that 'they have no head for it' (a literal translation of the Nupe phrase). Nor can the time taken by these higher studies be fixed precisely. Ten to fifteen years is an average estimate—at least, after fifteen years' study one is reckoned to have become 'fully a Mallam'. But only prospective teachers will take this advanced course systematically, and continue their study year after year. The *dilettanti* pursue their studies much more irregularly and leisurely, and students of 35 or more may often be seen in the schools of the teachers of 'knowledge'.

874 The Mallam schools receive pupils from every class and every walk of
565 life. I have compiled some figures to illustrate the social origin of the pupils of Bida Koran schools:

Father's profession	Mallams	Traders	Farmers	Guild-craftsmen	Individual craftsmen	Nobility	Clerks, messengers, &c.	Total
Studying: Koran	49	26	30	6	20	22	8	151
'Knowledge'	28	4	2	..	20	8	10	72

That the sons of Mallams are in a majority is not surprising, nor that individual craftsmen and members of the nobility should come next in number. Of the twenty-eight sons of Mallams who were studying 'knowledge' six were going to adopt a different profession (of messengers, clerks, labourers, or servants to Europeans). Of the forty-four other students of 'knowledge' sixteen were going to become Koran teachers either in Bida or in the villages. These sixteen prospective Mallams included, incidentally, the two farmers' sons. None of the sons of guild-craftsmen took up teaching as a profession: a proof of the strong organization of these 'closed professions'. The large number of farmers who send their boys to Bida Koran schools may appear surprising; and even more so that a certain number of them should take up the study of the Koran professionally (for among the boys who are at present studying the Koran a few are likely to become Koran teachers). One example may serve: a boy of 13, the only son of a farmer, was studying to become a Mallam. He was well aware that at the death of his father the land would be lost to his family. Nevertheless he would not return to farm-work. His father had made him a Mallam, and that was all there was to it. Again and again, in similar cases, I was told: 'We are no longer strong enough to work on the land', or 'After all, is the profession of a Mallam

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A BIDA MALLAM AND ONE OF HIS PUPILS

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AN AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATION DANCE

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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working 565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran 555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan 875 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarifuzi*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

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561 young man belongs to one or the other age-grade association, the age-grades are not a compulsory organization. No coercion is used to induce individuals to join the association, but failure to do so would be regarded as unusual, and under certain circumstances even suspicious. The constitution of the *ena gbarifuši* is based essentially on the agreement of a group of individuals who, with clear knowledge of the purpose and the rules of the organization, form themselves into an age-grade association. Sociologically, then, our translation of *ena* as association is fully justified.

561 369 The description of the age-grade system of Nupe is complicated by the large number of variations that occur. There exist, above all, certain essential differences between the age-grade association in Bida and in the village; we shall, in fact, have to contrast the two throughout this discussion. The rules governing the internal organization of the age-grades are elastic: much more so in Bida than in the village. In the village association, too, minor differences occur, sometimes even between certain local associations in the same village. Thus, the age-factor itself is not rigidly defined, and the entrance age and age-limits of the different grades vary widely. Nor is the duration of the single age-grade fixed universally or permanently. In the village we find a more rigid arrangement: in Kutigi, for example, all age-grades last six years, in Jebba four years. In Bida the term of the age-grade association varies from four to ten years, and the duration may vary in different grades, in accordance with the wishes of the members.

In the village each grade is represented by one *ena* only, and age-grade associations ascend as a rule *en bloc* from grade to grade. Changes in the membership, so far as they occur, as the *ena* advances to higher grades, take the form of a slight decrease caused by death or emigration. In Bida each grade is represented by a number of associations, and prospective members have the choice of alternative associations. The rules of membership are more flexible in Bida. One may skip a grade—'rest', as the people say—one may start in a higher instead of the bottom grade, or one may leave the association before it advances to the highest grade, even before its term comes to an end. In two villages age-grade associations of which I examined the membership, which was 17 and 18 in the highest grade, had remained almost unchanged through the three grades of which the age-grade association is composed. In Bida there is much coming and going. In two *ena*, for example, the highest grade of which numbered 26 and 30 members, respectively, only 7 and 15, respectively, had gone through all three grades, 16 and 10 through two grades, and 3 and 5 had joined the highest grade without having passed through the lower grades.

561 The most common and, in the eyes of the people, normal type of age-grade association comprises three grades, which are numbered from the top downward: the senior grade is called First Grade, the middle grade, Second, and the junior grade, Third Grade or *ena dzakangiži*, Children's Grade. We shall deal, in what follows, with this most typical three-grade organization. The average age in the senior grade is 20 to 30, in the second 15 to 20, and in the junior grade 10 to 15. The age-limit for

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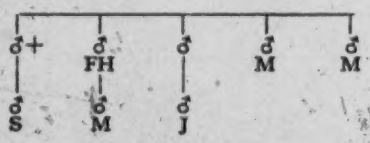
membership is about 30. It is interesting to note that the fact of marriage is of no significance—the highest grade comprises both married and unmarried men. The sign that a man is past the age of membership of 'young men societies' is the appearance of the external symptom of manhood, a beard—*za na de nũkpayi na da ena be à*, 'a man who has a beard no longer joins the association'. In certain small communities the age-grade system may be limited to the two higher grades; in other communities a fourth, junior, grade is added, called *ena wawagłži*, Association of the Small Children. This lowest grade is not taken seriously: it is regarded as mere *dzodzo*, play—of the children-playing-at-adults type—and shares with the other grades only their superficial external characteristics. The junior, third, grade is also in some measure regarded as less serious and significant than the higher grades, and as essentially a preparatory stage. Certain important activities of the higher grades are, as we shall see, of necessity excluded, or reduced to insignificant proportions, in associations which are composed of young boys. In one respect, however, the junior age-grade makes its own specific contribution to the age-grade system; it is the only one which has its counterpart also in the other sex. The highest age-grade, too, possesses certain specific features, in the form of certain age-grade ranks which are not bestowed on members of junior groups.

As *ena* membership is defined by age, and not by generation, it happens occasionally that, in large families, the young men of different generations but of approximately equal age belong to the same *ena*, and that young men of the same generation are members of different age-grade associations. The following genealogical diagram will illustrate a typical case. The letters S, M, and J indicate membership of the senior, middle, and junior age-grade, respectively; FH means family head, and a cross a deceased family member.



The separation from family and homelife is indeed one of the most characteristic features of the *ena gbarúfuši*. The people attach considerable weight to the fact that the bonds and forms of obligation which are implied in the *ena* are of an entirely different, and specific, nature. Even small boys, the youngest members of the junior *ena*, will tell you with an air of importance that the *ena* has nothing to do with family, home, or parents. The father? 'Yes, we tell him, and we ask him sometimes to help out with money or food for a feast which we arrange. But he has no say in our *ena*.' Fathers will confirm this. In Kutigi parents were quite surprised, and laughed uproariously, when I told them about the titles which had just been distributed in a newly started junior grade; the boys had gone with the times and introduced titles which did not exist in the days of their fathers' *ena*. But for my information the parents

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561 would have remained unaware of these changes, which were regarded as a purely 'internal' matter of the age-grade association.

561 369 Let us now see how an age-grade association starts its life. We will begin with the Bida *ena*. Here the procedure is the same both in the foundation of a new *ena* and in its promotion to a higher grade. A number of boys or young men who have become well acquainted with one another in various walks of life, possibly when participating in a previous *ena*, decide to form themselves into an age-grade association. They meet in the house of one of them, a group of only six or seven members at first, and discuss how many more members they can muster. Each of the founders of the prospective *ena* then enlists other friends and acquaintances of the same age, till eventually the membership reaches the required number, twenty or twenty-five. The first thing now is to find a 'captain' and a 'president' for the new association, or, in native terminology, an *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* (lit. Grandfather of the *Etsu*). The *Etsu* is a member of the age-group itself, as a rule one of the original founders, who is elected by the group.[1] The *Ndakotsu* must be of senior age: in the junior grades he will be a member of the next higher grade, and in the senior grade an adult who has 'passed', *go ga*, i.e. already gone through all the grades. Under their *Etsu* the members of the prospective *ena* approach a certain young man whom they regard as a suitable candidate, and request him to accept the position of president in the new association. Every member of the Nupe age-grades is assigned a certain rank which defines his place on the miniature social scale of the age-grade association for the duration of the *ena*. It is the first official duty of the newly elected *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu* to call a general meeting in the house of the *Ndakotsu* at which the distribution of these *ena* ranks is to take place. The elastic rules which govern duration and membership of the Bida *ena* imply also that no fixed rules can be laid down with regard to the time when associations usually start or 'change over' to higher grades. Moreover, in these associations in which only a small nucleus of members may remain faithful to the *ena* throughout its three grades long waits are likely to occur between the termination of one *ena* and the founding of a new association of a higher grade.

In the village the procedure governing the foundation and promotion of the *ena*, although the same in principle, differs in certain significant features from that obtaining in Bida. To begin with, the time when age-grade associations are started and promoted to higher grades is fixed permanently: it falls towards the end of the dry season, an arrangement which gives the new association time to be fairly launched when the agricultural season begins, and ready to undertake the tasks which, in a farming community, fall to the age-grade associations. The enrolment of members for the new *ena* is much less selective and arbitrary. In a small community where most boys of approximately the same age know each other, and normally meet in work or play, there is no need to canvass the new *ena* among friends and acquaintances. Nor is there any special search for captain and president of the new association. The village associations have, in fact, their *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu* appointed for

[1] Sometimes the captain of the second grade bears a different title, *Sokyara*.

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them in advance. Shortly before the existing associations are dissolved 561
previous to their reorganization on a higher grade, the outgoing presi- 369
dents of the different grades appoint, as a last official act of their term of office, one of the members of their group as '*Ndakotsu*-elect' of the next junior group, i.e. the group which, in the new term, will take the place of the outgoing group. The *Ndakotsu*-elect will then take charge of the organization or reorganization of the new *ena*, and also of the appointment of a captain for the new association.

In these age-grade associations which rise *en bloc* to higher grades there 561
is no gap between the termination of the old and the foundation of the new *ena*. The association which is about to be dissolved and promoted stages a last public appearance in a great feast, with music and dancing, to which all friends and relations are invited. A few days later the members of the *ena* meet again for the preliminary discussion in the house of the new *Ndakotsu*, for the distribution of the age-grade ranks which will be assigned to them in the new *ena*. When all ranks have been satisfactorily allotted the group arranges another large festivity, which is to announce publicly its reorganization and to inaugurate the new term. I had the good fortune to be in Kutigi in 1936, the year when the six years' term of the local *ena* came to an end and the general 'change-over' took place. It fell in the middle of March; the last public meeting of the old association was on the 7th of March, the session in the house of the *Ndakotsu* took place five days later, and the inaugurative meeting of the group in its new form as a senior grade on the 2nd of April.

Now, what are the qualifications for the position of a *Ndakotsu* and 561
Etsu, and according to what principles are the *ena* ranks distributed? 554
For the election of the *Ndakotsu* a well-established social position, good 369
reputation, intelligence, and also a pleasant nature and, if possible, an open hand, are regarded as essential qualifications. A satisfactory financial position is essential because the *Ndakotsu* will be expected to entertain and to organize parties—and to do it in style. Most of these conditions also apply to the election of the group captain. The members of a newly founded Bida *ena* explained to me: 'We made Mohamadu our *Etsu* because he is a nice fellow. We all like him. He has good connexions; you see he is invited to the court; besides, he has plenty of money, and both his father and his mother are rich. He is also ready to spend it when we have a feast and want drummers and dancers.' On the other hand, a very ambitious young man who had been *Etsu* of an *ena* (of the second grade) and who hoped to be made *Etsu* again in a new, senior, association whose captain was resigning shortly, complained to me that his chances were slight, for he had not much money and could not afford the expenses which he would be expected to meet. It is implied in the nature of these qualifications that the *Etsu* is not always the oldest member in the group. In one *ena* which I analysed the *Etsu* was 20 when the *ena* started, and there were three members older than he. But as a rule he is of higher social position, and often better educated, than the rest of the members. Thus in a Bida *ena* which consisted almost entirely of tailors and embroiderers the captain was a weaver, the son of the Bida guild-head. In another group of a similar composition the

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561 captain was an expert cap-maker, who made the expensive, fashionable
554 embroidered caps. And in a group the members of which came mostly
369 from the classes of the nobility, the captain was the son of a late Emir. It has become the fashion for captains of Bida age-grade associations to adopt an additional, allegoric or symbolic, title, which would also give the *ena* its name. Bida associations compete with each other in the invention of high-sounding names, which should evince the refinement and selectness of the *ena*. Thus one *Etsu* was known as *Etsu Yimani*, 'King Faith', as the *ena* over which he presided prided itself of the piety of its members; another captain called himself *Etsu Hankuri*, 'King Forgiveness', for more or less the same reason; a third *Etsu Turu*, 'King of the Europeans', a title which was meant to bear witness to the fact that this *ena* was organized on 'European lines' (to be explained presently).

The financial qualifications and those of status are of less importance in the village, where inequality of wealth and status are much less strongly marked, although even in the village *ena* the captain may be of a somewhat higher social position than the rest of the members, e.g. the son or brother of a village elder of high rank. The symbolic names of age-grade associations are absent in the village, where age-grade associations are neither as numerous as in Bida nor as interested in advertising their refinement and selectness.

The allotment of ranks in a newly founded association of the youngest
561 grade is largely a formality—although the popularity and influence of
554 the young boys among their age-mates will to some extent be taken into account. We have seen that these junior age-grades are generally regarded as representing a preparatory stage rather than a fully fledged *ena*. In the higher grades the distribution of ranks becomes much more serious. Change of rank during the lifetime of the *ena* occurs only when a member dies or withdraws prematurely, especially if he was holding one of the higher *ena* ranks, which must be represented. But when the *ena* terminates and the members form themselves into a new group, a complete reshuffle takes place. As the different grades use largely the same rank-system this redistribution of ranks at the end of an *ena* makes conspicuous the promotion, non-promotion, or degradation—as the case may be. These changes in the holding of *ena* ranks reflect faithfully the success or failure of individual members in the previous association, the capability shown in the performance of group activities, and the popularity enjoyed among comrades and superiors. The eager competition notwithstanding, the task of distributing ranks justly and to everybody's satisfaction does not, as a rule, take very long. I have seen these discussions carried through in one or two afternoons. But then, the general discussion is only a last, formal, step. Mostly, the two leaders of the group have decided the distribution at least of the more important ranks long before the first general meeting. The *Ndakotsu* of a prospective village *ena*, for example, knew a few months before the group was actually called into being exactly whom he was going to invest with the three highest ranks. As a rule the authority of captain and president is sufficiently strong to carry the vote. But instances of disagreement and

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long fruitless discussions also occur, both in town and village, and sometimes a compromise has to be effected by introducing a special title (with the word *Tsowa* before any rank, equivalent to 'vice-' or 'sub-'), which will satisfy a refractory member without upsetting the arrangement at large. Severe degradation, on the other hand, is rare, as it can be easily circumvented in these associations which are not compulsory, and cannot force members to accept their status. This is a typical instance: A very ambitious and vain young man of Bida who had held high ranks in previous *ena*, but was given a very low rank in a senior grade, resented this treatment as unjust; he could, however, do nothing except to show his disdain by disinteresting himself in the association, and staying away from all their meetings. Actually he never told me of his shameful treatment when we discussed his association with the *ena*; I learned of it only by chance when, examining a certain association, I came across his name on the list of members.

The village *ena* comprises one rank which can be won only in strict competition. We have spoken of this rank already (p. 250): it carries the title *Sode*, and is bestowed on the best farmer of the group. Sometimes there is also a second farmer's rank, won in the same way for which, rather incongruously, the title *Maiyaki*, 'Minister of War', has been chosen. These ranks are taken only in the highest and middle grade, and are won in open competition at the first of the more important *egbe* occasions of the season, frequently at the *egbe* performed on the farms of the village chief. Traditionally, the title *Sode* ranked next to that of group captain in importance and precedence. To-day it has been degraded to a lower place on the scale of ranks. Of course, neither the title nor the particular qualification for which it is bestowed is recognized in Bida. The rank of *Sode* is also the only rank that may change hands (at least in theory) during the term of the *ena*. Although this happens very rarely (I have not met with any actual instance), all people agree that if at one of the occasions of collective farm-work an appointed *Sode* proved himself to be inferior in skill to another member of the *ena*, he would have to surrender his title.

Age-grade ranks are largely copied from the political rank-system obtaining in the community to which the *ena* belongs. It is not a very exact copy—although the *ena* tends to arrange its ranks according to the order of precedence which they follow in the political hierarchy. In Bida the distinctions between the different classes of political ranks are not observed, and military and civil ranks, office titles and titles of the royal nobility, are bestowed indiscriminately. The village *ena* remains more faithful to the rank-system of the community, and would, for example, adopt its typical, possibly uncommon, titles of elders. But as the membership of the *ena*—especially of the junior grades—may be considerably larger than the number of titled village elders, ranks from outside the traditional rank-system may have to be introduced, preferably from the rank-system of the capital. The younger generation is indeed always ready and eager to adopt such innovations. Rank-systems of heterogeneous nature, and rather arbitrary precedence are the result. However, we must not forget that the rank-systems of many villages ar

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561 themselves similarly heterogeneous and arbitrary, including Bida titles
554 among its traditional village ranks.

The system of precedence involved in *ena* ranks and grades is taken
561 very seriously, and the rigid rules of etiquette which govern it are
554 enacted with all solemnity. Much of the *ena* business takes place, as we shall see, within the single *ena*; but when members of different grades
576 meet—for example, at family feasts in the house of a member, or at collective farm-work—submissive or condescending behaviour marks their relation towards each other. Members of a junior grade will never dance when members of senior grades are present, except with their special permission and at their request; in collective farm-work the junior grades work at the back of the team, at less important and less conspicuous tasks. Age-grade etiquette is even more emphatic within the individual association. At communal meals the 'subalterns' will wait till their superiors have eaten; at *ena* feasts subaltern and senior ranks will never dance at the same time; when greeting a superior, the age-grade member of lower rank will squat down and bend his head, exactly as prescribed for intercourse between superiors and inferiors in the social scale of 'real life'.

561 In the village *ena* it is only in general terms that the ranks indicate
554 social position on the rank-scale of the association. In the town *ena* the ranks are sometimes chosen so as to indicate and do justice to the special
369 gifts, or the special social position outside the *ena*, which characterize individual members. In this the organization of the town *ena* reflects the more highly differentiated social structure of urban society. Thus a Bida *ena*, composed largely of illiterate members, assigned to a young man who had been educated in the Government Middle School the title *Naïbi*, a rank of the Mohammedan clergy which can be held only by scholars. The rank-list of another *ena* included the rank *Boroti*, lit. Head of the Bororó, its holder being the son of the late Emir's 'regent-delegate' for the Bororó Fulani. Some Bida age-grade ranks indicate a certain official capacity held by a member in the *ena*. Thus I found a rank *Dzufã* (lit. pocket) bestowed on a young man who acted as 'purser' of the group. All purchases and payments for *ena* purposes were made through him; when, for example, a member decided to give a party for the group he would place his money contribution in the hands of the *Etsu*, who would then hand it over to the 'purser' as the member responsible for financial arrangements. In one *ena* I found the rather curious rank *Mataushe* (Hausa, lit. 'the man who rubs', i.e. 'masseur'), by which name a certain slave or body-servant of the Nupe king was known whose special duty it was to massage the feet of his master. In like manner it was the duty of this 'office holder' in the age-grade association to massage the feet of his *Etsu* at meetings of the group when his master felt tired.

561 One group of ranks typical of the Bida *ena* deserves special attention,
554 namely the ranks which are organized on 'European lines' and copy, not ranks and offices of Nupe society, but ranks, offices, and even names of
177 Europeans with whom the Nupe had come into contact. Such titles are often amusing and even puzzling. In one *ena* the head of the group was

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), *Likita* (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank *Borti* (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted, forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tálaka* and *saraki* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real', that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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and reality. The prototypes of *ena* ranks are all (at least theoretically) within the reach of the individual members. Every one of the young men who have gone through the *ena* may find when he reaches the suitable age that elimination by death or illness of senior relatives has singled him out for the position of a family head, and thus for a *nūsa* rank. Indeed, the promotion which accompanied his age-grade career will serve as an important qualification in the bestowal of the real rank by chiefs and elders. In certain respects all *ena* ranks of the senior grade retain their validity outside the *ena*, and after its expiry. The code of age-grade etiquette expires with the age-grade association. Not so the symbols of age-grade achievement: a man will be called by his rank rather than his name years after the *ena* has come to an end, often even for life—especially if he had held a very high rank. Men who have once been elected as *Etsu* or *Ndakotsu*, even when they are not, or not yet, appointed to a *nūsa* rank, will occupy a position of some distinction in their native village. Not only are they addressed and known by their *ena* titles, but village elders will pay attention to their opinion, and will entrust them with responsible tasks—in the organization of a ceremony, or of important collective work carried on outside the framework of the age-grade association. *Ena* ranks will never be confused with the political ranks of the village; they remain *tici nya ena*, ranks of the age-grade association. But although still only models of the 'real thing', they are 'real' in the sense that they indicate the varying qualification of individuals for access to the final social advancement. In the village *ena*, then, and similarly in the few age-grade associations in Bida which are recruited from the ruling classes, the *ena* rank-system anticipates a future social status; it introduces social concepts, and practises forms of conduct the effectiveness of which will be proved in adult life.

None of this is true of the average Bida association. Although here, again, the ranks attained in the senior grade accompany a man through life, they can claim no significance beyond that accorded to them by the rules of the game. A game indeed it is. These ranks let you enjoy fictitious contacts with a world of rank and power which you can never hope to enter in reality. Their upward trend, their incentive of competition, imply, not preparation or anticipation, but pretence, imitation—'substitution'.

Let us examine now the composition of the age-grade associations with regard to the social groups and strata which they absorb. In small villages a single age-grade association includes the youths of the whole village, and may even go beyond it, including the 'dependencies' of the village, the small *tunga* settlements, or linking a number of *tunga* settlements with one another. In the scattered hamlets round Bida the boys and young men of three to four hamlets join in a common *ena*. In very large villages (e.g. Kutigi) the age-grade is subdivided into a number of associations, each embracing one large, or two or three small, neighbouring, village *efu*. The age-grade itself, however, stretches across the whole village community, and the different associations conform to the same pattern with regard to the length of the term, and the time and year of the 'change-over' from grade to grade. In Bida the sub-

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division goes much farther, and we find a large number of disconnected associations, which are no longer co-ordinated or conform to a common pattern. I estimate the number of age-grade associations in Bida at 200. The individual *ena* is, again, bound up with locality, and includes boys and young men from the same part of the town. But here two new factors enter: social differentiation, and divided political allegiance. The very fact that the Bida *ena* finds its members among friends and close acquaintances already expresses the tendency to make it socially homogeneous, and to limit its membership to individuals from the same social stratum, or the same professional group. *Sarakiži* and *talakaži* never mix in the same *ena*. Nor do prosperous traders or Mallams join the same *ena* as peasants or small craftsmen; nor does, finally, the youth of the craft-guilds intermingle—glass-workers, blacksmiths, weavers, all have their separate age-grade associations. The limitation with regard to locality and close acquaintances is less rigid in the highest grades than in the junior grades. For as in the course of years the membership decreases, some members having died, others having left the *ena* or perhaps the town, it sometimes becomes necessary to open the membership of the higest grade to people from other parts of the town. Yet no *ena* would accept members from beyond the boundary of the town *ekpā*. The political solidarity of the three dynastic divisions of the town is thus reflected in, and even, as we shall see, actively supported by, the age-grade associations of the capital.

Here once more we gain insight into the social significance of the Nupe age-grade association: it underlines and fosters the solidarity of the existing social groupings. This means something different in the village and in the town. In the former it refers to the village community at large, and we find the age-grade associations stretching across it, and across the large kinship units and 'houses' into which the village society is divided. We can liken the age-grade system to a horizontal plane cutting across the separate structures of the extended families, with their wide base, tapering off to the apex of the one official representative of the family group, the titled elder. The age-grade association must thus counteract all possible separatist tendencies of individual kinship groups and sustain the large-scale integration on which the existence of the village as a social unit depends. In large villages this integrative scheme is in some measure narrowed down, owing to the size of the groups that can be absorbed effectively in a single age-grade association. It assumes, in fact, a somewhat different aspect, in uniting the extended kinship units within themselves—in the form of the large *efu* group—that is, in holding together the widely expanded structure which is to support the apex of a common official representative.

In the town the existing social grouping is created and held together by political and class interests. Here again, the age-grade association fosters the unity of a group which is to submit, in 'real' life, to a common head. But he no longer represents the 'apex' of an organically grown structure; as the *ena* is largely the product of a free, voluntary association, the group loyalty which it fosters is towards the freely chosen leader of a local political faction.

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one
369 of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida
561 *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan religion.

561 I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the *ena* a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known
[789] as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice as fast'.

561 Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional
574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*, *Etsu*, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food, drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the members of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited. At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred guests.

561 Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts
574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle, leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one
535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they
554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers.
369 There exist special *ena gbarúfuši* dances, performed at these occasions: they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena. Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

[1] This song, which was composed by the *saworo* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows.

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561 sub-tribe of Kutigi, Enagi, and Dabbã, the *gani* even dramatizes the age-
796 grade structure itself, its system of ranks, and the promotion from grade to grade. The *gani* assigns different ceremonial duties to the different grades, and involves certain symbolic tests of manhood of progressive severity which the different age-grades, one after the other, must undergo. The ceremony can, in fact, be regarded as a ritual of age-grade initiation. However, I must leave the description of this ceremony, closely associated though it is with the conception of age-grades, for a future occasion.

Let us turn to the Mohammedan religious ceremonies. At the celebration of the *Sallah* the age-grade associations play a much less specific role. They arrange a small festivity in the house of their group captains on the eve of the *Sallah*, at which—as in all houses of Bida and Mohammedan Nupe on that evening—a ram is killed and eaten. On the following morning the various *ena* of the town meet in the market to join the thousands of people who will follow the royal procession to the mosque and round the town walls, and gather later in front of the Emir's house, listening to drummers and musicians, and watching the display of the horsemen and the coming and going of the royal guests.

The celebration of the Mohammedan New Year, on the other hand, called *navũ* in Nupe (lit. torches), represents the climax of the public appearances of the Bida *ena*. The *navũ* is essentially a festival of youth. Its ritual acts, which appear to express, symbolically, the death and renewal of the year, are carried out by the young folk of Bida. On the eve of the New Year, at sunset, all the age-grade associations meet in the houses of their captains, and then march to the market of their town quarter, where all the associations of the *ekpã* forgather. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands, and are clad in simple, scanty garments. Three long processions, one in each *ekpã*, move slowly through the streets of Bida, down to the arm of the river flowing through that part of the town. The boys sing and dance while they walk, and throw their torches high up in the air, catching them as they fall. Arrived at the river, they take off their garments, and, clad only in a loincloth, wade into the water. There is no atmosphere of ritual or ceremony about it; they splash and play in the water, dance, wrestle, sing, and laugh at the clumsiness of those who drop and extinguish their torches. All the time the torch-play goes on; they play with the torches like balls, throwing and catching them. It is a dangerous game: I saw many lucky escapes, and quite a few incidents not so lucky.

Girls and young women, too, go to the river to bathe on the *navũ*,
561 and the sexual attraction adds its stimulus to the general excitement.
796 The *navũ* is, in fact, the only occasion on which I have seen the Nupe indulge in open, undisguised, sexual play. Torches are thrown into the
786 water to light up the spot where girls are bathing almost naked; boys
579 accost girls in the water, and couples disappear in the dark of the river-banks. But the *navũ* is in more than one respect a period of licence. Indeed, more important than this amorous play is the licence which was extended till about fifteen years ago to all acts of violence and assault that might occur on *navũ* night. And such liberty of action was not

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one *ena* would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age-grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the individual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which

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561 lays down the rules of behaviour for *ena* members, and which is again valid for life. These rules demand friendliness towards one another, and avoidance of all quarrels; mutual assistance in work (though not with regard to loans); respect towards one's superiors in the group; and respect also for the sanctity of marriage among all fellow members. The significance of this last rule, which applies to brides as well as wives, in age-grade associations the lifetime of which comprises the years when the adolescents first awake to the reality of sex, when they court and finally [369] marry, need not be emphasized especially. Yet only in the village can the rule be regarded as tending to eliminate quarrels and feuds which must disrupt the community. In Bida it is in effect abetting matrimonial laxity outside the small group to which this code applies. The narrow political and class loyalty of the Bida *ena* has thus its counterpart in the no less narrow *esprit de corps* with its qualified respect for matrimonial rights.

In the case of a breach of the age-grade code the culprit is summoned before the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*, who have the right to punish him. A first, light offence may entail only a warning. Repeated offences will be punished more severely. If a young man shows himself lazy in *egbe* work or reluctant to fulfil the obligations of collective farm-work, it is regarded as sufficient punishment to order him to work in the back row, among the youngest and most inexperienced *ena* members. In the case of more serious offences the penalty may take the form of social ostracism: the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* would rule that no member of the *ena* must attend festivities in the house of the offender. This sentence, I was told, soon brings the culprit to heel; he will kneel down in front of the *Etsu* and ask him for forgiveness, protesting that he would henceforth mend his ways. In certain age-grade associations, especially in Bida, fines are 561 inflicted in the case of graver offences against the *ena* code. Expulsion is 837 never practised, not even as a penalty of the gravest of all age-grade offences—misconduct with the bride or wife of a comrade. However, my inquiries into the occurrence of this offence were invariably answered with a blunt denial. Whether or not it was founded on fact I have no means of deciding. Quite possibly the *esprit de corps* of the *ena* forbade admission of so shameful a charge. The rather too sweeping denial with which my questions were met makes it appear not unlikely: 'We are like brothers,' many of my informants said, 'who would steal a brother's wife?'

In one respect, at least, this statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration. 561 Age-grade comrades are not 'like brothers'. The intimate relation between age-grade comrades which this simile suggests is not true to 572 facts. The relationship existing between friends, on the other hand, is often likened to the relationship between brothers, and does in certain respects resemble it. But age-grade comradeship as all informants agreed, is sharply distinguished from friendship, and the mutual obligations of friendship in no way coincide with those implied in *ena* membership. The subject is worth pursuing.

A man (or woman) will never have more than one friend. The friend may come from a different locality, a different profession, even a differ-

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ent tribe. I have seen friendship between a Nupe and a Yoruba in Jebba, 561
and between a Kutigi farmer and a *komi* weaver, between a Bida tailor
and a peasant from Patigi. Only social class remains an effective barrier 572
even in friendship. Unlike age-grade comrades, friends will help each other with money. Friends may also exchange their children, that is, adopt each other's children, and marry them to their own children—as is also done by men who stand to each other in the relationship of classificatory brothers. This practice has the aim, as the people say, 'to increase friendship'. The essential difference between age-grade fellowship and friendship is thus clear: if the former fashions sentiments of 'belonging together' on the basis of similarities in outlook and interest, i.e. similarities involved in common locality, tribal origin, common occupation, the latter unites individuals *qua* individuals, in a union which is essentially new, and initiates rather than follows existing bonds and sentiments.

It remains to discuss the *ena nyentsugiši*, the age-grade associations of 561
the girls, and the relation between the parallel age-grades of the sexes.
I have said already that the girl's *ena* is limited to the youngest age- 571
grade. As explanation of this different organization among the girls the people argue there can be no senior grades among girls, since the approximate age limit of the junior grade, 15 to 16 years, coincides with marriageable age. Unlike boys, the girls can no longer carry on in the *ena* once they are betrothed or married; their duties towards husband and family cannot be reconciled with age-grade activities. This explanation is borne out by the characteristic relations that unite the parallel *ena* of boys and girls. They both take exactly the same titles; and a boy and a girl who bear the same title enter a special, close, relationship: the boy calls the girl *nna*, mother, and the girl the boy *nda*, father. Girls' and boys' groups meet at the various feasts which age-grade associations arrange. It is the duty of the girls to prepare food and beer, the money being contributed by the boys, and to serve it at the *ena* feast. The *Etsu* of the boy's *ena* presents the girls with kola-nuts. The girls will sing and dance, and the boys will watch, and then, in their turn, the boys will perform before the audience of the girls. They all behave with utmost dignity, and even severity: the *ena* is quite obviously not the place for flirts and amorous play of the kind one can observe between boys and girls who meet in the street or market. The symbolism of the names by which girls and boys address each other—names which are never used by lovers or by husband and wife—emphasizes the 'respectable', non-sexual, nature of this relationship, even to the extent of excluding any reference to legitimate sex relations—marriage. It is supposed to happen occasionally that boys and girls who were brought together in the *ena* marry afterwards. I have not come across an actual case. The relationship between them, while the *ena* lasts, is definitely meant to be in the nature of comradeship, and must never lead to sexual relations. Yet once the girl is married, it may be difficult to maintain this aloofness. The danger of jealousy on the part of the husband, and possibly the temptation of carrying comradeship with the other sex to a more intimate relationship, forbid a continuation

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561 of the girls' *ena*. So much for the interpretation of the *ena nyentugiži* on
571 the lines of the Nupe argument.

561 But if for women the age-grade career comes to an end with marriage, while for men marriage represents neither a limit nor even a conspicuous grade in the age-grade career, this reflects also the different sociological significance that marriage has for women and men. For women, it is the end of one life and the beginning of another. It means change of home and family bonds, and initiation into new aims and duties. For men, marriage—a first marriage—does not even coincide with the periodical readjustments in the labour-unit, i.e. the release from the *efakó* group which, as we have seen, takes place as a rule when a man has two wives or grown-up children. The social career of the men—achievement of economic independence, promotion to office, and responsible position in the community—only begins to fulfil itself long after their first marriage; that of the women is meant to enter its last phase in marriage. Indeed we have seen that when the woman claims the right of an independent, continued, social career, she must buy it with the sacrifice of the marriage union.

561 As regards the institution of the parallel age-grades its practical value seems to be that it prepares the ground for the first experiences of sex
564 relations. Or rather, it aims at circumventing, and dulling, this unsettling first experience. Enabling the sexes to meet in the critical age, between 13 and 16, as it were on neutral ground, openly and respectably, it tends to remove some of the secrecy and unhealthy curiosity that is part of the mental transition from the self-contained existence of early youth to the new awareness of the polarity of sex. Our study of adult sex morality has left no doubt about the restricted effectiveness of this native 'co-educational' scheme. It must fail because it is, like all faulty education, in the nature of a palliative. It breaks the adolescent, we might say, gently, to the moral code of adulthood, but it adopts this code in all its dangerous narrowness and its rigid exclusion of amorous experiments and pre-marital sex relations. If age-grade discipline paves the way for adult sex morality, it does so also with respect to its repressions and inhibitions, and that final sweeping reaction against conventional morality which we could study in the adult life of the Nupe people.

561 To summarize. The age-grade associations include the adolescent male (and to lesser extent female) population of Nupe from early youth up to the threshold of adulthood. The most vital years in individual development are thus brought under the influence of this institution. We have studied the decisive part which it plays in moulding the personality of its members and in defining their attitude towards tasks and problems which they are to face in adult life. The essence of the institution of age-grades is, then, preparation—a twofold preparation. Its first aspect is the fashioning in the framework of the age-grades of sentiments of solidarity which are to bind the group at large.

182 This involves an important theoretical problem which has greatly engaged the attention of modern sociologists and social psychologists,
561 namely, the possibility of transferring co-operation and solidarity

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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.[1] Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

The second aspect of the preparation embodied in the age-grade system is the training of the adolescent, through discipline and certain concrete activities, in the tasks and duties which await him in adult life, and in the values and incentives which he will have to make his own. In the village this preparation represents a first step towards a final social career; in Bida it mostly implants in the mind of the adolescent values and incentives, as it were, *in abstracto*, without promising equally their fulfilment in later life. It teaches people who will never share in directing the fate of their country to appreciate, and make their own, the motives and values which govern the conduct of those who do. It imparts, if not claims to responsible citizenship, yet its spirit.

THE MEANING OF NUPE LIFE

If we compare Nupe religious teaching with the teaching implied in the age-grade system we find that the two educational institutions supplement each other in many respects and that, between them, they take in the whole field of 'education for citizenship'. The Mallam school offers promotion to one social plane; the age-grade association practises promotion in the framework of a complex scale of steps and grades. The promotion afforded by religious education is 'real', in the sense that it involves social privileges in adult life; that practised in the age-grades is fictitious, even vicarious, and concerns mental readiness rather than concrete achievements. Religious education, finally, creates a loosely organized professional group and at the same time fosters a much wider psychological unity, which embraces the whole of Nupe society, across tribal and class boundaries. The age-grades create an intensive solidarity, but only in a very narrow framework, and give tribal and class boundaries a wide berth. Common to both religious education and the age-grades is the social upward trend, the motive of rise and promotion. This upward trend appears indeed as the paramount motive in Nupe cultural life. If it is possible to reduce a whole culture to a single formula, to a fundamental unitary *ethos*, we find it in this *leitmotif* of

[1] Cf. F. C. Bartlett, in *The Study of Society*, 1939, p. 43: 'A specially interesting question is: if cooperation is established in one respect, when and how far does this help individual members of the groups concerned to cooperate in other respects?'

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Nupe education. No aspect of culture affords closer access to the paramount cultural motives and values. For education not only teaches openly the specific aims and conceptions of life accepted by the society, but reveals them also indirectly, in the motives and conceptions which it utilizes to call forth the desired response.

Is, then, the reverse equally true? is behaviour that does not conform to this conception of life met with public disapproval? One might indeed ask if Nupe culture did not reserve some legitimate place within its framework for individuals to whom its dominant trend was uncongenial, and who represent what some anthropologists have called 'deviants' from the type of personality which the society regards as so highly desirable.[1] I must admit that I have found no conspicuous instances of such 'deviant' types. But we can guess the public response towards such social or cultural 'failures' from certain occasional incidents: for an attitude that belies the upward trend, and this dynamic aspect of self-advancement, is indeed regarded as a 'failure'; such individuals would be dismissed by the people with a mental shrug—'*u de kokari à*', 'he makes no effort'. As the Nupe state undertakes to govern the moral life of the people and to co-ordinate rigidly their conceptions of right and wrong, so its education attempts a complete unification of types of personality.

Yet successful suppression in normal life may only mean that the 'deviant' type is forced into abnormality and will reveal itself in psycho-pathological cases. I have admitted in the first chapter the scantiness of data concerning mental disorders among the Nupe. But so far as they exist they seem to bear out the view that mental disorders in Nupe are largely symptoms of the failure of individuals to adjust themselves to the demands of the social environment. I have mentioned that the large majority of psycho-pathological cases that came to my notice presented the clinical picture of paranoid schizophrenia, with marked delusions and persecution-mania. Now modern psychiatry has shown that schizophrenia is essentially the result of inadequacy to a social environment. Indeed, in the few cases which I could examine more closely features of the social environment conspicuously entered the clinical picture. One man was under the delusion that he had been persecuted by a person of very high rank and robbed, through his intrigues, of his home and family; another maintained that intrigues against him at the court had cost him his land; a third case was that of an old man who was under the delusion that his younger brother (whom he admitted to be the more clever and successful of the two) was out to kill him. In creating these very specific delusions the psycho-pathological individual escapes from the consciousness of his own inadequacy. Though distorted and purely negative, the fears and anxieties which make up the delusion are the same fears and anxieties that accompany the successful mental adjustment to the *ethos* of Nupe life—the anxiety to 'get on' in the world, not to be left behind in the race for rank and position or the fear to lose the support of the 'powers that be', on whose influence one's career and safety depend. The border-line between normality and abnormality is that between

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, and Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament*.

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anxiety and unceasing efforts to master reality or, conversely, the open admission of inability to live up to the exigent standards of the social *ethos*, and that complete withdrawal from reality and surrender to subjective emotional and thought-life which we classify as pathological.

Have we, as sociologists, to leave off here, and to regard the *leitmotif* of Nupe culture as an ultimate, irreducible, fact—as would be the view of certain modern schools of anthropology—or can we hope to trace it farther, and to correlate it, as we could most cultural traits, with other, more fundamental, social facts?

Not having examined in this book the whole field of culture, we can only venture on a tentative answer. But I believe that such a correlation is possible. The upward trend in social life is entailed in the class structure of the Nupe state; in the existence of a social *élite* which must both renew and widen its ranks by admission of selected groups from outside its sphere, and build its strength on a population whose motives and ways of thought are in conformity with its own aims. The particular form which the upward trend takes, that complex social ladder of many steps and grades, is part of the 'admission of selected groups'; it is explained by the necessity of controlling and canalizing the upward trend, lest it should endanger the position of the ruling group itself. The *ethos* of Nupe society does thus not represent a unique, irrational, and, as it were, autonomous cultural trend; but the product of an interdependence of phenomena which is open to rational interpretation. Behind it we perceive the public approval of forms of behaviour which are essential to the integrity of the class-organized state.

In reducing the *ethos* of Nupe culture to necessities involved in the social structure we have not merely reduced one unknown quantity to another. The class-state built upon, and expanding by, conquest is not a unique phenomenon, but a typical and regular occurrence in the history of society which we have learned to correlate with specific environmental and historical happenings. These themselves fall outside our range of vision: the environmental factors which made the river Niger the hotbed of powerful military states; environmental changes which have most probably started the tribal movements resulting eventually in conquests and the formation of states with an alien ruling class; political developments in the north of Nigeria which resulted in the Fulani conquests of the central kingdoms; or the historical changes in civilization which gradually led up to greater political concentration and the evolution of centralized states. I do not mean to defend an absolute determinism of this kind. I will not deny that Nupe culture may have added specific features of its own to this general development; it may well be that certain autonomous psychological determinants, not entailed in these external conditions, have played an important part in moulding the structure of the Nupe state and the psychological traits and motives which it has made its own. I have worked out elsewhere the principle of 'alternative solutions' of which a cultural adjustment to environmental and historical demands may admit.[1] In these alternative solutions we

[1] 'The Typological Approach to Culture', *Character and Personality*, v, No. 4, The Duke University Press, 1937.

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181 discover the effectiveness of such autonomous psychological tendencies. The specific *ethos* of Nupe culture may indeed embody such an 'alternative solution'. But the extent to which this is true, the extent to which the autonomous psychological forces limit or qualify the effectiveness of historical and environmental factors (which we must regard as sufficient to explain the evolution of the social structure as such), can only be ascertained on the basis of comparative studies of similar, class-organized, societies. This is, once more, outside the scope of the present investigation.

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY

113 THE following list comprises the works of early travellers and writers on Nigeria and Nupe, arranged in chronological order, some of whose data were invaluable for the historical descriptions and reconstructions of this book.

IBN BATUTA (1353), describing the various countries on the Niger (which he knew as the Nile), mentions one called *Youfi* or *Noufi*, south of Mouli (Muri?), as 'one of the most important countries of the Sudan', and its 'sovereign as one of the greatest kings of the area'. 'No white man [Arab?] enters *Youfi*, for the negroes there would kill him as soon as he arrived.' These remarks have been interpreted by some authors as referring to Nupe, or Nouffie as it was called by certain early travellers. But it is very doubtful whether this can be true. Ibn Batuta gives the same name *Noufi* also to a certain tribe in East Africa, some 'six weeks' march' from the sea. Moreover, *Leo Africanus* (1520) makes no mention of Nupe.

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APPENDIX II

TRIBAL MARKS OF NUPE SUB-TRIBES

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619

BENI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks (i.e. Bida marks):

and

BENU sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

'NUPE ZAM' of Kutigi:
Traditional marks:

and

Modern marks:

KUSOPA sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

DIBO sub-tribe:

and

GBEDEGI sub-tribe:

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KYEDYE sub-tribe:

EBAGI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: very mixed. Have adopted Bida and Kutigi marks.

BASSA NGE sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

and also Bida marks.

KAKANDA tribe:
Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

APPENDIX III

HISTORICAL CHART OF NUPE RULERS

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A.D.	
1463?	Birth of Tsoede.
1493	Tsoede taken as slave to Iddah.
1523	Tsoede's flight from Iddah.
1531	Tsoede established himself as king of Nupe in Nupeko.
1591	Tsoede's death.
1591–1600	*Etsu* Shaba.
1600–25	*Etsu* Zavunla.
1625–70	*Etsu* Jigba.
1670–9	*Etsu* Mamma Wari.
1679–1700	*Etsu* Abdu Waliyi, foundation of the capital Jima.
1700–9	*Etsu* Alyu.
1710–13	*Etsu* Ganamace or Saci.
1713–17	*Etsu* Ibrahim.
1717–21	*Etsu* Idirisu.
1721–42	*Etsu* Tsado.
1742–6	*Etsu* Abubakari Kolo.
1746–59	*Etsu* Jibiri, the first Mohammedan king of Nupe. He was driven from his kingdom after thirteen years' reign. Died in exile in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen.
1759–67	*Etsu* Ma'azû's first reign. Power of Jima at its height. He resigned the throne and left Nupe to live in Ysuri.
1767–77	*Etsu* Majiya I.

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1777–8	*Etsu* Ilyasu. He is said to have disappeared suddenly.
1778–95	*Etsu* Ma'azū's second reign, after having been requested by the people to return to Nupe. Mallam Dendo (Manko), the Fulani emissary, appeared in Nupe.
1795	*Etsu* Alikolo Tankari. Reigned only for eight months, and was deposed by the people.
1795–6	*Etsu* Mamma. Foundation of the capital Rabá. Division of the kingdom.
1796–1805	*Etsu* Jimada, reigning at Jima. War with Majiya II. Jimada was killed in battle at Jengi (Ragada?).
1796–1810	*Etsu* Majiya II, reigning at Rabá.
1806	Majiya's war against the Fulani. Siege of Ilorin and defeat of Nupe armies.
1810?	The Fulani, supported by Idirisu, son of Jimada, conquered Rabá. Majiya fled to Zuguma. Idirisu (Yisa) installed as shadow-king of Nupe in Adama Lelu, near Eggā, by Fulani.
1810(13)–30	*Etsu* Idirisu (Yisa), reigning at Adama Lelu.
1830	Idirisu's rebellion against the Fulani. He was killed in the battle. Mallam Dendo recalled Majiya from his exile and made him shadow-king of Nupe in Zuguma.
1830–4	*Etsu* Majiya's second reign, in Zuguma.
1831	Death of Mallam Dendo.
1836	Rebellion and death of Tsado, Majiya's son. Usman Zaki, son of Mallam Dendo, was crowned first Fulani *Etsu* of Nupe.
1838	First rebellion of Masaba, Mallam Dendo's youngest son, against his brother. Established himself as rival king of Nupe in Lade.
1841	Masaba's second rebellion. Usman Zaki resigned the throne.
1847	Rebellion of the Hausa general Umar Bahaushe against his overlords. Masaba fled to Ilorin.
1850	Fall of Bida and defeat of Umar Bahaushe by Fulani armies under Umaru Majigi. Usman Zaki's second reign.

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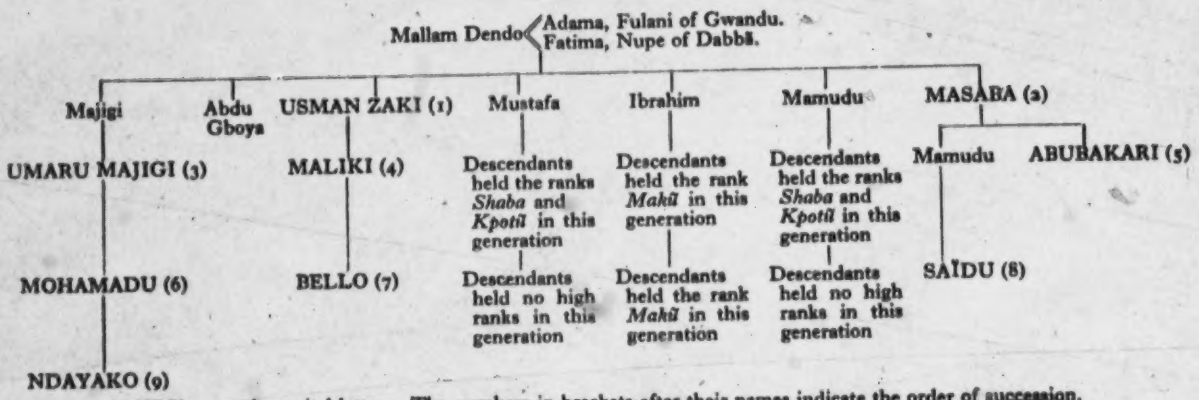
APPENDIX IV

GENEALOGY OF THE FULANI EMIRS OF NUPE



EMIRS' names in capital letters. The numbers in brackets after their names indicate the order of succession.

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APPENDIX V

NOTES ON THE NUPE CALENDAR

THE calendar of the Nupe peasant is an agricultural calendar. It is based on lunar months, and starts with the first rains, i.e. roughly in April. From the beginning of the rains the people count twelve, thirteen, and sometimes fourteen months until the new rains break. The last month of the old year (i.e. the 13th or 14th month) is then identified with the first month of the new year. The year is divided into six seasons, each comprising two months, as follows: 805

gbama first rains
zuzūkā rainy season
malikā (cf. the Hausa *marka*)—heavy rains
sabakā time of growth
gbāfere cold season
banagū hot season, or small-pox season.

Frequently, however, the Nupe peasant refers to the different months of the year by their number only, speaking of 'first month', or 'second month', and so on. The name *zuzūkā* is also used to denote the whole rainy season, and the whole dry season is called *yihére*, which means, literally, harvest.

This calendar is the pre-Islamic, original, Nupe calendar, which is rapidly going out of use, specially in Bida and the larger, semi-Mohammedan, villages, being superseded by a Nupe adaptation of the Mohammedan calendar. The latter, also operating with twelve lunar months, may coincide with the Nupe peasant calendar in the years when the Mohammedan New Year falls in the neighbourhood of April. But when the two do not coincide, and differ by a month or more, the time reckoning of the peasants in the semi-Mohammedan districts is thrown into serious confusion.[1] The Mohammedans, incidentally, unlike the pagan peasants, use the names of the months rather than the numbers. The Nupe-Mohammedan names of the months are as below. It will be seen that the idea of the original Nupe calendar, with its twin months grouped in six seasons, has been preserved in the new nomenclature: 805 184

1. *Etswa navū*—month of the torches (so called after the custom of throwing fire-brands during the celebration of the Mohammedan New Year).
2. *Etswa bawa gani*—month preceding the *gani* (a Nupe ceremony).
3. *Etswa gani*—month of the *gani*.
4. *Etswa togaya*—'twin month' (taken over from Hausa).
5. *Etswa togaya gubo*—second twin month. These two months are believed to be unlucky, and no important events, such as a wedding or naming-ceremony, will be celebrated during them.
6. *Etswa bawa azū sa gbakó*—month preceding the fast of the old men (i.e. first part of Ramadan).

[1] In June 1936, travelling from Kutigi to Jebba, I found that the Mohammedanised people of Kutigi were counting the second month, while the pagan Jebba Islanders maintained that it was the fourth.

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7. *Etswa axũ za gbakó*—month of the fast of the old men.
8. *Etswa bawa axũ*—month preceding the (general) fast (i.e. Ramadan).
9. *Etswa axũ*—month of the (general) fast.
10. *Etswa Salagi*—month of the small 'Sallah' (the first Mohammedan *Id* festival).
11. *Etswa bawa Salakó*—month preceding the great 'Sallah'.
12. *Etswa Salakó*—month of the great 'Sallah' (the second *Id* festival).

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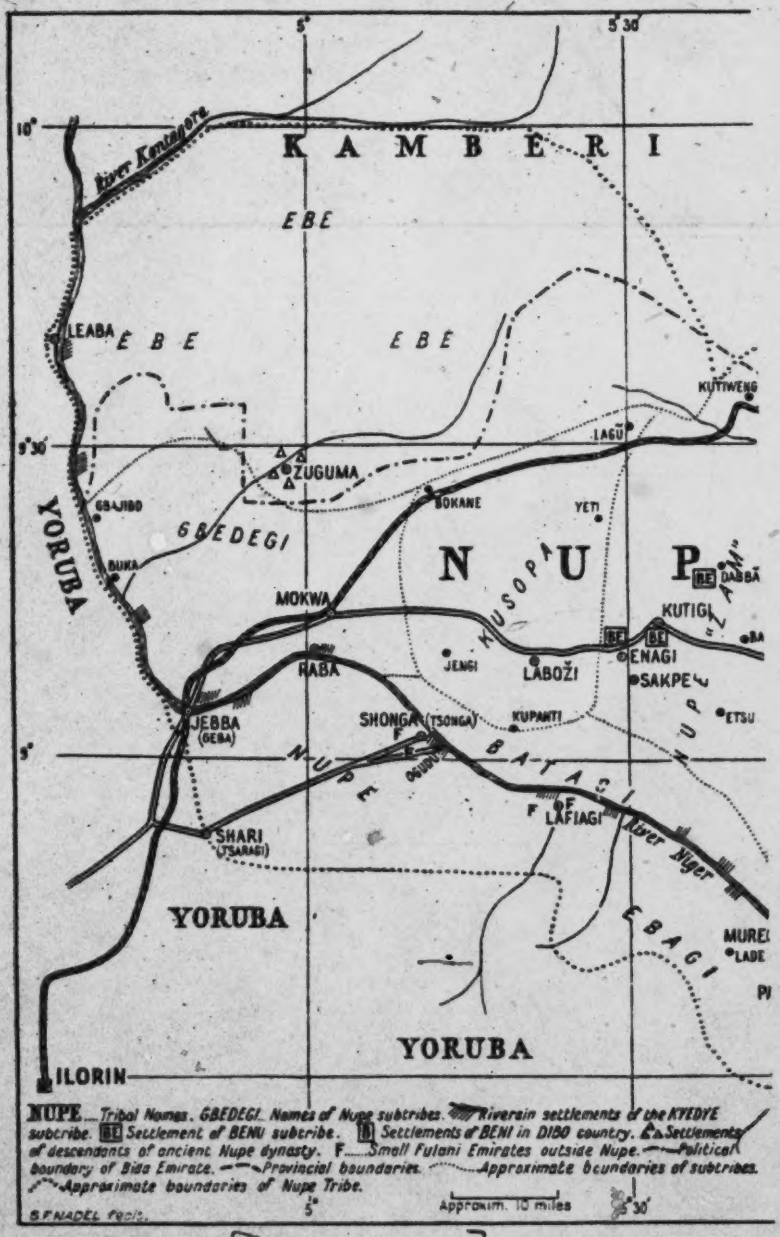

NUPE — Tribal Names. GBEDEGI Names of Nupe subtribes. Riverain settlements of the KYEDYE subtribe. BE Settlement of BENU subtribe. BI Settlements of BENI in DIBO country. Settlements of descendants of ancient Nupe dynasty. F — Small Fulani Emirates outside Nupe. — Political boundary of Bida Emirate. — Provincial boundaries. ..... Approximate boundaries of subtribes. Approximate boundaries of Nupe Tribe.

S.F. NADEL 1942.

5° Approxim. 10 miles 5°30'

[End Map I (A)]

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MAP OF NUPE

131
361
631
491
496

[End Map I (B)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

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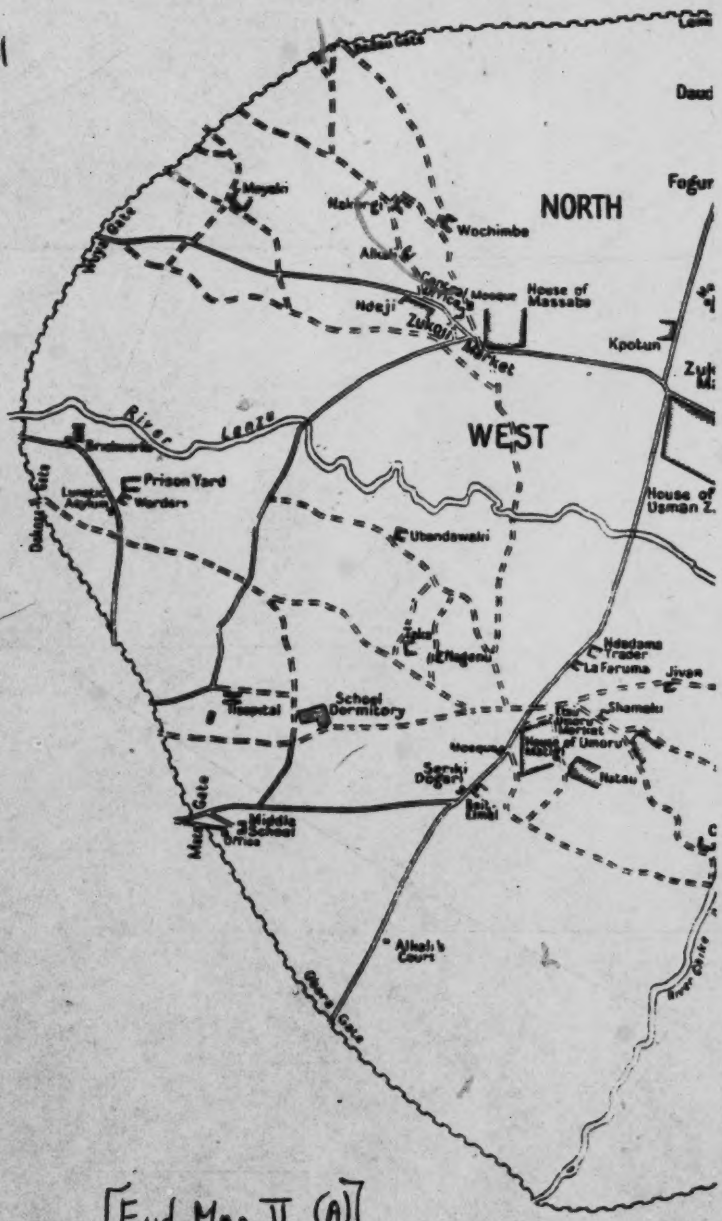
BIDA CITY

361



[End Map II (A)]

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BIDA CITY

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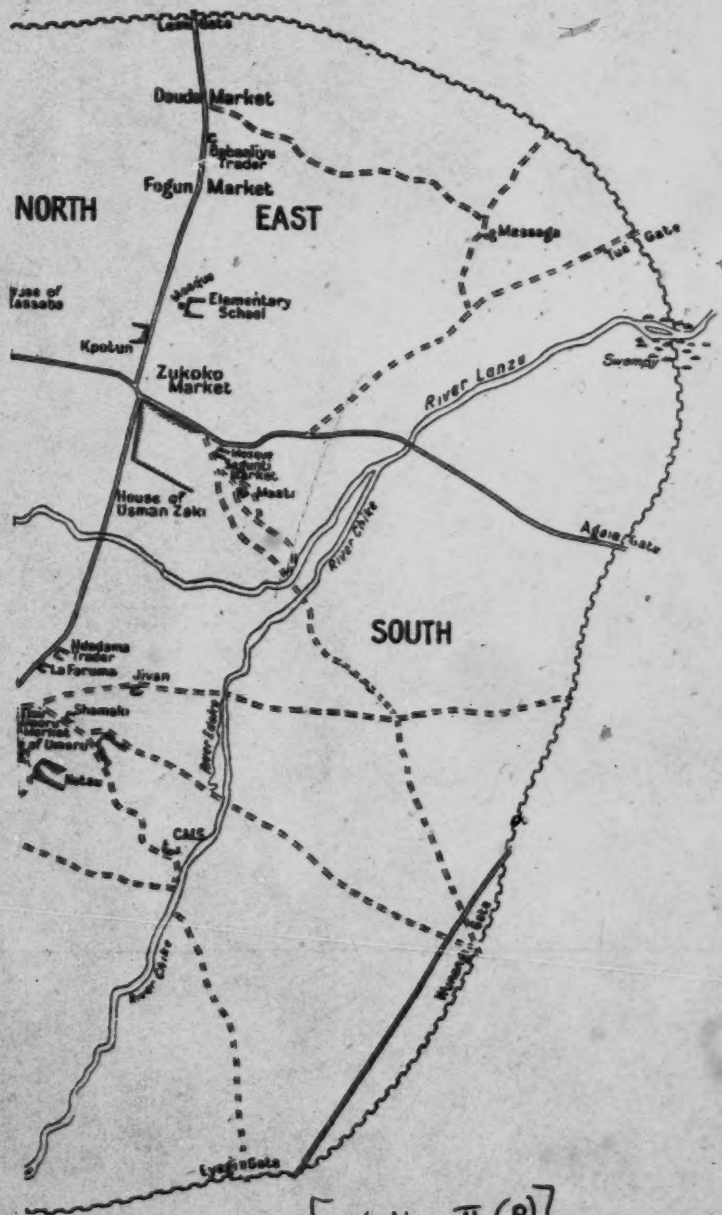

[Enad Map II (B)]

[Information on the Mallam schools where Koranic learning is taught has been placed in category 874. -- Analyst]

[For information on the barber-doctor guild, see categories 759 and 305. --Analyst]

[Information on the ticiži, the "Titled Ones," the office nobility of the Nupe state, has been placed in category 565. --Analyst]

[For information on the renting and leasing of land by baras, see also category 425. --Analyst]

463, 565 Nupe FF52

[Information on the Mallams, combination jurists and Mohammedan scholars, has been placed in category 875. -- Analyst]

326, 571, 592, 476 Nupe FF52

[For information on the efakó-group (cooperative labor group), particularly in the craft guilds, also see category 467--Analyst]

571, 675, 642 Nupe FF52

[Information on bara-ship, the sacrifice of individual freedom for the sake of political protection by a patron, has been placed in category 566. --Analyst]

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NUPE RELIGION

[p. i]

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NUPE RELIGION

by

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ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL LTD
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London

[p. iii]

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PREFACE

THIS book is intended as a sequel to my first monograph on the Nupe people, *A Black Byzantium*, the material presented there—on economic and political organization, and on kinship and the regulations of adolescence—being largely presupposed in the present volume. Here and there, however, the run of the argument necessitated a somewhat fuller reference to the data contained in the earlier book, so that repetitions and some overlapping could not altogether be avoided. Much the same applies to various papers which I previously published on particular aspects of Nupe culture. 128

In one respect the present account might seem incomplete; for it omits the full discussion of a topic not previously treated and one well suited to the context of a book on religion, namely, myths and legends. The reason for this omission is partly a practical one, since an exhaustive treatment of Nupe legends, which would inevitably lead on to ordinary tales and folklore, would have overburdened the present volume. But partly, the omission can be justified on the grounds that these tales and legends are of relatively little relevance for the understanding of Nupe religion, which point will be dealt with in due course.

As readers of *A Black Byzantium* will know, the Nupe people are today in great measure Mohammedanized, the influence of Islam steadily encroaching upon the indigenous form of worship. If, therefore, in this description of Nupe religion I were to take my lead from the actually obtaining state of affairs, I should have to assign equal weight to Nupe-Islam and to the traditional creed, if not indeed to give prominence to the former. In fact, I have done the reverse; more precisely, I have treated Islam in Nupe as an intrusion, as an instance (to use the familiar phrase) of 'culture contact', and the indigenous religion as my true or main subject-matter. I do not think that this viewpoint needs to be specially defended. The fact that the traditional observances had already disappeared from many parts of the country during my stay in 1934-6 and have probably receded even further since, far from detracting from our interest in the indigenous creed, only renders 128 771

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128 [171] the task of recording and analysing it more important as well as pressing.

A purely technical point in conclusion. It is always difficult to decide, in books of this kind, just how much scope should be given to vernacular words and quotations. Clearly, in a topic like religion certain crucial terms must be given, or must at least be introduced, in the vernacular. But too generous a use of the indigenous language is both clumsy and confusing to the reader. I have therefore tried to reduce it to a minimum. Nor do I think that this entails a serious loss of accuracy; for even the most intricate vernacular terms are translatable, even though the translation itself might have to be specially explained and perhaps justified: which is precisely the procedure I propose to adopt.

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I

THE NUPE CREED

I. PROLEGOMENA

THE title of this book, *Nupe Religion*, suggests a logical unity in our subject-matter which, at the very outset, might appear problematical. Two questions, in particular, might be raised. First, are we in fact dealing with *one* religion of *one* people, that is, with beliefs and practices which both form a coherent system and occur uniformly throughout the society? And second, how far are we dealing with 'religion' in the strict sense of the word, and with it alone, to the exclusion of 'magic', mere 'superstitions', and other, cruder forms of belief? 771 128

The answer to the first question cannot be given in the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no'; nor can all the issues involved properly be judged so early in the discussion. Let me, however, anticipate the relevant points. The religious beliefs and practices of the Nupe differ considerably in different parts of the country; we shall frequently meet with local cults and with forms of worship varying from region to region, even from village to village. Furthermore, the main acts of worship, their execution and promises, concern the single village community, and not that widest group, the Nupe people or tribe. Nor indeed is that widest group an unequivocal unit. The people who call themselves Nupe are internally divided in various ways—by ethnic descent, by tribal segmentation and, partly, political allegiance, by the cleavage between urban and peasant population, and by the barriers of social class. The bulk of the Nupe people is held together in the kingdom of that name, and in the following description we shall mainly be concerned with the politically united tribe or nation. Even so, certain of the internal divisions remain, and these, too, entail corresponding divergences in religious belief and practice. 771 184 128

It might seem, therefore, that in speaking of 'Nupe religion' we are merely employing a convenient descriptive phrase, a summary reference of the kind ethnographers find useful when they wish to state that such-and-such observances are found in a particular group or area. But the phrase is intended to mean more than this. 771 128

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The varieties of belief and practice found in Nupe are at least roughly akin, both in their content and in what might be called their style; though they exhibit no conspicuous uniformity or even consistency, they yet hang together in relevant respects and also reflect an identical psychological tenor. Most important of all, the people themselves think of their religion in terms of such an underlying unity; indeed, as we shall see, they tend to exaggerate it. Thus, though the local observances may differ and the congregations in acts of worship be no larger than single village communities, there is a clear understanding that the diverse and separate practices are instances of a common creed. When the people performing one kind of ceremonial comment on the different usage in another part of the country, they yet imply that the two belong together or, more precisely, belong to something wider than both. So that, over and above internal divisions, the people draw the (to them) much more important distinction between the sum total of beliefs and practices in their tribe, and the different totals of this kind in others.

It must be emphasized, however, that for the people this over-all unity is not constituted by the intrinsic coherence of the religious usages that happen to occur in their tribe; it is constituted, rather, by the fact that these usages do occur in their tribe and hence are typical of and valid for a given people or society. That collective entity—the people called Nupe—is the basic premiss; the diverse beliefs and practices are construed into a common creed on that basis.

The precise relationship between the total society and the 'total creed' will occupy us at a later stage. Here we might note that the Nupe have no special, collective name for their religion. They have names only for particular conceptions, single practices, local ceremonials. As for the total creed, the Nupe can describe it only circuitously and enumeratively, as being concerned with the God *Sokó*, and not with deities named differently; with such-and-such rituals or 'medicines', and not with others; with spirits, but not anthropomorphous ones, and so forth. Yet it is for them a 'total creed' none the less. If it be argued that this cannot be so, since in this case the people would have found a way of summarizing all these aspects in a name indicative of their over-all unity (as we do when we speak of Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism), the answer is that they do not think of their creed in that way. As they think of it, it has no identity apart from its validity-for-a-society; so that it would be meaningless to define it by a separate concept. Differently expressed, Nupe religion is a tribal or national religion, and *one* inasmuch as a tribe or nation claims it as its own.

To turn to our second question, which, let this be stressed, is of a purely preliminary order. It is here raised, not for the sake of

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discussing the meaning or essence of religious belief or of separating its relevant varieties, but merely in order to outline the kind of data that have been included in this book and to justify their inclusion. The word 'religion' will here be understood in the widest and loosest sense. I have not, for example, made the familiar distinction between religion and magic a criterion for the selection or arrangement of the material. Not that the Nupe are without observances and concepts which merit the name 'religious', however narrowly understood. But other beliefs and practices, though they might not satisfy the criteria of 'religion proper', will not for that reason be excluded or kept on one side.

It does not seem very difficult to define our position in general terms. Convenient phrases are at hand, such as: By 'religion' shall here be meant all beliefs and practices implying communication with and control of the supernatural, whether this is attempted through appeals and prayers to some transcendental intelligence (in the manner of religion) or quasi-mechanically, by the manipulation of 'magic' agencies. But this equation of religion with 'supernaturalism' (as Lowie would say), convenient though it may be, only poses further problems of definition; and the familiar category of the 'supernatural' proves on closer inspection to be itself ambiguous.

When speaking of attempts at communicating with or controlling the supernatural we are clearly viewing the situation through the eyes of the people we are studying, imputing to *them* the thought of transcending the given reality; we should probably impute to them also definite attitudes and feelings relating to the things transcendental, such as awe or fear, humility or ecstasy, or the emotional concentration we call worship. Yet when we try to define the supernatural itself we are driven to assume the opposite viewpoint and to judge the transcendentality of things by our own way of thinking. Nor, indeed, can we avoid veering round from one viewpoint to the other, since neither is by itself fully satisfactory.

Consider that any definition of the supernatural must introduce the contrast with the domain of empirical and scientific knowledge; more precisely, when judging any action or notion to be concerned with the supernatural we assert by implication that it is concerned with existences or influences (beings, 'powers', 'forces') the assumption of which conflicts with the principles of empirical enquiry and verification.[1] And since these principles and

[1] It must be emphasised that the relevant conflict is with the *principles* of empirical knowledge and with the *methods* of scientific enquiry, not merely with the body of information extant at any given moment. For in the latter case any scientific theory in advance of existing ideas or techniques of verification would be 'supernatural'.

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their potentialities have been fully explored only in our own modern science, and can certainly not be assumed to govern the intellectual efforts of primitive peoples, the separation of the 'natural' from the 'supernatural' can have a precise meaning only in our own system of thought. Thus, though we should hardly hesitate to call a primitive people's belief in spirits or witchcraft 'supernatural', we cannot in fact assume that these are considered less well proven, less 'true' or 'real', than the physical environment with which the people grapple in their everyday lives; and when we call a fantastic tale about the origin of the world a 'myth', this may well, for the believer, imply the same measure of credibility as he would assign to documented or witnessed 'real' history.

There is this further point. The very conflict between supernatural and empirical knowledge on which we base our judgments is likely to be absent in a primitive culture; so that our judgments are again valid only within our own system of thought. If people in our midst believe in guardian angels or the tale about the trumpets of Jericho, they do so in spite of the scientific knowledge current in our society and hence accessible to them also; in other words, these persons choose to accept one basis of credibility (faith) rather than another (knowledge), and our judgments on the supernatural character of such and similar beliefs rests on the possibility of this choice. But this mutual exclusiveness of the empirical and the mystic does not hold for less advanced cultures. The primitive who believes in guardian spirits or miracle tales does not do so in opposition to intellectual principles equally enunciated in his society; he is not facing a choice between faith and knowledge, having to set aside one when he accepts the other. Rather, he accommodates both, only distributing them over different provinces of life. He can believe that hard work makes the crops grow, but that on certain occasions guardian spirits do so also; that certain forms of illness come from eating the wrong kind of food, and others from the malevolence of witches; or that certain events in the past are authenticated by the memory of concrete individuals, while others are as credible even though (as the Nupe would say) 'no one has seen them'.

It would seem, therefore, that the category of the supernatural is of dubious value in anthropological description. This view has in fact been argued, to my mind very convincingly, by Dr. Bidney. We cannot, he holds, take it for granted that primitive peoples 'distinguish between the sphere of the natural and that of the supernatural, since gods and spirits are just as much a part of the order of nature as men and animals. The dichotomy of the natural and supernatural implies a scientific epistemology and critical, metaphysical sophistication which must not be assumed

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without indubitable evidence. And modern ethnography does abound in evidence that sacred as well as secular traditions are *equally* credible to the native mind and differ only as regards the motivations for belief'.[1]

Even so, it seems to me, we cannot dispense with the category of the supernatural, defined according to our own, the observer's, criteria, at least in a first approach to our subject-matter. In a sense these criteria alone enable us to mark out our subject-matter; for the very fact that primitive peoples give to spirits, witches, and mythical events much the same credence as to things 'true' and 'real', that is, that they reckon with and conceive of controlling phenomena which *we know to be imaginary*, clearly represents one of our most crucial problems. Yet it is clear also that this 'first approach' may seriously mislead us. Relying on our own criteria of the supernatural we should, for example, have to class as scientific (and hence non-religious) certain treatments of disease by means of exorcism or magic dances because, on the grounds of our own advanced knowledge, we understand these procedures to be psycho-therapeutically effective and thus empirically sound. Conversely, we should have to include in the category of the supernatural any technological processes which, without being 'transcendental' for the actors, prove from our standpoint to be empirically unsound, based on wrong reasoning or false premisses; and the same would hold for any would-be science which we know to be mere superstition (such as astrology, folk-medicine, or weather lore). The 'supernatural' would thus come to include clumsy and fallacious science, while the 'natural' would extend over empirical facts misconstrued and as it were 'super-rationalized'. Differently expressed, we should be disregarding the intentions of the actors for the results they unwittingly achieve (or fail to achieve).

It will be seen that in order to point out the inaccuracies of our criteria of the supernatural we had to refer to something like the primitive's own criteria; our sources of error are such only because we do not expect our own distinction between empirical and transcendental aims to tally with some equivalent distinction drawn by the people we study. That we must credit them with this ability, no one today will deny. I am far from assuming a primitive mentality essentially 'prelogical' or dominated by 'mystic' thought. Nor did I mean to imply that in the primitive's conception ghosts, spirits, miracle tales, technological processes, the physical environment, and witnessed records of the past all belong to precisely the same category of reality. All I mean to imply is

[1] D. Bidney, *Meta-anthropology*, in Ideological Differences and World Order, ed. F. S. C. Northrop, 1949, p. 333.

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that the *differentia* valid for the primitive is not coterminous with credibility, and hence with our 'sophisticated' dichotomy of faith and knowledge or things natural and supernatural.

What form, then, does this *differentia* take? Dr. Bidney suggests that the relevant distinction lies 'between secular, everyday experience and sacred, superhuman tales and traditions about gods and spirits, since (the natives) have *special terms to designate the different categories* of narrative'.[1] I would give much the same answer in somewhat wider as well as looser terms. The distinction we are after would seem to be twofold, bearing both on the assumption of particular 'existences' and 'influences' in the world, and on the means employed in reckoning with them. But since the assumptions entail the means, and both are implicit in the intent guiding the people's behaviour, we may formulate the distinction in the terms of the latter alone. Thus we shall place on one side behaviour of a public and everyday kind, understood (by the actors) to aim at 'normal' effects, that is, effects commensurate with ordinary human efforts and skills; and on the other, behaviour understood to aim at extraordinary and miraculous results, involving superhuman efficacy and achieved by esoteric (or 'sacred') skills. Our primary evidence will clearly be linguistic, being embodied in the statements and in the nomenclature of the people. It is probably futile to expect that the native language should always provide precise distinctions of the kind we require, words like 'normal' and 'non-normal', 'miraculous' or 'superhuman', 'sacred' and 'profane'. But as we shall see, the Nupe possess at least two concepts approximating to such precision, the word 'knowledge', meant to circumscribe all ordinary learning and skills, and the word 'ritual', which refers to a whole class of activities of extraordinary, miraculous, or sacred import. Secondly, there is the series of words naming specific existences or influences of such an extraordinary or superhuman character—the deity, spirits, ancestors, or the agency of 'medicine'. Finally, we shall find our evidence also in the visible attitudes of the people, in those signs of awe, fear, humility, and worship which we related at the outset to the sense of the supernatural, as against attitudes of ordinary concern and profane interest.

Let me emphasize that none of these criteria is by itself decisive. The Nupe word 'medicine', for example, is ambiguous in that it refers both to skills of an esoteric and miraculous kind, and to healing practices which are public, profane, and acquired by ordinary learning; but if the linguistic evidence blurs the distinction, the contrasting attitudes with which the 'medicines' are

[1] *Op. cit.;* the italics are mine.

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handled re-establish it. Again, anthropologists are familiar with magic practices carried out in a prosaic, businesslike fashion, which reveals nothing of a sense of awe or worship; here the nomenclature or the invocation of named deities or spirits will demonstrate the transcendental aims of the procedure.

In assessing, as we must, the attitudes and feelings of the actors we are of course relying on evidence often so subtle that our judgment may easily be at fault. Nor will even the combination of all three criteria always separate unequivocally supernatural conceptions (or their equivalent) from empirical (or would-be empirical) knowledge. For among the Nupe as elsewhere we also meet with intellectual efforts which aim at penetrating to something like ultimate agencies or quintessences—the human soul, a life principle, and such like—which, for us, are simply mystical. For the people, this speculative knowledge is still 'knowledge' and 'learning', and not something that should be placed on the other side, with things sacred and miraculous. But neither is it 'ordinary' knowledge, going some way beyond it and being in some measure esoteric. We might say that it belongs to 'metaphysics' and not, strictly speaking, to religion; yet by all the criteria we can bring to bear no sharp division seems possible. For though these ultimate conceptions may be handled without conspicuous show of awe, fear, or reverence, these are not far removed; clearly, truths of this kind, attainable only to a few, are often approached in a spirit at least akin to the humility or thrill evoked by things truly sacred. Nor perhaps can we expect these ultimate speculations to bear no reference, however tacit, to the acts of deities, to the miracle of creation, or to a supreme will to be accepted in all humility: much as the assumption of a divine order of the universe could fuse with our own, rigorous science of earlier days.

To sum up. Whichever way we propose to circumscribe the province of things religious, we are bound to encounter a border zone which defies precise *a priori* allocation on this or that side of the boundary. To be sure, this residue of inaccuracy is entailed in the broad view of religion which we made our starting point. But no other starting point seemed feasible. Bluntly stated, what we set out to do is to describe everything in a particular culture that has a bearing on religion. And since 'religion is precisely one of those words which belong to the more intuitive portions of our vocabulary',[1] and hence cannot be given a sharp connotation, we have no choice, but to feel our way towards the meaning it should have in given circumstances. We must not risk omitting anything that might be relevant; the risk we have to take is that of including,

[1] Edward Sapir, 'The Meaning of Religion'; in *Selected Writings*, 1949. p. 346.

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besides 'religion proper', also that 'border zone', composed of mere superstitions; of science misconstrued or all-too-crudely attempted; and of science aiming too high or incompletely severed from mystic thought.

2. DOGMA AND MYTH

The preceding discussion has to some extent laid down already what must be our first concern—to outline the basic categories in which the Nupe frame their transcendental knowledge and thus to express the crucial distinction between things religious and profane. This task clearly implies more than merely compiling a glossary and commenting on its items. These basic categories will embody already an essential part of the dogma or doctrine of the religion. For any dogma or doctrine, being a body of assertions and propositions, must employ the language of these basic categories; the significance we discover in the latter will already point to the tenets of the creed; while whatever further information might be derived from the doctrinal assertions, will in turn elucidate the terms of the 'glossary'.

In a sense, we cannot approach the dogma of Nupe religion in any other way. Like most primitive societies, the Nupe have not formulated their creed *ad hoc*, in a specific and coherent body of statements; nor is there any institutionalized teaching of doctrine on which we could rely. Rather, we must piece the creed together, from current sayings and from comments or arguments put forth in discussion, from the songs and prayers accompanying ceremonials and from the observation of the latter. There is, in many primitive societies, another source, again linguistic, which we could use, namely, the mythology of the people. Though dogma and myth are clearly not the same thing, they are akin in that both embody the tenets of the creed and the basic categories of religious thought: myths, of course, do so indirectly, through presenting (or concealing) the articles of creed in accounts of miraculous happenings, in narratives of some kind, which are meant to illustrate and exemplify rather than enunciate (in the manner of dogma). It has, in fact, been suggested long ago that in primitive religions, since they are without formulated doctrine, we must look for the 'key to ritual and practice', not in dogma, but in myth.[1]

None of this holds for the Nupe. To begin with, they do not separate 'myths' conceptually from secular traditions or 'historical' narratives, having the same term for both and relating

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, pp. 16–17.

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both on the same, profane, occasions.[1] More important, Nupe mythology is altogether flimsy and rudimentary. It illustrates only two tenets of the creed, the conception of a supreme deity and the role of 'medicine', while others, for example, the equally basic conception of 'ritual', are given no such expression. Nor does the mythology concern itself more than scantily with cosmological speculations or with the justification of particular ceremonies. 771

Certain legends meant to account for particular practices or ceremonials will be quoted later, in that context. Let me here illustrate my point by relating the one cosmological myth the Nupe possess. It is, strictly speaking, only 'near-cosmological', being concerned, not with the origin of the world and of all the things and creatures in it, but only with the origin of man, of the Nupe people, and of one observance (which is incorrectly stated). The myth, incidentally, may not be entirely a Nupe creation; the names of the first human beings mentioned in it have a Mohammedan flavour;[2] and certain details of the narrative (the bull who appears out of the water, and his strange language) occur in almost the same form among the Bororó Fulani.[3] However this may be, the myth is far from well known, so that for this reason also it cannot be considered a relevant expression of the Nupe creed. 771 773

'In the beginning, there was a man called Ancestor Adă and a woman called Ancestress Adama. They had two children, one male, one female, who in turn begot two children, male and female. The male child died immediately after birth, while the girl stayed alive. When she grew up she spoke a strange language which her parents could not understand. But a bull who one day rose from the river when the girl was standing on the bank understood the language. He talked to the girl, and the two became friends. Later the bull became the girl's lover, and she bore him a male child. This child again spoke and understood the strange language. When the boy grew up, he used to go to the bank of the river to talk to the bull, until one day the bull climbed out of the river and followed the boy on dry land wherever he went. This boy was the ancestor of the "Cow Fulani", and the bull the first of the Fulani cattle. 771 773 539

'Ancestress Adama had a third child, a girl called Mureamu (Miriam or Mary), who had three children, two sons and a daughter. When they grew up the two young men both desired their sister. They quarrelled and one was killed. It was thus that

[1] The word in question is *etă*, meaning 'stories of old times', and these are told in daytime, not at night (as are stories meant for amusement), when people would be 'too tired to listen to serious things'.

[2] See below, p. 247.

[3] See F. W. de St. Croix, *The Fulani of Northern Nigeria*, p. 8.

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771 death and murder first appeared in the world. The couple who
773 remained did not know what to do with the dead body. They
539 carried the corpse on their shoulders for three days, lamenting and crying, but could not get rid of it. At last, God caused the earth to open, and they placed the body inside. Thus the practice of burial and of the three days' mourning for the dead began.[1] The couple now stayed together and begot a male child, who became the ancestor of the Nupe people.'

771 If, then, Nupe mythology is a very inadequate guide to dogma and doctrine, this inadequacy is itself significant, revealing the Nupe attitude towards their creed and indeed the whole tenor of their religious thought in their true perspective. Mythology, as we have said, illustrates and exemplifies rather than enunciates the creed. We may go further and say that it expresses the creed in a form less abstract and theoretical than does formulated doctrine. For myths borrow the phraseology of realistic accounts, dealing as they do with near-humans and near-natural events; thus they make less demand upon sheer credence, compromise with ordinary imagination, and as it were vulgarize the dogma. If, then, primitive religions rely on mythical narratives rather than on dogmatic assertions they seem to discard the more abstract contents of religious thought. Yet Nupe religion, which does not employ mythology either to any great extent, is clearly not of this kind. If the Nupe do not attempt a specific, coherent formulation of their creed, neither do they seek to re-phrase it in more concrete and would-be realistic language. In other words, Nupe religion forgoes the means of 'vulgarizing' the dogma. Thus, though its creed may be inarticulate, yet it is held in all abstractness.

3. CATEGORIES

(i) *God and the World*

779 The most basic concept of Nupe theology, that of the supreme
776 being, is also the widest. In a sense it stands for the whole realm of religion, serving to separate all things that belong to that realm from others that do not. For in order to express this distinction the Nupe say of an object, phenomenon, or type of action that it is, or is not, *nyá Sokó*—'of God' or 'belonging to God'. There are two inaccuracies in this broad category of things religious. The clause 'of God' in the sense here understood is properly applied only in the context of discussions turning upon the dichotomy of the religious and profane. In a wider context the phrase loses its disjunctive implication; for ultimately everything is 'of God', that

[1] There is no such rule of 'three days' mourning'.

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is, is his creation. But the relationship between God and the created world is once more viewed as a dichotomy. And in this final context only the forms of religious action which bear on the living, active powers of the deity are 'of God', while all others, having become part of his completed creation, are classed with the 'things in the world'. 779 776

We shall later exemplify this somewhat sophisticated point in Nupe theology. As regards the dualism of God and the World, it is aligned with yet another, of more concrete character, of the sky and the earth. Together, these four concepts describe the Nupe universe; for it contains no other cosmic entities, for example, no underworld or some yonder inhabited by the spirits of the dead; nor have the Nupe anything to say about the stars, the sun, or the moon. In all relevant respects the created world (*yiže*) is identical with the earth (*kin*); while the Creator is identified with the sky. Though the supreme being is also addressed or referred to as *tsóci*, 'Our Lord',[1] his proper name is *Sokó*, which is best translated as God-the-Sky, the same word also denoting the sky in the visible, physical sense.[2]

As God is identified with the sky, so he is also said to dwell in the sky. But this belief is vague and contradicted by other statements, as are most assertions on the nature of the supreme deity. In fact, nothing very definite can be said or is known about God. He is not on earth, and the most common and most strongly emphasized comment on the nature of the deity is *Sokó lokpá*, 'God is far away'. Yet in a different, more mystic sense he is present, always and everywhere; thus in a song I recorded it is said—

God is in front,
He is in the back.

God has clearly awareness, intellect, and some of the sensitiveness of man; for he is addressed and appealed to in everyday language. But he is hidden and cannot be seen; nor is he personified more concretely; indeed, no one knows if he is or is not like man.[3]

[1] The suffix *-ci* means 'our'; the word *tsó* occurs normally as a suffix of other words, denoting 'owner of' or 'master of', e.g. *kin-tsó*, Owner of the Land, *emi-tsó*, Family Head.

[2] There exists another word for 'sky', *sama*, which is of Hausa-Arabic origin and is used, at least today, when referring to the sky and firmament in the material sense, e.g. 'the sky is black', 'the sky is clear', etc. The word *Sokó*, incidentally, also indicates something big or great, the suffix *-kó* having that implication.

[3] Strictly speaking, therefore, there is no justification for calling the supreme deity 'he'. In Nupe language this issue does not arise since the personal pronouns have no gender and do not distinguish between animate and inanimate objects. For purely practical reasons, however, I shall continue to employ the personal pronoun in the masculine. [193]

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779 776 Characteristically, any thought of gaining more precise knowledge of the deity is regarded as absurd and may well be ridiculed, as in this somewhat slangy proverb: 'The thing that conceals God, go and buy it.'

Only these facts are positively and universally known and are often argued when the Nupe wish to compare their beliefs with those of other peoples: God is all-powerful, as he is all-knowing; there is only one God, and no other deities exist; God was in the beginning, before the appearance of man and the creation of nature, being himself the creator of all things. And here we must note that the phrase 'all things' is meant to include things good as well as evil, which article of creed appears, circuitously phrased, in various secular songs. Thus one song contains this phrase—'A being which God did not create, neither did the world create it'; and another runs thus—'Should you do anything that is beautiful, God has caused it to be beautiful; should you do anything evil, God has caused it to be evil.'

The Nupe deity, then, is something like the *causa causans* of mediæval philosophy, though the crucial problem of that philosophy, how to reconcile an omnipotent deity with the presence of evil in the world, is not really seen as a problem. Good and evil are both laid into the same creation, as are the various sources of evil —malevolent spirits, disease, witchcraft. Without further speculations about a Free Will, or the weakness of mind and matter, or Satan, the deficiencies of the world are taken for granted. The only problem in Nupe theology is the actual power of evil, not its origin. And this power is justified, once more without moral speculations, by accepting, simply, the aloofness of the deity. In other words, one does not wonder why God did not create a better world; but one attempts to answer the question—Why does God not better protect man, who has to live in this world? The answer, as we shall see, is that divine concern with the world is limited.

Here a slight correction is necessary. The Nupe do mention Satan or the Devil; but they only just mention him and no more. He is called *Abilí* or *Jibilílu*, and sometimes *Sheitán*. The last name is, of course, Arabic and a loan-word in Nupe. So is *Jibilílu*, which is the Nupe version of the Arabic *Jibríl*, an angel of the Qoran having been changed into an African Devil. Whether *Abilí* is an original word or a further corruption of *Jibríl*, it is difficult to say; the Nupe use of the word in ordinary conversation seems to suggest the former. It is commonly employed to denote some unexpected evil turn of events, for example, a quarrel between friends or the discovery that an otherwise truthful person has been guilty of a lie. On occasions like these the people would exclaim—'Ah, the devil is at work' or, literally, '*Abilí* is present'. But though the

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Nupe firmly hold that the devil exists, that he is behind many (though not all) evil things, and that there is only one devil (while there are many evil spirits), their knowledge of Satan carries no further; nor does he play any part in religious observances. Only diviners might refer to *Sheitán* or *Abilí* in connection with a particularly sinister prophecy. Above all, the Nupe hold that God has created the devil, so that Satan, far from being a counterpart of the deity, is only one of his ambiguous creatures.

There is no doubt in the minds of the Nupe that God, as he created the world, so he can also control it and intervene in its course. Everyday speech is full of phrases such as 'with God's help', 'may God give this or that', or 'may God cause such-and-such to happen'. To describe, incidentally, this divine intervention one uses the ordinary causative mode and the same verbs that are applied to human actions. One also swears by God and lends weight to any assertion by adding *be Sokó nyi*—'by God'. But these allusions imply little certainty that God will in fact intervene; for 'God is far', aloof, outside the world; which tenet overrules all other notions.

This belief has an important consequence: one cannot approach God directly. Although every ritual act is accompanied by some phrase or blessing invoking *Sokó*, there are no prayers specifically addressed to God and capable of being employed freely and independently of the appointed ceremonial occasions. Rather, the approach to the deity is circuitous, that is, through the given ceremonials or rituals. If we call the belief in God-the-Creator the first article of the Nupe creed, the second would be this conception of ritual as an intermediary between God and man.

(ii) *Ritual Force*

The condition that God is approached implicitly in every ceremonial and solely in this manner is regarded, not as fortuitous, but as having been willed by God and embodied in his creation. Equally, it is regarded as peculiar to the Nupe form of worship. To quote a typical comment: The Mohammedans can pray to God directly; but *Sokó* is 'so very far from men' that he gave them the ritual as an intermediary—a 'thing-in-between'. The ritual is thus a gift of God or 'of God'—*nyá Sokó*; but being an intermediary, the ritual is also of this world. Now, the Nupe will readily quote an inventory of the world, thus: 'In the world there are these things—*zawangfi*, human beings; *ena gontáfi*, animals; *aljenúfi*, spirits; and *huti*, ritual.' With one exception, this list fully accounts for the Nupe picture of creation, though the nature of animate beings is itself composite and requires a further list of attributes. For the moment we are concerned only with the last item on the list and

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779 with its twofold citizenship, among the 'things of God' and the 'things of the world'.

In translating *kuti* as 'ritual' we are not conveying the full import of the conception. We shall later speak of other acts of worship—invocation of ancestors, sacrifices to twins or medicine shrines, offerings to spirits; all these are ritual actions as we understand the word, and the Nupe too acknowledge the underlying identity by calling the crucial act, the sacrifice, offering or libation, by the same name—*labá*. But *kuti* means more, even though it always includes the phase of *labá* and in one form does not go beyond it. For the people the external procedure of *kuti*, the things you can see and hear and easily describe, stands for something more obscure and intangible, even unknowable. Nor is the nature of *kuti* exhausted by saying that it is a means of communicating with the deity. For there are many *kuti*, each with an identity and power of its own; each also has its individual name, and some are 'stronger' than others, and more or less dangerous. The *kuti* is called a 'thing', *enya*; it is also something that you 'make' or 'do'; equally it is said to know its priests and congregation, as though it were an intelligent being. The Nupe do not deny these contradictions and obscurities; they would simply hold that they are beyond human understanding. There is the Nupe saying—'Such-and-such *kuti*: a speech (explaining it) does not come first'; which means, you may learn the names and procedures of *kuti*; but as for the rest, no explanation must be expected. Ultimately, no one can see, hear, or know the *kuti*; to wit, these verses from the song cycle connected with the most important ritual of Nupe, *gunnu*—

> Do you know the *gunnu*?
> You do not know it.
> For can you hear it?

Yet though the nature of *kuti* cannot be fully grasped, the external procedures are known and can be learned. There are rules about performing a particular *kuti*, guarding it, keeping away from it or protecting it from illicit knowledge; and by means of these procedures, which are both delicate and on occasion dangerous, humans are enabled to tap some mysterious but in essence divine force. Also, the procedures belong to humans, much as material possessions belong to their owners. Thus it is considered a general and important characteristic of the Nupe people, which gives them a distinct position in *rebus sacris*, that they collectively 'own' the ritual called *gunnu*, while different sections of the tribe possess other rituals besides, and different tribes rituals of other kinds. Mostly, however, this 'ownership' is understood more narrowly,

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being ascribed to single village communities; and as these 'own' such-and-such *kuti*, so they can exercise a certain mastery over the universe on given occasions and for given aims. Generically, *kuti* is a portion of cosmic power, which is in itself unspecific but is capable of being harnessed and canalized into specific efficacy in particular rituals; or more briefly, *kuti* is the Force-that-is-in-ritual. 779

We have noted the twofold nature of *kuti* as a thing-in-between God and man. In one sense, it plays the part of a gesture or utterance whereby man brings his wishes to the attention of the deity; but in another it is also a thing-in-between man and the power which, we must presume, God normally wields when he makes or remakes the world. Let me argue this point from the Nupe point of view. Men, they would hold, cannot hope to move the remote and aloof deity by prayers alone; but they possess, in *kuti*, a means of drawing directly upon the power that is God's. There is this saying: 'The human being, he makes *kuti*; God, he causes it to come', that is, to have the desired power or efficacy. In a way, it is as simple as that—a matter almost of pressing a button. But the fact that human beings can thus simply summon divine action, is itself due to an act of divine providence. Paradoxically speaking, the Nupe deity, concerned over the limits set to his concern with the fate of men, bestowed upon them, not the efficacy of prayer (which might not reach him), but a portion of his own force. In this sense, then, the ritual is a shortcut as well as an intermediary and has the greater effectiveness of such a direct access to the causes that move the world. This notion too has been formulated, if more elliptically, in these verses from the *gunnu* cycle of songs—

(*If someone said:*) 'Give me for the sake of God',
I should give him nothing.
(*If someone said:*) 'Give me for the sake of the *gunnu*,'
There it is—I give him.

Which means, in simple language: While it is of little avail to invoke God, the performance of the *gunnu* (or any other *kuti*) is always effective.

This, incidentally, is a somewhat optimistic view, as we shall discover later, when discussing the occasions for ritual and the precise expectations that go with them. We may anticipate this, however. As *kuti* are vested in, or 'owned' by, communities, so the aims and occasions of their performance essentially bear on the problems of community life.[1] These are the ubiquitous and perennial

[1] This is true of the 'fixed' rituals, which have their firm place in the Nupe calendar. Certain of the 'movable' *kuti* can on occasion be performed for the sake of individuals, though their performance is still in the hands of the community priest (see below, p. 87).

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779 problems of survival which face, not this or that individual, but the collectivity, such as droughts, epidemics, the fertility of the land, and the fertility of the population. The close association of *kuti* with the well-being of the whole community is convincingly expressed in the concluding formula of every ritual, whatev[illegible] occasion—*Sokó lá eži u ge*: 'May God grant that the villa[illegible] town) prospers.'

Let me make it clear that the efficacy of the ritual lies in the whole of the procedure and not in any of its elements, not even in the language employed on such occasions. Though invocations and prayer-like formulae play their part in ritual, they are not peculiar to it; like the act of *labá* they also occur, in much the same form, in other observances and are by themselves without any power. Significantly, they are often couched in language which is nondescript or takes the form of riddles and parables representing comments upon the ritual rather than crucial stages in the procedure. Also, the language can be varied without affecting the efficacy of the rite; thus I could record songs in one ritual which were borrowed from another, the people's comments being that 'it made no difference'. Nor yet are there material objects, effigies and the like, which might be said to contain the supernatural power. Most rituals have their customary places, and some of the sacred songs
[778] speak of the 'initiates entering the house' of the *kuti*; but this is a mere metaphor, for no Nupe ritual has a 'house' or 'temple', or indeed a locality which is on all occasions 'sacred', barred to the uninitiate, or avoided by the people. On occasion, the localities are changed without further ado, for example, when a village grows and encroaches upon the grounds hitherto reserved for the ritual. The cult objects, if they exist at all, are usually things of no sacred association—boughs or leaves carried in the dances, unimportant animals killed in the sacrifice, and pots and dishes used for cooking and eating.

778 There are exceptions. In a few places I found rituals associated
779 with stones, either ordinary rocks in the ground or (in two instances only) round stone balls supported on carved wooden posts. Sometimes the rituals are even named accordingly, for example, *fūtákuŋ*, 'The Stone drinks' (a ceremonial from Doko and Pichi), or *takúŋžiko*, 'Black Stone' (a ritual from Katcha). Other cult objects seem to be of alien origin, such as the masks of the *elo* ritual of Mokwa, which betrays Yoruba influence, and the 'thunderbolts' used in a fertility cult known to come from Gwari. The most elaborate cult objects in Nupe, certain bronze figures in human shape, occur only in the Niger valley, in the two villages Jebba and Tada, and are again said to be of allen origin; they also belong to a very special series of rites, associated with the mythical

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founder of Nupe kingdom and serving the interests of the state. 779
We shall later deal with these 'exceptions'. Let me here stress that
in calling them that I am taking my lead from the people. Indeed, 778
the Nupe would altogether disregard these lapses from a wholly abstract creed, which seems to require no effigies or visible symbols; for when comparing their religion with that of other peoples, the Nupe will always emphasize that they have no sacred emblems, idols, masks, or 'little likenesses' (*zazagiži*).

It is perhaps not surprising that so abstract a conception as that 779
of *kuti* should not be held with equal clarity by everyone. In particular, I met with two as it were heterodox notions; one was the 184
idea that *kuti* represents a part of *Sokó*, or a *Sokó tetengi*, a 'Little God' (which, in Nupe language, is a contradiction in terms); according to the other, God was 'up above', but *kuti* was somehow of the earth, being a 'thing' buried in the ground, very likely in the places of ritual. These notions were always put tentatively, and were moreover voiced by individuals who could not claim the fullest knowledge available in the society, that is, by younger men or by Nupe under the influence of Islam; the older men, and especially the priests of *kuti*, declared such views to be false. But supernatural power understood more concretely and associated with specific material objects also has a place in the Nupe universe. This notion is embodied in the third tenet of the religion, which concerns the existence of *cigbe* or 'medicine'.

(iii) *Medicine*

Let me say, first of all, that 'medicine' is the literal translation of 779
the vernacular term, which is applied not only to 'magic' substances but also to medicinal herbs or drugs of any kind, native as well as European, whose properties are assessed essentially empirically. Of the relation between the two we shall speak in a later context. Here we must note that the Nupe inventory of the 'things in the world' does not mention 'medicine', although in some respects it is an exact counterpart to *kuti*, that is, an agency meant to aid man in a universe governed by an all-too-distant deity. But unlike *kuti*, 'medicine' is not thought of as being part of the creation and a primordial gift of God. If it now exists in the world, it does so because of man's own endeavours. There is a legend, well 779
known throughout the country, expounding this view. 773

'There was a certain younger brother, called Kpara, whose elder 539
brother was Tswasha Malu. They lived in the time of *Etsu* (king) Shagó.[1] There existed a certain medicine, called *cekpyeca shina*

[1] The two brothers are mentioned in no other myth. The name of the king, Shagó, occurs also in the myth describing the origin of the

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779 *shina buburukun* (meaningless words). On the day when the two
773 brothers were making this medicine, Kpara wished to climb up
539 into the sky. Kpara explained to the king that he needed a chain. The king summoned the blacksmiths of the whole country and they forged a chain of seven links. Then Kpara tied the chain round his waist and went straight up, higher and higher, until he reached the sky. It took him three years to travel up to the sky, and people thought they would never see him again. At the end of the three years people beheld the chain dropping slowly down to earth, and 19 days later, Kpara himself dropped from the sky, sitting down, bang, on top of the chain. The people asked—Had he seen God? Kpara answered (this part is sung):

> God is far away,
> God is far away,
> But medicines are applied on earth.

"The person who tries to eat porridge while shouting at the same time will get nothing into his stomach" (i.e. one must not attempt the impossible). Kpara then said to all the people that they must try and make medicine of ingredients. "For God is not watching man." This Kpara was the elder brother of the father who begot us—our tribe, that is.'

779 This legend or myth introduces two crucial features into Nupe doctrine. One is the assertion that 'God is not watching man', or literally, *Sokó nw' á yelé à*, 'God is not seeing'; the other is the notion that that powerful agency, *cigbe*, has been produced or discovered by man's own initiative. The two clearly hang together, both following logically from the root concept of the supreme being. The assertion that God 'is not watching' only expands and sharpens that other idea, that God, though creative and omnipotent, 'is far away'—too far away to follow closely his handiwork, and too impersonal to concern himself closely with all that happens on earth. And it is this extreme aloofness of the deity which justifies the further notion of human self-help. God, as we know, cannot be reached by prayers and invocations alone. Thus there have to be intermediaries, of which *kuti* is one and *cigbe* the other. But there is this difference. Only the *kuti* is 'of God'; equally, it provides only for the collective and unvarying needs of a people, not for the more variable and particular troubles of individuals. As regards these, God seems even more remote; for he has not thought of giving man the appropriate aids: rather, they had to be discovered by man left to himself. Here, then, we have

anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá* (see below, p. 173). Shagó is probably identical with the mythical hero and deity of Yoruba religion, Shangó, who, in Yoruba mythology, is described as a man or king of Nupe.

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something like a Free Will, though crudely conceived and devoid of ethical implications. All the Nupe concept implies is that man can attempt to correct creation, and is compelled to do so by his knowledge (as the myth has it) that 'you cannot have everything' —live on earth and have the full protection of God. 779

This is a naïve and, if you like, cynical philosophy. Within its frame of reference, however, everything falls into place and *kuti* and *cigbe* appear complementary in many ways. We said before that the *kuti* is understood both as a means of reaching the attention of the deity and as a means of drawing more directly upon the divine (or cosmic) force, as an 'intermediary' as well as a 'shortcut'. Now *cigbe* is a shortcut much more than it is a medium of appeal. If in *kuti* the invocation of the deity and the harnessing of a cosmic force are made to merge, in 'medicine' that force is more independently effective and works in the manner almost of a machine. In preparing or administering 'medicine' the name of *Sokó* is often mentioned; but now it occurs, not in the context of a prayer-like appeal, but in a *spell*, every word and phrase of which is important and unchangeable. At the same time the mastery of *cigbe* is strictly technical; the Nupe say that it is *kpeyá*, 'knowledge', and nothing else. This knowledge no longer refers to total procedures embracing prayers, localities hallowed by the occasion, the occasions themselves, songs, dances, and all the phases of the ritual performance; rather does it refer to highly specialized *skills*, primarily to the skill of *gbá gbèrè*, 'using ingredients', that is, to a skill in manipulating and manufacturing material things. For the *cigbe* is always material, some object or substance whose efficacy is communicated by physical contact or therapeutic administration. We note the ambiguous role of medicine, which is opposed to ritual both as another (more 'machine-like') form of supernatural control and as an altogether different kind of mastery, through technical-empirical knowledge. For the Nupe, the latter alignment counts more heavily: if they were to use our phraseology they would say that the practice of medicine is less 'religious' (or 'supernatural') than ritual, and in many instances entirely non-religious.

Again, the conception of ownership differs fundamentally in the case of *kuti* and *cigbe*. The former is 'owned' corporately by groups, and the question of acquisition does not arise (save in mythical speculations). Though the ritual procedures can be learned, and are learned by every new generation, this is a secondary feature, incidental to the right or title to the ritual knowledge; which title is vested, inalienably, in the tribe or village community. It makes no sense, in Nupe, to ask whether strangers can learn and put themselves in possession of a *kuti*. If they are adopted into the

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77A community, they will also learn about the ritual and share in its possession; otherwise they remain without the crucial title, even though they may conceivably come to know all about the technical procedure. In *cigbe*, the latter is everything: who learns, possesses, and the learning is open to any individual who can find a teacher. Admittedly, certain medicines are today owned by families and passed on from generation to generation; but with few exceptions this vested ownership is only of the kind that applies to trade secrets, and everyone understands that, originally, the knowledge of such family *cigbe* had again been taught and learned, perhaps even bought. Medicines of all kinds can still be purchased, regularly and openly, from their makers; you might also purchase the knowledge of how to prepare them, though this would be done only occasionally and in secrecy. Finally, both the medicine and the recipe may be brought in from another country. Now, it would once more be nonsensical to think of a *kuti* that can be bought; and though a few rituals are said to have been introduced from abroad, this was the work either of immigrant groups, which 'owned' the *kuti* by right and are still called its 'owners', or of mythical figures and heroes. In brief, the *kuti* is part of the traditional estate of communities; the *cigbe* is individual property, fortuitously acquired and held. With the different title of possession goes the corresponding conception of the benefits conferred by the possession, which are once more collective in the case of ritual and individual in the case of medicine. This contrast is thrown into relief in the invocations accompanying the two practices; for the prayer formula invariably voiced in all Nupe rituals, 'May God grant that the village prospers', is as invariably absent in the *cigbe* spells.

Here we are touching upon a final difference between *kuti* and *cigbe*, which goes deep into the ethical foundations of the Nupe creed. The *kuti* is, *ex definitione*, good; it always serves to secure benefits—prosperity, health, success—and to combat evils or ills—disease, drought, barrenness. Many 'medicines' do the same; but some may also serve evil purposes, that is, they may be meant to further the egoistic aims of individuals while harming the rest of the people. *Cigbe*, then, is potentially 'anti-social'; and, logically, the force of evil *par excellence*, witchcraft, is by many attributed to the efficacy of *cigbe*. Now, as God is the indifferent creator of things both good and evil, *kuti* and *cigbe* represent the two sides of his nature. Not all that is evil or ill in the world is due to *cigbe* or witchcraft; indeed, various evils and ills may be diminished by the agency of *cigbe*. But 'medicine' remains a supernatural agency which men might wield for disaster and harm. Thus the conception of 'medicine' reflects, on a smaller scale, the ethical

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indifference which the Nupe ascribe to divine creation. Yet since 779
the world contains both things, *kuti*, which is good, and *cigbe*, which is both good and evil, the good would seem on balance to preponderate. As we shall see, various other religious thoughts confirm this impression of a cynicism tempered with optimism.

(iv) *Body and Soul*

We turn to the other 'things in the world' and first to the 779
animate beings. Each of these possesses, to begin with, a body, *nakā*. The Nupe word means precisely what we mean by 'body'— 842
the flesh and blood of living creatures, resulting from procreation, 843
parturition, and natural growth, and decomposing after death. The biological processes of procreation and parturition are fairly well understood, though this empirical knowledge is not free from fallacies. Thus no one misunderstands the connection between coitus and conception; one understands, too, that both women and men can be infertile, and that abortion can be brought about by strong laxatives or overstrain. At the same time the Nupe also use certain purely 'magical' cures for barrenness and charms or magic belts to prevent conception. More surprisingly, the Nupe [826]
fail to distinguish between semen and male urine, or have to borrow a word from Hausa to describe the former. Nor finally is the precise length of pregnancy known. To quote one of my informants, a diviner and knowledgeable old man: 'It all depends; it may take anything between seven months and a year; a strong and fit child will be born after eleven months or so, a weak one after a shorter period.'

The biological processes as such, one believes, produce only a 779
lifeless body, as death in turn leaves the body lifeless but still 774
physically intact. The living being thus has further attributes, of soul-like nature, which are three in number: *rayi* or 'anima'; *fifingi* or 'shadow soul'; and *kuci* or 'personal soul'.

The word *rayi* is used generally to denote the living state; the pulse, for example, is called *rayigi*, 'little life'. Everything animate possesses *rayi*, while stones, pieces of wood, and similar inanimate objects are without *rayi*; growing trees and plants, however, are counted among the animate things. Life comes from God and exists with God, in the sky, when it is not incarnate. At death 'God takes it away'; at birth it is sent down by God, more precisely, it appears already when the child first moves in the womb. The new life is thus at first tied to the life of the mother, and in a sense remains so tied for a period even after birth. For the mother who [842]
has borne one child must not risk another conception before the child can walk and is 'sufficiently strong', lest it would never grow up; so that its *rayi* would seem to be diminished by the other life

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that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifingi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifingi*.

Fifingi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifingi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifingi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifingi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

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1. Sacrifice before twin shrine

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2. The sacred crocodile of Mokwa

[p. 22(A)]

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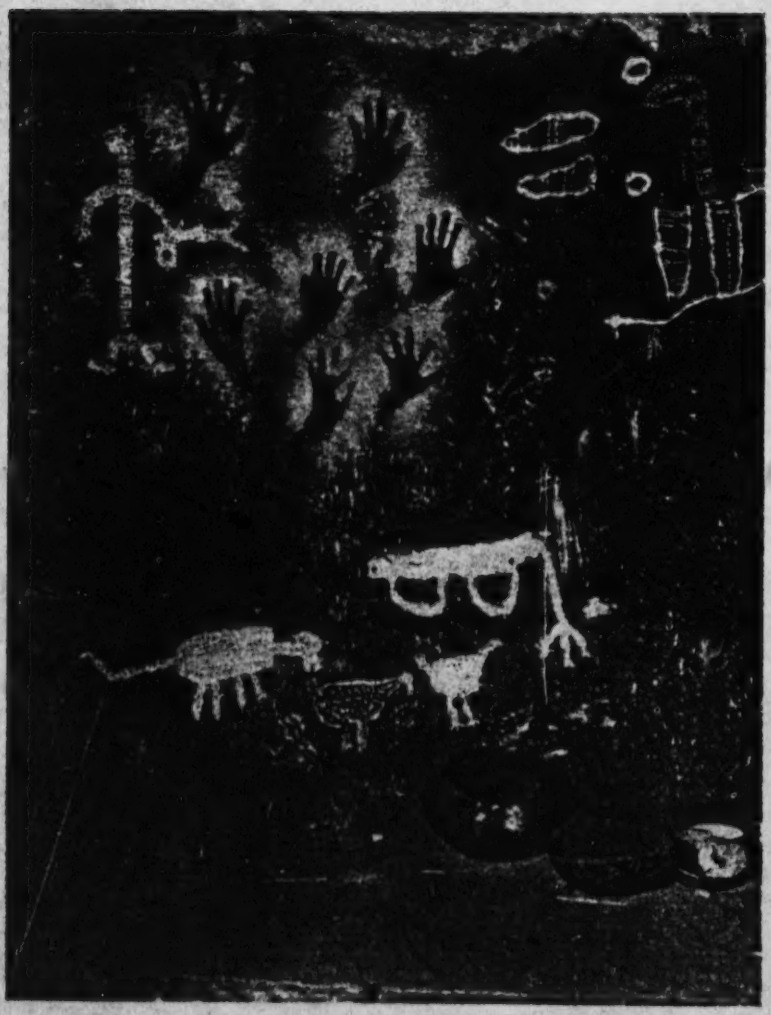

3. Wall paintings in a Nupe house

[p. 22(B)]

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the *fifingi* which acts in this fashion, although one may loosely use this term; for in the cases just described the shadow soul turns into something else—a *fará*, a ghost or spirit.

As I have already suggested, the *kuci* corresponds to something like a 'personal soul'. But this is an obscure conception, and all informants will at some stage of the discussion plead ignorance or the presence of a final mystery. The Nupe believe in reincarnation, the souls of the dead being re-embodied in their offspring; it is these transmuted souls which are called *kuci*. One does not in this connection think of distant and perhaps unknown ancestors, but of great-grandparents or even grandparents reborn in their children's children. The rebirth can occur in either line of descent, which fits well into the Nupe kinship system with its strong emphasis on bilateral descent. Whether the ancestors are paternal or maternal, as they are reborn, so their personal qualities, of character (good or bad) as well as physical likeness, reappear. The body, *nakā*, is thus partly shaped by the ancestral soul or *kuci*, which is said to 'enter' it much as a fluid or substance enters a vessel (while the *rayi* does not 'enter' the body but merely gives life to it).

The *kuci* appears in the act of birth, that is, it 'enters' a body already possessing life, and the new-born is in fact called 'a *kuci*', unnamed. For a time body, life soul, and *kuci* are not yet firmly united. Body and life soul merge fully when the umbilical cord is cut; but the *kuci* will not be in full harmony with the other two until it has been identified by divination and the infant's name (which is the name of the reincarnated ancestor) has been pronounced for the first time. The crying of the babe, too, will cease at that moment, since it is only a sign that the new-born senses the initial disharmony. In other words, the three components of the living being become reconciled when the link between human vessel and ancestral soul is acknowledged socially, that is, by the symbol of a name. Only then does the *kuci* lose its other-worldly nature and become fully of this world; while the infant is from then on a person, and not only a breathing body. Henceforth it will be called *egi*, child, and no longer *kuci*, disembodied soul or spirit. The *kuci* therefore adds to the *anima* or life soul a 'personal soul', which is also the carrier of heredity and of kinship continuity.

It is difficult to say just how personal this soul concept is. It is certainly specifically human; for animals have no *kuci*, as they have no names or kin groups. Yet the relationship between the ancestral *kuci* and its reincarnation is not of a one-to-one kind. The same ancestral soul may animate numerous progeny, all living at the same time; indeed, it is said that there 'is no limit' to the number of simultaneous incarnations of the same *kuci*. Here,

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then, the *kuci* appears as an impersonal principle of descent and heredity, even as something like a biological strain mystically interpreted. It is consistent with this latter conception that the *kuci* should be held to be sexless, so that the soul of either grandparent may appear in offspring of either sex. This theory, however, is belied in practice; for I have found few personal names that can be given both to males and females; rather are male and female names sharply distinguished, which would presuppose the opposed assumption of a sex-linked reincarnation. And once, when I was present during the divination of the *kuci* of a new-born child and commented on the likely identity of the *ndakó* (grandfather) in question, the diviner corrected me, pointing out that the child was a girl and that her soul would therefore come from a *nnakó* (grandmother).

The two conceptions, of a 'personal' and of a 'kinship soul', conflict, above all, in the beliefs concerning their fate after death. At death, the *kuci* is said to leave the body and to return to God, if only temporarily, until it finds a new incarnation. Yet it is also said to stay on earth, watching over its kinsfolk in the manner of a guardian spirit and ready to come to their aid in various ways. The *kuci*, incidentally, does so indirectly, having no power of its own, but acting in some fashion through *Sokó*. To enlist the aid of the *kuci*, one performs special sacrifices (*labá*) in the house or on the grave of this or that ancestor. Now, such a belief in the souls or spirits of the dead which, while not at the time incarnated, interest themselves in their surviving kin, would seem to reconcile satisfactorily the two conceptions of a personal soul and one bound to lines of descent. But Nupe belief failed to work out a consistent solution on these lines. Thus the ancestral sacrifices are performed both on the grave of the grandfather most recently dead (and hence hardly yet reincarnated) and on the grave of the most remote known ancestor (who will surely have found a new body). And if, in the latter case, one knows of one outstanding person among the ancestors, the sacrifice will be addressed to him. On the other hand, one need not sacrifice to any particular, named ancestor at all; often, the people address an anonymous *kuci*, that is, the souls of the dead in a generic sense. This is done invariably, in an informal fashion, whenever one drinks beer; then a small libation is poured on the ground, for a *kuci* no further defined.

There is no orthodox answer to the question how the *kuci* can be 'with God' and on earth at the same time, or how it can influence God when it has already entered upon another incarnation. When pursuing this point I received these diverse replies. A first informant made the revolutionary suggestion that there might be two *Sokó*, one in the sky, the other on earth; needless to say, this

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notion was rejected by everybody else. A second view was more widely held, namely, that the *kuci* remains on earth but is watched by God, so that your appeal to the *kuci* will yet reach God; the *kuci*, then, would be 'with God' only in a metaphorical sense. A third informant argued as follows, with somewhat dubious logic: Since you cannot see either God or *kuci*, it follows that they are together. Finally, there was the unprofitable but incontrovertible reply, that here we have a mystery of which 'man is ignorant'. 779 775

If the Nupe failed to work out a clear and consistent conception of this survival of 'personal souls', they equally failed to exploit its potentialities. The belief in souls of the dead which remain concerned with the fate of their living kin and are reincarnated in progeny would seem to lend itself ideally to an ethical interpretation. Yet there is no trace of this. There is no conception of the *kuci* being angered by the sins or offences of the living, perhaps refusing its aid or sending punishment. In appealing to the *kuci* the suppliant expects help, not rewards, and help untempered with justice; the help may not come; but this only means that the circumstances were unfavourable or the difficulties too great. Nor is the fate of the soul after death affected by the deeds or character of the living person. It is the same for good men and evil, and the idea that the two might fare differently in the beyond is simply not understood. 'When a person dies, we no longer see him', is all the Nupe find to say on this topic. Which is another facet of that ethical indifference we noted before.

The *kuci* is invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding the crucial events of kinship life—birth, marriage, death. Apart from this, *kuci* worship has no special domain, nor is it subject to any regular routine. The sacrifices to ancestors represent casual appeals, performed *ad hoc*, for a variety of reasons, and nearly always on the advice of diviners. Of ten informants one had performed the sacrifice three times in the last four years, because of his ill-health; one had sacrificed twice, first because his horse was sick, and then because his child had smallpox; six informants had sacrificed once during that period—three because of illness, two because of a drought, and one for no particular reason and without consulting a diviner. One informant had performed no *kuci* sacrifice for seven years, and another had sacrificed regularly every year; but he was a village chief, and in his case the sacrifice, addressed to the ancestor who was also the founder of the village, had merged with a *kuti* 'belonging' to the community. 779 769

This fusion of *kuci* worship with another type of observance is not an isolated case. As we shall see, it is also entailed in the possession of certain 'great', hereditary medicines, which similarly

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absorb the appeals to ancestors. This is only another aspect of their lack of a special 'domain'. And even where *kuci* worship does not lose its independence so completely, it yet has little autonomy; for the kind of supernatural aid it promises can equally be procured by other forms of worship or sacrifice. But of this, too, we shall speak later.

Let me conclude the present account with the brief mention of a further ambiguous practice, a form of sacrifice which stands half-way between an appeal to *Sokó* and the appeal to *kuci*. It is performed by families in which there are or have been twins and is known by that name, *bakomba*. Such houses will possess a special shrine, consisting of a number of small earthenware pots built into the outside wall of a hut, which the women will regularly fill with beer and porridge. Once a year, on the birthday of the twins, the family head will bring a sacrifice of beer and blood of fowl. Now, twins are lucky and a sign of divine benevolence; equally, they represent a special incarnation, a concentration as it were of the 'kinship soul'. In this sacrifice, then, one addresses *Sokó* as well as (an anonymous) *kuci*; and the people who have such a twin shrine will perform all their sacrifices to *kuci* there, and not over the grave of an individual ancestor.

(v) *Spirit Beings*

In the preceding discussion we touched upon certain beliefs in spirits—in 'ancestral spirits', which are an aspect of the personal soul, and in 'ghosts', which are transmutations of the shadow soul. But when the Nupe mention 'spirits' among the things that make up the world they do not mean either of these; they mean immaterial beings which exist in their own right and are not derived from humans, although they have some quasi-human attributes and inhabit the same earth. It is possible that this belief is not an original tenet of Nupe creed; for the Nupe call these spirit beings by a Hausa–Arabic name, *aljénu* (pl. *aljenúži*), and may well have borrowed certain of their aspects from Islam. However this may be, the Nupe do not regard this belief as in any way alien or 'borrowed'. And whether the name for spirits is Nupe or Arabic, it is a name, sharply distinguishing this class of beings from all others.

Though circumstantial and readily expressed, the spirit beliefs are fluid and far from uniform. The most varied opinions will not be thought unorthodox, but will be taken as evidence for the multifariousness of the spirit world. A first group of spirits, vaguely anthropomorphous but without distinct individualities, is said to inhabit the inanimate parts of nature, hills, trees, watercourses, the bush, and so forth. These spirits have sex, and according to

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some informants the female variety lives in the water while the males prefer the land. The sex of the spirits does not influence their character, which may be either friendly or hostile. The people know where 'good' spirits dwell as well as the places haunted by 'evil ones', and may perform sacrifices to keep their friendship or to ward off their malevolence. Small gifts to the spirits (called *efu*), consisting of a little food, honey, a few kolanuts or cowrie shells, are often left on the roadside, placed beside a spring, or dropped in the river. The behaviour of the good spirits is nondescript and consists in not doing evil or mischief rather than in doing anything positively beneficial. The hostile spirits act erratically and unpredictably, their actions ranging from meaningless pranks (such as throwing stones or making frightening noises) to the infliction of serious harm (causing lunacy or fever, or making pregnant women bear a deformed child). Any locality showing unusual or unnatural features, such as an unexpected clearing in the bush or a grassless patch in a meadow, is likely to be the dwelling place of a spirit; so is any uncommonly large tree in the bush. A woodcutter who is unable to fell a tree, a fisherman who loses his nets in the river for no apparent reason, would equally suspect the presence of an *aljénu*. At midnight, when there is 'no noise and sound', the spirits are likely to be abroad. But on the whole one pays little attention to these 'nature spirits', which can easily be foiled by simply avoiding the haunted locality and against which sacrifices are ample protection.

Only in the Niger valley have I recorded nature spirits ascribed more momentous power as well as names and individualities and worshipped in proper, full-scale rituals. We shall in due course speak of two of them, the spirit *Ketsá*, inhabiting the steep rock of that name which rises in mid-stream near Jebba Island, and the spirit suggestively called *Ndáduma*, 'Father Niger'.

A second group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. I recorded only two isolated instances of fully-fledged beliefs in animal spirits. The first concerns a spirit called *Bukpe* which lives, in the shape of a crocodile, in a stream near Mokwa. It is supposed to be a male spirit, 'black' or evil, causing disease and drought. Yet its malevolence can be controlled by means of an annual ritual, known by the same name, and by means of a pact concluded between the people of Mokwa and the crocodile spirit. It is part of the pact that the people of Mokwa must never kill or annoy this or any other crocodile, while they in turn will not be harmed by any member of the species. This belief, however, is not willingly put to a test; when I visited *Bukpe* in his lair, my Nupe companions were very careful not to come too close. Some time after my visit the crocodile in fact killed a child; whereupon the people

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of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court, trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

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insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'.

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds.

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses.

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of

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that human, it follows that good spirits can be wedded to evil persons and vice versa. 'Good' spirits might therefore grant success to the most evil machinations, and 'bad' spirits frustrate the best intentions of their human twins. Also, a good person, tied to a good but weak spirit, cannot hope to escape misfortune; while the misfortunes of an evil person who happens to possess an evil spirit double would be as blindly bestowed. All this fits well into a universe which *ab initio* contains good and evil, fortune and misfortune, without moral reasons. But here, in the realm of concrete personal fate, the amorality of the creed is most clearly noticeable. Yet it is so only for us; the Nupe worry little about the ethical issues. Only in one respect do they face these issues and resolve them by admitting this exception to the general rule: Witches always have evil spirit doubles, and these exercise their power, not against their human twins, but against the victims of the latter. But this modification of the spirit belief is slight; for the evilness of the spirit does not make the witch a witch; his or her evil nature is simply given and only aided by the congenial spirit.

A few of the men with whom I discussed these questions seemed prepared to reinterpret the belief in personal spirits more thoroughly. They held that all spirit doubles were 'good', not morally, but in the sense that they served their twins as best as they could. As the spirits were weak or strong, so they would be capable or incapable of gaining success for the human beings, whatever the morals of the latter. These were the views of a minority, and far from correcting the moral ambiguity of the creed they only added to its cynicism. But they seem to indicate a desire to correct another weakness in the creed, which strikes us as forcibly, namely, the supererogatory character of the spirit belief. Clearly, there is no need to make the spirits good and evil as well as weak and strong; the former distinction adds nothing in the way of explanations which the latter does not already furnish.

In a wider sense, the whole conception of personal spirits seems redundant since it accounts for nothing that is not already accounted for by other agencies. Owing to the spirits the human beings meet with fortune and misfortune; but the same fortuitous dispensation of good things and bad is ascribed to the very nature of the created world. The spirit doubles account for nightmares or helpful dreams, but so do the *fifingi* and *kuci*; they bring about illness, but this may equally be due to the weakening of *rayi*, to the attacks of witches, or (as we shall see) to acts of God. The spirit doubles cause afflictions of the mind, but these may again come from God or be rooted in the human body. Altogether, the Nupe creed seems without economy; diverse agencies are introduced to explain the same phenomena, and diverse supernatural

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aids are made to overlap in their aims or concerns. Thus one sacrifices to spirits, twins, kinship souls, and, through rituals, to God himself; or one uses *cigbe*; and one does so for the same reasons —to secure prosperity, to protect oneself from illness, or to safeguard fertility of man or nature. Even so, there is some design and order in this confusing picture; the Nupe universe is not entirely a random array of entities and mystic forces, but something of a cosmos. We shall, by way of a summary, try and outline its features.

4. RELIGION AND POLITY

First, however, I must mention an important figure in the Nupe creed which falls into none of the categories so far discussed—Tsoede or Edegi, the legendary first King of Nupe. The tradition of Tsoede and its essentially political symbolism has been discussed elsewhere, so that here a few remarks will suffice.[1]

Tsoede's memory survives in an elaborate cycle of myths, the only instance of this kind in Nupe; several rituals and sacred objects (an iron chain, brass bangles worn by chiefs, the bronze figures mentioned before) are said to have been his creation; and a specific cult also bears his name. Similar observances also exist, here and there, in the villages, relating to the ancestors of hereditary chiefs; they, too, are sometimes regarded as the founders of their communities or as the initiators of particular cults, their *kuci* being invoked in regular ceremonials. But Tsoede is much more than an ancestor chief magnified, and the rituals called after him do more than merely summon up his memory. Nor is it the *kuci* of Tsoede which is invoked. The concrete ties of descent, implicit in the worship of *kuci*, are obviously absent between the ancestor king and the vast, nation-wide congregation of his cult, while his 'personal soul' has no part in any cycle of rebirth.[2] In the rituals of Tsoede it is he himself who is invoked, so that he may intervene with *Sokó* on behalf of his people. The precise circumstances of this intervention are neither explained nor pictured in any way; yet one knows that it is more powerful as well as active than that accessible to *kuci* (which are merely 'watched by God').

If Tsoede is not a *kuci*, neither is he a 'spirit' nor *aljénu*. He represents, in fact, a figure outside the general framework of Nupe religion and a conception both anomalous and unique in Nupe

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 72–76, 141–2.

[2] Tsoede is said to have been harelipped, and every Nupe child born with a harelip is still named after him. But this custom only serves to keep his memory alive; for it has no further consequences and does not imply any belief in Tsoede's reincarnation.

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779 thought. He is a man-become-deity (though there is no pantheon
where he could find a niche), a national hero turned into an
773 ancestral being (though again, there are no named ancestors to whose ranks he might be added). Tsoede is the ancestor only of a line of kings; but in a wider and vaguer sense all Nupe within the kingdom regard themselves with pride as his 'offspring', in the sense, that is, that they were born in a country he founded and made great and come of stock which, originally, lived under his rule and supernatural protection. This protection, which still endures, bears on certain problems of life which are resolved also by means of other rituals or appeals to *Sokó*, namely, the ubiquitous problems of illness and fertility. But these are only incidental effects of Tsoede's mystic power; its main efficacy used to bear on political interests—the maintenance of the 'king's law', the punishment of criminals, and the protection of the 'King's Highway' on the river Niger.[1] Even the 'incidental effects' of the Tsoede cult are bound up with political interests, being embodied in material objects which are at the same time the paraphernalia of secular power. Let me only mention the 'Chain of Tsoede', which is believed to cure the sterility of women but which was formerly also used to strangle political offenders and to uncover crimes in the manner of an ordeal.

[182] In brief, the Tsoede cult is essentially a State religion superimposed upon a pre-existing creed. The cult ties the people to supernatural benefits granted not simply by God, nor by a God who commands his own rituals, but by a God who listens to kings. And its rituals, no longer 'owned' by communities or kin groups, are aligned with the growth and pride of a nation.

5. THE NUPE COSMOS

779 I spoke before of the supererogatory character of certain Nupe
beliefs. In a sense, the greater part of Nupe doctrine has this
772 character. Consider that the Nupe hypothesize a deity who creates the world and then leaves it to itself—uncertain, full of obscurity and accident, and embracing good and evil in entirely fortuitous measure. With such a conception of the relationship between God and the world, the Nupe need not have speculated further about some deeper meaning behind the features of the universe. Anything that exists or happens in it would be sufficiently explained by that key concept of an aloof and non-ethical deity. One might, for example, imagine a religion starting from the same premisses which would leave all further explanations to the crude realism of naïve common sense. Whether so unambitious a theo-

[1] See my article on the 'King's Hangmen' in *Man*, 1935, 143.

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logy is ever likely to arise, I will not venture to discuss. The point 779
is that Nupe theology is more ambitious; the Nupe do speculate 772
further, and reckon with a great many additional (or 'supererogatory') existences and influences. They seem to feel the need to do justice to the particular features of the world by means of particular conceptions, over and above its broad justification in terms of divine creation.

This proliferation of thought is, of course, not peculiar to Nupe 779
religion, though we may note that the Nupe ignore many 'particular' features which other religions feel compelled to acknowledge and elaborate. Thus the Nupe find nothing to explain about the heavenly bodies, do not concern themselves specifically with lightning, thunder, or rain, and speculate only vaguely about animals or natural features. Instead, their attention is focussed upon health and disease, birth and death, fertility, misfortunes, dreams, that is, upon things human. The Nupe elaboration of the universe, we might say, is anthropocentric.

Yet it concentrates on natural man, not on the moral being. Again it neglects all features which might serve this kind of conception, such as an after-life promising reward or retribution, or natural catastrophies that might signify divine anger or warning. Even where the ethical interpretation suggests itself forcibly it is ignored; thus the metamorphosis of the soul stands apart from any ethical design; the powers of good and evil spirits descend on man at random, and the success or failure of supernatural appeals, to ancestors or even to God, do not reflect upon the moral worthiness of the suppliants. There are a few vague notions of divine retribution. Thus it is admitted, but never spontaneously vouchsafed, that incest is punished by barrenness and blindness, and [681] that persons guilty of concealed crimes may be punished by the *kuti* (in an unspecified manner) or killed by lightning (in the case of theft). But these half-hearted concessions do not alter the picture of a creation devoid of moral purpose.

Are, then, all the 'additional influences' which the Nupe read into creation and all their 'further speculations' merely attemps to 'do justice to the particular things in the world', and no more? It may well seem so. There seems to be no other, ulterior, motive behind the readiness to ascribe the contrariness of a tree or the uncanniness of a locality to spirits rather than to nature just-so created; behind the belief that certain ailments betray the machinations of spirits or witches over and above the weakening of the *anima*, and perhaps natural causes; or behind the subdivision of mental afflictions, which are traced to spirits, to the vagaries of the body, and to God. But consider also that these diverse explanations are not kept apart, by some economical parcelling-out of the universe;

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779 rather, they mostly represent alternatives and overlap for the same phenomena. And since each explanatory conception entails a different notion as to the controls or remedies applicable to the phenomenon in question, the multiplication of the former means also a multiplication of the latter. In other words, you have several strings to your bow. Indeed, this is doubly true. For as we know, the overlap in explanatory conceptions is matched by the overlap in the supernatural aids themselves; like the appeal to the *kuci*, which has 'no domain', ritual and even certain forms of medicine have a wide and multifarious efficacy. The lack of economy of thought thus means first, that the map of the universe is drawn in greater detail, and second, that in coping with its forces one has the chance of several trials.

779 Now, the 'details' in the universe are not multiplied at random. Rather are they ordered in the sense of two principles. The first 829 reflects the organization of human society as the Nupe see it. Thus there is the sphere of the fate of communities, governed by influences irreducible beyond the givenness of creation and anonymous beyond their ultimate origin in God, which influences are controllable by the collective efforts of *kuti*. Then there is the sphere of individual fate, governed by the specifically named agencies of life soul, shadow soul, witchcraft, and spirits (personal or otherwise), and controllable by *cigbe* and individual sacrifices. There is, further, the sphere of kinship fate, governed by the agency of *kuci* and controlled by sacrifices to ancestors and twins. And there is, finally, the sphere of the kingdom and political fate, with its special rituals of Tsoede. Admittedly, these various spheres are not as neatly separated, the social appropriateness of supernatural aids like the social import of supernatural influences overlapping at many points. Certain nature spirits also affect the fate of communities and hence call for the effort of ritual, while a drought, though it threatens the community, can also be dealt with by an invocation of *kuci*. Certain medicines are owned by kin groups, and certain *kuti* can be invoked by individuals; the twin sacrifices are addressed to God, like the *kuti*; witchcraft, though it attacks individuals, may be treated as a threat to the community or state; and the 'royal' cults of Tsoede also serve to meet the needs of individuals. If there were no such overlap, the chance of 'several trials' would not be as great as it is. But neither is it unlimited, being subject to that hierarchy of social appropriateness, which is only a little blurred by these ambiguities.

779 The second principle is purely theological and integrates the speculations about the 'details' of the universe with the basic dichotomy of God and the World; for this is carried even into the realm of things found in the world. Thus certain things come

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directly from God, such as the power of *kuti* or the life principle, while others indicate his presence only indirectly or ultimately, in that they are part of creation or happen in it. This is true of *cigbe*, of the nature spirits, and of various diseases and misfortunes. We might say that God willed certain things, while he permits or suffers others to exist. In other religions, a similar dualism might follow from the assumption of divine omnipotence, serving to vindicate the latter in the face of the evils in the world. In Nupe, it follows from the belief in a single act of creation, performed by an aloof creator disinterested in the progress and day-to-day fate of his work. For the two things which are most conspicuously 'willed' by God are also exceptions to this tenet; that is, they vindicate, though not the goodness of the deity, at least his continued concern with the world he called into being.

First, there is the conception of *kuti*, by means of which man can break through the aloofness of the deity. That this is so, is part of God's willed creation; but through investing man with this supernatural tool, God is committed to further acts upon the world he already fashioned once and for all. These renewed acts are only intermittent and in a sense casual, being contingent upon the human appeals; furthermore, man is also competent, and permitted, to fashion similar tools for himself. Thus the created world has some independence and some development of its own, as its human creatures have some inventiveness and will of their own. The second exception goes much farther, implying the continuous creative activity of God. The renewal of life on earth, more precisely, the bestowal of *rayi* upon animate beings, is conceived of in this fashion. This was made clear to me by means of a parable meant to elucidate the relationship of *rayi* and *kuci*. On the surface, the two seem alike, both leaving the human body at death and 'returning to God'. But in one case it is like throwing an object skywards which will soon afterwards drop down again by itself; in the other, you must imagine someone up above who would catch the object, so that it stays in his hands; so the *kuci* goes up to God and returns to find a new incarnation, while the *rayi* goes up and is 'held by God'. The life soul, then, returns to God in the sense that it is re-absorbed in the process of creation; every time it appears on earth, it is a new, separate manifestation of the divine will. The personal or kinship soul, which returns to God only for a while, is independent of this continuous creation; it is as it were continuous in its own right, having its own cycles or chains of existence, which essentially correspond to the empirical cycles or chains of generations. So that it stands, once more, for the world 'left to itself'.

Yet let me admit that in all other respects the dualism of God

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779 and the world is less sharply conceived than we have phrased it. It is blurred, above all, by the ambiguity of that crucial phrase 'of God'.[1] We can now define it more sharply: The Nupe will generally assert that only certain things in the world are *nya Sokó*, and that others are not; but, when pressed, they will admit that even these 'independent' entities are yet known to God and must in some sense be by his will. Nupe theology, in other words, has not refined its conceptual tools sufficiently to carry this dualism to its logical conclusion. The contrasted concepts which we employed, of things 'willed' by God as against those he only 'suffers' to exist, is beyond its capacity or intentions. Yet the Nupe do express something of the kind in a different way, by default as it were rather than in positive statements, for they leave the share of God in the creation of these 'independent' things of the world unemphasized, like matters that are unimportant and of no consequence. Thus it is important and always stressed that God gave life and ritual to man; and it is unimportant and not normally mentioned that in some fashion divine creation also includes *cigbe*, illness, the shadow soul, evil spirits, lunacy, and witchraft.

I would read a further meaning into this unequal emphasis of the divine share in creation. It suggests, it seems to me, an attempt to gloss over the philosophical difficulties entailed in this conception of a creation which is imperfect and neutral with regard to good and evil. These difficulties might have been resolved in a more sophisticated theology by some pseudo-Thomist doctrine, equating the divine design of the world with perfection and making the world 'left to itself' the source of all imperfections and evils. Yet though Nupe doctrine fails to furnish any such vindication of divine providence, the failure can at least be concealed by the manner in which the doctrine is handled, through emphasis here and 'glossing over' there. These attempts are never more than crude and half-hearted; but the motives behind them are, I think, unmistakable. Indeed, in one instance they even intrude upon the formulated doctrine; and this relates, significantly, to the one form of evil which is specifically and unreservedly ascribed to the deity.

779 The two most dreaded diseases are in this sense 'of God'—sleeping sickness (*kpatsũgi*) and leprosy (even called *Sokó 'gũ* or *sokogũci*—the 'Illness of God'). Now, God did not pre-ordain them in their deadly form; he created only their possibility, while the actual evils are a consequence of the 'world left to itself', that is, of accident and unpredictable circumstances. When creating man, God placed leprosy and sleeping sickness into every human organism, but he created the two diseases both in male and female form, and an organism possessing one form only remains healthy and

[1] See above, p. 10.

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normal. The actual disease materializes when the two forms happen to be combined in the same person, and the prospects of a cure depend on which 'germ', male or female, is the stronger. Predominantly male leprosy is curable, predominantly female leprosy, fatal. In the case of sleeping sickness everything depends on the treatment, though the prospects are bleak in either case; if a *cigbe* expert succeeds in killing the male 'germ' only, the disease will take its fatal course; in the opposite case death at least will be avoided, though another incurable disease, lunacy, will result.

This is once more a half-hearted vindication of divine providence; all it attempts to prove is that creation is not necessarily evil and that evil things slip into it by chance. Fundamentally, the whole Nupe universe is thus ruled by accident. Such benevolent design as is discernible in it is all too vulnerable and all too easily vitiated by the coexistence of evil. Yet neither are evil and malevolence more securely established. It is true that there is no real struggle between the two, as between opposed wills or destinies, but only the casual share-out of fortunes and misfortunes. Even so there are grounds, if not for an inspiring faith, yet for its cruder version, optimism. And to this, as we shall see, the Nupe firmly cling.

This is not, however, the whole picture. Our view of Nupe religion is still one-sided, based as it is on the doctrine alone, on ideas asserted, taught, and learned as such. Another kind of faith or assurance, less articulate but perhaps more powerful, may spring from the concrete acts of worship, that is, from the psychological stimulations and experiences gained in ritual and other observances. With these the following chapters will deal.

For the moment we need point out only one of the consequences of the Nupe conception of the universe. Clearly, it vouchsafes little certainty or guidance for action. Even the promises of supernatural aid only add to the uncertainties, for as they offer the chance of several trials so they confront the user with the problem of choice, which problem is not always readily solved. But the Nupe universe holds out some promise of certainty and some guidance for action. Both are mechanical and of a case-to-case kind; in other words, they are such as divination can offer. And since this guidance is required both for the problems of everyday life and for the handling of the supernatural tools meant to aid man in these problems, divination becomes a prerequisite, not only of provident action in general, but also of religious actions. It seems logical, therefore, to turn to divination first, and afterwards to ritual, medicine, and to all the other 'supernatural tools'.

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II

DIVINATION

787 WE shall deal with two methods of divination, both of which are known throughout the country and applied on all occasions, trivial as well as serious. The first, called *eba*, consists in throwing strings of shells and resembles in technique the *ifa* divination of Yoruba; the second, *hati*, is of Mohammedan origin and involves drawing mystic patterns in the sand.[1] [177] The two methods appeal to a somewhat different public, the former being practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts, the latter in the sophisticated capital, Bida. The division, however, is far from rigid; also, as we shall see, the two methods share certain essential features in spite of the difference in technique and religious background.

Two other types of divination, which are used infrequently and mainly on minor matters, and which are known only in the river area, may be disregarded. One, called *evo* ('cowrie shells'), is a simplified version of the method of *eba*. The other, called *kpápagi* ('tortoise'), employs the dried, hollowed-out body of a tortoise, which is made to slide down a taut string. This is a crude oracle, permitting only three answers—'yes' (if the tortoise glides down quickly), 'no' (if it does not glide down at all), and 'doubtful' (if it glides down slowly).

I. THE MECHANICS OF EBA

787 The method of *eba* is far from uniform. Although the divining
791 apparatus itself and the principles of interpretation are the same everywhere, the 'key' used by the diviner, his invocations, and his minor paraphernalia may differ from locality to locality, even from one person to the other. This scope for variety does not extend to the attitude assumed in the act of divining. The eight men I observed all went through their act in a serious and tense mood, their gestures and utterances from time to time rising to an excitement which lent to the proceedings a thoroughly dramatic atmo-

[1] The Nupe term *hati* appears to be a corruption of the Arabic *hatim*, 'seal', 'magic square'; cf. the corresponding Hausa term *hatimi*.

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5. *Hati* diviner

4. *Eba* diviner

[p. 38 (A)]

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782
291
516
415

7. *Nddduma* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]

6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(a)]

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sphere. One diviner, indeed, behaved in an almost hysterical 787
manner. The clients in turn were shy, spoke little, and behaved 791
in the presence of the diviner with the same visible restraint and, occasionally, awe which the Nupe bring to the esoteric part of a religious ceremony.

The diviner's apparatus includes two sets of objects, the divining 787
strings themselves, and a series of marked slabs which serve as the 'key' for interpreting the throws. The former consist of eight cords of hemp, each strung through four perforated, hollow half-shells, placed equidistantly along the cord, about three inches from one another. The cords end in four strands, covered with small rings made of hollowed-out berries and cowrie shells; these cord-ends have no importance in the actual divining, being merely ornamental tassels, though it seems significant that they are again four (or eight) in number. The divination fastens upon the four half-shells, which are called *kpyekpya* and are made either of the shell of sheanut or of the kernel of the dompalm; in either case the bundle of eight cords is referred to as *vúnkpara*, 'white shell' (of sheanut). The diviner starts the proceedings by placing the eight cords on the ground, in parallel rows and pointing away from him, all shells being turned open side down. He then picks them up at the middle, two at a time, holding one in each hand, and throws them down again, once more in parallel rows. When this has been repeated four times, that is, when all the cords have been picked up and thrown, the diviner will interpret the pattern of shells as they happened to fall, open side up or closed side up. The procedure is called *sa 'ba*, 'to cast the *eba*', or for short, *esa*, 'the casting'. The diviner himself is known, accordingly, as *ebásaci*, 'One who casts the *eba*'.[1] The interpretation of the pattern thrown does not, however, consist merely in counting up the shells, but involves a more complicated calculation which requires certain aids to memory and a definite 'key'.

These are provided in the second set of objects, which is included in the generic name for the whole divining apparatus, *eba*. It consists of eight small, roughly square slabs cut from gourds, each of which bears a different series of point-like marks. The point-designs are known as *emi* or *kata*, that is, 'house', which nomenclature will become clear presently. The diviners employ two further paraphernalia, which play no part in the actual interpretation of the *eba*, a hippopotamus tooth, and a round or wedge-shaped stone about the size of a fist. Throughout the proceedings the diviner will poke the tooth or stone at the divining cords as though he wished to prod them into activity or to aid some process that

[1] The diviner is also called, by the Hausa name, *boka* or (the Nupe-ized version) *bosi*.

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is going on in them. This act is in fact intended to 'bring out the truth' and to help the shell cords to 'give speech'. The hippopotamus tooth is sometimes replaced by the tooth of a warthog, but no reason can be quoted why it should be one or the other; nor have these two animals any mystic or mythical connotation. The stone, on the other hand, is known as *sokógba* ('stone of God' or 'thunderbolt') and is always claimed to have 'fallen from the sky'; when pressed, however, the diviner will usually admit that he either simply found the stone or obtained it from a friend. Its round shape and smooth surface seem to be the main reasons for the choice, the nature of the stone being unimportant. Several diviners of my acquaintance used ordinary pebbles; one had a piece of quartz, another a piece of iron ore which, I discovered, came from disused iron ore workings in the neighbourhood. The diviner is also free to add to these paraphernalia at his own discretion; one of my diviner friends who had been working, in the conventional manner, with a hippo tooth and stone, had added a chameleon to his apparatus when I visited him after an interval of a few months. He had found the animal in the bush, which meant that it 'must be a gift from *Sokó*', claimed that it understood what he said, and employed it by throwing it from time to time at the divining cords. Judging from the behaviour of the onlookers, he had indeed acquired an impressive and uncanny tool.

The sketch opposite shows four different sets of *eba* slabs used by Nupe diviners. They are numbered from right to left, and are shown in the order and position in which the diviner places them on the ground, with the lower edge towards him. Series (*a*) and (*b*) are used in Bida and the surrounding district, including the Beni village of Doko; series (*d*) comes from another Beni village, Pichi; series (*c*) from Jebba Island.

The fourth slab in each series is sometimes placed face down on the ground, since it indicates misfortunes which the diviner wishes to ignore if not to spirit away. Although the markings differ widely in the four series they are supposed to be merely different versions of the same thing. One diviner used both set (*a*) and (*b*), considering that the latter set was simpler to read', since it showed only the marks that 'counted' and omitted those which had no significance.[1] Equally, the diviners will insist that there is a close correspondence between the markings on the slabs and the patterns of open or closed shells thrown in the strings, and will go to great length to prove it. They would argue, for example, that each pair of holes on the slabs corresponds to one shell thrown open

[1] The same diviner also taught me the art of *eba*. He first used set (*a*) but later brought along the second set, since he 'could see that I found the other too difficult'.

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side up, and each single hole to a closed shell; or that only the upper (or lower) halves of the slabs count in this calculation. None of these explanations, however, proves correct; in reality, the markings are entirely irrelevant and cannot even by a *tour de force* be harmonized with the varying combination of open and closed shells. What counts is not the markings on the slab, but the order

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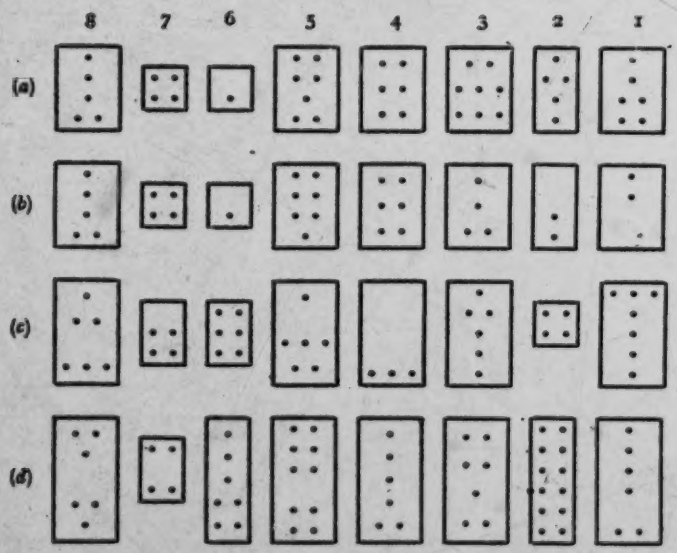
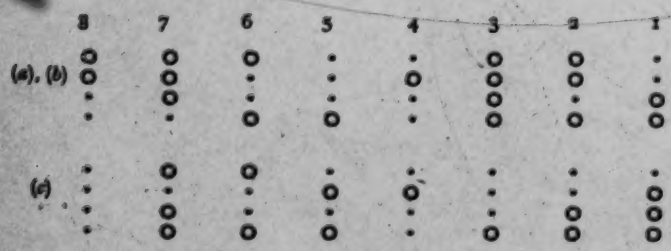


of the latter and the significance attached to each of the eight positions in it; for it is this position which is linked (quite arbitrarily) with the various possible 'throws' and gives the 'key' to their meaning. This connection is illustrated, for series (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*), in the diagram below; the position in the series of eight is indicated by the respective numbers; shells falling with the open side up are shown as rings, shells falling with the closed side up, as dots.



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2. NOMENCLATURE AND INCANTATIONS

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Though the markings on the slabs and the corresponding patterns of open and closed shells vary so widely, the significance attributed to their numerical order and the names given to them in that order are largely identical in all forms of *eba* divinations. To begin with, the shell patterns are called, generically, *etsuži* (sing. *etsu*), that is, 'kings' and are usually referred to by their number in the series, for example, '*etsu* three is a good *etsu*' (i.e. propitious), and so forth. Then there is a name for each 'house', that is, for the position which the slabs or shell patterns occupy in the series of eight. Two names, finally, refer to the slab markings themselves and to the corresponding patterns of open and closed shells. These last two names represent a sort of code, indicating the meaning attributed to the markings and shell patterns. One refers to the upper half of the slab and to the respective shell pattern lying 'straight' (i.e. as shown in our diagram); the other, to the lower half of the slab and to the shell pattern turned upside-down. Normally, only the first 'code' name is quoted; and when any shell pattern appears in reverse it usually changes not only its name but also its meaning, sometimes assuming, by a simple symbolism, the opposite significance.

The eight combinations of open and closed shells shown in our diagram are those the diviner would first demonstrate when explaining the system, the 'standard positions' as it were. But since for each string of four shells there are sixteen different throws, the eight standard positions represent only half the number of possible throws; that number, then, is completed by allowing for the reversal of the 'standard position'. By the same means the diviner can also double the range of his interpretations.

Even so, certain additional rules and provisos must be brought in. Certain slabs, for example, have symmetrical markings, so that their 'upper' and 'lower' halves coincide; in this case the second name, which corresponds to the reversed throw, refers to the (blank) back of the slab. Again, two strings in their standard position—Nos. 6 and 3 in (*a*) and (*b*), and Nos. 8 and 6 in (*c*)—show the same shell pattern when reversed; here the 'reversed pattern' is obtained by counting open shells as closed and *vice versa*. Furthermore, series (*a*) contains among its standard positions two throws (Nos. 1 and 8) which are the reverse of one another; they also have roughly opposite meanings, prophesying good fortune and disaster respectively. Since here one particular combination and its reverse are both included among the eight standard positions, another possible combination of shells must obviously be missing; if this missing combination occurs in a throw

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it remains meaningless in this series. Let me note finally, that not every shell pattern in reverse has a special meaning; in other words, the range of interpretations utilized by the diviner lags behind the mathematical possibilities of his system. 787

We need not point out specially that one series includes among its standard positions throws which do not occur in the other or occur there only in reversed position. It will be agreed, I think, that there is a great deal of arbitrariness and even haphazardness in this system of divination. The cause may well lie in the manner in which the rules of divination have been transmitted from generation to generation or spread from one community to another; this arbitrariness would thus reflect errors in the learning and memory of individuals and perhaps unwitting variations which crept into the practice. As we shall see, the system of divination is in fact taught, learned, and handed on in a purely practical and often fortuitous fashion, with none of the sacred or ritual sanctions which would make for strict adherence to given rules. However this may be, in the following discussion I propose to ignore the different variants and exemplify the method of divination on one series; that marked (*a*) in our list.

These are the names of the eight 'houses' and the 'code names' for the markings and throws, both in 'standard' and 'reversed' position:

	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Name of 'House'	*Kuti*	Road	Man	Woman	House of Diviner	Town	House	*Sokó*
Code name stand. pos.	Crowd	Arab	Wretch	Hole	Offerings	Monkey	Witchcraft	Divination
Code name rev. pos.	Hiding	Wound	Receiving (gifts)	Needle	Danger	Begging	*russ*	Rain

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The translation of the 'code names' entails considerable difficulties since the words are often given an unusual or cryptic meaning; nor can the diviners themselves always state it in more than tentative fashion. The code name for No. 8 in reversed position, for example, is *shikã*, which means normally 'dirt'; but the diviner suggested that in this context the word represents a contraction of two verbs, *shi*, meaning 'to be dark', and *'kã*, to 'hide from sight'. Again, the name for No. 4 in standard position is *nyikã*, 'fish'; but here it is taken to refer, not to the zoological species, but to the ritual offerings of fish. The name *rusu* for No. 2 is altogether untranslatable, though the diviner held (without any etymological evidence) that it meant 'foreknowledge of evil things'. I suspect that much of this is pure speculation, put forth to disprove the apparent arbitrariness of the names. The diviners are certainly convinced that there is a definite logical connection between the names for the 'houses', the code names for throws and markings, and the prophecies based on both, and in order to demonstrate it they will resort to the most far-fetched and circuitous explanations. Here is one such glossary, alleged to prove the connections underlying the threefold terminology.

No. 1: Both divination and rain come from *Sokó*.

No. 2: A house (*emi*) has a family head (*emitsó*), who wields 'power'; witchcraft equally gives power; and people also have foreknowledge of witchcraft (through dreams).

No. 3: The monkey is an animal, that is, one of many; in the 'town' there are many human beings, some of them beggars.

No. 4: The diviner often receives gifts of fish, while his craft entails certain mystic dangers.

No. 5: The 'hole', like the eye of a 'needle', stands for the vagina and hence for 'woman'.

No. 6: The 'man' consulting the diviner is often 'wretched', that is, worried over his possessions; while the prophecy connected with this 'house' bears on personal possessions (i.e. on what one 'receives').

No. 7: 'Arabs' are mostly traders and thus travel on the roads; on the roads, there are also robbers who may attack and wound travellers; thus the prophecies connected with this 'house' bear on trade and highway robbers.

No. 8: At the *kuti* there are 'crowds', and the *kuti* is also 'hidden'.

From the nomenclature we may briefly turn to the incantations which accompany the art of divining. 'Incantation' is not quite the right word; the Nupe speak of *emisa*, which is the term for the set and often elaborate forms of address required by Nupe etiquette.

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Similarly each pattern of shells has its appropriate 'greeting', which the diviner utters when it appears among his 'throws'. Mostly he mumbles it as though speaking to himself, and the listeners cannot possibly catch what he says. Nor could they make much of it even if they were interested (which they are not); for the meaning of these phrases is no less obscure than that of *eba* nomenclature. But now the diviner himself will admit this difficulty. Even my most knowledgeable informants, when trying to explain the *emisa*, gave up after a few attempts, saying that these were 'just greetings', and hence meaningless. Interspersed with meaningless words, however, one usually discovers decipherable phrases, which take the form of proverb-like sayings of nondescript character and of no striking appropriateness. Few of these sayings, incidentally, are today in common use or widely known. Their connection with the names for 'houses' or divining strings, if it exists at all, is vague, often purely verbal, and sometimes quite haphazard; the impression of haphazardness is further strengthened by the considerable diversity that occurs between the sets of *emisa* used by different diviners. A few examples will illustrate the character of these 'incantations'. 787

Throw No. 1, standard position: 'Fire of witchcraft, though red, will not burn the house'. This 'greeting' would seem to fit throw No. 2 much better; in another series it is replaced by the altogether cryptic allusion 'The devil is hungry.'

Throw No. 2, standard position: 'Dampness quietly causes the house to collapse.'

Throw No. 5, standard position: 'A burglar will not fall into a hole, though he may stumble on a slippery place.'

Throw No. 8, standard position: 'A large boat that would go into a narrow creek, you cannot build it: a crowd cannot go into a narrow place.' Replaced in another series by—'When the knees bend, the mouth should not joke' (i.e. you cannot work and play at the same time).

Throw No. 1, reversed position: 'The gown of a poor man will not (by itself) catch indigo; if he pays money, people will dye the gown for him. The poor man who becomes a grave-digger must hang his hoe on his back and walk from house to house' (i.e. even as a grave-digger, a poor devil will have to beg for custom).

Throw No. 2, reversed position: 'The leader who quarrels while pretending he wishes to prevent quarrel (is as bad as) a man who stabs you in the back.'

Throw No. 5, reversed position: 'He can sew but not wear (what he has sewn); when war eats a horse, the vulture is pleased' (which means, 'evil deeds find you out).

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787 Throw No. 8, reversed position: 'A bushfowl breaks away from the birdlime; the only thing for it to do is to run fast' (and hide).

3. INTERPRETATION

We have, so far, been dealing only with the preliminaries of divination; this obviously consists in more than reciting the names for the 'houses' and divining strings or in knowing the appropriate formulæ of address. Nor is the diviner's skill exhausted when he is able to interpret the shell patterns in their fixed numerical order, rather is this only the first step. This order (illustrated in our diagram) shows each possible shell pattern in its appropriate place or, as the Nupe would say, 'each king in his own house'. It represents a model or 'key' series, on the basis of which the diviner must compute the meaning of the actual throws. These, of course, may fall anyhow, so that any one of the eight cords may show any one of the sixteen possible shell patterns; in other words, a particular shell pattern may appear in a 'house' other than its 'own'. The main problem of the diviner, therefore, is to interpret these irregular, transposed, throws, and it is here that the series of slabs acts as an aid to memory; for having the slabs before him in their fixed numerical order the diviner is kept aware of his 'key'. To quote one diviner: To know the names and 'greetings' and to interpret the throws 'in their own house' is easy—only a matter of 'remembering'; what is difficult and demands a 'good head' is 'to know the speech of the cords when they fall in a strange house'.

I have called this part of divining a computation; for such in essence it is. The diviner knows the meaning of the various places in the series of eight; he also knows the meaning of each possible shell pattern in the key series. In divining any actual throw he considers the juxtaposition of place and shell pattern, and arrives at an interpretation combining in some reasonable fashion the two meanings. If, for example, shell pattern No. 3, which, in the key series, means 'fortune', occurred in the seventh cord (or 'house'), which has the meaning 'road', then the diviner would argue that the actual throw must mean 'fortune acquired on the road', that is, in travel or trade. It is not easy to say how far the diviner reasons anew in this fashion every time he interprets an actual throw, or merely follows some remembered rule governing this and all other possible permutations. It is most unlikely, however, that he relies on remembered rules alone, since these would have to be far too numerous.[1] When demonstrating the system of divination for my benefit the diviners did in fact cite a number of

[1] To cover all possible permutations, there would have to be 112 such rules, ignoring the 16 rules for interpreting the key series.

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possible permutations with striking readiness, which suggested that they were relying on well-memorized rules. But in the concrete case, when divining for clients, they sometimes arrived at different interpretations for identical throws. Sometimes, too, the diviner would repeat certain throws twice or three times before he seemed satisfied. The reasons for doing so were explained to me by this analogy: 'When you are told something important once only, do you believe it? No—you would wish to hear it twice or three times before you are satisfied that it is the truth. Similarly you must consult the cords several times.' But I suspect that by means of this repetition the diviner merely tries to obtain an arrangement he can more readily interpret. I would conclude, therefore, that the diviner relies on a number of remembered rules, covering certain set permutations, and interprets all others by *ad hoc* reasoning. In either case, he would also be guided by the questions put to him by his clients and by such knowledge as he happens to have of his clients, their interests, and the like.

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To some extent, this kind of guidance is fully admitted; for in actual divining the different 'houses' and shell patterns vary in relevance according to the nature of the questions put by the client and the interests he is likely to have. When dealing with a trader, for example, the 'house' called 'road' will be the most important; in the case of a person concerned about the birth of a child 'house' No. 5 ('women') and shell pattern No. 2 (referring to fortunes or misfortunes befalling a family head) will be the most significant. Furthermore, the timing of the prophecies differs for the different shell patterns. The first three shell patterns have unlimited validity, bearing on the near as well as distant future; the prophecy of shell pattern No. 4 includes only the actual day of the divination, shell pattern No. 5, the next two days, shell pattern No. 6, an indefinite future, and shell patterns Nos. 7 and 8, the near future. The interest of the diviner in all the possible throws is thus narrowed down, and he will in fact acclaim the appearance of the relevant throws with much aplomb, while lightly passing over all others.

I have listed below all the interpretations referring to throws in the 'key' position and a number of interpretations of 'transposed' throws. The list is based on 'key' series (*a*), which I recorded in Bida.

Key position

Shell pattern 1—A great man, someone well known in the town, will die. Reversed—The nobility will be angry with the White Man.

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787 Shell pattern 2—Some misfortune will befall the family head. Reversed—The family head will acquire greatness.

Shell pattern 3—Smallpox will visit the town in the rainy season, but there will be no deaths.

Shell pattern 4—The diviner will receive gifts. Reversed—Misfortune will threaten everyone, in the whole country.

Shell pattern 5—The women will quarrel. Reversed—Everyone in the country will enjoy good business; the women will have children.

Shell pattern 6—All the men (not the women) of the town will have grounds for distress, for example, because of the death indicated in shell pattern 1.

Shell pattern 7—Trouble on the highway.

Shell pattern 8—All the important people in the town will be happy.

Transposed position

Pattern 1 in house 2—Happy relations between the nobility and the White Man.

Pattern 1 in house 3—Many deaths.

Pattern 1 in house 5—Refers to menstruation.

Pattern 1 in house 7—There will be fights on the road, possibly death or murder.

Pattern 2 in house 1—Rain will fall; or—Happy relations between the nobility and the White Man.

Pattern 2 in house 4—Many deaths.

Pattern 2 in house 7—Pregnancy.

Pattern 3 in house 4—The diviner will receive a gift of a goat or sheep.

Pattern 3 in house 5—The women will quarrel among themselves.

Pattern 3 in house 6—Highway robbery.

Pattern 3 in house 7—War.

Pattern 4 in house 1—Many deaths.

Pattern 7 in any house other than 5—A guest will arrive.

Pattern 7 reversed in any house—A case of death.

Pattern 7 in house 5—Pregnancy.

Pattern 8 in house 1—There will be greetings and gifts for the nobility.

Pattern 8 in house 2—The client should stay at home and not travel.

Pattern 8 in house 3—Success in trade.

184 787 Let me note that different diviners, using a different key series, will also interpret it somewhat differently. Mostly, this merely means that the interpretations are moved about, from one place

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on the list to another, while the list as a whole remains unchanged. Sometimes, however, the lists themselves differ; though these differences are few, they bear relevantly on the social background of the diviner and the interests current in his setting. Thus the diviners in the villages interpret shell pattern 3 as meaning, on occasion, a 'good hunt', which interpretation does not occur at all in the list of the diviners in or near Bida town, where there is no hunting. Again, in the villages shell pattern 8 is sometimes taken to mean 'a council in the house of the chief'; the connection with the 'important people' mentioned in our version is clear; but in that version, coming as it does from the capital where there are no councils of elders or chiefs, the reference to a 'council in the house of the chief' would clearly be out of place. Conversely, shell pattern 1 reversed has in Bida a meaning which hardly affects the life in villages remote from the political difficulties and tensions of the capital; characteristically, in the villages the same pattern reads 'rain will fall', a prophecy which in turn has less importance for the townspeople. In one instance at least—the transposed pattern 2 in 'house' 1—the diviner's key allows for both these interests. I need not point out especially that it allows also for modern conditions and problems of a thoroughly topical kind. 787

Let me finally quote two examples of complete divinations. The first was performed for a canoe-man who was about to set out on a trip up the river. The cords fell as follows: 787

Cords	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Shell patterns	6	2 rev.	4	7	3	4	2 rev.	1
Prophecies	The people will forgather	Refers to evening	A pleasant trip	Good trading	The women will pick quarrels	The men will be pleasant	Gifts for the chief	The *huti* is friendly

The advice to the client was to be of good cheer: he should start out in the evening, take along gifts for the chief, and be careful in his dealings with women; he would return, after a successful trip, in four or five days (which last prophecy was nowhere indicated in the cords). The second divination was concerned with identifying the *kuci* of a boy just born to the client (a man). Here the diviner was interested only in the first two 'houses', the first referring to 'God', the second to 'House', that is, to the client's position of a family head. After several throws the diviner obtained this combination: 775 787 852

Cords	1	2
Shell patterns	4	6

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whereupon he announced: 'The grandfather who begot your father—his name is that of the child.' The diviner would not explain his reasoning more precisely beyond saying that pattern 4 in 'house' 1, meaning 'many deaths', must relate to a *kuci* five 'deaths', i.e. generations, removed, while pattern 2 in 'house' 6 indicated the male sex of the *kuci*. Since the Nupe usually regard a great-grandfather as the most remote ancestor likely to be reincarnated, the diviner's reference to an additional generation would seem to be a plausible interpretation of a throw meaning 'many deaths'.

4. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The names of the 'houses' and the meanings attached to the various throws, even in the simple key series, clearly illustrate the close connection between divination and social life. Among the names and meanings we find represented, not only the universal problems of men and communities (death, birth, rain, illness) or particular religious notions (*Sokó*, *kuti*, performance of sacrifices), but also the mundane interests typical of Nupe society. Events on the high roads and travel and trade; the ever-present social issue of 'greatness', that is, of success in the struggle for rank and status; and the equally ubiquitous interest in matters politic, chieftainship, councils of elders, the actions of the ruling class—all these have their place in the scheme of divining and partly even in its basic vocabulary. Similarly, each relevant social grouping is explicitly referred to: the 'house', that is, the large extended family under a family head (*emi*); the 'town' or village (*ežì*); the 'whole country', that is, the kingdom of Nupe; and the class of the 'great men' and nobility. As we have seen, the diverse social settings of the capital and of the villages are reflected in certain variants in the rules of divination. These affect the individual case as well; for a diviner would interpret the prophecies referring to 'gifts' or 'greatness' differently when dealing with a *ialaka* (a commoner or peasant) than when dealing with a member of the aristocracy. In the former case 'gifts' mean bowls of food and 'greatness' the favours of a nobleman; in the latter case the gifts turn into more valuable presents, and 'greatness' bears on promotion in rank and title. We have seen, too, that the rules of divination are far from static, having been successfully adapted even to recent conditions and to political problems only some forty years old. We can even point to a typical, transitional phase in this process; for the choice mentioned before, of interpreting the same throw as meaning either 'rain' or 'friendly relations with the White Man', means nothing else.

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It is easy enough for the diviner to guess the status and background of his clients, and hence their likely interests, even if they are strangers to him. For dress and general behaviour reveal a good deal in Nupe; and the questions put to a diviner are usually sufficiently specific to give him such clues as he may need. Well-known personages, incidentally, such as members of the high nobility, never consult a diviner in person; they send messengers who are not supposed to divulge the names of their employers. But these messengers are usually servants or retainers of the nobleman in question, and as well known as he. 787

Generally speaking, the Nupe diviner tends to be optimistic; if some trouble is forecast, the suggestion of a ready remedy or some warning easily observed would accompany the prophecy. I have, in fact, not met with any prophecy which was outright disastrous. Nor is the Nupe diviner given to cryptic statements; ambiguous though his technical vocabulary may be, his communications to clients are clear and straightforward. Occasionally he makes use of symbolic allusions, which are, however, readily understood; thus the mention of 'dark' or 'black' things means that the prospect is bleak or frightening; 'white' means luck and good prospects, while 'red' indicates wealth, ampleness, prosperity. [822]

In order to gain a clear picture of the variety of problems on which diviners are usually consulted, I employed a crude statistical technique. I supplied four diviners with sheets of paper on which I drew rough pictures representing certain expected topics and instructed them to mark, underneath, their visitors, day by day for one month—a stroke for a man and a circle for a woman. Cross-strokes were meant to indicate repeated visits, while space was left for additional topics. It must be noted that all four men had a high reputation in their locality so that the size of their clientele, which proved to differ widely, did not reflect their unequal renown. Rather surprisingly, the largest and most regular clientele was that of a diviner in Bida, where I should have expected the competition of sand-divining to have spoiled the market for the pagan variety. The next best clientele was that of a diviner in Saci, a small hamlet near Bida, while the custom of two diviners in the heart of the country, in Kutigi and Jebba, was markedly smaller. The season of the year, incidentally, did not seem to affect the diviner's business.

The Bida diviner had thirty-seven male and twelve female visitors in a month (in March); of these five men had come twice, and one man three times. The diviner knew personally only one of his clients, who was his brother-in-law and came from Doko. The diviner in Saci was consulted twenty-eight times by men and twice by women (in January); three men had come twice, four men

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four times, and one woman twice. Again, he knew few of his clients personally, though he knew that they came in about equal proportion from Bida and from the hamlets nearby. The diviner on Jebba Island had six male and five female clients (in June), one of the women coming twice. Though Jebba Island is a small village it lies close to an important river port with a considerable floating population of traders, canoe-men, and other strangers. It is understandable, therefore, that, with two exceptions, the diviner's clients were all strangers. The diviner in Kutigi, finally, had four male and two female clients (in March): all were local people and well known to him.

The reasons for which the diviners were consulted varied characteristically with local conditions. In Bida, consultations about prospects of trade came first (in the case of both men and women); only a little less important were enquiries about projected journeys—when to set out, whether to travel at all, and so forth—and about the well-being of distant relatives whom the client thought of visiting; there were a few cases of men who consulted the diviner about marriages they had in mind, of men and women who desired children, and of others who wished to divine the name of a new-born child; very few consultations were about illness, and even fewer about favours which men of high status were anxious to obtain from the king. Excepting the last topic, the diviner in Saci had to deal with almost exactly the same set of problems. In Jebba, the order of topics was as follows—journeys and distant relatives; childbirth and naming of a new-born; trade; illness and enquiries as to the appropriate 'medicine' or sacrifice; and some unspecific requests for fortune-telling. In Kutigi much the same topics occurred, with the exception of enquiries about trade, which were absent in this predominantly rural community; enquiries about projected journeys and distant relatives were at the bottom of the list, which tallies with the geographically much more limited range of Kutigi marriages and movements in general. We note the absence of enquiries about projected marriages both in Jebba and Kutigi; the reason seems to be that in the villages marriage is much more rigidly laid down by custom and more firmly controlled by the kin group; the restriction of individual choice, then, obviates the need for the diviner's services.

A final reason for consulting the diviner, on matters of communal ritual, does not appear in our lists, mainly because they are based on random periods and hence apt to miss these relatively infrequent occasions. Consultations of this kind are the responsibility of the village chief or the *kuti* priest. They take place, less often on the occasion of the fixed, seasonal *kuti*, than at times when an unexpected misfortune threatens the community; in the

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former case, too, it is sometimes considered advisable to make sure of a propitious day; but in the latter case divination may be the only means for discovering the appropriate religious remedy. Let me mention in passing the widespread conviction that even the Emir of Nupe consults diviners (of the Mohammedan variety), in large numbers and 'for whole weeks at a time', to aid him in his multifarious problems: which belief, in spite of its circumstantial nature, is unsupported by such evidence as I could muster.[1] 787

One more word about the frequency of the visits one pays the diviner. For the townspeople no rule can be laid down; persons who seek advice on trade, travels, promotion in rank or other specific questions will obviously consult the diviner *ad hoc*, whenever the need happens to arise. It is somewhat different in the villages, where people also go to the diviner simply to have their fortunes told. Here individuals would pay fairly regular visits, once or twice a month, or at least once in two or three months. I have, however, spoken to villagers who had not been to the diviner for as much as five or six months.

The diviner is paid a small fee every time he is consulted. The fee is neither rigidly laid down nor claimed in advance. In Bida, the diviner is usually paid in money, though a bowl of rice or a few kolanuts may be thrown in, the client paying according to his ability, between a penny and sixpence. In the village one mostly pays in food or kolanuts. The diviners themselves regard the payments as 'gifts', and would strongly deny that they are divining 'for money'. No diviner could in fact live on what his skill earns him; nor does a diviner's reputation add in any way to his status in this rank-conscious society. Divining is merely an additional vocation, prized for the mystic wisdom and power it implies rather than for material or social gains. 791 [555]

This brings me to the last point, the social position of the diviner himself. Divination is essentially 'learning'—a skill that can be acquired by anyone having a 'good head'; if it is hereditary in a family it is so only incidentally. A great many diviners learned the art, in their youth, from another expert, paying for the tuition. One Bida diviner, for example, a man of about sixty-five, had learned divination when he was fifteen, studying for ten months, 'every day as in school'. Another had learned the craft from a stranger he met on his wanderings when a young man. Two diviners made an exceptional and unorthodox claim; while admitting that they had to acquire the skill, they maintained that they had 'learned it from God', by inspiration as it were. The majority of the diviners I met were also farmers; one was a barber by

[1] According to tradition, the old kings of Nupe had numerous official diviners among their retinue; this practice has certainly disappeared.

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profession; the diviner in Kutigi was the head of the small group of 'hunters' in that community; while the diviner in Jebba held a high rank among the village elders and the priestship of an important *kuti*. Several diviners are medicine experts at the same time, so that they can treat as well as diagnose illness; those who are not must send their clients to a 'doctor' for the appropriate *cigbe*, unless of course their diagnosis reveals the kind of illness which only sacrifices and similar observances can cure.

Being a learned 'skill', divination is irregularly distributed. Bida, not unnaturally, has a great many diviners (though the majority are Moslem sand-diviners), both in the town itself and in the farming settlements outside. Doko, a moderately large village, has three diviners; Kutigi, a much larger place, and Jebba, a busy thoroughfare on the river, have only one each. Some villages have no resident expert; here the people would go to diviners in the neighbourhood, the diviners themselves being apparently unwilling to go 'on tour'.

Every diviner, apart from advising clients, also divines for himself and his family, either when confronted with some particular problem or on regular days (for example, every Friday in Kutigi). Furthermore, before his first divination of the day, the diviner must go through a particular procedure which in a sense consecrates his tools. Without at first using the marked slabs, he will throw the cords as often as is necessary to obtain the full key series. As each shell pattern appears in its proper place he puts the corresponding slab on the ground. In due course, the *sokógba* is placed between the 4th and 5th slab, that is, beside the slab referring to the diviner's own 'house'. While proceeding with his throws, the diviner mutters a kind of running commentary, thus—'Figures of the *eba*, join each other. Are your words (or signs) sufficient? They are not sufficient. There are three *etsu*, now there are four *etsu* . . . I have not yet extracted *etsu* (number) three . . .' So it goes on until the series is complete. At this stage the diviner says—'*To, Sokó da bo*', 'Good, God is there', turns all cords with the open shell face down, and is ready to begin the real divining.

In no other way does the diviner stand under special rules, restrictions or observances, with two exceptions. If he happens to refresh himself with beer while divining, as he often does, he would pour a little on his slabs, saying that this is 'for God', while the normal practice is to pour a little beer on the ground for the *kuci* or 'grandfather'. Again, while the *efu* gifts to spirits made by ordinary people are harmless, the diviner's gift harbours great danger for any person who would first catch sight of it after it had been placed on the wayside. To avoid this danger, the diviner would place his *efu* underneath some large tree in the bush where

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people are unlikely to pass. These two rules, then, and the 'consecration' of the diviner's tools with its reference to the presence of God, demonstrate the mystic power that attaches to divining and to those who handle it, and the sacred provenance of the skill. As we have seen, however, this evidence of sacredness does not content every individual; so that some will also claim that their whole knowledge is divinely inspired or that their paraphernalia are gifts of God. 791

Whatever status the diviner will claim for himself, for his art he will always claim the perfection of a well thought-out system, governed by rigorous, consistent rules, even though he must resort to far-fetched arguments to prove his case. Let us consider this point for a moment. The diviners clearly represent a selected group of individuals, not a random sample; for only those with particular leanings and aptitudes—those with a 'good head'—will choose this profession. Now, comparing the manner in which the Nupe generally are apt to discuss religious topics with the attitude shown by the diviners in their field, we find that one of the variants of the former constitutes the norm of the latter. The layman discussing religion may or may not be inclined to embark upon speculation: the diviner discussing divination does so as a matter of course if by this means he can force his facts into a more convincing order. Equally, in the act of divining, he is capable of a tense and dramatic mood. The first attitude only satisfies the diviner's own leanings; for his public takes no interest in these speculative refinements and cannot appreciate them. But his public does expect the diviner to be tense and excited, and is visibly impressed by his excursions into drama. In either case, we may conclude, the diviner's role offers a congenial niche to individuals of that religious bias or, more generally, of that temperament and intellectual predisposition.

5. THE MECHANICS OF HATI

Although we are not at the moment concerned with the influence of Islam on Nupe religion, it is convenient to discuss the Mohammedan variant of divination in this context. For in the main it is only the technique which is novel in this system of divining, while its topics, interpretation, and social aspects coincide with those typical of the pagan system. Partly, too, the two techniques share various points of resemblance, such as the designs of the 'key' figures or the use of series of eight, so that it would seem that the new, Mohammedan, practice has been assimilated to the older, indigenous method. 787

Hati or sand divination is even more fully a learned skill than

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787 is the system of *eba*. Its performance is prosaic, without any show of excitement or drama. Even its links with things sacred are reduced to the level of strictly occupational accomplishments since *hati* is one of the skills which 'mallams' alone can acquire, that is, men who have studied the Qoran and acquired at least the rudiments of Moślem learning. Most of these mallams-cum-diviners are found in Bida. They include men of widely varying status, learning, and reputation. Two of my diviner friends will illustrate the extremes. One was a highly educated scholar, who could read and write Arabic, possessed a number of books, and had some knowledge of Islamic doctrine. The other could read a little, though without much understanding; he could not write more than the cryptic cypher the diviners put on the sand table before starting to divine; and he neither knew the Qoran nor possessed any knowledge of Islamic doctrine. The first case, however, was an exception; for the true Islamic scholars (by Nupe standards) do not normally engage in divining; while the diviners are not infrequently men who had been unsuccessful in the scholarly profession. Thus one diviner had studied the Qoran but, earning too little as a mallam, later became a beadworker, supplementing his earnings by divination and the sale of charms. Another diviner was at the same time a trader in a small way, a third a hatmaker. Some of the sand diviners (including the scholarly mallam) seemed to be doing very well, having one to three clients a day. Less successful ones would still have two or three a week. Only one of the five diviners I knew had had no customers for a month, though he claimed that this was exceptional.

Like the *eba* system sand-divination has its 'key' and key series, though these are not embodied in a separate set of objects but are carried entirely in the diviner's head. A more substantial 'key' does in fact exist; it is contained in a book on divination, written in Arabic and amply illustrated with diagrams, the relevant pages of which are in the possession of most diviners; while actually divining, however, this book of rules is never consulted. The diviner's apparatus is simple, consisting only of sand, flattened out on the ground so that it forms a square, smooth surface, on which the various signs are impressed with the tips of the fingers. Before he begins, the diviner draws a cypher in the sand, which looks vaguely like an Arabic sign but which I was unable to identify; it is said to be the 'sign of the king', but fits neither 'king' nor 'Allah', nor any other word I could think of in this connection. To the right and left of the cypher certain of the 'key' signs are impressed, varying with the day of the week. On Friday, for example, the diviner puts sign 14 on the left and sign 7 on the right; on Sunday he draws signs 15 and 9; on Monday, signs 4 and

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5, and so forth. Saturday alone has more than two signs, namely, the four signs 6, 8, 10, and 13. No reason is quoted why this arrangement rather than any other should be chosen. Having completed this preparatory task, the diviner wipes the surface clean again and starts with the real divining.

He impresses small dots into the square of sand, one beside the other, starting from the left bottom edge and describing an arc up and down again to the right side of the square. He produces sixteen such dotted arcs, one underneath the other, which are considered to fall into four sets of four arcs. Having completed this fourfold set, the diviner wipes out every second dot in each arc, now starting from the right, down to the left bottom edge; where the last dot to be wiped out would be the last dot of the arc, that dot is left intact, so that in this case a double dot remains. As a result, the diviner obtains four patterns of dots lying along the left bottom edge and consisting each of four single or double dots.[1] These four patterns, as will be seen, are obtained entirely by chance. Once they are obtained, however, chance ceases to play a part; for the subsequent procedure is purely mechanical and rests on computations and manipulations all ultimately based on the four initial dot patterns. First, the sand table is once more wiped clean. Then the diviner draws the four patterns into the right upper space, the pattern which was originally farthest to the left being placed farthest to the right, and so forth in that order. In this new position the four patterns are drawn upright and symmetrically, and now represent the proper 'signs' of *hati*. From this first group of four signs the diviner derives a similar second group, which he draws into the left upper space; he does this by converting each horizontal line of dots in the first group into a corresponding upright column in the second, thus:

Underneath this row of eight signs a second and then a third row are drawn, now numbering four signs each. The lower rows are obtained by coupling adjacent signs in the next higher row and reducing each such pair of signs to a single sign in the row below. In the case of the top row each sign is coupled once only, that is, in accordance with this schema—*ab, cd, ef, gh* (if *a–h* are the eight

[1] Sometimes the diviner draws only eight arcs at a time, in which case the process just described has to be repeated.

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787 signs). In the second row each of the four signs is coupled both ways with its neighbour, so that again four pairs result, thus—*ab*, *cd*, *ad*, *bc*. In reducing a pair of signs to one, the diviner adds up the dots which appear horizontally, on the same level, in the two given signs and considers whether the total for each level is two, three or four; if the total is two or four, the resulting sign in the next lower row will have a double dot on the corresponding level, if the total is three, a single dot. For example:

upper row	•	•	— level 1
	•	• •	— level 2
	• •	•	— level 3
	• •	• •	— level 4
lower row	• •		— level 1
	•		— level 2
	•		— level 3
	• •		— level 4

Having thus obtained sixteen signs in three rows, the diviner performs a further calculation. He adds up the total number of dots appearing on the top level of each of the three rows and deducts twelve from the total or, if the difference exceeds sixteen, twice twelve. The balance gives him the key series number of a particular dot pattern, which he must then locate in his sand drawing and use as a starting point for the interpretation. The proviso, that the difference must not be more than sixteen, is explained by the fact that the key series itself consists of sixteen signs, so that a number larger than this would be useless. It is possible, however, that the number so obtained might be that of a sign which happens to be missing in the sand drawing; if so, the diviner will look instead for one of the six 'kindred' signs, which will be discussed presently.

The diagram opposite illustrates the key series of *hati* divining; with two exceptions its general design is also that of the actual sand drawing. The first exception is of a minor order and refers to the lay-out of the third row which, in the key series, is broken up into three-plus-one signs. The second exception refers to the principle upon which the key series is constructed. This bears no relation to the procedure just discussed, whereby the diviner derives his whole drawing from an initial group of four signs; rather, the key series seems to be put together almost at random, though we may note (a point strongly emphasized by all diviners) that the total number of dots in each group of four signs is always twenty-four. As we shall see, this discrepancy in the construction of the two designs does not prevent the diviners from explaining both by an identical analogy.

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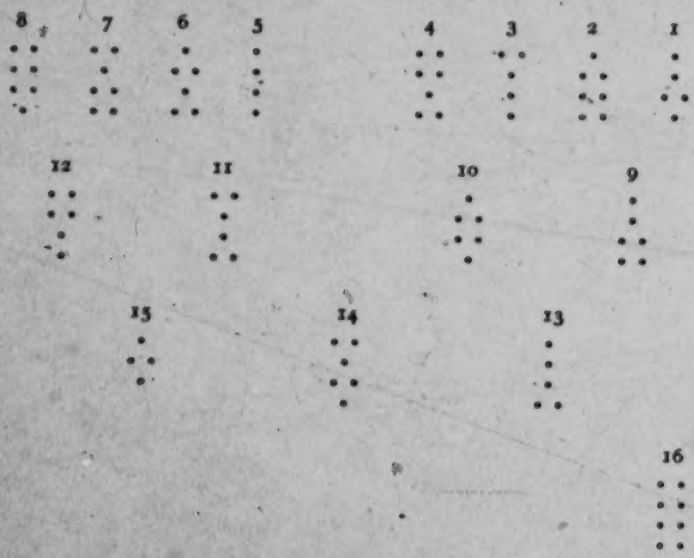
We note the resemblance between the dot patterns and certain of the markings on the *eba* slabs. In the case of *hati*, however, the key series is complete, its sixteen signs including every possible combination of single and double dots grouped in this manner. Let me mention some other similarities. The correct name for the signs in their key position is 'stars', which is consistent with the vaguely astrological background of sand-divining; in spite of this, the diviner will usually refer to them as 'houses', that is, in the phraseology of *eba* divination. A single dot in any sign is called



'open' and a double dot 'closed', as though the diviner were again dealing with shells falling face-up or face-down. The actual divination, finally, rests once more upon considering the varying positions (or 'houses') in which any one sign may appear and upon combining the meanings of place and pattern.

This procedure, however, is backed by a different theory and a much more elaborate set of rules. To begin with there is the astrological background of sand-divining. The signs in their key position (the 'stars') have long, Arabic-sounding names, said to be the names of constellations.[1] In each sign the four levels of single or

[1] These are too complicated for regular quotation, so that the diviner uses the key-series number instead. I could identify only a few of these names, which would seem to refer, not to constellations, but to diverse Islamic concepts. *Almayika*, the name for pattern 2, is probably *Mala'ikah*, 'Angels', which is also the name of the 35th *Surah* of the Qoran. *Atariki*, pattern 5,

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787 double dots (counting from top to bottom) represent the four elements—Fire, Air, Water, Earth. Equally, the key series as a whole is taken to symbolize the four elements; these are so distributed over the sixteen signs that the three groups of four in the first and second row each contain three of the elements, one of them twice, while the group of four in the bottom row includes all four elements in their proper order (reading from right to left), thus:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
E	A	W	W	W	A	F	F
12		11		10		9	
E		A		E		F	
	15		14		13		16
	E		W		A		F

The analogy with the four elements plays no further part in the interpretation of the key series. Here their spatial arrangement alone is important and its meaning is explained with the help of a different analogy, with procreation and kinship. The first group of four signs (1–4) is called the 'mother-group'; the next group (5–8), the 'children' (there being no corresponding 'father' group); the four signs in the second row (9–12) are called 'grandchildren', and the three signs in the bottom row (13–15), 'great-grandchildren'. Sign 16, which contains the largest possible number of dots and stands apart in the design, also has an independent meaning in this pseudo-genealogy: it represents the 'mother' of all the other signs, and in the divination bears a prophecy concerning the diviner himself. The four 'mother' signs in the first group are said to 'give birth' to the 'children' signs, these to the 'grandchildren' signs, and so forth. The latter analogy is once more applied to the drawing of the design in actual divination; for when the diviner derives the second group of signs from the first, and similarly the lower rows from those above, this procedure is again described as signs 'giving birth' to signs. The same procedure also establishes other, more specific links of 'kinship' between the signs; for all those signs which, by means of this procedure, would produce the same resultant sign (or 'give birth' to it) are regarded as that sign's 'kin'. In demonstrating this connection repetitions and signs appearing in reverse are ignored, so that each sign has

seems to be *Tariq*, 'Way' (of belief) and the name of the 86th *Surah*. *Nasuralharaja*, pattern 9, and *Nasuraldahili*, pattern 12, may mean *Nasr al kharaj* and *Nasr al dakhl*—'Luck on leaving' and 'Luck on Entering' (?). The name for the last and fullest pattern (No. 16), *Jim'a*, is Arabic for 'assembly', 'congregation'. *Almanhu*, the name for pattern 8, seems to be the Nupe word *Manhó* arabicized, meaning 'Great Scholar'.

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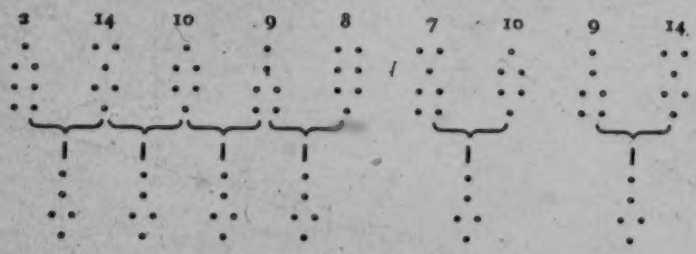
six 'relatives'.[1] The diagram below illustrates this for the first sign in the key series. The example also shows, incidentally, that the 'kinship' so derived conflicts with that other, genealogical, schema, since now a sign of the 'mother' group is assumed to be 'born' of signs belonging to the offspring generations. The logical conflict, however, has no further consequences; only the 'kinship' between signs is made use of in the practice of divining, while the genealogical schema remains pure 'theory'.



6. INTERPRETATION

Let me now list the meanings attributed to the various signs in the key series and hence to any sign in its own 'house'. Each position in the key series has a brief name, this time quoted in Nupe not in Arabic, which corresponds to the 'code' names of *eba* divining and similarly alludes to the respective prophecy.

No. 1. Good health; the client will have a son. Code name 'Life and War'; the latter allusion is, as it were, per contra, war being the destroyer of life and sons.

No. 2. Some day the client will be rich ('Wealth').

No. 3. The client will some day have a large family and receive many gifts ('Kinship').

No. 4. The client's wife, or a female client, will become pregnant ('Father and Mother').

No. 5. As No. 1 ('Child').

No. 6. Recovery after illness ('Illness').

No. 7. The client will find a good wife or husband ('Marriage').

No. 8. The whole town will be thrown into strife and upheaval ('Uproar', 'Commotion').

[1] The 'mother' sign 16, which consists wholly of double dots, is equally ignored. Bearing in mind the rules for reducing two signs to one, it will readily be seen that sign 16 cannot be derived from any other pair of signs. In this sense it is rightly placed apart from the rest of the design. There is a further kind of 'kinship', which is however unimportant. It links each sign with the one showing the same pattern in reverse, and sign 1 (which is entirely 'open') with its opposite, sign 16 (which is entirely 'closed').

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No. 9. A successful journey ('Voyage').

No. 10. All the leaders of the town will meet in consultation, but will arrive at bad decisions ('Nobility', 'Office Holders').

No. 11. God will listen to all prayers and cause all 'medicines' to work successfully ('Doubts').

No. 12. Success in love against rivals ('Enemy').

No. 13. Success in every enterprise ('Writing', 'Prayer').

No. 14. Financial success ('Trade' and 'Money').

No. 15. Fear and worries will disappear ('Barbers'; the allusion is to the many barbers who are also doctors and thus make illness 'disappear').

No. 16. The diviner will find many clients ('Mallam').

In the actual divination not every sign is located, identified, and interpreted in accordance with its varying position; this would clearly be immensely complicated, and the diviner does not even pretend to do it. Rather does he greatly simplify the procedure by various means. Thus he assesses and interprets the combination of place and sign only in the case of the one sign which serves as his starting point. Assuming, for example, that this happens to be sign 12 in the key series, meaning 'wealth', and that in the actual design it appears in 'house' No. 2, which in turn means 'enemy'; the diviner would then conclude that 'people are jealous of the client's wealth' or that the client 'will rival the wealth of others', according to which divination seems more plausible in the case of a particular person. The diviner's next step consists in tracing the six 'kindred' signs; and now he no longer considers the precise position of the signs but only their relative order, that is, whether they occur in a place with a higher or lower number. The sign occurring in the place with the higher number (that is, further to the left or in a lower row) is said to 'eat up' the 'kindred' sign in the place or places with the next lower number; which means that the prophecy of the former will overrule the prophecy of the latter. For example, sign 13 ('Prayer') occurring to the left of the 'kindred' sign 8 ('Uproar') is taken to indicate that 'prayer will eventually overcome the strife'.

Furthermore, the sixteen signs are allocated to four series on the grounds of their allegedly similar meaning. The first series includes all signs referring to wealth, success, health and high social position, (signs 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16); the second series includes all signs referring to poverty, misfortune, ill health, and other worries of the moment (signs 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15); the third series is said to concern men—(signs 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16), the last series women (signs 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15). The main merit of this arrangement, which incidentally does not quite tally with the interpretations listed before, seems to be that it operates with two

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pairs of broadly contrasted categories of wide applicability and with four series of eight, which are relatively easy to remember. In interpreting these series, the diviner will always take into account whether his client is a man or a woman. Thus, if the sign to be interpreted belongs to series 1 (meaning 'success') and series 4 ('concerning women'), and occurs in the consultation of a man, the diviner will conclude that his client will be successful in finding a wife. If the same combination occurs in the case of a female client, it will probably mean that she will be prosperous in business. If the sign belongs to series 1 and 3 ('concerning men'), and occurs in the case of a male client, the latter will 'gain reputation and rank'. If the sign belongs to series 2 (meaning 'misfortune') and 4 ('concerning women') and occurs in the case of a female client, it might mean that she will have a difficult pregnancy, and so forth. 787

It is clear that in this flexible system of divination the diviner will be guided by the particular case of his client much more fully than is his pagan colleague; in fact, the system of divination itself acknowledges the importance at least of the sex of the client. Also, the diviner has several methods of calculation at his disposal and is free to choose the less complicated one provided it still offers a plausible prophecy. This is borne out by the existence of an optional, final rule which reduces the whole system of divination to a simple mechanical procedure. This rule lays down that all signs which have a single dot at the top and a double dot at the base, so that they 'point away' from the diviner, bear an adverse prophecy; while all signs of the opposite design, 'pointing inward', are propitious. If the diviner uses this simplified method exclusively he will consider only the 'houses' that bear on the client's question and phrase his reply accordingly. In a consultation I watched the diviner was asked if the client would recover some goods that had been stolen. The diviner looked at 'house' 2, meaning 'wealth', at 'house' 9, meaning 'voyage' (since the goods had been 'carried away'), at 'house' 12, 'enemy', and at 'houses' 13 and 14, implying 'success'. The signs at 2 and 13 were inconclusive; the signs at 9 and 12 pointed outward; only the sign at 14 had a propitious meaning. The answer was, quite plausibly, that it was no good looking for the thieves; the client might be successful if he could follow them; but this was difficult since they had by then left the town with their loot.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nupe sand-divining is the contrast between its pretentious theoretical framework and its primitive and slipshod application in practice. In some respects the 'theory' simply evaporates in the 'practice', as in the high-sounding Arabic nomenclature which gives way to common Nupe 787 182 178

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787 expressions or in the astrological notions of which no use is ever
182 made. The practice is clearly meant to cope with the relevant
178 problems and interests of Nupe social life; and these, let us note, are now typical, not only of a Mohammedan community, but also of a highly urbanized one. There is no longer any mention of rain, of the prospects of hunting, or of the influence of *kuti*; instead, we find references to 'writing and prayer', to mallams and barber-doctors, to 'the whole town in strife', and the strong emphasis on travel and trade, including travel and trade 'concerning women'.

The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of *hati* and its practical application suggests once more an attempt to assimilate the Mohammedan system to local conditions. The attempt is crude and unambitious, stopping far short of anything like a true synthesis; rather, any feature which cannot readily be assimilated is left on one side and only nominally acknowledged. Occasionally even this bare acknowledgement is discarded, as is shown in this example. One diviner, able to read his Arabic book on divination, discovered in it a new rule which distinguished between 'fixed' and 'movable' stars and operated with series of seven and the corresponding permutations. The diviner frankly admitted that he did not fully understand the rule: consequently he simply ignored it, not even borrowing the new nomenclature.

7. CONCLUSIONS: DREAM INTERPRETATION

787 I have called the guidance offered by divination mechanical and of a case-to-case kind. The preceding discussion will have borne out this description. Nupe divination is concerned less with foreknowledge in its own right than with resolving the problems and obscurities of the moment. The diviner can discover and disentangle some of the hidden influences which are at work always and everywhere, and can to that extent predict—piecemeal, and illuminating only the immediate future: he cannot uncover any more embracing design. Indeed, as we know, there is no such design in this non-committal and fundamentally amoral religion. Yet within the limits set to it divination has a part to play, providing some of the certainty and guidance required for provident action. We may call Nupe divination a concession or compromise; for as its scope is so restricted by the logic of Nupe religious thought, the fact that it exists at all, is a concession exacted by the practical needs of human life.

Let us note that religion itself adds to these needs. We spoke of the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought which crowds the universe with supernatural agencies overlapping in their effects and multiplies the supernatural aids, so that their appropriateness

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can only be discovered by trial and error. Once more divination is needed to reduce the uncertainties which must arise; it is thus that it becomes a 'prerequisite' of religious no less than of practical action.[1] And here, I think, we find the explanation for a somewhat puzzling point of Nupe doctrine. Although Nupe divination is marked off as being 'of God', it is not numbered among the other, similar 'things of the world', that is, of creation. Nor are there any legends explaining its origin or appearance on earth. This ambiguity seems in keeping with the peculiar role of divination in Nupe religious practice. Divination is clearly one of the tools bestowed by God upon man so that he may be better fitted to cope with the practical problems of life on earth; but these include also the problem of handling successfully all the other transcendental tools. And just because divination is such a twofold 'prerequisite' and so basically indispensable, its presence is simply taken for granted.

The role of divination in Nupe life, however, must not be exaggerated. It is far from all-important; the Nupe, for example, do not practise divination as regularly or consistently as do many other primitive societies. When I asked my informants if they consulted diviners daily or perhaps weekly, they simply laughed. In a great many walks of life one can carry on without this mystic advice; for daily life has its own routine and its own practical rules, on which one can safely rely. Medicine, too, has its routine side. So has religious life: the seasonal rituals, fixed by the calendar of the country, are performed largely without the aid of diviners. Only when the routine of everyday life breaks down and when its rules prove inadequate in the face of choice, that is, when anxieties and uncertainties arise, divination comes into its own.

Among the topics handled by the Nupe diviner we should perhaps expect to find also dreams, especially since they offer so important clues to witchcraft and to the activities of spirits and *fifingi*. Yet this is not so. Certain rules for interpreting dreams exist, but their knowledge does not appear to be widespread, being altogether absent in certain parts of the country. Even where it exists, it is shared by diviners and laymen alike and is never made the subject of divining proper. The Nupe do puzzle about their dreams and suspect that a curious dream may have a message or purport something important; in this case the dreamer might discuss his experience with others, and together they would speculate about the likely meaning. Or, where there are individuals knowledgeable about dreams, the dreamer would look for one of them among his friends or fellow villagers, the 'expert' claiming neither payment nor special status.

[1] See above, p. 37.

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787 Generally speaking, there are three kinds of dreams. If your dream is accompanied by pains and nightmares, then it betrays the presence of an evil *aljénu*, which must be dealt with by the appropriate gifts to spirits. If you dream that some other person is about to kill you, then this is evidence of witchcraft. In neither event is it necessary to consult any book of rules since this kind of dream is obvious to everyone. If, however, your dream is merely unusual or odd, then it requires interpretation according to the rules, which would usually also suggest certain observances meant to secure the promise of the dream or to ward off its veiled threats.

Thus, when you dream of herds of wild animals, it means that witches threaten you; when you dream of herds of cows, you may expect wealth and success, though you should make a gift of milk to a mallam. A man who dreams of women or girls in the water will marry well, provided he presents some honey and millet to the unmarried young men of his acquaintance and some fish to the married men; the same applies (suitably adapted) to the corresponding dreams of women, though in their case omission of the gifts would bring on severe and painful menstruation. A man dreaming of a black snake will prosper in his enterprise provided he sacrifices a white cock to the *kuci*; in the case of a woman the dream means pregnancy. If you weep in your dream, you will be successful; if you laugh, you will die, and no sacrifice and the like will help you. A fish freshly caught means the birth of a child; a dried fish, the death of an acquaintance or relative. The latter meaning is also attributed to dreams about digging out yams, since this suggests the digging of a grave. Both fire and water indicate witches, and such dreams must be followed by sacrifices to *kuci* or by alms to the poor. Excrements mean sickness; so does blood in a man's dreams; in a woman's dreams it may mean childbirth (if it is 'good' blood, that is, from menstruation) or abortion (if it is 'bad' blood, from a wound). No dreams, incidentally, tell a woman anything about her prospective child: this is simply 'God's will'. Finally, if you dream about a person being killed, then this is the truth, and you will warn that person, who must in turn consult a diviner.

In these dream interpretations Mohammedan ideas (alms, gifts to mallams) and pagan ones (sacrifices to the *kuci*) are employed quite indiscriminately. So are diverse principles of interpretation; some, as we saw, fasten upon contrasts, others upon analogies more or less close or suggestive. Certainly, we find no consistent symbolism, nor yet any of the 'universal' symbols cited by psychoanalysts. More important, the prophecies attributed to dreams are much the same as those dispensed by the diviner, so that the interpretation of dreams (which one can do for oneself) and pro-

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fessional divination in some measure duplicate one another. If this means that the diviner has no monopoly of prophecy, it equally means that one need not be very seriously concerned over one's dreams, since the message they might hold would also transpire in some other way. Normally, in fact, the people are not inclined to take their dreams very seriously, even in the localities where there are experts versed in that lore. I used to record all the dreams of the Nupe men with whom I was in daily contact; though they were quite often puzzled about their dreams, they performed sacrifices and so forth only when their dreams referred to dead relatives. Dream interpretation, then, represents another 'supererogatory' element in Nupe religious thought, another 'additional' notion about the meaning of the things in the world, and now one conspicuously treated as such.

Let me add that in other respects, too, the diviner holds no monopoly of prophecy. If he pronounces upon lucky or unlucky days, some knowledge of this kind is common throughout Nupe. Thus two months, the seventh and thirteenth, are held to be unlucky, and people will avoid travelling or having wedding feasts and other celebrations at these times. In all other months certain days are specially lucky—the second, seventh, twelfth, seventeenth and eighteenth day; so is the time of full moon, while moonless days are unlucky and dangerous for all tasks.[1]

If divination and the interpretation of dreams represent supernatural aids which overlap in their efficacy but are of different ease of access, this is true also of the knowledge, shared by everybody, of propitious and unpropitious dates. In other words, for much the same kind of guidance you can rely on your own knowledge, on what you or your friends know about dreams, and on the professional advice of diviners. Once more we note the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought and that tendency to multiply the mystic tools, that is, to have 'several strings to one's bow.'

[1] It is usual in Nupe to refer to months and days in this way, by numbers rather than names. The interval of five between the lucky days, incidentally, plays no further part in Nupe thought or religious observances.

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III

RITUAL

I. PRELIMINARIES

*796 ON the grounds of time and occasion the Nupe rituals fall into two sharply distinct groups. On one side we have rituals occupying a regular, fixed place in the calendar of the country; on the other, rituals which, as the Nupe say, 'have no month', that is, whose performance is contingent upon the variable needs of the moment. A few 'fixed' rituals which can also be performed out of season and others which, originally 'fixed', have become 'movable' represent intermediate or transitional forms. But even here the twofold division is not obscured. For in the case of rituals performed both regularly and contingently, the latter performance is clearly marked off as an adaptation to particular circumstances; it is on a much smaller scale and lacks the festive features which accompany the regular ceremony, being as it were only concerned with the business in hand.

*796 184 795 Surveying Nupe country as a whole the number of different rituals is strikingly large and their geographical distribution irregular; the chart on p. 69 lists a number of them by name and locality, and also shows their varying times of performance. Only one ritual, *gunnu*, occurs everywhere; others are common to one or two tribal sections only or even to a few villages, where special local conditions appear to justify the special cult. In the extreme case a particular ritual may be restricted to a single village community. We met already with instances, such as the Mokwa ritual of the sacred crocodile, the rituals called *ketsá* and 'Father Niger' in the riverain area, and the worship, once more on the river, of the sacred bronze figures associated with Tsoede. Let me add some further examples: in the kolanut-growing district of Labozhi we find the special cult of an ancestress reputed to have introduced the planting of kolanut; a somewhat similar cult, concerned with the cultivation of the oilpalm, occurs in the village Kutiwengi, in the 'oilpalm belt' to the north; Jebba Island possesses a special ritual, unique in Nupe country, which is meant to ward off smallpox; while Mokwa and a few villages in the neighbourhood practise the similarly unique masked dance *elo*.

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CHART OF NUPE RITUALS

	Month	LOCALITIES—INLAND								LOCALITIES—RIVER			
		Doko	*Sahpe*	*Kutigi*	*Etsu*	*Labozhi*	*Ewugi*	*Wuna*	*Mokwa*	*Jebba*	*Leaba*	*Gbajibo*	*Bele*
'Fixed' Rituals	1(13)	[navũ]	gunnu [navũ]	[navũ]					[navũ]				
	2												
	3			gani	lugba*								
	4												
	5	žiba					gbara		gunnu				
	6	sakó											
	7					gunnu	sara				gunnu	elo	
	8							dakunu			mamma		
	9	žiba					gunnu*	gunnu*	elo	mamma; dzakó; ndá-duma		gunnu	gunnu
	10			[sallagi]		nnakógba			sara; bukpe		ndáduma	mamma	žiba; ndáduma
	11	gunnu	mamma		gunnu			fufobo		gunnu			
	12			[sallakó]									
'Movable' Rituals		Dibo Saba; ftakũ	sara; žikinta	gunnu; žikinta	tídzana	gunnu	dzanavu; žikinta	žicigbã	sara; bukpe	tídzana; žikinta; ketsá; ndáduma	žikinta	sara; žikinta; ndáduma	žikinta

Note : Names in square brackets indicate Moslem observances (see chap VIII). Rituals marked by a star are performed triennially; as these are isolated cases they are disregarded in the text.

796
184
795

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X796 184 795

With so much variety it is impossible to select a particular community whose rituals would be 'typical' of Nupe practice; rather, each village cycle of rituals is typical (or atypical) in its own way. Yet neither is it possible to describe every variety of Nupe ritual (several of which I only knew from hearsay or from informants' reports). What seems more important is to examine some such cycle of rituals within the setting in which it operates, that is, within the corporate life of the community for which it is primarily valid or, in Nupe parlance, by which it is 'owned'.[1] As regards the question, which particular cycle of rituals to select, I propose to resolve it by taking two instances, one from Doko and the other from Jebba Island. This compromise seems the most expedient both since I have actually observed the majority of rituals in these [622] two places and since these represent an interesting contrast, Doko being a 'typical' inland village, with hereditary chieftainship, and Jebba Island a riverain community where chiefs are elected. Let me add that, from other points of view, both communities are also 'atypical'; Jebba, because it is one of the two villages possessing major 'relics' of Tsoede; and Doko, because it formerly belonged to a federation of villages (or 'towns' as the Nupe would say), which type of political organization is unique in Nupe country. As regards the two communities themselves, a full description has been given elsewhere and need not be repeated.[2]

One further point of more general import may be anticipated. In spite of the great variety of local cults the number of rituals performed and their place in the year's cycle do not differ greatly in the different communities. Usually there are one or two movable rituals, rarely more, and two or three fixed rituals, only a few villages having four or five; and though the dates of the fixed rituals vary somewhat from place to place, they fall more frequently in certain months (e.g. the 9th and 11th) than in others (e.g. the 3rd or 5th).[3] The corresponding months in our calendar, [805] incidentally, can only be calculated approximately since the Nupe reckon in lunar months, the year beginning with the onset of the rains, and insert a 13th month every five years. In other years the 1st month is usually also called the 13th, especially when the rains are late, which not infrequently leads to confusion, some localities being temporarily a month out in their reckoning.[4]

[1] I am here using the phrase 'primarily valid' since certain rituals imply an additional, wider validity (or 'ownership') which extends to the whole sub-tribe or even tribe. This point will be examined later (see below, p. 103).

[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 19, 25, 35. [3] See the chart on p. 69.

[4] In 1934, for example, the 1st month was taken to have begun on March 15th in the eastern part of Nupe, but at the end of April I found that the people of Mokwa, in the west, had just started with their 1st month. For a fuller description of the Nupe calendar, see *A Black Byzantium*, Appendix V.

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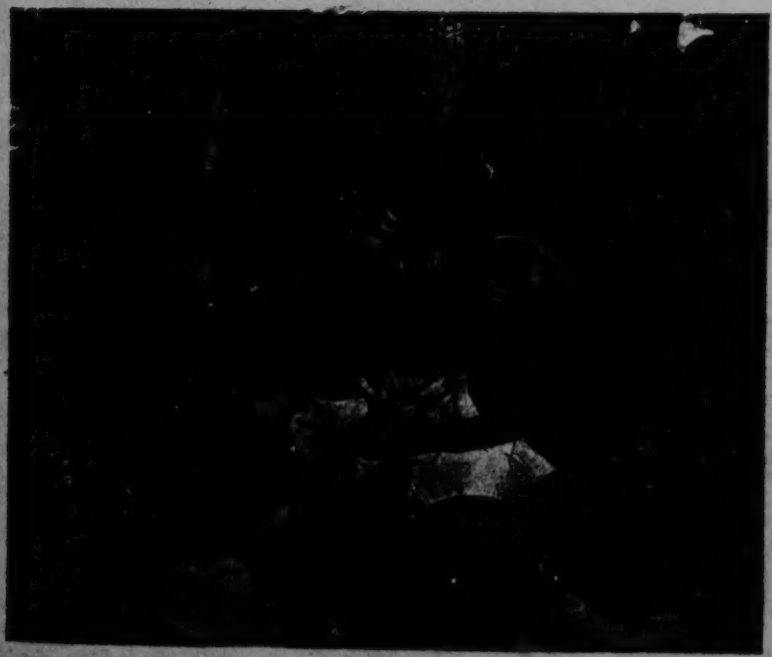
796x
795
782

8. Scene from *gunnu* dance in Jebba



[415]

9. *Dzabó* sacrifice
[p.70 (A)]

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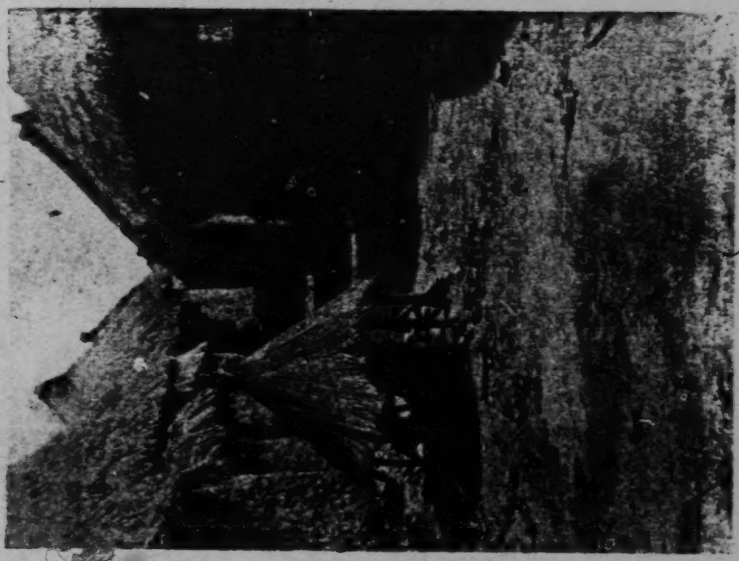
×796
795
342
361

11. Dressing the *mamma* masks

[778]



10. The *zumdcika* medicine shrine in Jebba

[p. 70(8)]

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This roughly uniform timing of the fixed rituals might suggest that they are bound up with important seasonal events, farming activities and the like, which are similarly uniform throughout the country. The 9th month, which is so regularly accompanied by rituals, in fact represents a crucial phase in the life of a farming people, coinciding with the end of the rains and the time of the sorghum harvest, the staple crop of the country. But the 11th month, which falls in the middle of the dry season, coincides only with a minor agricultural activity, the harvesting of the last bean crop. Conversely, an important agricultural phase, the 1st (or 13th) month, when rains and planting begin, is infrequently accompanied by ceremonials. Other dates marked by rituals in different communities coincide with the first millet harvest (5th month), with the first yam harvest (7th month), or fall in the early rains (3rd month), when nothing in particular happens. 796x 795

The Nupe rituals are thus neither firmly linked with important agricultural activities nor yet concentrated in the season when farmwork is at a standstill, when the granaries are full, and when the people have both food and time to spare. But there is a nexus of a more general kind; for the Nupe rituals tend to be associated with the reaping of the crops more than with the planting, with 'ends' more than with 'beginnings', bearing upon the renewal of the fertility of which one has just received a token rather than upon attempts to secure it at the outset. The subsequent discussion will bear out this view. Here we must note that the ceremonials which happen to coincide with this or that harvest are in no way strict first-fruit rites, meant to signal the proper time for reaping or to control the first consumption of the new food; nor yet are they special feasts of thanksgiving. Rather is their religious import more unspecific, bearing on fertility, the thriving of crops, and health in general, irrespective of the particular occasion.

2. THE INLAND VILLAGE

(i) *Priestship*

The list of Doko rituals is brief. There are two movable ones —*fitakū* ('The Stone drinks') and *Dibo Saba* (named after an ancestor chief),—and three fixed rituals: *ḷiba*, which is performed twice, in the 5th and 9th month; *sakó*, performed one month after the first *ḷiba*; and *gunnu*, performed in the 11th month.[1] 796x

The ceremonials are in the charge of different officiants. The ritual *Dibo Saba*, addressed to an ancestor chief, is also performed by the chief. The ritual *sakó* concerns only the small group of [769 622]

[1] In our calendar the 5th month corresponds roughly to July–August, the 9th to December, the 11th to February.

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X 796 hereditary hunters in Doko and is performed by the head of that group. The two ceremonials, then, have no special 'priests', being entrusted instead to particular individuals in virtue of some other office or position they hold. In addition, there are two priests in 793 the strict sense of the word, men specifically invested with the religious office and holding no other official position. One has charge of the rituals *žiba* and *fitakũ*, the other of the *gunnu*. Both men must have the status of full adults, that is, must be married, before they can assume the religious duties. In all other respects their qualifications differ fundamentally.

The first priestship is traditionally vested in one of the reigning chief's younger brothers (real or classificatory), who must not be his prospective successor. This division of the two offices, one political, the other religious, also includes the guardianship of the sacred bangles of Tsoede which, in Doko, represent the insignia of the chiefly office; they are kept, not by the chief, but by his priest brother, the chief himself being allowed to wear them only on three ceremonial occasions—at his investiture; when he performs his 'own' ritual, *Dibo Saba*; and when he pays a visit in state to the *Etsu* Nupe. The peculiar relationship of ruler and priest is traced back to the first chief of Doko and represents, for the people, something in the nature of a complementary arrangement, at once uniting and separating secular and religious authority. Logically, the two offices bear analogous names, the chief being called *Žitsú* ('king of the town') and his brother *Žigí* ('priest of the town').[1] The priest is, however, addressed by another, ceremonial name, *Ndákatsa* of uncertain derivation.

The *gunnu* priest is known as *Gunnukó* (Great *gunnu*) or, more specifically, as *Ndazo*, and is addressed by that name. *Ndazo* means the 'rare man' or the 'man difficult to find', which name already indicates the unusual manner of his election. For only an individual born with a tuft of hair on the top of his head can become (and in fact must become) a *gunnu* priest. That this birthmark is rare need not be specially emphasized; during my stay in Nupe only one village in the whole country (actually Doko) had a true *Ndazo*, and he was as yet too young to officiate. In the frequent periods of interregnum the office becomes hereditary in the family of the last *Ndazo* who had the miraculous qualification, his successors cutting their hair so as to imitate the tell-tale tuft. When a true *Ndazo* is born, the man who previously took his place will train the youth in his future responsibilities, take him to all ceremonials even while he is a babe in arms, and eventually surrender the office to him. Should the *Ndazo's* family die out before

[1] The latter name means literally 'One who eats (in the sacrifice) for the town'.

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a new priest is born, the village must temporarily cease to perform the ritual altogether and join instead in the celebrations of a neighbouring, more fortunate, locality. 793

The *gunnu* priest is also in other ways elevated above common mortals. In everyday life there is little to distinguish the *Žigí* or *Ndazo* from the average Nupe peasant. The only visible distinction lies in their manner of dress; for the two priests may only wear a loincloth and a piece of cloth slung across the shoulder, never the more elaborate flowing gown and trousers of Nupe, and must always walk bareheaded. Both the simple dress and the uncovered head are also obligatory for anyone attending the rituals in question (and indeed most rituals), so that the priests are as it were always 'on duty' and constantly display their association with things sacred. In the case of the *Ndazo*, his very life is sacred: he is inviolable, and no one may lay hands on him, even if he committed some serious offence. Also, when the *Ndazo* dies, the usual funerary rites are replaced by a performance of the *gunnu*. Concerning the priestly dress, the usual explanation is that the *Žigí* and *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round the waist' (as they would if they wore trousers); but the people do not speculate further, and the *Ndazo's* birth-mark is taken to mean simply something that is rare and lucky, and attaches to the most vital part of the body, the head. Characteristically, another lucky birth-mark, once more on the head, is linguistically associated with the *gunnu*: children born in a caul are called *Ndagunnu*, 'Father *gunnu*'. [845]

Of the three fixed rituals of Doko the *gunnu* is undoubtedly the most important, representing the peak of ceremonial life and being thought of as harbouring the strongest force of *kuti*. Equally, it is the only ritual bearing so conspicuously the stamp of the miraculous. Somewhat surprisingly, the greater importance of the *gunnu* has not helped to protect it from the impact of cultural change. On the contrary, the *gunnu* is usually the first ritual to disappear or at least to lose its character of a 'fixed' ritual, surviving only as an occasional, 'movable' ceremony. Now several of the villages which abandoned the *gunnu* altogether did so when their 'born' *Ndazo* died or the family of hereditary priests became extinct. Whatever other influences may have tended to weaken the hold of the *gunnu* ritual, the difficulty of finding a successor to this unique priestship must have hastened the process; so that the link with the miraculous, as it helped to raise the cult above all others, also made it more vulnerable. 796* [177]

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

These are quickly described; for they are simple and businesslike, devoid both of elaborate proceedings and complicated

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796 paraphernalia. The 'business' of *fitakũ* is to break a drought or to combat illness. I witnessed the ritual in July, during the so-called 'little dry season', when the usual spell of dry weather lasted unexpectedly long. The ritual took place at midday, in a clearing in the bush a few minutes walk from Doko. The place formed a rough circle whose entrance was flanked by two fresh mounds of earth. In the centre of the clearing, under a big tree, there was another, old, mound, said to cover the sacred stone from which the ritual derives its name; a small pot was half buried in the mound. The congregation consisted of the *Žigí*, who performed the sacrifice and spoke the prayer, and of family heads and other old men, the village chief not being present. In the sacrifice the blood of the slaughtered animal (a ram) and some beer were poured into the pot in the mound, thus making the 'stone drink', after which the meat was cooked, divided among the men present, and consumed there and then together with the rest of the beer. The priest ate and drank first, the others following in order of rank and age; a share of both meat and beer was kept for the chief, to be taken to his house after the ceremonial. In the prayer which accompanied the sacrifice the beer was referred to as *nuwã*, 'water' (as is usual in all Nupe sacrifices), so that the stone was made to 'drink' the fluid of which one stood in need. The prayer was brief and addressed to both *kuti* and God, thus—

'*Kuti*, the thing we are pouring, drink this water. *Sokó*, cause rain to fall, *kuti*, cause rain to fall. *Sokó*, cause that the whole town may prosper, that everyone may (have things) to eat, that everyone may have health.'

Finally, some leaves were plucked from the tree and stuck into the mound of earth underneath. This action was merely meant as a sign that the ceremony had been performed and had no ulterior or symbolic meaning. The whole ceremonial lasted a little over an hour.

769 According to Doko tradition Dibo Saba was the village chief
796 who ruled at the time of Tsoede's advent, and the second in a long and (until recently) uninterrupted line of chiefs. It was he who received, at Tsoede's hand, the sacred bangles, and of all the graves of more remote ancestors his alone can still be identified. It lies outside Doko, on the old, now abandoned, site of the village, and today forms a narrow uncultivated space surrounded on all sides by farmland. The ritual is performed whenever some grave danger threatens the community, especially illness or, again, drought.
[731] The present chief of Doko performed it in 1930, during an outbreak of smallpox, and again in 1932, when a horse sickness attacked Doko. It was not performed either in 1934 or 1936,

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during my stay in the country, so that my description is based on the account of informants. But their account tallies with the ancestral sacrifices I had seen elsewhere; and the *Dibo Saba* ritual is, in essence, nothing but a sacrifice to the *kuci* of an ancestor, though both the ancestor and his invocation are here matters of public concern. This double significance of the ritual is clearly expressed by the people, who would say that, on this occasion, the chief is performing two sacrifices at once, one for his own 'house', and the other for the 'whole town'. It is interesting to note that the present chief of Doko does not come of the dynasty of Dibo Saba but of a new family, which came to power two generations ago; even so, he continues the sacrifice to this alien ancestor. In other words, the transformation of the chief's private kinship rite into an official and public ceremonial has become complete. In the ceremonial the chief, accompanied by the older men, sacrifices beer, a goat, or some other food over the grave of Dibo Saba and addresses both the *kuci* and *Sokó*. The choice of the sacrificial animal depends on the diviner's instruction. The formula of prayer is of the usual kind, mentioning the need of rain (or whatever the cause), of food in abundance, and ends with the stereotyped wish that 'the whole town may prosper'.

796x 769

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

Let me start with the simplest of the three, the ritual called *sakó* (meaning 'Great Deer'). As already mentioned, it is 'owned' by the hereditary hunters of Doko, that is, by a small number of families, all kinsmen of the *Maji Egbe* ('Master of the Hunt') and descended from some earlier holder of that office. In Doko everybody is also a hunter, or can be one if he is so inclined, and every house has its bows and arrows, traps, and hunting nets. Conversely, all the hereditary hunters are also farmers. But it falls to them to organize the large-scale drives carried out in the dry season (now increasingly rarely since the bigger game is fast disappearing), and it falls to the head of this group to ensure, by ritual means, success in hunting. He receives a share of the big game killed by any Doko man; he also keeps the horns of buck and deer killed by his own group in a small hut in his house, while other people would throw these trophies away. Whenever the Master set out on a large-scale hunt or desires to invoke his ancestors, he pours a small libation of beer outside this hut, addressing an anonymous *kuci*. In his case, then, the hut containing the trophies replaces the ancestral grave or shrine of other families. Once a year, the same offering is brought in order to secure good hunting for the whole community, the ritual being now performed in the Master's sleeping hut. No particular secrecy surrounds the sacrifice, though it

796x 224

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×796 must not be seen by women. I saw it late in August; it was
224 attended (as is the rule) only by the Master and his adult sons, and consisted in pouring beer on the ground, drinking the rest, and breaking some reeds over the place of the libation. The Master spoke thus—'*Sokó*, may the town have health, may everything be prosperous (now that) we are breaking the reeds finally'. The breaking of the reeds was explained to me as follows: 'Reeds grow in the bush, and game is found in the bush'; which devious analogy seems to have little bearing on the very general character of the prayer formula. As regards the latter, let us note that here again a private ceremonial is linked with the well being of the whole community.

×796 Of the two *žiba* rituals I only saw the earlier one, performed in July; I understand, however, that the two performances are exact replicas. The name is explained as meaning *eži bà*, i.e. the 'town prays'; but this interpretation is somewhat doubtful since the same phrase can also be read as *eži 'bà*, 'the place' or 'ground of the town', which would tally with the name of a very similar ritual in other places, called *žikinta*—'the ground (or soil) of the town'. The early *žiba* coincides with the harvest of bullrush millet, the first crop of the year. On the eve of the ceremonial the priest cuts a bundle of millet on his farm and has gruel made from it. About noon the next day he goes to the place of the sacrifice, which closely resembles that of *fitakũ*, accompanied by much the same congregation. A black she-goat is killed (contributed by the chief), blood and beer are poured on the mound of earth (now concealing no sacred 'stone'), and the food is eaten by the people present; a share is once more sent to the chief. In this as in the other ritual in his charge the *Žigí* is assisted by his sons and brothers. The *Žigí* prays twice, first while killing the animal and again when making the offering of beer and blood:

(1) 'May the whole town have health; may it have to eat, may it have to drink, may the whole town have health'.

(2) '*Tsoci* (Our Lord), what we are giving this year, (what) we are doing thus: God may give health (for that reason); the doing of new (things), may it come (to prosper) also next year, also (in) a thousand years.'

When the sacrificial meal is over, the *žiba* assumes the new aspect of a public ceremonial and festivity, which sharply distinguishes it from the *fitakũ* and all other movable rites. The congregation walks back to the village, stopping at the chief's house. The priest alone may enter the chief's sleeping hut, where the latter has been awaiting his visitor, while the others stay in the

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entrance hut. The priest informs the chief that the ritual has been completed and the chief replies—'It is well; (after) what has been done, may God give that we pass through (endure) this year, and that the next years may pass (in well being).' From the chief's house the congregation repairs to the home of the priest, where they stay to drink the rest of the beer. Meanwhile women and young men, who were not allowed to see the earlier part of the ceremony, have gathered outside the house and drums have been brought out. A dance begins in which the old men alone are supposed to perform; actually, the younger men (not the women) join in later, but they are only suffered to take part and are sometimes stopped, though not very seriously. Later the whole crowd walks in procession through the village, 'saluting' on the way the houses of the various family heads and finally stopping at the dancing ground. Here the dance is resumed, in an unexcited fashion, until nightfall, when both the dance and the ceremonial come to an end. 796x

We noticed, in the *šiba* prayer, the emphasis on 'this year and next' and on 'new things', that is, on the completion of a phase, and on continuity and renewal. This idea is even more concretely expressed; for immediately after the ceremony the skin of the goat that had been sacrificed is sewn into a sack, shaped like bellows, to be kept in the priest's house until next year's ritual. There it will serve as an instrument of ordeal, anyone accused of a crime being able to protest his innocence by touching the bag: if he lied, his body would swell up ('like the bellows'). Thus the protection of the law and the punishment of crime are renewed year by year by the force of this *kuti* concerned with the 'doing of new things'. [627]

The *gunnu*, unlike most other Nupe rituals, has its special myth, which relates how the ceremonial originated and also explains, if only in an elliptic and cursory fashion, one or two features of the actual practice.[1] It tells of a mysterious stranger who, many generations ago, came to live among the Beni, in a small hill village in the north, close to the border of Gwari country. After a while he developed leprosy, was looked after by the kind-hearted villagers, and eventually died. As was the custom, the body of the leper was abandoned in the uninhabited bush on the top of the hill. Later, it was found that the body had miraculously disappeared and that in its place there had appeared a patch of pure white sand. The villagers then realized that the stranger had been no ordinary mortal and that God himself had buried him. They planted a tree on the place and instituted a big ceremony to be performed annually, so that the *kuci* of the dead should be propitiated and duly worshipped. The ritual, which is said to have 796x 773

[1] A much more detailed description of the ritual and the full texts of the *gunnu* songs are given in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, vol. LXVII.

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x 796 spread in the course of years through Beni country and the whole of Nupe, is the *gunnu*; the hill is known as *Gunnu* Hill; and the 773 white sand is said to possess special healing properties (a claim which chemical analysis did not confirm). The *gunnu* priest of that x 796 village is regarded as the senior among all other *gunnu* priests, almost as the spiritual head of their fraternity; for at the beginning of the month of the *gunnu* celebrations every born *Ndazo* of Beni country makes a pilgrimage to *Gunnu* Hill, travelling by night and in secrecy, to salute and consult the local priest, and to collect a little of the sand and a few pebbles from the sacred place. The sand will later be used as medicine and for divining (in *hati* fashion); the pebbles will be placed on the place of sacrifice, and when the *Ndazo* opens the *gunnu* dance he will put one of the pebbles in his mouth.

These are all the tangible links between the myth and the ritual practice. We note that they apply only to the Beni subtribe, a section more closely united by kinship ties as well as politically,[1] so that the collaboration of the *gunnu* priests goes together with co-operation in other, secular spheres. In the rest of the country the religious collaboration and the myth sustaining it are alike unknown; at least, the myth might be known only sketchily, and would be quoted merely as a curious tale of no real consequence.

Apart from these few references to details of procedure, the myth offers only a vague and incongruous pedigree for the ritual itself; it merely relates certain mysterious happenings in the distant past, which seem to have no bearing on the aim or the general design of the ritual, and then concludes summarily—'And this was the beginning of the *gunnu*'. This kind of jumpy logic is of course not unfamiliar in the mythology of primitive peoples; its incongruity in the present case can be seen from these three instances. To begin with, so unique a feature as the *Ndazo* priesthood is completely omitted in the mythical account. Conversely, the arrival and death of the stranger and the whole notion of this saint-like personage, buried by God Himself, are in no way touched upon in the ceremony; indeed, they represent utterly alien features in the conceptual framework of Nupe religion. Characteristically, when the Nupe tell the story they have no other term to describe the character of the stranger than the Arabic word *wali* ('saint'). Finally, the crucial motif in the myth, leprosy, is without bearing upon the aim and design of the ritual. There [766] are certain indirect and tenuous links: everywhere in Nupe (not

[1] I am referring to the old federation of the twelve Beni 'towns', which in some respects survived to the present day. See above, p. 70, and *A Black Byzantium*, p. 25.

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only among the Beni) the burial of lepers is the responsibility of the *gunnu* priests; and leprosy, as we know, is considered a 'disease of God', as the *gunnu* is a '*kuti* of God.' In their speculations about the meaning of the myth the Nupe indeed seize upon this last point. But they would only enlarge upon the terrifying aspects of leprosy and its divine preordainedness, being content to draw the parallel with a *kuti* equally powerful, dangerous, and divinely preordained. Their interest does not go further; none of my informants, for example, referred to the male-female principle believed to govern leprosy (and unrepresented in the ritual); nor did they attempt to relate the name *gunnu* to the name for leprosy, *Sokó 'gũ*, an etymological speculation which, from my knowledge of the Nupe ways of thinking, I should have expected. The Nupe, in brief, do not feel the need for any closely argued 'mythical charter' of their religious practices; and indeed, as I have stressed, the *gunnu* myth is altogether an exception. 796x [766]

A few informants offered me their theories about the derivation of the name *gunnu*. According to one the ritual was so called because of *egũ na dã miní 'nu ô na*, because of the 'red earth that is inside (the furrows) of hoeing'; according to another the reason was that, in the ritual, 'one reaches the end of the wandering, it is accomplished', *àgũ̃ 'nu mã, nwa dà zo*; in a third interpretation *gunnu* was taken to be the word *nugũ̂* ('boundary', 'limits'), reversed.[1] The first version would merely bring out the character of the *gunnu* as a farmer's ritual; the other two versions go more deeply, alluding to the characteristic concern of the ritual with the completion of a phase, and with 'end' and 'renewal'. Even so, the arguments are specious ones, ignoring, for example, the tone structure of Nupe language. Let us call them what they are, a play upon words and mere speculation. 796x 829

To turn to the ceremonial itself. It lasts for three to five days, according to the amount of food and drink which the people are able to accumulate. The celebration I observed in Doko started on the 17th of February and lasted until the 19th.[2] Like the *ẓiba*, the *gunnu* has an esoteric part, performed outside the village, in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'bà* ('*gunnu* place'), and a public one, performed on the village dancing ground. The congregation of the esoteric rite includes both older men and youths, the youngest being about 15. The *gunnu* place looks much like the places of 796x

[1] Such reversals of bisyllabic nouns occur quite often in Nupe language; they turn the noun into the corresponding verb, so that *nugũ̂*, 'limit', would become *gũ̂(ɛ)-nu* 'reaching the limit', 'accomplish'. [193]

[2] The date is not inflexible; in the same year the nearby village of Pichi celebrated the *gunnu* almost a month later, since the people had no 'leisure' before that, being kept busy by the collection of tax arrears.

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X 796 sacrifice previously described; again, there is a big tree in the middle, this time adorned with a strip of white cloth, which is renewed at each ceremonial; if the village has a 'born' *Ndazo*, he will wear the new cloth round his waist while officiating, and put it back on the tree afterwards. Also tied to the tree are two tortoise shells, which will serve as drinking vessels during the sacrifice and afterwards as musical instruments, being beaten with small sticks. The other musical instruments used in the *gunnu* are as [534] unusual and are employed on no other occasion; they consist in two large and two small pot drums (of Gwari manufacture), and a raft-zither made of reed. During the year they are stored in the house of the *Žigi*, who has, however, no other function in the *gunnu*.

X 796 On the day of the *gunnu*, before dawn, the *gunnu* drums begin to play. This is the signal for the boys and young men to leave 881 their homes and to go to some secret place in the bush, led by the *Ndazo* and the *Ndakotsu* (the appointed leader of their age grades). Arrived in the bush, where they may only talk in whispers, they remove their caps and everyday clothes and dress in *gunnu* fashion, that is, in a loincloth of striped cloth such as the women wear round the waist. They break off twigs of the *nũbeci* tree, which will later serve as the 'whips of the *gunnu*'.[1] Then the novices are taught the deportment required of them at the ceremonial—to keep their heads bent, eyes on the ground, as one does in the presence of superiors; equally they are taught the *gunnu* salute, which consists in a fierce yell, accompanied by the throwing-up of both arms and a rhythmical stamping on the ground. During these proceedings the novices at least are visibly frightened, while the older boys try to show their unconcern. Finally, they leave the bush, walking in single file, the tallest first, to the place of the sacrifice; throughout the ceremonial the young men will move thus, in a long file, 'whips' in hand, led or sometimes driven by the priest and the *Ndakotsu*.

At the *gunnu* place they join the older men who have meanwhile assembled. The musicians sit under the tree and have started drumming and singing. Everyone is stripped to the waist and sits on leaves or branches, since it is sacrilege to sit on the bare ground of the *gunnu 'ba*. The older men form a circle round the place of the sacrifice; the youths sit some distance apart, though they will from time to time jump up to 'salute' late-comers or to drive away strangers who might trespass on the secret site. Soon the sacrifice follows, which varies from year to year, according to the advice of

[789] [1] This tree has no further ceremonial significance, though its twigs are sometimes stuck into the ground outside a house as a charm against thieves.

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the diviner; in the ritual I observed it consisted of fish-and-porridge and the ubiquitous libation of beer. The *Ndazo*, on his knees and using one of the tortoise shells for a vessel, pours some beer on the ground, speaking thus:

'Lord God, take this. The *Etsu Daži* (chief) ordered us to make *gunnu*. *Gunnu*, may the town have health. The food of the soil, may it thrive greatly. The women, God give them children. May the town have health. Rain may fall, yam may thrive, corn may thrive. God may cause that everything shall prosper.'

Then the priest drinks, and more beer is handed round in gourds, first to the old men in order of age and rank, then to the musicians, and lastly to the young men. The sacrifice and invocation are repeated, now with a dish of food. Throughout the proceedings the *Ndazo's* younger brother acts as his assistant. At the end of the meal everyone washes his hands, in the same order of seniority, and the gourds which served as dishes are broken in pieces and left on the ground.

The sacrifice over, dancing begins, still in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'ba*. The older men dance singly, the young men in a group, the novices being taught and shown the dance steps by others who are more experienced. But while the older men can pause whenever they are tired, the youths must dance without a break, and are driven on to greater and greater exertions by their leaders. The excitement is visibly mounting, and may indeed go too far, for the young dancers will suddenly start using their 'whips' on one another. Though flogging with the whips of the *gunnu* has its place in the ritual, its premature introduction, at the place of the sacrifice, is a serious breach of discipline, and the culprits are made to kneel before the *Ndazo* and beg forgiveness. The incident is taken as a sign that the dance had lasted too long already (it had lasted about three hours); silence is ordered once again, the dance stops, and the congregation moves in a long procession to the village.

The secret part of the *gunnu* is now over; what follows is done publicly and before a crowd of onlookers. The youths race each other to the village, half running half dancing. They will beat anyone standing in their way, and this liberal use of the whips continues when they all arrive at the village. They lash out at each other and at strangers or women, although both strangers and most women are allowed to watch this stage of the ceremonial. This episode does not last long, however, and gives way to a general dance begun by the *Ndazo* in slow, dignified fashion. He is followed by other old men and the chief himself, who only now joins in the proceedings. Eventually everybody joins in, congregation and onlookers, men as well as women, and all join also in the singing.

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The dance frequently rises to feverish excitement, when the youths will suddenly resume using their whips, violently and against anyone. The flogging now has a purpose: when directed against male adolescents it is thought to promote growth and maturity; when directed against women, fertility. But there are also phases of calm as well as humorous episodes, acclaimed by general laughter. One episode, in particular, may be mentioned: now and again, the young men will imitate, with comic exaggeration, a typical women's dance or caricature the walk and gestures of women.

I will not describe the dance further: it fills the rest of the *gunnu* festivities, being interrupted only for a brief night's rest, and ends when all the beer is exhausted and everyone too tired to carry on. I will only note these important and partly unique features. Some time during the dance the young men form themselves into a procession led by the *Ndazo* and march and dance through the village, still singing the *gunnu* songs, to give the 'salute' in front of the houses of high-ranking elders. On the way they also visit the childless women of the village; for these are strictly forbidden to watch the *gunnu* dance and must hide in their huts until the ceremonial is over. These women may be unhappily barren; or they may be suspected of avoiding childbearing and family duties so that they might lead the immoral life of female traders and prostitutes (which, in Nupe, means one and the same thing). In either case the *Ndazo* will enter their house and encourage or admonish them, as the case may be; the woman, kneeling before him, will receive two lashes with the *gunnu* whip, administered by one of the young men, which is both a punishment and a promise of fertility. Women who have no taste for either will have to leave the village or hide in some other house during the critical period, as indeed quite a few are doing.

Again, few other Nupe rituals include a mixed dance of the sexes; in the *gunnu*, this is not only permitted but considered a relevant part of the celebration, as is the whole excited and abandoned tone of the dance. Always, when describing the *gunnu*, the Nupe will use some such phrase—'we make merry, we drink, we dance, men and women together without order, until we talk without sense'. This excitement is in no small measure sexual; not only is the attention of the young men constantly drawn to the other sex (even by the fact that they wear an item of women's dress), but the week preceding the *gunnu* and the whole period of the celebration are also marked by a severe prohibition of all sexual intercourse, lest death visit the community. Only when the dance is ended and everyone has bathed, the men in a nearby stream, the women at home, is the rule of chastity lifted; the same night men and women will again sleep together, matrimonially or promiscuously—no one cares.

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miscuously—no one cares. Which final aspect of the *gunnu* is once more emphasized in all statements. 796x

The ceremonial is thus full of allusions to procreation and fertility. But we noticed also the emphasis on male adolescence, more precisely, on the role of the age grades, on the respect relationship between youth and old age, and on the teaching or initiation of the novices. In the ritual I described this last aspect was only lightly touched upon. But in a fuller version of the *gunnu*, which disappeared in Doko some ten or twenty years ago, the emphasis on initiation was much stronger. The short prelude in the bush was then expanded to a full night; and the youths were made to dress up in elaborate fashion and to paint their bodies red and white, so that everybody should see that they were '*gunnu* men'. All through the night the novices were kept in a state of nervous excitement and fear by tales of the spirits that haunt the bush; often the dreaded apparition of the *n̄ ʔakó gboyá* would materialize to punish any youth who had, in the preceding year, offended against this or that rule of custom, and especially against the rules of filial respect. We shall hear more of the *ndakó gboyá* later on; let me say here that its part is acted by a member of the secret society of that name, and that it is also referred to as the 'policeman of the *gunnu*', which epithet aptly summarizes its functions. 881 796x 881 177

Today this episode has fallen in abeyance in Doko as elsewhere. The reasons are not the same in all places. In Kutigi, a relatively recent and pseudo-Moslem ceremonial has absorbed the initiation aspect of the *gunnu*, so that the more elaborate version of the ritual came to lose its particular appeal.[1] In Mokwa, the vigil in the bush fell in disfavour with the young men, who refused to suffer any longer the threats and punishments that go with that episode; the remonstrations of parents and elders were met by the argument that even young men were nowadays earning money and paying taxes, and had hence become the equals of their seniors. In Beni country, the attractions of Bida town were seducing more and more adolescents away from the 'crude' village celebrations, so that eventually the greatly reduced attendance made the whole initiation rite seem futile. About that time, too, the Government suppressed the *ndakó gboyá* secret society, the drama in the bush thus losing its main actors. These varied causes reflect the multifarious changes assailing traditional Nupe life, in the political and economic sphere, in family relations, and in recreation as well as in religious belief. That the changes were so effective in truncating the *gunnu* (while falling more lightly or tardily upon other ceremonials) is not due only to the force behind the new influences; rather is it in large measure due to a factor touched upon before,

[1] See my article *The Gani ritual of Nupe*, Africa, 1949, vol. XIX, p. 183.

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the greater vulnerability of the *gunnu* ceremonial. For the very ambitiouness of its scope exposes it, on too many sides at once, to the impact of change.

3. THE RIVER

(i) *Ritual Calendar: Priestship*

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In Jebba Island I recorded the fullest repertoire of rituals anywhere in Nupe country, including three movable and five 'fixed' rituals, one of the latter being also performed 'without a month', whenever the need arises. Not all, however, are still in use, so that the ritual calendar of the island now approximates more closely to that of other communities. Though the people quote specific rational reasons for the discontinuation of the respective rituals, I suspect that the 'repertoire' itself proved too large and simply became unworkable under modern conditions. Jebba Island owes its rich list of ceremonials essentially to two facts; first, to its double livelihood, derived from the land as well as from the river, and reflected in the religious institutions; and secondly, to the possession of the sacred emblems of Tsoede, which are scattered mainly along the old highway of the Kingdom—the river valley.

Today, the Jebba people perform two movable and two fixed rituals, one which serves both purposes and one which, formerly fixed, has now become 'movable'. The movable rituals proper are the *ketsá*, previously mentioned, and the *tídzana*, a sacrifice to the sacred 'Chain of Tsoede'. The fixed ceremonials comprise the rituals *mamma* and *dzakó*, both performed in the 9th month (November–December). The *gunnu*, traditionally performed in the same month, is nowadays celebrated as a movable rite, though in a different sense it still retains its compulsory character. The ritual *ndáduma*, finally, is performed both as a fixed rite, again in the 9th month, and as a movable ritual. Another movable ritual, the *ɨikinta*, concerned mainly with success in hunting and fishing but also with childbirth and health, is now hardly practised; and a fixed ritual, *sokokó*, was discontinued some twenty years ago. To some extent the observance of the ritual *mamma* has also been affected by the changed conditions; for most of the grass masks worn in the ceremonial were destroyed in a fire some years ago and have not been replaced; the people now husband their two remaining masks and perform the ritual only in years when there is a special reason. Even so, the ceremonial cannot be moved to another date, and has for this reason been included among the 'fixed' rituals.

The different rituals are again in the charge of different officiants.

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The different rituals are again in the charge of different officials. 796x 793

Two of these are priests in the strict sense of the word—the *Ndazo* of the *gunnu*, whose office has the same miraculous connotation as elsewhere, and the hereditary priest of the *ketsá* ritual. The priestship of the remaining rituals goes with secular status, that is, with certain ranks vested in family heads and with the appropriate positions on the council of elders. Yet while the large majority of the Jebba ranks (eleven out of thirteen) are non-hereditary, being based on election and promotion, only one of these (a minor rank) entails a religious office, the rank *Ndace*, whose encumbent officiates in the *dzakó* ritual. The two hereditary ranks, on the other hand, *Ejukó* and *Tswanya*, are both linked with duties of priestship. The *Ejukó* is the guardian of the Chain of Tsoede and officiates in the corresponding ritual; he is at the same time an important member of the village council and was formerly its chief 'legal officer' as well, since the Chain of Tsoede figured prominently in the legal machinery of the country. The connection between religious and political office is even more pronounced in the case of the *Tswanya*. In the religious sphere he takes charge of the ritual *mamma*; in the secular sphere it is his privilege and duty to deputize for the (non-hereditary) village chief during an interregnum and to name the successor. In other words, he is an hereditary 'king-maker' who, as I have explained elsewhere, appears in all Nupe communities which are without hereditary chieftainship and whose investiture with a sacred office replaces the religious connotation which otherwise attaches to chieftainship itself.[1] As in Doko, then, religious and secular power are at once united and kept distinct, though in Jebba the separation is the more marked.

If the priestship of several rituals is thus linked with secular ranks, the same kind of link applies to the rituals as such. For two of these, the *gunnu* and *dzakó*, also form part of the funerary ceremonials for titled elders, being added to the rites known as 'Three Days' (after the burial) and 'Forty Days'.[2] Thus the *gunnu* is performed at the death of the chief, the *gunnu* priest, the *Tswanya* and *Ejukó*, and at the death of seven other elders; the *dzakó*, for the *Ndace* and two other elders. Only one rank is left out, that of *Kpotuŋ*, which was introduced relatively recently, having been copied from the hierarchy of ranks in the capital; being an innovation, it is also unconnected with the traditional usage.[3] When thus employed in the funerary ceremonial, the *dzakó* is greatly reduced in scale; the scale of the *gunnu* varies with the importance of the rank held by the deceased; the death of the chief, *Ndazo*, *Tswanya*, and an elder styled *Cece* commands the 796x 766

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 52–3. [2] See below, p. 122.
[3] This rank was not included in the thirteen mentioned above.

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x796 full-scale performance, while in the remaining cases there is a mere
766 suggestion of the ritual.

This association of two fixed rituals with the funerary cere-
x796 monial presents several puzzling features. To begin with, the dis-
766 tribution of the two rituals among the thirteen ranks of Jebba is
616 strikingly uneven, ten ranks being linked with the *gunnu* and
554 only three with the *dzakó*. This, I was told, was not always so; but a more even distribution was upset in the course of time, when certain ranks originally linked with the *dzakó* were allowed to lapse because at the death of the incumbents there happened to be no suitable successors. This may be so; during my stay in Jebba, for example, three minor ranks of the *dzakó* group (not counted among the thirteen) were in fact vacant, and several more may have completely disappeared. Even so, the fact remains that no attempt was made to even out the inequality, though this would present no difficulty in this non-hereditary rank system. Furthermore, the dual division on the grounds of the suitable funerary ceremonial extends, not only to the men holding the respective ranks, but to their whole 'house' (i.e. lineage); thus the Jebba people generally class any individual or family as belonging either to the *gunnuciži* or *dzakociži* (the '*gunnu* people' or the '*dzakó* people'). This fits in oddly with a rank system based mainly on election and promotion; for it would imply that whole kin groups might have to change their religious affiliation if their titled head is promoted from a rank belonging to one section to a rank belonging to the other, or if a new family head is elected to a rank, say, of the *dzakó* group while his predecessor belonged to the *gunnu* section. Such promotions and elections do in fact occur and, as might be expected, entail considerable confusion. Most puzzling of all, this comprehensive division of the population into ritual moieties seems to have no relevant consequences, religious or otherwise. At least, the only consequence ascribed to it is both incongruous and obscure. It was claimed by most informants that the sons of *gunnuci* families alone were formerly allowed to join in the esoteric part of the *gunnu*, while no such rule applied to the *dzakó*.[1] One informant, an old man of high rank belonging to the *dzakó* section, maintained that that ritual was similarly exclusive. Since the rule concerning the *gunnu* is no longer in force (if it ever existed), it was impossible to verify the respective information; the *dzakó* ceremonial I witnessed certainly failed to

[1] If this were true it would obviously mean that boys and young men originally admitted to the secret part of the *gunnu* might be excluded from it when their family head changed his rank, or that boys not previously admitted might suddenly acquire the necessary qualifications. Either contingency is difficult to credit.

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12. *Dzakó* dance

13. Cutting of tribal marks

[p. 86 (A)]

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15. Vendor of medicines

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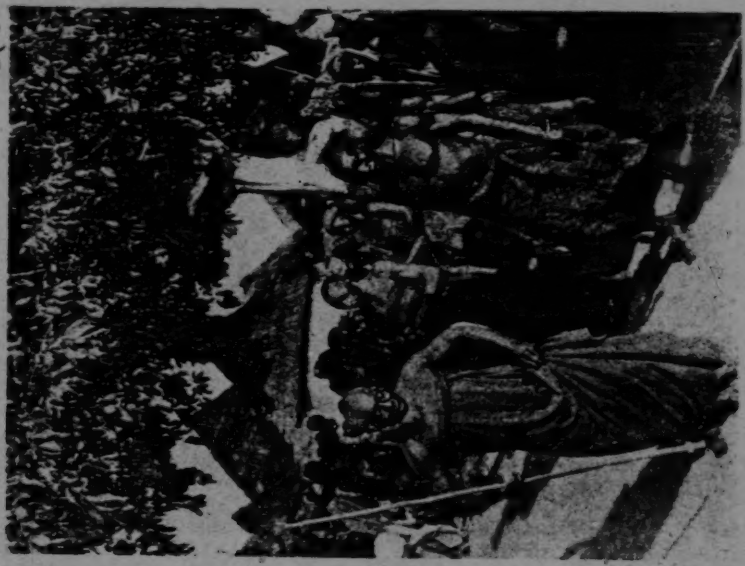

14. *Dzakó* dance

[p. 86(B)]

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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 796x
'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division. 766

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an 616
original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe communities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular 554
rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. [184]
The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *ḫiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Ṣamaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements.

(ii) *Movable Rituals*—

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be 796x
performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage.

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a 796x
disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief 773
of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the

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Kuta sent a white cow to Jebba, instructing the island people to add a white cock and some honey, and to sacrifice all these at the foot of *Ketsá* Rock. This was the beginning of the ritual, which is today repeated, still by the *Kuta's* order, whenever there is a danger of floods, and also when a new Kede chief assumes office. The story thus closely supports the actual practice so far as it bears on the welfare of the riverain people and on the strong political link between Jebba Island and the Kede sub-tribe.[1] But the story tells nothing of the origin of the *ketsá* priestship; nor does it refer to the much wider application of the ritual. For anyone on the river can request its performance—chiefs for their communities, individuals for themselves or their families—and can do so for widely different reasons; equally, the sacrifices will vary widely, according to the advice given by diviners. But while the ritual performed in the name of the Kede chief and for the whole river population is on a large scale, involving the usual sacrificial meal of all the elders as well as drumming, singing, and dancing, the 'private' rituals, strictly 'businesslike', consist only in the sacrifice itself, performed by the priest and his close kinsmen. In 1936, for example, the following 'private' performances took place: the *Etsu* of Patigi sent a fowl, requesting it to be sacrificed for the general well-being of his community; the chief of a small riverain village did the same; a Hausa man offered a goat for good fishing; a Kakanda man a goat for 'health'; two Nupe men offered fowls to secure the birth of children; and there were other, similar, requests. A final instance concerned me personally. I had gone down with a severe attack of dysentry, and my Jebba friends, who visited me regularly, advised me to sacrifice a fowl in order to recover. The sacrifice was duly performed, though unhappily I was too weak at the time to attend it: and this was the closest I ever got to seeing the *ketsá*, which was performed so irregularly as well as promptly that the news of its performance never reached me in time.

The second movable rite is concerned with the 'Chain of Tsoede' and is called by that name, *tídzana*. In appearance, this is an old slave chain, with fetters for arms and legs; it is kept in the *Ejukó's* house and is invariably covered with dried-up blood and beer from the sacrifice. In 1936 three of these sacrifices were performed, all small-scale and 'businesslike', and invoked by local people.[2] One sacrifice was for a man who offered a goat to recover from a fever;

[1] For fuller information on the Kede sub-tribe see my chapter on 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, 1940, ed. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard.

[2] Strangers, too, may invoke the *tídzana*, though this is said to happen relatively rarely.

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the second for the chief, who was worried by the numerous cases of illness in the village; and the third for a young man who sacrificed a fowl so that his wife might bear a child. We note that the *tídzana* is appealed to for much the same reason as the *ketsá*; let me note also that the third suppliant came of a family which 'owned' a particular medicine reputed to cure sterility, even though he himself had invoked the sacred chain instead. In his case as in all others the sacrifice had been indicated by the diviners, who are the final judges of the appropriate supernatural remedy.

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I mentioned before that the Chain of Tsoede formerly also served as an ordeal of deadly efficacy and as an instrument of execution.[1] It may seem puzzling that a tool of death should be believed to restore health and fertility. Yet even as a tool of death the Chain of Tsoede is a *kuti*; indeed, it is used to kill because it has the supernatural power also to purify the executioner and sanctify the deed. And as the *kuti* is always a force, divine in origin and unspecific in nature, so it can, by definition, be made to do many things.

We may add the ritual *ndáduma* to this list of movable rites although it figures equally among the fixed ceremonials. In its movable form, it is concerned with the rise and fall of the river and is performed when the seasonal floods are late or of threatening dimensions (though not sufficiently grave to warrant the performance of the *ketsá*). The name of the ritual, 'Father Niger', refers to a whole species of spirits inhabiting various localities on the river. The most powerful of these river spirits is said to live at Bazumagi, a small village up-river from Jebba. Here the local priest performs a special version of the ceremonial, which takes place only when ordered by the *Kuta* of the Kede. In the course of this ceremonial the priest wades into the river and throws a stone ashore, the place where the stone drops being believed to show that year's highwater mark. In Jebba, the ritual is in the hands of the *Tswanya*, who sacrifices a white cock, some beer, and a little honey (a favourite food of all river spirits). I did not witness the movable ritual but only the fixed version, which is the last in the cycle of rites falling in the ninth month; it was performed on 5th December, succeeding the ritual *dzakó* by two days. The actual observance, however, is the same in both rituals, though the fixed form bears not only on the river floods, but also, more generally, on health, prosperity, and childbirth in the village. In neither case can the *ndáduma* be made to serve the private interests of individuals or

[1] See above, p. 32.—The name *tídzana* is said to mean 'head (*eti*) of Dzana', Dzana being the name of the legendary first victim of this method of execution.

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x796 strangers. Indeed, it is not supposed to be seen by strangers, and these are driven away with much shouting and angry gestures; the contingency arises quite often, for the place of the sacrifice is [505] fairly public, being situated on the open bank of an arm of the Niger, close to the landing place of a canoe ferry.

The ritual takes place in the morning and lasts about four hours. Eight elders accompany the priest to the *kuti* place, where a mound of earth has been thrown up close to the edge of the water. Water, fetched from the river in gourds, is first poured over the mound, followed by a little honey, the rest of which is thrown into the river. Then the white cock is beheaded over the mound so that his blood drips on to the earth; the head is left lying on the mound and the feathers are planted around it in a circle; this is done as a sign that the ritual has been performed and as a suggestion to passers-by to leave a gift to the spirits. A libation of beer follows, the rest of the beer being passed round among the elders. Meanwhile the preparation of the meal has begun, the cock being cooked in corngruel over an open fire; while this goes on, the old men chat freely, without any signs of awe or restraint. When the meal is done, the priest throws a few morsels on the mound and into the river, and the rest is eaten by all present. Finally, all wash their hands in the river and a last gourd of river water is poured over the mound. At each offering the priest repeats the same brief prayer, which is of the usual informal kind; one prays that God may give health, that there should be plenty of food, and that the women may have children. Though the prayer starts with the invocation of 'Father Niger' no further mention is made of the river. During the sacrifice I witnessed a sentence was added *ex tempore*—'God give health to the White Man', a reference to my recent illness. Such special appeals, I was told, were quite in order; though no individual could order the *ndáduma*, the health or fate of any member of the community (which status was accorded to me) can suitably be brought to the notice of the river spirits and of God.

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

x796 The *kuti mamma* is supposed to start the cycle of rites linked with the 9th month. Once more, however, the ritual time table 751 is not rigid; the performance I saw, for example, fell on the 16th November 1934, i.e. in the middle of the 8th month in Nupe reckoning. Also it lasted one day, more precisely one night, instead of the traditional week. The ritual, which is again in the charge of the *Tswanya*, includes two distinct observances which appear to have been merged in a purely fortuitous fashion. The first, called *zumácikã* ('Back of the Bush'), is concerned with the

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sacrifice to a *cigbe* shrine of that name, said to ward off smallpox; the other, the *mamma* proper, consists mainly in the appearance and dance of masked figures called *nāgbe*. The masks themselves are referred to as *kũyí* ('full garment') or simply as *ewo* ('dress'), and their appearance is meant to cleanse the village of evil influences. These are not further specified save negatively, in that they exclude witchcraft. The *zumácikā* is said to have been introduced by an old woman who, many years ago, happened to arrive in Jebba during a smallpox epidemic and taught the people the secret of the appropriate medicine; nothing further is known about her, about the manner of her death, or about her burial place. The medicine is contained (so it is said) in an earthen pot which now stands under a low grass roof in the middle of the village. It is in every respect an unusual version of *cigbe*. It cannot be utilized at will but only at this ceremonial; it belongs to the village and not to any individual owner; nor yet is it used in the manner of other medicines. For the substance in question is neither drunk nor otherwise applied to the body, since its effect would be deadly if it were so used; indeed no one has ever seen it. It is hidden inside the vessel, being periodically increased when blood and beer from the sacrifice are added, and its mere presence is magically effective. This effect bears on the prevention of the disease rather than its cure: smallpox is being 'kept away as you keep away a stranger'; which preventive aspect is also reflected in the date of the ritual, which falls towards the end of the cold season, while outbreaks of smallpox are believed to occur only during the hot season, in the 10th and 11th month. 796x 751

The masks of the *kuti mamma*, on the other hand, are attributed, with so many other things, to Tsoede. They are made of dried grass, consisting of a skirt and a kind of veil covering face and chest, and during the year are stored in the houses of various elders. While the *cigbe* vessel stands on a public place and is in no way concealed, the masks must be kept hidden and may be put on only in a safe and secret place. The whole ritual is similarly veiled in secrecy; it takes place at night, the women having been warned to keep indoors, and out of the sight of strangers: if women or strangers were to see this *kuti*, they would be killed by its 'force'.[1] 796x 532 751

The ceremonial I saw started about 8 p.m. on a moonless night, 796x 751

[1] The fear of the *mamma* is a very real one. At the time of the performance here described the District Head from Mokwa, a Fulani nobleman, happened to stay in Jebba. He heard that a 'feast' was going to take place, and when he learned that I was going he decided to come also. He arrived when the dance was already in progress, gave one look, and literally fled. His hurried retreat was received with much hilarity by the men present, who added: 'This is how all strangers run away when they hear the *mamma*.'

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and was performed to the light of a hurricane lamp and a number of grass torches. About forty men were assembled in front of the *cigbe* shrine. The beating of drums and a high-pitched screech of the men announced the beginning of the ritual, giving also a final warning to women who might still be abroad. The *cigbe* pot had been decorated with a strip of white cloth tied round its neck, which was referred to as the 'dress' of the vessel, that is, by the same name as the masks worn by the dancers. These appeared later, accompanied by two older men, one of them the *Ndakotsu* of the senior age grade, and some youths, all carrying sticks to drive away and beat intruders. There were two masks, worn by young men of the senior age grade, who had dressed in the presence of the *mamma* priest while he spoke this brief prayer:

'Our Lord God, let us go out (as masks); men and women (who must not see the masks), God will kill them. Now the *kuti* enters (into the masks). May God cause that the thing (i.e. smallpox and evil in general) does not stay here (in the village).

At the place of the *cigbe* shrine, the masks keep at first in the shadow without moving. The officiant kneels down in front of the *cigbe* vessel, whose lid has been removed, while the rest of the men sit around him in a triple halfcircle, the old men on the inside, younger men in the middle, youths on the outside. The man who actually performs the sacrifice is the *Ndakotsu*, since the *Tswanya* is too old and weak; but he sits immediately behind the younger man and from time to time instructs or corrects him. Throughout the proceedings the drums continue playing, and repeatedly the congregation breaks out in a high-pitched scream or calls out '*gengebaru*' (a meaningless word)—the 'greeting' of the *cigbe*.

The officiant pours some beer into the *cigbe* vessel, saying—'*Kuti*, we brew beer, we give thee water (i.e. beer), so that the town may have health, everyone may have sweet things, the women may have children, everything may prosper'. The libation is repeated three times, then the officiant drinks a little of the beer and pours the rest into the *cigbe* vessel. He kills a black male kid, slitting its throat, and lets the blood run into the vessel. The body of the animal is removed to be roasted over an open fire while the libation of beer is repeated, the same prayer being now spoken by the old-men, one after the other. Finally, the beer goes round according to age and rank, the *Tswanya* drinking first. The men clearly enjoy drinking the beer and behave much as they would at any ordinary drinking party. This concludes the first phase of the ceremonial; the proceedings that follow belong to the *mamma* proper.

[535] They begin with singing and a slow and dignified dance of a few old men. The masks soon join in, being acclaimed with shouts of

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'*mamari*', the 'greeting' of the *mamma* masks. Later the masks, accompanied by all the young men, set out on a dance-procession through the village, where they beat with their sticks on the doors of houses, to frighten all evil persons (and all women). On the way they 'salute' the houses of chief and elders and also look out for strangers who might have strayed into the village. The dance procession is repeated several times, and on every return the masks join in the singing and dancing, which become more and more general. Let me stress that the dance preserves its restrained and quiet character throughout, the occasional shrieks notwithstanding. Altogether, the general mood is neither excited nor severe. The men who stay behind at the *cigbe* shrine, if they do not dance, talk in whispers but quite informally, about previous performances of the *kuti*, about old times, and so forth; one of the elders takes the opportunity of telling me about the meaning and rules of the *mamma*. Some time during the dance the meal has been prepared and is eaten by the congregation after some morsels of food are dropped into the *cigbe* vessel. It is by then 11 o'clock. There is no washing of hands, and no other formal conclusion of the sacrifice. Singing and dancing, and the drinking of beer while it lasts, go on in the same manner until dawn, though some old men, tired out, have fallen asleep. In the morning, the men return to their houses to sleep, while the womenfolk, now released from the night's prohibition, set about their day's work. Formerly, I was told, this went on for a whole week, with dancing at night and rest during the day. 796x 751 535

The songs sung during the *mamma* refer, on the whole vaguely and obscurely, to the ceremonial and its rules, though the text is interspersed with meaningless words. 796x 751 539

1

The person who offends the *mamma*,
He (the *mamma*) will hear it and tell it
(i.e. the person will be punished with death).

2

The *mamma* instructs the masks;
it is closed to the uninitiated.

3

The masks, *woro woro*,
The masks kill (evil) people,
Eyeh——

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4

Arato, one makes the *mamma*,
Arato, the drum of *mamma* (is playing).
By night, the drum of *mamma* is speaking.

5

They are making the *mamma* with it together,
They are making the *mamma* with it together
('it' refers to the *kuti*, the phrase meaning—
in the ceremonial masks and *kuti* are one).

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The people have no theory why the cult should be particularly frightening to the women; on the contrary, they emphasize that the *mamma* is meant to frighten all evil doers and deny that it has any bearing on witchcraft (which is wielded essentially by women). Yet the cult is clearly the men's secret and seems to express male dominance and some antagonism between the sexes. Oddly enough, one of the ritual paraphernalia, the smallpox medicine, is described as a woman's gift. But let me leave this point for the moment and only point out that the *mamma*, which cleanses the community from evil influences, fittingly initiates the cycle of rites meant to procure more positive benefits—timely floods, as in the *ndáduma*, or health and fertility, as in the *dzakó*.

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The latter ritual is supposed to succeed the *mamma* by ten days, though the performance I witnessed took place seventeen days later, on 3rd December. The *dzakó* is performed in public, without secrecy, in front of the sacred relics of Tsoede, two bronze figures of a man [534] and a woman. Special musical instruments are used, two gourd rattles, and three drums hung with brass bells and other ornaments again attributed to Tsoede. The congregation during the sacrifice itself consists of the thirteen elders of Jebba, as usual bareheaded and stripped to the waist, and carrying long staves; but other men and women, even children, may watch and will later join in the dance. The officiant of the ritual is the *Ndace* (the 'Father of Hunting'), though the ritual has nothing to do with hunting. Nor has the rank itself this particular connotation. In Jebba, it is an elder's rank among others, though one specifically connected with the relics of Tsoede; for the *Ndace* is one of the four men who serve (or used to serve) as the 'executioners' wielding the Chain of Tsoede.

The ceremonial starts in the afternoon, with a sacrifice in front of the bronze figures, during which the officiant has the two rattle players on his right and left. The place on the priest's left, opposite the female figure, signifies 'birth', the place on his right, opposite the male figure, 'health'; which symbolism of right and left is

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unique in Nupe religious practice.[1] First, water is sprinkled on the ground and a little beer poured out; immediately afterwards the priest kills a white cock, cutting off its head and letting the blood drip on the earth. The head of the cock is left lying there while the body is taken away to be cooked later in the evening. Before the meal, in which only the elders share, a further offering of a few morsels of the meat is placed before the bronze figures. During each offering the *Ndace* utters this brief prayer—'God, may the town have health; may the (several) towns prosper; may the women bear children; the children, may they be plentiful.[2] The killing of the cock concludes the sacrifice proper: what follows is '*dzodzo*', '*ji raha*', mere 'playing' and 'merry-making'. 796x

Even during the sacrifice an old woman and later an old man did a few dance steps. Afterwards more old women (bareheaded like the men) and all the old men, carrying their staves, join. Even very old men, who can hardly stand on their legs, try a few shaky steps. Later still, young women and girls form a ring round the musicians, singing and swaying rhythmically with the music without moving from the place; this motion is called the 'dance of the female bronze figure'. The two sexes never truly join in the dance; for the younger men do not dance at all, and the girls keep to themselves. Only old men and old women dance together, occasionally holding hands and behaving with jocular amourousness, almost like grandfather and grandmother remembering their youth; some such comments in fact come from the onlookers, who are greatly amused seeing 'the old people playing young couples'. Throughout, the dance is strikingly calm; nor is there any time for a more excited mood to gather force, for at dusk, after three hours, the ceremonial comes to an end. The songs sung at the *dzakó* are irrelevant little ditties, which have no bearing on the ritual. 796x 535

About the *gunnu* I can be brief. I saw it in its small-scale version, as part of the funerary rites for the *Ejukó* who died during my stay in Jebba. It included only the sacrifice of a fowl (on the village dancing ground), the mixed dance, and the playing of the *gunnu* drums; the young men carried their whips, and the dance was a close replica of the one in Doko, though the funeral version omits the sexual taboo and loses much of the hectic excitement typical of the true *gunnu*. From the description given me of the full-scale ritual I gather that it used to correspond closely to the one I saw elsewhere, being, however, more elaborate, comprising the vigil in the bush of the adolescents as well as the appearance of 796x 766

[1] *Eba* divination provides the only parallel, the slab called 'man' lying to the right of the slab called 'woman'.

[2] The plural in the second sentence is unusual; it refers to all the 'towns of Tsoede', that is, to all the settlements on the river possessing Tsoede relics.

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*796 the *ndakó gboyá*. As mentioned before, the practice was abandoned
766 apparently in the early twenties. But it was since revived once, in 1931, at the death of the village chief, when even the *ndakó gboyá* society played its part (in spite of the official ban).

4. RITUAL AND CULTURE CHANGE

*796 This seems an opportune place to consider the impact of changed
177 conditions upon Nupe ritual, at least in its negative, disruptive aspects. The changes undergone by the Jebba rituals do not of course stand alone; in the last generation or two numerous pagan rituals all over Nupe country have been disappearing or have suffered more or less radical modifications. But the conditions in Jebba are in some respects unique and hence capable of illuminating factors and processes obscured elsewhere.

Let me, to begin with, say a few words about one of the abandoned Jebba rituals, the *sokokó*, whose name suggests a ceremonial of uncommon importance. It belonged to the cycle of rites performed in the 9th month; it was concerned with fertility, health, and prosperity in general and centred upon a sacrifice performed on the top of a hill overlooking the river valley. It is said to have been discontinued in 1914, when the residence of the Governor was built on the site of the sacrifice.

Now, similar reasons, similarly fortuitous, are also quoted in connection with certain other changes of ritual practice. In each case, my informants maintained, the disappearance of the *bà žiko*, the 'black' or 'secret place', led to the disappearance of the respective ceremonial or at least to some radical change in the observance. It is true that the place formerly chosen for the esoteric part of the *dzakó*, which used to lie on an uninhabited bank of the river, is today occupied by a riverside camp of Hausa fishermen; the old *gunnu* grove and the place in the bush where the *mamma* masks used to dress in secrecy have similarly lost their former seclusion, being now close to crowded thoroughfares. Yet it is equally true that suitable adjustments could be made: the *dzakó* is still regularly performed, with a programme only slightly changed; the *mamma*, though performed irregularly, has suffered this change for different reasons, and the masked dancers can still dress in secrecy, now in the privacy of an elder's house. Only the observance of the *gunnu* has been altered in a more far-reaching
[778] manner. These facts bear out a point made previously, that sacred places and the like are of relatively little importance in Nupe religion. If, then, a ritual is abandoned altogether or radically modified, this must be due to factors other than the loss of the customary locality and seclusion, inconvenient though the loss might be.

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One such change, affecting the *gunnu*, has already been discussed. The changes that occurred in Jebba, however, show a new and interesting aspect in that they reduced an unusually rich repertoire of rites to dimensions both more moderate and more common. This levelling-down of the ritual schedule would seem to imply two things. First, it suggests that Jebba, which had clearly for a great length of time carried on happily with its numerous rituals, reduced their number in a crisis which did not as seriously affect other communities, whose ritual programme was less ambitious; secondly, we may assume that this levelling-down amounted to a reduction to essentials.

(1) The first assumption repeats, on a more general plane, what we previously said about the *gunnu* and its 'vulnerability' under changed conditions; if this seemed to attach to the ambitious scope of a single cult, the ambitiousness of a whole repertoire of ceremonials now proves to have the same effect. As regards the 'crisis' which precipitated the disruption, I already suggested its nature: the over-rich repertoire proved unworkable under modern conditions. More precisely, its demands upon time, interest, and resources must in many ways have clashed with the increase in trade and production, with the more severe economic competition as well as the new forms of economic stress, and with the many new interests, aesthetic, recreational, and political, which emerged in recent years. These influences, too, have been felt throughout Nupe country. Comparing Jebba and Doko in particular, it may be said that both have been exposed to much the same impact, as they were similarly fortified against it. In Doko, the impact of change came from the proximity of Bida, the centre of trade and political activity, of a new religion, and of a new metropolitan culture. In Jebba the river and the railway, with their large cosmopolitan traffic, exercised a comparable influence. The Doko people are sustained in their traditional way of life by the knowledge that they are neither alone nor isolated, but belong to a large, closely knit group, the Beni sub-tribe, sharing the same institutions, intermarrying, and looking back upon a common history. In Jebba, the links with the riverain communities and the tangible evidence of the past, embodied in the Tsoede emblems, help to buttress the traditional values. If these weakened in the religious field, they did so, not because of the greater weight of changed circumstances in that community, but because of the greater 'vulnerability' of its religious institutions.

(2) The last remarks also suggest the sense in which the changes in the repertoire of rituals can be called a levelling-down to 'essentials'. As we have seen, the association of Jebba with the river and the figure of Tsoede is behind a large proportion of the

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Jebba rituals; and these remained unaffected by the general reduction in number. Jebba, then, abandoned (or abandoned first) the rituals of more general appeal and more common occurrence, and preserved those bearing on its peculiar geographical and historical position. The 'national' rites as it were gave way before those of local importance. Equally, the rituals which gave way—*gunnu*, *sokokó*, *žikinta*—had in essence been concerned with benefits of a very general order, with fertility, health, livelihood and prosperity at large; while those which were preserved voice much more specific aims, bearing on the river floods, on ordeals, smallpox, and the expulsion of 'evil things'. Let us note that, when the former were abandoned, relatively little was lost, since the same aims were common to most other rituals; while the second group of ceremonials, which were not so duplicated, could not be discontinued without a serious loss of this kind. It fits into this picture that the Jebba *gunnu* was preserved in its more specific form, as a funerary rite for titled elders, and not as an annual ceremonial meant to renew fertility and well-being.

This process of change clearly presupposes that 'overlap' in the efficacy of religious observances which we noted so frequently. It is now thrown into relief from a new angle. The 'overlap', as we see, is not irreducible: it may give way, in a crisis, before the assessment of essentials.

A last question remains: do fixed and movable rituals resist change to a different degree? The fact that a movable Jebba rite, the *žikinta*, disappeared together with other, fixed, ceremonials would suggest a negative answer. Yet we also know that certain originally fixed rituals only survived in movable form, or at least in a form no longer rigidly bound up with annual performances, such as the *mamma* in Jebba and the *gunnu* there and elsewhere. By means of this conversion the loss of the religious rite was minimized; though it disappeared as a regularly repetitive institution it remained available as a possibility, to be utilized 'when the need arises'; which compromise seems adequately explained by the lesser demands upon time, energy, and resources of the movable ceremonials, especially when the conversion goes together with performance on a lesser scale and in 'businesslike' manner. But another factor is probably also at work. For we can understand that people who have abandoned or neglected many of their traditional religious institutions will revert to them in sudden emergencies or times of stress, that is, in precisely the conditions for which the movable rituals are designed. The sudden, single revival of the Jebba *gunnu* after a pause of many years seems a case in point; and similar evidence also comes from other Nupe communities.

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IV

RITUAL (*continued*)

I. FORM, CONTENT, VALIDITY

WHEN we speak of 'ritual' we have in mind first of all actions exhibiting a striking or incongruous rigidity, that is, some conspicuous regularity not accounted for by the professed aims of the actions. Any type of behaviour may thus be said to turn into a 'ritual' when it is stylized or formalized, and made repetitive in that form. When we call a ritual 'religious' we further attribute to the action a particular manner of relating means to ends which we know to be inadequate by empirical standards, and which we commonly call irrational, mystical, or supernatural. And one of these means, perhaps the most crucial one, is constituted by the very formalism of the action. If its rigidity no longer strikes us as incongruous, this is so because we are so thoroughly familiar with the notion that the supernatural efficacy of behaviour is bound up with rigid formalism. Whatever the psychological roots of this notion, it is clear that it furnishes the motive for this particular way of acting and underlies the actor's expectations; for the performers of a ritual do not behave purely mechanically in the rigidly repetitive manner (as some sufferer from compulsion neurosis might do): they behave in the given manner because they trust in its efficacy. This trust in turn rests on the body of organized beliefs, on doctrine and the tenets of the creed, which sanction the (ritualized) behaviour and warrant its relevance.

In analysing religious rituals, then, we are always dealing with two sets of facts: the *form* of the action (since without the set form it would not be a 'ritual'); and its content of ideas and aims (since without the mystic aims it would not be 'religion'). The 'content' is again twofold. It includes, first, the desired effect or end result, that is, the professed 'aim' of the ritual; and second, the items of the creed relevant to the 'means' employed. This latter knowledge clearly goes beyond a guarantee of isolated manners of acting; rather is it of a general and systematic kind, and amounts to a frame of reference bearing upon every kind of action which a

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group of people will regard as 'religious'. In Nupe, this frame of reference is given in the conceptions of the deity, of the universe, of the force of *kuti* or *cigbe*, and so forth. We need not again expound it, and can therefore take this aspect of the 'content' of rituals for granted.

Yet understood thus widely, the category of 'ritual' would include also various other observances, which the Nupe hold apart from *kuti*—sacrifices to ancestors and twin-shrines, to certain 'great' medicines, and even the minor offerings to spirits. In another sense, too, these practices do not stand apart, but merely extend the Nupe conception of ritual. Its two forms, 'fixed' and 'movable', clearly supplement one another: where one is bound to time and occasion and involves enterprise on a considerable scale, the other is freely available and capable of being employed readily as well as economically; and where one (as we put it before) anticipates the ubiquitous and perennial needs of communities, the other bears on unforeseen events, which must be dealt with quickly and *ad hoc*. Together, they fit communities to meet, on the supernatural plane, all the problems and threats that might face them. But in one or two instances the movable rituals are made to include even such problems or threats as may face individuals or single families. And if this private validity of ritual, as the Nupe understand it, represents an exception, it becomes the rule in those other observances, sacrifices to *kuci* and so forth. They thus complete the hierarchy of social appropriateness of which we spoke before, and which has two of its grades or steps already within the practice of ritual.

This hierarchy need not concern us further; nor is there any need, in the present context, to revert again to the other observances, save in passing: the employment of medicine will form the subject of a special chapter; the sacrifices to *kuci* will be mentioned in connection with kinship ceremonial, that is, with the one 'domain' they command; as for the casual offerings to spirits, there is no more to be added. But let me note this. The circumstances and actions characterizing these three practices all occur also in the movable ritual—sacrifice, prayers or invocations, the private character of the appeal, and its concern with contingent needs. Much that will be said on the latter therefore also applies to the former rites, even though, in Nupe eyes, they do not constitute 'ritual', but an essentially different kind of appeal.

Reviewing the professed aims of ritual we find them to be strikingly uniform. Mostly they are composite as well as unspecific (without special 'domain'); almost every ritual is meant to ensure the same series of benefits—health, ample food, fecundity of the women, and general prosperity. In the movable

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rites the aim is usually adjusted more narrowly, bearing on the specific need of the moment. The fixed rituals, too, may, by their date or particular associations, be related to a more specific purpose; even so the more general bearing will be voiced at least in the final phrase of the prayer formula. Again, the professed aim nearly always bears on the village community; occasionally that scope is widened, so as to include a whole tribal section, or (more rarely) narrowed down, so as to benefit individual suppliants. Finally, the professed aim is always conspicuous, being openly stated, both in the prayers and in relevant comments. This is not equally true of the songs that accompany certain rituals: where the songs are not altogether irrelevant, they usually refer only to the general characteristics of the religious rite, its secrecy, power, the dangers that lie in mishandling it. It falls to the songs, therefore, to affirm those 'items of the creed' which relate to the position of the *kuti* in the conceptual framework at large. Thus it is not puzzling that songs belonging to one ritual should on occasion appear in another.

To turn to the formal features, which are once more widely uniform. The general plan of the ceremonial, especially, varies little. There is the same sequence of esoteric and public events, usually accompanied by a change of scene, and the same series of episodes—the sacrifice and prayer, the libation of beer and the sprinkling of blood; the communal meal, and the final dance and general festivity. The separateness of the various phases is reflected in the nomenclature which assigns to each a particular name. The sacrifice and prayer is called *labá*; the communal meal *biki*; the scene of the esoteric part is known as *kuti ba* or *ba žiko* ('secret place'), and the final, public and festive, episode as *dzodzo* (playing, dancing) or *jī raha* ('merry-making'). There are certain differences. Most movable and a few fixed rites are without the final phase; the *gunnu* alone includes a dance in which both sexes join and, preceding it, a sexual taboo; the *mamma* alone involves the utter secrecy of a performance in the dark of the night. Within the set framework of phases or episodes the various component actions are again fairly uniformly standardized. Thus the officiant always kneels when bringing the sacrifice; the congregation always appears bareheaded and stripped to the waist; and beer and food are always passed round in accordance with age and rank. Occasionally, too, there is a triple repetition of the prayer formula. Yet the formalism is not over-strict: as we know, time and place of the ritual are subject to change; the performance of the sacrifice implies no peculiar, stereotyped gestures; above all, the invocation is loosely phrased, without any insistence on a rigid rote, Indeed, we might call the very fluidity of the formalism part of the 'typical' form of Nupe ritual.

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In spite of this fluidity and uniformity each *kuti* represents, for the people, a procedure possessed of a distinct and unmistakable identity. We need not mention especially certain external details marking off one ritual from another, such as the different trees in places of sacrifice otherwise closely alike, different musical instruments played with songs which themselves may be interchangeable, or one or two objects peculiar to particular ceremonials. More importantly, the person of the officiant varies from ritual to ritual, only very few sharing the same priest. We spoke of him as being 'in charge' of a ritual; the Nupe would say that he 'owns' the ritual: and for them no reference to a *kuti* is complete without the mention of this relevantly varying 'ownership'.

Now, this is a new conception of the ownership of rituals. We have met with two others—an ownership vested in the village community, as part of its corporate estate, and one vested in the whole tribe or nation, as an attribute of its collective identity. The former comes closest to 'ownership' in the conventional sense of the word, since the village community in fact views its cycle of rituals much as one does some concretely held source of benefits. In the priest's ownership of 'his' ritual this notion disappears; for he 'owns' the ritual only as a task or duty (if a privileged one), which falls to him by virtue of his descent or rank. In either case, the village community, as the true 'owner' of the ceremonial, delegates its execution to one of its segments (the priest's kin group) or to one of its individual members. This notion is in fact carried to the extreme; for neither the priest nor his family derive any particular benefits, secular or mystic, from the religious office: the priest is merely the one individual entitled and expected to exercise it 'for the whole town'. The unique priestship of the *gunnu*, which sanctifies the person of the incumbent, is only partly an exception. The priest is distinguished from other mortals only inasmuch as he is a vessel of a force working miraculously; but he is not expected to be blessed with children because he officiates in a cult of fertility nor to be better off than others because the cult also promises prosperity. Indeed, like any other person due to assume a public office, he must prove that he is 'strong enough', that is, he must first acquire the full adult status of a married man and family head.

The individual 'ownership' of ritual thus implies no special validity of the thing owned for the owner. The two forms of group ownership imply precisely this. Here 'ownership' is coterminous with validity for a group so-and-so constituted. Where this group is the society at large, the tribe or nation, that is, the widest group on which behaviour is normally oriented, the validity of the ritual also ceases at the group boundary; which is merely saying that

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Nupe religion is 'national', not 'universal'. Where the group equals the village community, the coincidence of validity and group is no longer entirely true. More precisely, the validity of the ritual holds on two different planes, both coinciding with and extending beyond the group boundaries. Thus every ritual is valid for the community which actually performs it, promising its various benefits to that congregation; and every ritual is further valid for the wider or widest group of which the congregation forms a part. This wider validity may again be of two kinds. First, the group performing the ritual may regard it as a task (a privileged task) apportioned to it within the embracing social unit, so that each performance is understood to contribute to the welfare of that unit and also affirms its existence; as we have seen, this is true of several rituals in the river area and, on the widest plane, of the rituals associated with Tsoede and the kingdom of Nupe.[1] Secondly, the community performing the ritual may merely know that other villages in the tribe or perhaps sub-tribe 'own' an identical observance; so that every performance will recall and confirm the existence of a larger human aggregate of like customs and beliefs. In the first case, then, the single village community sees itself as belonging to an embracing association in which it has a part to play; in the second, as belonging to a particular species of humanity. In either case the purely religious aims merge with notions of group existence and relationships.

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2. THE PROMISE OF RITUAL

The discussion of the validity of rituals, which is bound up with the promises they hold out, leads us at once to the crucial questions—how do rituals fulfil their promise? and how do they convey the hope, or perhaps certainty, that their professed aims will in fact come true?

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Consider that the rituals are being performed incessantly through the generations and have undoubtedly, at times at least, been followed by the desired results; thus there must be in existence a body of knowledge, empirical if misconstrued, bearing out the believed-in efficacy. Consider further that the fixed rituals are concerned mainly with 'ends' and 'new beginnings', that is, with the overall repetitiveness of natural life—with the cycles of the seasons, with birth, with the growing of crops, with the rise and fall of the river. This repetitiveness is well known empirically, independently of any belief in supernatural agencies. The

[1] We note the same principle of 'delegation' which also underlies Nupe priestship, though the 'privileged task' now falls, not to individuals, but to sections of the society at large or to groups within groups.

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traditional Nupe calendar shows this clearly, naming as it does the various parts of the year 'First rain', 'Nothing-but-rain', 'Growing-time', 'Hot time', 'Cold time'. If the rituals are meant to ensure that life goes on being what it has always been, they merely aim at preserving a normality which one knows to be such. In other words, if you accept that there should be such rituals, then you will find that their aims come true. Purely practically, the rituals would seem to be supererogatory efforts; yet just because they are so supererogatory they are also self-confirming. But the question of supererogation does not really arise; for the Nupe, like all people, are capable of thinking on different planes. On one plane, there is an empirical 'normality', valid for all ordinary intents and purposes. On another, this normality is part of divine creation, which includes, with the natural order of things, also that mystic order of which ritual is an item. It is not a question of one conditioning the other or being necessary for the other; the two belong together and to the same design; both exist, and fit. And from this fit, so conceived that it demonstrates itself in the familiar regularities of life, one derives, not merely hope or confidence, but certainty.

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This is still an incomplete view both of the universe as the Nupe picture it and of the efficacy of their rituals. The former also contains accidents, and the latter are meant to secure also benefits beyond those vouched for by some summary 'normality'. This is true especially of the movable rituals which deal with unforseen contingencies; but the fixed rituals, too, aim at such things as freedom from illness, prolific childbirth, prosperity, the disappearance of evil, that is, at the control of uncertainties. Here the ritual efforts, no longer self-confirming, can only convey a hope or strengthen confidence.

The nature of ritual as the Nupe conceive it betrays the same wavering between hope and certainty. As we know, it is a procedure, a rule of acting, which actuates a portion of cosmic force. In this sense, then, it is a macnine, set in motion and working towards predetermined results. At the same time the procedure belies its own efficacy; for part of it is a *prayer*, not an automatically effective spell, that is, an invocation and appeal. One begs God to bring about what the performance of the ritual acts are themselves trusted to bring about. I do not think that I have misread the paradox in this situation. The *mamma* ritual would seem to express it most clearly. For there one employs a 'medicine' which is in itself automatically powerful and masks which are equally charged with some autonomous force; yet one also prays—'May God cause . . .' Nor can this ambiguity be reduced by calling the prayer a request for divine blessing, without which the ritual

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procedure would remain powerless. The notion of a blessing is quite alien to the Nupe: they say 'May God cause so-and-so to happen', not 'May God make our efforts successful'; the prayer simply duplicates the other features in the ritual performance. Nor yet is there any conception of moral worthiness, of 'showing reason' why God should grant success or give his blessing. The paradox remains, and the only way to dissolve it is to call the Nupe ritual a bow with two strings. 796x

This viewpoint fits well into the conceptual framework of Nupe religion, where different rituals and even different forms of supernatural appeal appear as alternatives which may replace each other, one being effective where the other happened to fail. Their possible failure is thus to some extent anticipated. The efficacy of the 'fixed' and more general rituals, especially, may be corrected by that of the 'movable' and more specialized ones. As we know, divination will suggest the suitable alternative, while the wide overlap in the ritual aims makes such choices and changes feasible. There is some hierarchy of power among the rituals, some being definitely 'stronger' than others; nor are they all interchangeable. The supreme or unique rituals, therefore, such as the *gunnu* or *mamma*, may suffer a failure which is irreducible. But even this failure does not assail the confidence that is placed in them; for there are the loopholes which we know well: the ultimate unconcern of the remote deity, and the evil forces he suffers to exist. 771 796x

The fact that the failures of ritual can in this fashion be explained away does not, however, account for the initial source of the confidence which is thus protected. It might be argued that no special explanatory hypotheses are needed; since people, after all, believe in what they practice, the assurance found in the practice is likely to be implicit already in the belief. Differently expressed, the confidence in the ritual would simply be part of its conceptual content. Undoubtedly, this must be true, in some measure, of all rituals, and wholly true of the movable rituals and all the other casual observances, whose aims are not self-confirming and whose procedure is prosaic and businesslike. Here the rule holds—if you believe, then you will find assurance in the practical application of this belief; if you do not, the practice will carry no conviction; for the application itself offers nothing further in the way of persuasion. The ritual, as it were, draws upon faith but does not add to it, save accidentally, when its professed aim happens to come true. 796x

It is different in the fixed and more elaborate rituals; for here the belief is affirmed by the practice, and the content of the ritual sustained and reinforced by its form. Let me explain this more

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fully. The form of the ritual clearly implies more than an external procedure composed of such-and-such invocations, music, and manners of eating, sitting, or walking. These items and others also produce a certain mood, made up of emotional tensions and satisfactions, and of given expectations. Upon this mood fall the words which voice the aims of the ceremonial, so that they gain weight through the very context in which they are spoken or sung; and this mood is further effective as any stirring experience is effective, in offering stimulation and catharsis, in providing sensory pleasures, and, ultimately, in leaving a mark upon experience. Many—not all—of these stimulations are also normally sought and felt satisfying, apart from ritual contexts, in dances, songs, festivities of all kinds. The rituals add the thrill that goes with secrecy and uncommon occasions. Above all, one knows that the ritual *is* a special, sacred occasion, which has a name and a given aim: so that the stimulations and satisfactions that lie in the ritual behaviour blend with the promise for which it stands. One is not *proved* by the other; but one is emotionalized by the other, and the promise made or sought in this mood gains, though not in intellectual certainty, yet in persuasiveness. One *feels* the import of things so announced. They are, of course, things one also wishes to believe. If any person simply said, say, 'May God grant you children' or even 'You shall have children', the faith put in this pronouncement will depend partly on the prior faith in the role and powers of the speaker, and partly on the strength of the wish and hence on its capacity to predispose the audience towards a ready belief. But if there is, in addition, the stirring atmosphere of the full-scale ritual, this predisposition is itself created. To be sure, it is not created *ex nihilo*: the important thing is that the ritual does not merely draw upon faith but also adds to and reinforces it.

It is true that the crucial pronouncements are made before the full emotional force of the ritual can be felt. But there is some anticipatory effect; for one knows the ritual to be a whole, with given phases, and any earlier phase carries within it the expectation of its sequels. Indeed, the sequel may protrude into the preceding phases (as in the anticipated episode of flogging in the *gunnu*). Again, the crucial pronouncements are made before a smaller congregation than that for which the promise is to hold; but the wider community knows, at least in general terms, all about the things the ritual is supposed to do. It is possible, however, that the public phase, with its sensory and aesthetic appeal, might become dissociated from the esoteric phase, which contains the intellectual kernel of the ceremony. The Nupe ceremonial shows clear traces of this. The singing and dancing sometimes assume the role of pleasures sought and found satisfying in their

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own right; and jokes or horseplay, which seem quite out of place, are inserted in the programme of 'merry-making'. If the dissociation were complete, the ritual would cease to be one and turn into a mere festivity. Normally, this is not permitted to occur; when economic stress or similar circumstances make it necessary to curtail the ritual performance, it is the 'merry-making' which is so shortened or even omitted altogether. But I have met with one instance of the opposite change. The people of Mokwa have a ceremonial called *elo* which has a great many of the essential features of the Nupe ritual: it has its 'month' (the 9th); a titled elder who has charge of it and can alone sanction the performance; and it employs masks and special dresses normally stored away and used on no other occasion. But it is without sacrifice, esoteric phase or prayer; nor is it (today at least) credited with any aim beyond *dzodzo*, 'play'. There is no evidence that the *elo* has been truncated for any particular reason; the evidence merely shows that the dissociation of the esoteric from the public episode can become complete, the latter coming fully into its own.

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3. SYMBOLIC AND IMPLICIT FUNCTIONS

Normally, even the public episodes are permeated with significance or continue to convey the ideas primarily expressed in the esoteric rite. A familiar method of keeping ideas in sight is by means of signs or symbols, that is, by means of objects or ways of acting understood to point beyond themselves, to some 'referent' or *significatum*. This reference may be of a general kind, merely indicating that the situation is of a religious nature or part of a particular ceremonial. Think of the dress obligatory in the esoteric sacrifice but worn also during the public episodes, of the *gunnu* whips or the staves of the old men in the *dzakó*, of the yells or shouted words which are understood to be a salute of the *kuti*, or of the musical instruments which are known to belong to this or that ritual. These symbols, then, act as reminders that even the 'merry-making' has its peculiar, more solemn context. The symbols may be more specific reminders in that they refer to the professed meaning of the ritual performance. Thus the *gunnu* whips and the flogging indicate fertility; the masks of the *mamma* secrecy and a knowledge hidden from women and strangers; and the cult objects of Tsoede stand for the whole past and unity of the tribe and kingdom.

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Symbols, of course, also play a part in the esoteric rites. The river water poured on the ground in the *ndáduma* indicates the character of this river ritual; the white cloth, annually renewed in the *gunnu*, signifies the 'end and renewal' sanctified in the cult;

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the freshly cut grain eaten in certain sacrifices points to subsistence and the continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to secure. The meaning of all these symbols is fairly obvious and in a sense 'natural', being based on a commonly known nexus between the sign and the thing signified. Symbols of a more artificial kind, resting on some specific and perhaps esoteric convention, are rare in Nupe ritual. The only clear instance is the symbolism of right and left in the *dzakó*, which, as I have said, has no parallel in any other Nupe cult. The sacrifice of fish in one version of the *gunnu* is a more doubtful case; for though fish are associated with fertility (in dream interpretation) and welcome gifts (in divining), that knowledge is far from general. The use of tortoise shells in the same ceremonial reminds the congregation of the Father Tortoise stories, but does no more. The rule that the *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round his waist' evokes no association, say, with constraint inimical to growth and fertility. And though it may be tempting to speculate on the rule of calling the sacrificial beer 'water', that is, by the name of the fluid which (as rain or semen) is linked with the fertility of nature and man, the Nupe attach no ulterior meaning to this metaphor.

Whether these and other details of the ritual procedure do not perhaps involve symbolisms of a more subtle and unconscious nature, I will not discuss. In my view uncomprehended 'symbols have no part in social enquiry; their social effectiveness lies in their capacity to indicate, and if they indicate nothing to the actors, they are, from our point of view, irrelevant and indeed no longer symbols (whatever their significance for the psychologist or psycho-analyst). But let us note that certain modes of acting may be significant for the actors without constituting symbols, merely because they represent a rule, a formalism of acting, that is, a *ritual*, and not accidental or random behaviour. This is true, for example, of the choice of the sacrificial animals. To begin with, they are in every case 'ordinary' animals, without sacred associations and neither rare nor avoided in workaday life. Though most rituals prescribe the sex of the sacrificial beast, males and females are chosen in random manner, suggestive of no symbolic link with the purpose of the ritual. The *ketsá* is perhaps the clearest example; the legend, as we remember, mentions the sacrifice of a cow; yet the actual ritual, when performed at the request of the Kede chief, requires the killing of a bull. In other rituals the sex as well as the species of the animal simply depend on the outcome of divination. It might seem that at least the specification of white or black animals, which is fairly common, must have a symbolic significance since black colour is generally associated with secrecy and evil things, and white colour with

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prosperity. But again, both kinds are irregularly employed; all that can be said is that the sex, colour or species of the animals is *laid down*, and hence stands for a rule significant as such. 796 182

A few words must here be said about the whole conception of the Nupe sacrifice. It seems anomalous that a non-personified deity or an abstract 'cosmic force' should be offered food and drink. But the prayer formula accompanying the offering speaks concretely of 'giving' these to God or *kuti*, just as the name of at least one ritual implies that the *kuti* (or the stone representing it) 'drinks' the fluid offered. The name for sacrifice, *labá*, offers no further clue; denoting the actual offering as well as the prayer accompanying it, it does not separate the former from the general act of worship. The offering is thus a gesture among others: like the prayer formula, meant to break through the aloofness of the deity, the sacrificial gift serves to attract and hold his attention. In either case the gesture used is borrowed from everyday life, the prayer employing ordinary language, the sacrifice items normally offered by clients to patrons. And this conception of a 'normal' gift is once more consistent with the notion that the various *kuti*, precisely like persons of rank and standing, command their special 'greetings'. If the offerings are anomalous, they share this character with all the other forms of addressing God and *kuti* and indeed with the very conceptions of the deity and of the Force-that-is-in-ritual. 782

Let me note briefly that the same anomaly also holds in the case of sacrifices made to ancestors or over the vessels of 'great' medicines. The former, as we remember, are brought to the disembodied souls which are 'with God'; mostly, too, they are accompanied by invocations addressed at once to God and *kuci*. The sacrifices to medicines again involve the invocation of God; and though they consist in offerings of beer, morsels of food, and the blood of the sacrificial animal, they are, as we shall see, also understood to strengthen the impersonal force that is imputed to the substance of medicine. Nor are the offerings to spirits, de-humanized beings that they are, any less anomalous; indeed, in a different context I recorded the positive assertion that 'spirits do not eat'. 796 182 782 769

The first two observances may, like ritual proper, include the sacrificial meal of the congregation; the sacrifice to ancestors does so in most cases, the sacrifice to 'great' medicines only where it has fused with a *kuti* or with *kuci* worship. Invariably, however, the inclusion of the communal meal, even where it means merely a sharing-out of beer, entails the invocation of God, and not only of ancestors or of the 'force' of medicine. Yet the sacrificial meal has in no way the significance of a sacrament. The meal undoubtedly represents a sacred occasion, although it may show

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X796 little trace of awe or emotional thrill.[1] But there is no conception
182 of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing
782 bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial
769 meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations' between deity and congregation. Much the same point was made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties'.[2]

X796 Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of
182 the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of
183 very general social import and established by means of a relevant parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal, efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence. The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and afterwards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition, rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dancé', and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis, and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, however, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols. They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

[1] This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *biki* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

[2] *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

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or underline only the professed aims of the ritual; rather do they express additional aims in an implicit and incidental fashion. Consider that the ritual procedure acknowledges distinctions of rank and seniority (for example, in the order in which the congregation is seated and receives food and drink); that it draws a sharp line between those admitted to the esoteric ceremonials or to the ceremonial altogether (certain age sets, men, members of the community), and those excluded from it (other age sets, women, strangers). Again, among the youths admitted to the esoteric rite there are the novices and those already initiated, each group being expected to behave differently, to show fear or not, to teach or to be taught, and so forth. Among the women who may join the public phase the girls might have to keep apart from the old women, as in the *dzakó* dance. Both in the *gunnu* and *mamma* the leader of the age grades assumes the special duty of supervising and organizing the youths. And in all larger ceremonies there is some procession through the village, when one 'salutes' the houses of chiefs and elders.

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Now all these instances refer to behaviour valid and meant to be valid also in everyday life. If, then, respect towards elders, awareness of one's place in the society, the very notion of being of it, are given expression in the ritual procedure, this comes to demonstrate, in the manner of a model, the obtaining social norms. Needless to say, it is a very special model since it is presented in the context of stirred-up emotions and to a consciousness artificially heightened. Rarely is this model also explained in so many words; nor does it seem necessary: the norms of ritual behaviour simply parallel or duplicate the norms of 'real' life in a conspicuous manner, the ritual mobilizing the group as it should normally function. And since this 'normality' is an aimed-at state and represents goals or values governing secular life, we may here speak of aims or functions super-added to the professed aims of the ritual, or, with Radcliffe-Brown, of 'social values' rendered visible in the ritual. The important thing is that they are rendered visible *incidentally*, being implicit in the procedure of a ritual overtly directed towards quite other aims. In other words, the form of the ritual adds to its content, and this tends to be cumulative, absorbing a variety of aims.

Yet though these represent ways of acting generally desirable and important in social life, the ritual, in virtue of its professed aims, has its own importance. So that one importance is sustained or thrown into relief by the other. This circle is true of most or all religious rituals. But let us note two things. The additional aims conveyed in the ritual need not be merely implicit in its procedure; they may equally be made explicit by formal pronouncements

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occurring in the course of the ceremonial. In Nupe, this is the case only in the *gunnu*. We remember the exclusion of barren women from the public celebrations: this attitude is not merely left to emerge from the procedural rules but is also laid down in the form of an explicit warning voiced by the *gunnu* priest. Similarly the general obligation of respect towards elders and, especially, of sons towards their fathers is put into words, during the vigil in the bush, when the *ndakó gboyá* catechises the adolescents. Thus the Nupe can rightly say (in one of the *gunnu* songs) that the '*gunnu* teaches men', though in a more indirect fashion this would be true of all their rituals.

Furthermore, the 'desirable and important ways of acting' demonstrated in the ritual, implicitly or explicitly, may be held up as desirable and important in the ritual alone, not having the same weight in everyday life or not appearing in it at all. The ritual would then present, not a duplication or model, but something else—an ideal rarely met with in practice or even a reversal of the practice. This is true in varying degree of four features of the Nupe ritual, all concerned with the relationship of the sexes. There is, first, the rigid exclusion of women from the esoteric rites, which sometimes goes together with intimidation and threats. Yet women play an important part in Nupe social life, in many ways equal to that of the men; many women are influential and wealthy, and ranks and titles are open to them.[1] In no sense are they the 'weaker' or more timid sex. If, then, it is 'important' in the ritual that women should be kept in their place and forcibly reminded of their inferiority, this seems to imply a redress of balance, a compensation for the loss of male prominence, and something in the nature of a wish-fulfilment. The issue seems conspicuously summarized in the *mamma* ritual, which admits the power of women (since the 'medicine' employed is a woman's gift) yet is also meant to subdue and terrify them. The sex antagonism here apparent has a much wider bearing and will occupy us again in the discussion of witchcraft.

Secondly, the ostracism of the childless woman in the *gunnu*, though it does not contradict the norms valid in 'real' life, greatly exaggerates them. The Nupe men will always moralize about the impropriety of contraception and the shameful conduct of mothers who behave as though they had no children, becoming professional traders and, incidentally, prostitutes; equally, everybody will decry the misfortune of barrenness. But the fact remains that a great many women, childless or not, happily live in this 'shameful' state and are able to choose it without necessarily incurring the

[1] For a fuller account of the position of the women, especially in the economic sphere, see *A Black Byzantium*, chap. IX.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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x796 like them; and after the first admission to the *gunnu* there will be repetitions of the same ceremonial and masquerade. The *gunnu* 182 thus exaggerates the change of roles and presents it in a manner 183 not exactly true to life; but just because it does so it becomes a 881 means of dramatizing a crucial crisis of life which, in reality, is neither as conspicuous nor as dramatic. So that the *gunnu*, through this part of its procedure, assumes the relevance of a *rite de passage*.

x796 To summarize. By its professed content, the ritual applies and partly affirms the system of religious ideas; and by its form, it 182 becomes part of the machinery which maintains the efficient 183 working of a society of a given structure. By its form, too, the ritual 'accumulates' further aims and ideas, bearing on codes of conduct, on social roles, and hence on the values of 'good' and 'bad'. Surveying all the various Nupe rituals we find that the *gunnu*, as it is considered the paramount ritual, so it is also the richest in 'cumulative' content. There is practically no manner of acting which is not referred to and evaluated in its procedure; furthermore, the *gunnu* alone goes beyond implicit references and contains also express pronouncements upon these 'additional' aims.

As I previously tried to show, it is not paradoxical that a cult of such far-reaching importance should be the first to disappear or to be truncated under the pressure of change; rather, its very ambitiousness exposes it 'on too many sides' to disruptive influences. Let me rephrase this assertion in terms of the 'content' and 'form' of rituals. The disappearance or radical alteration of the ritual clearly implies some weakening of its appeal. The professed content of the ritual would lose its appeal only if the whole conceptual framework of the religion were disrupted, as it would be by the impact of another religion, in this case Islam. Yet this was certainly not true (or not yet true) of the many Nupe communities where the *gunnu* alone of all the various rituals had disappeared or broken down. The form of the ritual, however, since it absorbs so many of the general norms of social life, would be weakened by any change affecting the latter, by any remodelling of the relationship between the generations, by any new attractions seducing the younger people, and by all changes in moral or educational standards. It is precisely dislocations of this kind which have spread most widely through Nupe country; and it is thus the *gunnu* carrying within its 'form' a mirror of the traditional way of life, lost its appeal and indeed its very relevance as its picture ceased to be true.

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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

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843 He will consult the diviner again at the beginning of the confinement and before the child is named. The father will also buy 'medicines' to facilitate the birth and buy or collect herbs with which to prepare the new-born's first food. During the delivery 844 itself the father keeps away, leaving the scene to his elder sister, mother or aunt, and to his father or father's brother, who is called in to cut the umbilical cord and dispose of the afterbirth (which is buried outside the hut). Even afterwards the infant's [603] grandfather plays a more conspicuous part than does the father; [851] while the latter goes quietly about his business, the grandfather loudly announces to all friends and visitors that a grandchild has been born to him, and it is to him that all congratulations are addressed. The delivery and the treatment of the new-born represent essentially practical procedures devoid of ceremonial. We may [853] mention only that for four days the infant is fed on a boiled infusion of the herbs which the father has collected and given the mother's milk only on the fifth. On the same day the father sends 852 gifts of kolanuts to all relatives and friends, with the announce- 553 ment that the naming ceremony, meanwhile fixed, will take place on such-and-such a day.

This ceremony, known as *suna* ('name'), usually takes place eight days after the birth, and is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be re-born in the child. The ceremonial is brief and takes place in privacy, usually in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor lies buried, being attended only by the child's father and his nearest male relations. The father kneels down, a gourd with beer in his hand, and speaks this prayer (to quote a concrete instance):

'I am praying to *Sokó*. The child that has entered, Lord God, it is Landu returned (the grandfather's name). *Kuci*, hold him (the child) securely, do not permit that he falls sick. May he live, cause him to grow old'.

The ceremonial ends when beer is poured on the ground and the rest drunk in silence by the men present. As this brief ritual summarizes the whole conception of reincarnation, so it also betrays its ambiguity; for the *kuci* which is believed to have returned to the living is yet asked to take care of the living; and though one sacrifices to a particular ancestor, one yet invokes God.

The naming ceremony itself makes no further mention of these mystic notions, being concerned exclusively with formally announcing the name and identity of the new-born. This is done before a gathering of guests as large as the host can make it. The guests are relatives, friends, neighbours, and such important personages as the child's father may happen to know; they are expected to bring small gifts and will in turn be furnished with

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food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization. 852 553

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services 852 553 305 302 304

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852 of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers
553 and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gather-
[305] ing and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests, will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptu-
553 ous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered
619 to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem
304 to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal
[619] throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several
[834] other puzzling features. It is called *zũ 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-
[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

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16. Circumcision operation

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17. A bridal procession

[p. 118 (A)]

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18. Levelling the ground over a new grave

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19. The master of the *cigbeciži* in his 'dispensary'

[p. 118 (B)]

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their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen. 852 304

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests. 585 [292] [302]

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step. 585 797

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585 Afterwards the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, accompanied by her girl friends, her father's younger sister, her mother's brother, as well as some drummers and musicians. If the marriage is between families living in the same village or town, the procession will start after nightfall since it is 'shameful' for the bride to be seen on this occasion (her veil notwithstanding). If the marriage is between villages too far apart for a short walk after dark, the procession starts at daybreak the next morning. Should the bride be then seen by others, which can hardly be avoided, she must kneel down and sob realistically to show 'how ashamed she is'. In Bida, it is now customary for the bride to ride on a more or less beautifully caparisoned horse to her [797] new home—another Mohammedan innovation and another chance for displaying wealth and status.

In the next phase the scene shifts to the bridegroom's house. The bride is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her sleeping hut, which has been decorated and painted. Here she will stay in seclusion, in the company of her aunt, her girl friends and a married woman from the bridegroom's family (usually his mother's younger sister). The women and girls take no share in the 'merry-making' which will presently start in the other parts of the house, but pass their time chatting and singing womens' songs. On the morning after the bride's arrival the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice to the *kuci*, which is an exact replica of the one previously performed in the bride's house and is again attended by an envoy from the other family (now the bride's mother's brother). This ritual is clearly meant to affirm the acceptance of the bride into the new family and lineage and, in duplicating the previous sacrifice in the bride's house, to 'tie', or complete in tying, the marriage bond. It is not surprising that the Mohammedan cere- [797] monial includes no counterpart to this double ritual; for there can be no need to 'tie the marriage' again; while the public announcement of the marriage by the mallam, coupling as it does the names of the spouses as well as the names of their fathers and grandfathers, also obviates the need for a separate ceremonial of 'acceptance'.

On the same day the festivities begin, to which all the friends and relatives of the bridegroom's family are invited. Neither this nor the concluding phase of the wedding feast include any specifically religious features. During the 'merry-making' the emphasis is on the male participants, among whom the bridegroom's age mates figure prominently, typical men's songs and dances being alone performed. The bridegroom himself, in his finery, sits stiffly among the guests without joining in the general fun. The festivities end on the ninth day, and with them ends the segregation of the bride. On

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the tenth day she will for the first time sweep the hut, having until 585
then been waited upon by her companions, and join the other women of the house in the routine of household work. But she may not yet leave the women's part of the house and hence still remains separated from her husband. The same evening she sits down outside her hut, where she is visited by all the relatives and friends of her new family, receiving a small gift of money or kolanuts from each. This custom is called the 'buying of shame', since the bride will no longer need to feel ashamed when meeting the strangers among whom she is to live. On the twelfth day the concluding observance takes place. In the morning the bridegroom sends two fowls, one cock and one hen, to the bride's mother or, if she lives in another village, to his bride's aunt who has come with her. This woman will cook the fowls, adding various spices, and take them at midday back to the bridegroom. The hen is then sent to the bride, who will offer a small portion to her mother-in-law and eat the rest together with her companions. The cock is cut in two, the bridegroom and his best friend eating one portion, while the other is eaten by his father, alone in his hut. Afterwards the bride's companions finally depart, leaving her by herself in her new home. Now, as the Nupe put it, the 'path is open at last', that is, the marriage will be consummated the same night.

No religious significance is attributed to the observance just described, which pagans and Mohammedans alike perform; it is merely taken to express or affirm, in the manner of an obvious gesture, the new, friendly relationships which are henceforth to obtain between the husband and his wife's family, and between the bride and her in-laws. In this sense the observance represents the last step in the circuitous traditional procedure of 'tying the marriage'. That this exchange of food includes both a male and a female animal would seem to throw into relief the crucial nature of the occasion, the union of man and woman. But the fact that [812]
men eat the cock and women the hen appears to harbour also a further meaning, namely, an expression of that sharp dualism of male and female which pervades the whole of Nupe philosophy.

(iii) *Death*

Of the three 'crises of life' death is most heavily weighted with 764
ceremonial. This seems consistent with the trend of Nupe religion, to emphasize 'ends' rather than 'beginnings'. But it does not reflect the more sinister nature of the event, doubly sinister, it might be thought among a people ignorant of after-life and knowing only the vague chance of reincarnation. For though death itself is always felt to be uncanny and disturbing, the ritual elaboration is heaviest at the death of old people, in which one

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764 sees nothing tragic, and is meant to meet social demands as much as metaphysical fears. The ceremonial surrounding death differs somewhat in different communities; mostly, these variations are of [184] a minor character (concerning, for example, the precise duties of the grave-diggers), and can be ignored.

The full funeral ceremonial includes a whole series of rituals, beginning with the burial, called *mba*, and spun out over three funerary rites, performed after eight days, forty days, and one hundred and twenty days, and called after these time intervals. Poor [184] families may be unable to perform the last rite, which is altogether absent in the riverain area and in a few pagan inland villages. Several informants maintained that the Hundred-twenty Days' rite was an innovation, though long since established in many parts of the country (both among pagans and Mohammedans), and that it had come to Nupe with Islam. This last assumption is without foundation since the Mohammedan funeral customs include no such observance. Yet it does seem likely from the present distribution of the ritual that it originated in the Mohammedan capital and then spread to the pagan villages. The villagers, of course, show in a great many ways their readiness to imitate the 'superior' way of life in the town; and there need have been no stronger reason for an innovation otherwise congenial to the traditional outlook. But in the town the addition of another funerary feast fits more specifically into the social conditions.

764 To some extent it merely reflects the greater preoccupation, in the town, with occasions for the display of wealth and status. But 587 there seems to be this also. When discussing the final funerary rite the Nupe always stress that it is 'important for the women' or concerns 'the women especially'; as we shall see, it does in fact bear specifically on the end of widowhood and on the parentage of posthumous children. In the villages which do not perform this rite, these questions are settled, three months after the death, in an informal family council. The last funerary rite thus ceremonializes the same occasion as well as postpones it. Now, this occasion is much more important, the issue being more uncertain, among the townspeople than among the peasants in the villages. Only in the town, among the aristocracy and the wealthier classes, does large-scale polygyny occur, so that the re-marriage of widows becomes a complicated matter; equally, levirate and marriage of the mother's brother's widow which, in the villages, greatly simplify the problem, are disappearing among the Mohammedans of the town. The postponement of the decision by another month would thus seem to be a useful expedient; while the added ceremonial lends moral weight to an occasion grown more critical.

764 The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with

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The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with [764] 766

the age, sex, and status of the deceased. The full series is performed only for married men; in the case of old men who are not survived by widows the last ritual is omitted. Children, young men who are as yet unmarried, and most women are accorded only the Eight Days; only old women, married or widowed, who hold the position of *nũsako* (the 'Great-old-one') are entitled also to the Forty Days. This position goes to an eldest surviving sister in the oldest generation, and the nature of this qualification, referring as it does to the woman's own descent and not to her status by marriage, is also reflected in the arrangement of the ceremonials; for in the case of widows who returned to their own family after the husband's death (as many do), both rites take place in that house; while if the woman died in her husband's house, the Eight Days is performed there, and the Forty Days in the house of her kin. Differences of age and kinship position also determine the burial proceedings and the choice of the burial place. Old men and family heads, and old women, are buried in their sleeping huts, beneath the floor, and a sacrifice is performed over the grave; everyone else is buried, without special ceremony, in the space between huts or by the compound wall, or perhaps in a disused, roofless hut. At the death of old people, finally, the Eight Days' and Forty Days' rites include (among pagans) drumming, singing, and dancing, while this festive aspect is absent in the case of younger people; for their death makes 'the heart ache', while old people 'have seen the world', and there is no cause for grief.[1]

At the death of chiefs or priests the performance of the particular *kuti* they 'owned' may replace the funerary rites of the Eight Days and Forty Days. Similarly, the hunters will perform their [184] own rituals on these occasions. But the rules differ widely; in some communities, as we know, the *gunnu* is the ritual appropriate to the funeral of chiefs and elders. Whichever solution is adopted, the combination of the funeral ceremonial with a fully-fledged *kuti* once more exemplifies the Nupe view of death as warranting the heaviest ceremonial.

The general rules are further modified when the death has been

[1] The qualification of old age cannot be stated more precisely. Old women who do not also hold the position of *nũsako* are sometimes treated like younger people. And in the case of men one always considers these three things—ripe age; possession of an elder's rank and title; and headship of the family. When these three qualifications coincide, there can be no doubt as to the appropriate ceremonial, burial place, and so forth. When only one or the other applies, there is some latitude, the final decision depending mainly on practical considerations, such as the economic position of the family and the likely number of mourners. Thus the observances appropriate to 'old' people do not always form an unbroken series; a person may, for example, be buried in the sleeping hut, with a sacrifice, but without the subsequent festivities of the Eight Days or Forty Days.

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766 of an abnormal kind. Lepers, we remember, are buried in the bush, by the *Ndazo*; people who die of smallpox are buried in the normal manner, though their body is wrapped in dirty rags instead of a new piece of cloth, and there is no ceremonial or mourning. In most parts of Nupe death by lightning does not affect the ceremonial; but in the north and east, apparently under Gwari in-
[[84] fluence, such persons are buried by the priests of the *sogba* cult, which flourishes in Gwari country.[1] When a person dies on the farm or in one of the outlying hamlets, the body is taken to the village for burial, and all ceremonies are performed there. A person who dies on a journey or in another part of the country is buried locally, without ceremony, all the rites being performed at his or her home; but if the deceased's kinsfolk are not certain that he has been buried at all (say, in the case of people killed in the war), they will perform a fictitious burial with a shroud representing the body. Criminals who have been executed used to be buried, without rites, by the executioners; but in the case of unconvicted criminals, even if they are known to have been guilty of the most hideous crimes, the usual ceremonial is observed: as moral depravity does not count in the beyond, so it ceases to be important on the threshold.

764 Let me begin with a few words on the technique of burial. The grave is oblong, square, and shallow, only about two feet below the ground. There are no marks on the grave; on the contrary, the ground is carefully levelled and repaired so that it looks like any other place. If the grave is inside a sleeping hut, the latter remains in use after the burial, the same hut often containing two or three graves of successive inhabitants. The body is placed in the grave lying on its side, 'as though asleep', and, among Mohammedans, facing east. The grave chamber is kept clear of earth by a roof of wooden beams, covered with a white grass mat; the body rests on another mat of the same kind. Among Mohammedans, fresh leaves and boughs are in addition scattered over the floor
764 and roof of the grave chamber.[2] The grave-diggers are called *goro*,
767 and are charged also with preparing the body and performing a first sacrifice over the grave. Their duties, ritual already in their secrecy, are usually hereditary in certain families which hold no other religious function. Among Mohammedans the body is prepared by four male or female relatives, according to the sex of the deceased, and mallams are grave-diggers.

[1] See below, p. 211.

[2] I was told of an older form of burial, in which the grave chamber is dug into the side of a circular shaft five to six feet deep. This practice has now disappeared, though the people of Doko assured me that chiefs would still be buried in this fashion. I have seen burials of this kind only in the neighbouring country of Gwari.

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The burial is marked by extraordinary haste, the *goro* being sent for immediately. If possible, the dead are buried within three or 764
four hours, at all times of the day, even at dawn or dusk, if only there is sufficient light to see by. There is no articulate fear or concern behind this haste, say, fear of the ghost of the dead or concern with the fate of the soul; rather is it the presence of the corpse as such which the Nupe find disturbing. The people in the house especially, who must stay with the body until the grave-diggers take over, are anxious to see it go; for 'the person who sees a dead body, his heart sinks'. For the same reason children are at once sent out of the house and not allowed to return until after the burial. When the *goro* arrive (usually three or four men) they wash the body with soap and water, rub it with aromatic cam-wood, wrap it into a new indigo-dyed cloth, and pull a cap (in the case of a man) or a kerchief (in the case of a woman) over the face of the deceased. Men of rank are today buried, in Moslem fashion, in a white gown, with a turban on the head. The grave is dug, the body placed in it, and the grave covered with loose earth, without ceremony. If the deceased was an old man or woman, the *goro* perform a libation of beer over the closed grave and speak a brief prayer, thus:

'Grandfather of the *kuci* (i.e. the deceased) who is returning to the earth, (thy) grandchild is now coming. (When) he arrives, spread (thy) two hands, receive him to your heart.'

All this is done in secrecy, no one watching; the mourners stay away, and when the *goro* leave the grave they will shut the door of the hut with a curtain or bar the access to the burial place with branches placed across the path. On the next day the ban will be lifted, the earth over the grave will be beaten down and levelled by the young women of the house, and if the grave had been dug in a sleeping hut (that is, for an old man), his heir will at once move in. When the grave-diggers have completed their task they join [767]
the mourners, being offered refreshment and a small fee, and leave shortly afterwards.

The news of the death travels fast, and an hour or two later the 765
house will begin to fill with guests. Men and women stay apart, the former in the entrance hut of the house, the latter in the women's huts. All are dressed in old clothes, simply and without ostentation, and sit about stiffly, with expressionless faces. Only the chief mourners among the women—the mother, sisters, and the widows of the deceased—are expected to express their grief more violently, by loud sobbing and an occasional high-pitched wail (called *tigi*) which is the conventional expression of deep sorrow. The nature of the gathering will vary with the status of the departed; if he is a titled elder, all the other village elders will

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765 come to mourn him; if he is a young man, all his age mates will be present. Messengers have also been sent to nearby hamlets, and if visitors live too far to arrive on the day of the burial, they will come later and stay for the first eight days. The family head (or his heir if it is the former who died) will receive the guests and offer them food and drink. Every new visitor, before joining the mourners, kneels down before the family head and speaks the conventional formula of condolence, *okú be hákuri*—'Hail with Compassion'.

The mood of the mourners, which must be kept up for eight days, is rigidly conventionalized, though the convention is maintained with varying success. Also, it differs for the sexes. The men keep a severe, dignified and calm countenance; there must be no irrelevant chatting, only subdued talk, one topic alone being allowed, the dead person, his achievements and qualities. But the rule is often broken; on one such occasion I heard the mourners discuss farming prospects and taxes (if in whispers), and one man, whom I had some time previously presented with a watch, thought nothing of asking my wife, in the middle of the mourning, to wind up his watch for him. However, as soon as a new visitor enters, everyone at once puts on the rigid look that passes for a show of grief. Nor is the violent mourning of the women uninterrupted; now and again they may cease their sobbing and wailing and rest for a while. Female relatives who come from distant places will join in the wailing for one day and afterwards stay as ordinary guests. They, too, sit together and talk in whispers, but do not omit their more prosaic duties; for young mothers come with their babies, who must be fed and looked after, and others will help with the work in the house.

For eight days the relatives of the deceased may not wash, dress their hair or change their clothes. None of the older people may leave the house, and the women not even their huts (save for calls of nature). The men observe this rule for four days only, so that afterwards they may help with the preparations for the Eight Days' feast. But even before that household work has been going on all the time, being shouldered mainly by the younger folk. The young men will continue to go to the farms or to the market, joining the mourners in the evening, while girls and young women look after the house. These are least affected by the duties of mourning; when, the day after the burial, they level the floor over the grave, they exhibit no signs of grief, but laugh and joke freely. This, the Nupe will tell you, is quite in order: for the workers are always in-laws and 'joking relations' of the deceased (daughters-in-law or the wives of younger brothers), and are hence exempt from mourning.

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On the eighth day or some time during the first week each guest makes a small gift of food to the family head, which is meant to be used in the funeral meal and represents the guests' 'greeting' or 'salute'. That day starts with a beer sacrifice, performed by the family head outside the sleeping hut of the deceased. The congregation consists of his (or her) male relations, the old men forming the usual inner ring while the youths, including the sons of the deceased, sit on the outside, looking forlorn and dejected, and being generally ignored. The family head addresses God (or sometimes the *kuci*), saying: 765 [431]

'We make mourning for so-and-so, who died. God, cause all people to have health. We offer you water (i.e. beer) because of the death. God, grant health to everyone; may no one die from now on.'

The beer is then drunk by the old men, which act concludes the ceremonial. Let me add that during this brief sacrifice, though it conforms so closely to the general formula of rituals, the men wear their ordinary clothes, only the bared head indicating the sacred occasion.

Soon afterwards the general meal begins. And now the house loses all appearance of mourning. It is crowded with visitors, there is constant coming and going, children get in one's way at every step, and everyone is busy preparing food, handing it round, or consuming it. The women laugh and joke while they work, the men no longer endeavour to behave severely, and even the chief mourners have turned into ordinary hosts or guests. If it is the funeral of an old man or woman, drummers and musicians will have been engaged, and soon the younger folk will sing and dance, men and girls apart, each group keeping to its own songs and dances. These are in no way peculiar to the occasion, but correspond in style and expression to any ordinary form of 'merry-making'. Ample supplies of beer keep up the spirits of the gathering until nightfall, when the feast comes to an end, the visitors departing and the hosts retiring to their huts.

The period following the Eight Days' ceremony involves few prohibitions. Widows must continue to wear the simple dress of mourning and must not wash or do their hair; nor must they leave the compound, though they are now free to pursue their daily tasks. As regards the men, the brothers (or the husband) of the deceased should refrain from shaving until the Forty Days' ceremony, though this custom has now fallen into disuse. The men go about freely but will try to be at home at night. Guests will still occasionally visit the house, but now these visits are free from the restraint and show of grief that marked the earlier occasion. Forty days after the death and burial, the family head repeats the beer

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765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably so, that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 184 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the

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pious aims are again made a vehicle for ostentation. The gifts of condolence are once more in money and are made, not once only, but two or three times, every guest being expected to give in accordance with wealth and status. Equally, the gifts have changed their name, being now known as *sadaka*, 'pious alms', although like the pagan 'greeting' gifts they are intended as contributions towards the funeral expenditure. The subsequent ceremonials become further occasions for alms giving, now on the part of the hosts; for a portion of the food prepared at these feasts is sent out to the mallams of the town or distributed among the poor.

The three funerary feasts are in fact described as *sadaka*, 'alms', or as *walima*, 'sacred feast'. The latter name seems hardly appropriate, since in the Mohammedan version these rites are almost entirely devoid of sacred or religious features. The sacrifice of beer and the private invocation of the deity have, naturally, disappeared; yet the mallams' prayer, which might have taken their place, is not repeated after the burial service. In other words, there is nothing in the funerary ceremonies that would show them to be 'ceremonies', sacred and not secular events, save the pious distribution of alms. But perhaps there is also less chance of confusing the sacred with a worldly occasion; for the Mohammedan version of the Eight Days and Forty Days does not admit singing and dancing and thus maintains the outward appearance of mourning. Only the last ceremonial includes 'merry-making' and finally discards the show of grief.

The Mohammedan funeral ceremonial clearly represents something like a compromise between traditional Nupe practice and the orthodox requirements of Islam; and like most compromises it led to unintended results. To begin with, the contrast between youth and old age has been minimized; for while traditionally only the old were buried with special religious offices (the *goro* sacrifice) and mourned in the early stages with singing and dancing, the former (in the form of the mallam's prayer) are now generally applied, and the latter are altogether omitted. Moreover, there has been a certain loss of mystic appeal and of emotional weight; for the secrecy which traditionally surrounds the burial has been allowed to disappear; and in the subsequent ceremonials the religious appeal is sustained, no longer by an esoteric sacrifice and invocation, but merely by the exercise of charity. If I considered both results to be unintentional and accidental I did so for these reasons. If we took the first result to be a planful adjustment to changed conditions, then we should have to assume that the distinction between youth and old age has been made less sharp because it ceased to be important; yet it has lost none of its

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764 relevance in Nupe social life.[1] And we should have to assume further, to account for the loss of mystic appeal, that Islam has 184 radically altered the Nupe view of life and death; which, as we shall see, is once more untrue.

5. SOLEMNIZATIONS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 There is no need to point to the close affinity of the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death, with the rituals of more general religious bearing. Both operate with the same elements—private (or esoteric) invocations, libations, communal meals, and public 'merry-making' in the concluding phase. Both, too, conspicuously involve numerical calculations defining the occasion and sequence of rites. The congregations, of course, differ, though there is some overlap; for certain *kuti*, like the solemnizations, mobilize the kin group only, while at the funerary rites of men of standing all the dignitaries of the community will be represented. Like the *kuti*, finally, the ceremonials surrounding the crises of life have their implicit as well as their professed aims. The latter could not be 'professed' more clearly. The *suna* is there to name the infant in solemn fashion, and hence to assign to it its future place in the society while at the same time invoking divine protection; the wedding ceremonial sanctifies the union of man and wife and holds out the promise of progeny; and the funeral ceremonial disposes of the dead while one prays that there may be no further deaths; it imposes mourning as well as cancels it, and thus repeats or dramatizes, in the ritual sequence, the endless cycle of human existence. We have, I think rightly, called these rituals solemnizations; for they hallow all these events through relating them with the supernatural. But they do more. Through the form they take, that is, through the manner in which the rituals mobilize their particular congregations, they also express the principles and values governing the structure of the society. Think of the rules assigned to the father and grandfather in the ceremonial of birth, the former being expected to collect the 'medicines' needed for an easy confinement and to consult the diviner, the latter to announce the new-born's name. Or think of the complicated exchange of gifts which concludes the marriage ceremonial, of the double sacrifice in the bride's and the bridegroom's house, and of the selection of the bridegroom's envoys and the bride's companions. The funerary rites throw into relief both the social distinctions that go with sex,

[1] I am here referring to status in the society at large, i.e. to the access to rank and office open only to older men and to the respect they generally command, not to the kinship authority of family heads; the latter has indeed been weakened (see pp. 85, 251.)

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age, and status and the varying degrees of kinship; even so specific a feature as joking relationship is built into the ceremonial. 182

Now, with a few exceptions—the role of friends in the marriage ceremonial, of age grades in marriage or funerals, and of rank-holders in the funerary rites,—the relationships mobilized in these rituals are kinship relationships; and through being mobilized in a sacred context, they are in turn affirmed and sanctioned. That the implicit efficacy of these rituals should serve to sustain the group based on kinship seems to fit the nature of the events so solemnized, which themselves primarily concern the kinship group. But these events do not only 'concern' the kinship group as, say, rain or fertility concern the village community; they punctuate its life and in fact determine its existence, that is, they create and renew it, birth and marriage replenishing the group and death depleting and re-ordering it. So that the circle is complete, the ritual 'content' and 'form' sustaining one another and, in a sense, coinciding. For the solemnization of these crucial events employs (and hence affirms) the very relationships brought into being by the events; and the professed aims of the ceremonials bear on the perpetuation of the human aggregate which their procedures serve to hold together.

V

MEDICINE

I. RATIONAL AND MYSTICAL PROCEDURES

755 757 THE term 'medicine' has been adopted mainly because it is simple and convenient without distorting too much the meaning of the Nupe word *cigbe*. The English equivalent, however, does not quite render the implications of the vernacular concept; for though the latter includes typical remedies, that is, materials applied for a strictly therapeutic purpose (as the Nupe see it), it equally includes materials whose alleged efficacy goes far beyond the treatment of ailments. In this latter sense *cigbe* is a substance or object which exercises remote and miraculous effects upon the efficacy of other objects, for example, tools or weapons, upon the outcome of human efforts of all kinds, and upon human fate in general. The correct though clumsy translation, then, would be 'efficacious substance' or 'force-in-substance' (as *kuti* meant 'force-in-ritual').

755 757 278 Indeed, the important thing about *cigbe* is that it is always a substance, compounded of natural materials which anyone in possession of the recipe can collect and process by relatively simple procedures such as pulverizing, boiling, mixing, or charring. Most Nupe, incidentally, maintain that the essential ingredients of *cigbe* are always roots of trees.[1] It is tempting to conclude that here the empirical knowledge of the processes of plant growth has led to the assumption of some inherent but communicable force stored up in the roots of plants and trees. Which assumption would fit in well with the idea that all forms of illness connote a weakening of the life soul. But no one theorizes on these lines. Altogether, Nupe medicine shows little concern with theory, metaphysical or otherwise. As regards the alleged importance of roots, the various *cigbe* recipes show that herbs, grasses, the leaves of trees, or animal matter are employed as often. The power of *cigbe*, then, lies in materials of almost any sort if suitably processed and combined, and the knowledge of *cigbe* is precisely this skill of 'using ingredients'.[1]

[1] Two informants, in fact, assured me that the very word *cigbe* was a contraction of *cigbā gbere*, 'tree root'.

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We must now ask—to what extent is this knowledge empirically sound and the skill rationally employed? It can obviously not be entirely so since the non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, credited as it is with remote effects upon objects or human actions, reveals at first sight already its non-empirical, miraculous nature. Yet the twofold use of medicine, therapeutic as well as non-therapeutic, suggests the corresponding distinction between rational practices and others irrational or 'magical'. To some extent this will prove a valid distinction, though one far less clear-cut or consistent; and this in turn is partly due to the ambiguity of the concept of rationality when it is applied to the practices of a primitive people. For they may act with rational intent but insufficient or faulty knowledge, so that their would-be empirical practices will conflict with our scientific knowledge, and hence strike us as irrational or 'magical'; while in a sense the converse case may equally occur.

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I spoke of this before and need here only state the four possibilities entailed in these considerations. First, a procedure 'subjectively' rational, involving for the people the application of ordinary learned skills, may also be 'objectively' rational, that is, appropriate to the ends for which it is employed. Secondly, a subjectively rational procedure may prove futile and incongruous when assessed by 'objective' standards. Thirdly, a procedure professedly supernatural or mystical may yet prove appropriate, concealing some valid empirical principle. Lastly, a professedly mystical procedure may be such also from our point of view, that is, empirically false and incapable of achieving the ends for which it is employed.

Before examining each possibility in turn we must restate our criteria for assessing the mystical as against the professedly rational intent behind *cigbe* practice. In a very general sense, every *cigbe* procedure implies both kinds of intent. For even though Nupe medicine is, by definition, 'knowledge', which is usually purely technical as well as transferable through tuition or purchase, it is also given a mythical pedigree and related to the remoteness of God.[1] But these mystical associations are left almost entirely unemphasized, furnishing only a vague and ineffectual background, and can thus be disregarded. If, then, we are to credit certain procedures with mystical intent, they must exhibit it in a more pronounced and specific fashion. In the most obvious case the manufacture or application of *cigbe* will involve invocations of the deity and sacrifices proper, that is, open appeals for supernatural intervention. Where these are absent, we may yet search for that other evidence, of awe, fear, and a sense of the extraordinary or miraculous, which would set the procedure apart from pursuits

[1] See above, p. 18.

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755 and interests of a profane kind. The 'sense of the extraordinary'
757 if it is not vouchsafed by verbal expressions, is clearly the most
813 difficult to identify. But it is at least likely to go together with uncommon procedures and with rigid rules, barring even minute departures from a given course of action, that is, with ritualization. In sum I would list these criteria of professedly mystical as against professedly rational intent: the degree of ritualization implied in the preparation or application of medicines; their secrecy or otherwise; their commercial or non-commercial, public or private character; the diverse ways in which the knowledge of *cigbe* is transmitted; and the different kinds of faith placed in it.

If previously we described 'ritual' behaviour as behaviour exhibiting a degree of rigidity not accounted for by its professed aim, we may now say, of the 'ritualized' procedure of *cigbe*, that its rigidity is not accounted for by the rational intent. For the Nupe, the latter lies in the application of material substances which as such possess a given efficacy. But often we find additional and incongruous rules such as these: certain medicines may only be prepared in certain months of the year; in certain treatments a particular procedure must be repeated three times; in the operation of setting a broken limb four splints (no more and no less) must be used. Here, then, the Nupe no longer rely on the empirical or pseudo-empirical knowledge of 'ingredients'; rather, they abandon their own 'scientific' principles, diluting them with rules of a different order—with ritual, and hence with 'mystic' observances.

Again, certain medicines, their preparation and disposal, are cloaked in rigorous secrecy, while others are not secret or no more secret than the skills or tricks of a particular trade. The latter kind is usually freely bought and sold, while the secret medicines can be given away only with special formalities or not at all, being accessible only to the relatives or perhaps friends of the 'owner'; so that some medicines are available to the public, like any commercial commodity, and others are unalterably 'private'. As we
[428] know, the knowledge of *cigbe* is mostly transmitted through ordinary teaching, and is such as any clever, observant, or widely-travelled person can acquire; but occasionally it is hereditary, the ultimate provenance of the knowledge remaining unexplained. Finally, while no one would assume that ordinary remedies, administered without ceremonial, are infallible, precisely this faith is put in the other, 'miraculous', medicines, even if they involve no explicit appeals to the deity.

These features, however, occur with varying degrees of definiteness; and, though they all hang together logically, they do not always appear together in practice. But considered singly, they

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20. A noted medicine expert and 'wise man' from Jebba

21. The dance of the *ndakó gboyá*

[p. 134 (a)]
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22. The *Sagi* of Kpatsuwa

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23. *Gugu* dance of the Yoruba

[p. 134 (B)]

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offer only ambiguous criteria. Ritualization, for example, especially when it is slight, may represent only an item of 'knowledge', empirically futile and 'superstitious', but for all that entirely profane. And secrecy may attach to medicines, not because they are sacred or credited with miraculous efficacy, but because they are morally reprehensible. Our assessment of 'mystical' and 'rational' intent will therefore sometimes be uncertain and admit of borderline cases. Even so, it enables us to examine *cigbe* practice in the terms of the four 'possibilities' mentioned before.

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(i) It is clear that this possibility can apply only to the therapeutic medicines. But only very few even of these satisfy our two conditions of rational intent and objective appropriateness. For several of the therapeutic medicines require the accompaniment of invocations or sacrifices, or otherwise exhibit at least an admixture of mystical intent; and those which do not, often fail on the second count. It is clear, however, that in this relatively backward society we must not assess the appropriateness or otherwise of remedies by too exacting a standard. Thus, if they do not conflict in principle with our scientific ideas and are such that their efficacy might at least conceivably be of the alleged kind, their actual worthlessness may be ignored; at least, it does not make them 'mystical', but only shows them to be crude, inadequate, or ill-chosen. This would be true of such remedies as herbal potions used for intestinal troubles, of salves or powders rubbed into snake-bites, or of certain simple surgical treatments. Few of these betray any true medical lore; the surgical operations are rarely applied and have little merit; most potions or salves prove on chemical analysis to have no positive value, though I found none that was actually harmful and a few that had a slight medicinal property, such as the absorptive or laxative effect of charred vegetable matter. Even so, these practices are at least of the right kind or resemble the right kind of treatment, and will for this reason be included in our first category.

Many more treatments are without even this semblance of appropriateness, suggesting merely blundering attempts, unguided even by faulty knowledge. Lunacy, for example, is treated by means of inhalations; smallpox is prevented by burning herbs in the entrance hut; pregnancy, by the wearing of a 'magic' belt; and for rheumatic pains one has this abstruse cure: the patient stands inside a hut, pressing the aching part of his body against the wall; the doctor stands outside and holds the 'medicine' with his foot against the wall, opposite the place where, on the inside, the patient's body touches the wall; the doctor then slowly drags the medicine to the ground, thus 'drawing the pain from the body'. Though this treatment seems to imply some crude

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755 reasoning from analogy, it clearly belongs, with all the other treat-
757 ments just mentioned, to our second category, of practices utterly incongruous and not even conceivably capable of the alleged effects.

813 We must add, further, that a great many therapeutic remedies are ascribed so multifarious an efficacy that their 'rational' application to one kind of ailment is belied by the other, extravagant claims. The same substance will serve as an antidote for snake-bite, as a cure for headaches, and as a potion applied in ordeals; and a herbal concoction for intestinal troubles will also be used to cure rheumatic pains in the fantastic manner just described. Thus the borderline between rational and pseudo-rational treatments is once more blurred, and the province of the former narrowed further. And here we may note that in a sense the Nupe wish to keep it narrow. For the one version of medicine which comes nearest to satisfying our two conditions of rational intent and empirical (if crude) appropriateness, that practised by the barber-doctors, is also criticized for this very reason. The barber-doctors
[759] are entirely profane practitioners, whose skill is a matter of cleverness and learning, involves no secrecy, and is at the disposal of all who can pay for their services. But their practice is largely restricted to the capital and the more sophisticated large villages, and little known or little thought of elsewhere. Indeed, the country people simply laugh when you suggest that the barbers have a knowledge of *cigbe*; 'barbers', I was always told, 'know no *cigbe*; all they can do is to cure headache'. Now some of my informants certainly knew that this was incorrect; furthermore, several village *cigbe* of the secret and mystical kind were also supposed to cope with headache. It was therefore not the efficacy of the remedies which the people held in ridicule but their purely profane character; and in denying that the barbers possessed any worthwhile knowledge of medicine, they really denied that their knowledge deserved the name of medicine. We note, then, a bias towards excluding from the genus *cigbe* those remedies which combine all the characteristics of a rational practice. The true *cigbe*, the people seem to feel, must at least in some respects bear the mark of the extraordinary or 'magical'. But this is no more than a bias since even in the villages where the art of the barber-doctors was so de-
[369] rided there exist purely profane, would-be rational remedies.[1] Their number, however, is strikingly small; so that in the peasant culture of Nupe, unlike the urban culture of the capital, the non-mystical or non-'magical' *cigbe* represents an exception from the rule.

[1] Also, this 'bias' is being obliterated by the modern usage of the word *cigbe* for all European drugs and medical appliances, in which the Nupe see nothing transcendental or magical, but the application of 'knowledge' proper.

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(ii) We have already mentioned the therapeutic medicines which fall in this category in virtue of their fantastic nature or of the extravagant claims made for them. We need only add that there are no non-therapeutic *cigbe*, that is, medicines at first sight already 'miraculous' and irrational, which are handled in a would-be rational manner; all also imply at least some expression of mystical intent. 755 757 813

(iii) Strictly speaking, this possibility of professedly mystical but unwittingly appropriate practices does not apply to Nupe medicine. Trance possession attributed to spirits, magic dances meant to cure mental disorders, and similar treatments which might conceal a psycho-therapeutic efficacy under the mystical trappings are altogether absent. But the combination of invocations and sacrifices with remedies which are 'of the right kind' constitutes a borderline case since the people would attribute the success of the remedy (such as it is) as much to supernatural intervention as to the inherent properties of the ingredients employed. In a sense even the most absurd therapeutic remedies have a share of such a concealed empirical efficacy. In calling them absurd and worthless we were considering only their intrinsic inappropriateness to the effects ascribed to them; we cannot deny that the patient's trust in the efficacy of the medicine or the repute of the doctor may well produce at least an apparent relief. Which means, further, that the practitioner's medical notions will repeatedly receive some empirical support, whose spuriousness he is unable to judge.

(iv) Our last category comprises all the non-therapeutic medicines and a considerable number of therapeutic ones. Their objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. When a potion is said to make a person invisible, a salve to secure invulnerability, a herbal concoction kept in the village to keep away smallpox, or a powder applied to a hoe to double the farm output, there can clearly be no question but that only a miracle could make these 'medicines' effective. Nor is the mystical intent any less certain, being visible in the prescribed invocations, sacrifices, forms of ritualism, and so forth. It is interesting to note that several of these practices are based upon the principle 'like causes like'; by itself, this spurious 'theory would not establish the mystical intent since for the people it represents only one more item of would-be scientific knowledge. The same principle, in fact, also underlies a few therapeutic and strictly profane cures. But it seems significant that it is employed on a large scale only in the fully irrational practices, that is, in situations where success is vouchsafed also by mystical procedures. In other words, false knowledge tends to go together with transcendental guarantees (though more sound knowledge does not necessarily discard them).

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755 Let me summarize. By our criteria of rational and mystical
757 intent the whole range of non-therapeutic *cigbe* together with a
813 good portion of the therapeutic ones would fall in the category of transcendental practices (religious or 'magical'); while only the rest of the cures proper, good, bad, and indifferent, would belong on the side of reason or near-reason. And since a great many of the cures in the former category are 'objectively' as futile or absurd as the non-therapeutic variety, it may be said that the Nupe tend to treat as 'magical' what is, by all standards, magical and to aim at miraculous effects by means openly designed for miracles.

2. PHARMACOPOEIA NUPEANA

757 It seems convenient to insert here a fuller description of Nupe
278 medicines and medical (or pseudo-medical) treatments. Their
759 therapeutic or non-therapeutic character will become clear from the description, as will also the share of 'irrational' or mystical observances. We must, however, anticipate the various classes of medicine experts and briefly state their respective specialities. First, we have the guild of barber doctors, who are all Mohammedans and whose craft is entirely therapeutic and would-be empirical; a few minor instances of 'ritualization' do not contradict the generally rational intent. Secondly, there is the corresponding and predominantly pagan order of *cigbeciži* or *bociži* ('medicine-men'), whose practice, both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, invariably betrays mystical intent. Thirdly, there are a few individual experts who belong to neither organization and may employ any kind of *cigbe*. Lastly, we shall meet with the owners of hereditary medicines, vested in the lineage or (in Nupe parlance) 'house'; these are both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, and always conspicuously mystical. In one isolated case a conspicuously 'mystical' medicine is owned by a whole community. Let me also recall that some medical practitioners are diviners at the same time, though there is no firmer link between the two professions.

757 These are some of the remedies known to the barber-doctors of
278 Bida. Stomach trouble is treated by means of various potions: one consists of the infusion of a certain swamp plant; another, of the infusion of the charred bark of the oil-palm, sheanut tree or locust-bean tree, mixed with natron;[1] a third, of the pounded roots of a certain tree, mixed with powdered eggshell, dried in the sun and then taken with water. Light headache is cured by burning a certain common plant and making the patient inhale the fumes,

[1] The 'natron' is natural carbonate of soda from Lake Chad which is on sale in all Nupe markets.

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or by preparing a potion from bits of earth extracted from a termite mound. For severe headache one applies an ointment to the eyes, compounded of the dried kernels of a fruit tree, the bark from the roots of another, cloves, and powdered antimony. Sometimes headache is treated quasi-surgically, by a species of bleeding; the barber makes a number of fine incisions into the patient's forehead and then rubs a paste of dried locust-beans and natron into the cuts. The counter-irritation thus induced may well offer a temporary relief, though the bleeding itself is probably too slight to have any effect; the cure, however, has an odd conclusion, the patient's head being knocked gently three times against the wall. 757 278

Ulcers and wounds are treated with powdered bark or roots, used either dry or damp, and left on the wound for two to three days. Broken limbs are first massaged with a salve made of palm-oil and the dried and powdered leaves of a certain tree (another remedy including dirt from a hen house and charred earth from a termite mound), after which one applies a ligature of rope, using four sticks as splints. The ligature is removed after three days, but the massage with the ointment is continued. If the fracture does not heal, this treatment is followed up with a 'stronger' one, to wit, a massage with snake poison. For smallpox one gives a potion made of the pods of a certain vine growing in the bush. There is also a 'prophylactic' treatment, applied when an epidemic is threatening; it consists either in drinking an infusion of the bark of the locust-bean tree, boiled together with some grains of sorghum or millet, or in fumigating the house, at night, by burning certain herbs. Pounded hibiscus seeds, taken like snuff, are given to patients suffering from asthma. For fever accompanied by rigor (malaria?) one drinks the boiled juice of the pawpaw mixed with natron; a more 'magical' cure consists in inhalations of the fumes from three ingredients burned together in an old, broken pot (never a new one)—a powdered herb, the swamp plant mentioned before, and twigs taken from a vulture's nest. We shall meet again with this predilection for old pots when discussing the medicines of the *cigbeci* experts; the vulture plays a part also in another remedy of the barber-doctors, applied to sore eyes: they are bathed in ash-water mixed with a pulverized vulture's leg. Other herbal concoctions are used in the treatment of gonorrhœa (called *tswashi*), syphilis (called *tunjeri*), and sleeping sickness; these remedies are similar in that the first two are said to increase the typical secretion until 'the whole disease leaves the body', while the last brings on diarrhœa, the germs of the disease being passed with the stool. Lunacy of a non-violent nature may be treated by means of inhalations, repeated several times day and night, or by

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757 means of a potion. For the inhalation one uses leaf-tips of the oil-
278 palm, hair of a she-goat, and the pulverized genitals of a he-goat, all burned together in a pot; the potion is made of the sap of a certain 'male' shrub (that is, the fruitless variety, called *darabagi*, 'male *dara*'), the charred bark of another, mixed with natron. The patient, having been treated in this fashion, is said to calm down and eventually to recover, though the cure can never be certain. For violent and dangerous attacks there is no agreed cure. The barber-doctors, in fact, do not treat this form of insanity at all, but other people sometimes know a treatment, though it is always said to be difficult and uncertain. Thus one informant suggested that the patients must be made to fast until they calm down; and another recommended flogging (a treatment apparently widely applied in Yoruba country).[1]

757 A final group of medicines bears on conception and virility.
278 Dried cocoyam, the charred bark of the *savi* tree, and onions,
842 pounded and taken in water, are said to constitute a powerful
[832] aphrodisiac. Fertility of women is ensured by a potion, drunk the morning before cohabitation, made of an infusion of leaves of the tamarind tree mixed with natron. Delivery is facilitated by rubbing the womb with three herbs after they have been soaked in water for a night. There are also two 'contraceptive' medicines, one having a temporary effect only, the other believed to cause permanent barrenness. The former consists of two powdered herbs, mixed with bits of grass from a termite mound, and taken with water; the latter, of the charred stalk and leaves of a young cassava plant, mixed with henna root and natron, boiled in water, and drunk. The knowledge, incidentally, of the permanent 'contraceptive' is claimed to be purely platonic; the Bida practitioner at least has no chance of applying it in practice, not because he is reluctant to do so or because the Bida women avoid these shameful practices, but because they would not risk their reputation by thus openly consulting a 'doctor' in the town. Instead, my informants assured me, they go to 'medicine-men' in the villages, where they are unknown and their secret will be safe. A secret in fact it is; and here we meet with a first, though fairly mild, instance of reprehensible medicines, employed for immoral ends.

757 This list is far from complete, omitting, especially, the many
759 variants of the same kind of cure.[2] The barber-doctors do not believe in specifics in the strict sense of the word; rather, there are several treatments for each ailment, and different practitioners

[1] The informant in question came, in fact, from Shari, a village on the border of Nupe and Yoruba.

[2] I recorded altogether thirty-four remedies known to barber-doctors, which number is probably fairly exhaustive.

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will often know and apply different ones. Also, some specialize in 757
potions or in poultices and lotions; others prefer treatment by
means of inhalations, which the Nupe call *turare* (a Hausa word, 759
meaning 'scent' or 'fumigation'). Certain more versatile experts know several remedies for the same illness, which they would try out one after the other. The position is summed up in this statement of a famous Bida 'doctor': 'Sometimes one medicine proves sufficient; but there is only one way of discovering the right one—to experiment and trust in God.' Certain barber-doctors, too, are specialists in particular diseases and are known as such. Thus only two men in Bida knew how to treat lunacy and only one Bida barber (whom I met in Ibadan, where he was staying at the time) knew how to treat sleeping sickness; similarly, there were specialists for venereal diseases, for eye complaints, and so forth. For certain ailments there are no treatments; their list includes blindness, idiocy, leprosy, elephantiasis, deafness, 'incurable syphilis', and, oddly enough, the common cold; my informants made it quite clear that the last was too trifling a complaint to deserve the attention of 'doctors'.

As we have seen, surgical treatments are almost entirely absent, [752]
and the use of splints in fractures is considered no more important
than the application of some 'strong' salve or ointment. The 757
barbers, in fact, herbalists at heart, deprecate the 'use of the knife' and emphatically deny its value. Said the head of the barbers' guild: 'The knife begets pain; how could it cure?' Though the same few herbs or plants appear in the majority of remedies, this does not mean that they alone have curative properties. On the contrary, it is considered that all plants contain some medicine, even if its nature or extraction are not known. It is considered equally certain that this medical knowledge, far from being static, is growing all the time, so that the barbers today possess medicines unknown even a short time ago. Once more, this is a question of experimenting 'with the help of God', and there are certain rough rules how to proceed. One tries first the bark of a plant or tree not hitherto used; if this proves worthless, one tries the roots, and finally the leaves or fruits. As to why certain parts of plants should contain *cigbe* and others not, there is no answer; or rather the usual answer is '*cigbe u de 'tsu a*', 'medicines have no king' (that is, follow no proclaimed law): God has made them so, and men can only hope to learn by trial and error or by accepting the wisdom of others.

A strikingly large number of remedies employ plant parasites 757
(called *etú*), and their special medicinal properties are strongly
emphasized. If the alien growth of the parasites once suggested to 278
the people some affinity with the nature of diseases and hence a

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757 278 possible application of the principle 'like cures like', no one today is aware of this notion. Nor are there any 'theories' as regards such abstruse ingredients as eggshells, the excreta of fowls, twigs from the nest of vultures, or grass from inside an ant-heap. Yet it is also difficult to see how the precept, 'experiment with the help of God', can have led to these peculiar discoveries. If they are 'superstitions', they are not, like other superstitions, the degraded offspring of more elaborate mystic or cosmological speculations. The treatment of lunacy, with its 'male' and 'female' ingredients, seems to suggest something of the kind; but there is no clear link between this cure and that other idea, that lunacy is a residue of 'male' sleeping sickness.[1] And in all the other fantastic remedies their intellectual antecedents are simply not traceable, not even to legends or folk-tales. Perhaps the remedies have been adopted, more or less blindly, from other groups and countries, on some of those informative travels of which the barber-doctors boast. As they stand, they are merely crude and absurd attempts at 'empirical' treatment, instances of that 'blundering' I spoke of before.

278 755 [759] Any of the medicines just described might equally be the product of the *cigbeciži*, and a number are in fact identical. But unlike the barber-doctors, the *cigbeciži* also employ the fully irrational, non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, and even their remedies proper, salves, potions, and the like, are much more often based on recipes of an incongruous and abstruse kind.[2] Thus a 'strong' potion taken for intestinal troubles includes the fluid extracted from the gall-bladder of snakes, a potion alleged to cure smallpox contains a boiled lizard tail, and an ointment for rheumatic pains is composed, among other things, of powdered potsherds which must be obtained from old pots found lying about with the broken side up, any other position rendering the remedy worthless.

While these recipes seem as random and arbitrary as the more abstruse examples of the barber-doctors' art, others betray some underlying 'theory', some vague and often uncertain reasoning from analogy or from the principle 'like cures like'. Thus one [842] expert had a cure for impotence consisting of a potion whose ingredients included, besides various roots and two kinds of pepper, also the powdered genitals of a he-goat.[3] A contraceptive credited with lasting effect is concocted from the roots of the

[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Of the twenty-two *cigbeci* medicines I recorded fifteen belonged to that category, while the corresponding proportion in the case of the barbers' remedies was six in thirty-four.

[3] I have this incongruous evidence for the efficacy of the treatment. My servant, who was with me when I visited the expert, at once bought and drunk the potion to increase his virility. The next day I had to doctor him for severe indigestion.

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tamarind tree, leaves of baobab, sorghum stalks, and the skin of a fish said to 'die at once when you hold it in your hand', the last ingredient being the most important. Another, temporary, contraceptive is prepared with grass taken from an ant-heap which must have three round mounds and must be broken open with the heel. The magic belt mentioned before, said to prevent pregnancy, is made of leather into which these two ingredients are sewn—hair from the tail of a mule and seeds from locust-beans 'forgotten' (i.e. overlooked) at the harvest. The reasoning from analogy is fairly obvious in the recipe for impotence and in the last appliance. In the lasting contraceptive the underlying 'theory' seems to rest upon this argument: since a freshly caught fish stands for fertility (in dream interpretation), a fish that 'dies at once' might plausibly be identified with its destruction. And of ants, which figure in the temporary contraceptive, it is said that 'one does not know their father and mother'; so that a medicine derived from ants would seem to promise precisely what its users desire. The former 'theory' is my own inference, while the latter, as we shall see, is explicitly mentioned. But it is incomplete apart from being abstruse; for it fails to account for the three mounds that are required and for the peculiar method of opening the ant-heap; nor yet does it state why grass taken from an ant-heap should, in other remedies, serve quite a different purpose.

The moral attitude of the *cigbeciži* towards such dubious practices as facilitating contraception and sterility differs considerably from that of the barber-doctors. While the latter simply claim that they have no chance of dispensing these remedies and shift the blame on their pagan colleagues, these both admit dealing in them and try to justify their actions. They maintain that they dispense these medicines only rarely and in deserving cases. At least, this is true of the medicine alleged to procure permanent sterility; the expert in question assured me that he had given it only once, out of pity, to a woman whose husband was forcing her to sleep with him while her first-born had not yet been weaned. In the case of the temporary expedients the conscience of the *cigbeciži* is more easily satisfied; they merely put up the price for frivolous clients, that is, for 'rich people who do not want children'. As a corrollary, the medicine for impotence is similarly expensive (costing as much as ten shillings), not only because it is difficult to prepare, but because it is something of a luxury; for the expert argued that since this remedy did not 'save people from death' but afforded them 'enjoyment' it was worth paying for. He was fairminded enough to add that he would lower the price in the case of poor clients.

As regards the non-therapeutic medicines, they are credited

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755 with widely varying but uniformly fantastic properties. Thus a certain potion is said to make you invisible and invulnerable to guns; a similar protection is afforded by a powder carried in a leather bag which must be of two colours, red and black. Another powder, which may either be drunk in water or rubbed on the gun, assures success in big-game hunting. Two potions protect the drinker from all evil-wishers, who would in one case be struck with lunacy or sleeping sickness and in the other with blindness. It is interesting to note that while one of these medicines, called *zabadi*, can be used by both sexes, the other, called *imi-ya-ga* (both undecipherable words) is designed for women only. Conversely, there is a 'male' medicine called *eshe*; its composition is extremely complicated, numbering fifteen ingredients, and it can be rubbed on the body or on a hoe, or buried in farmland: its effect is to divert the fertility of all adjacent fields to the one farmed by the owner of the *cigbe*. Finally, there are two medicines associated with witchcraft; the first is the 'female' medicine *imi-ya-ga*, which, used as a potion or as an ointment or simply kept in the house, protects you [754] from witches as well as spirits; the other is a potion called *waka*, which must be taken by the performers in the anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá* but is deadly to the uninitiated. Most of these medicines serve more than one function. Thus a snake-bite antidote called *dabwalé* can also be used as ordeal or kept in the house to guard it against thieves (who would be bitten by a snake), and the anti-witchcraft remedy *waka* similarly protects the house where it is kept, the thief being punished with blindness.

As has already been mentioned, the *cigbeciži* always employ professedly mystical procedures. To some extent these are visible already in the conspicuous ritualization attaching to certain of their remedies. More importantly, the practice of the *cigbeciži* also involves ritual invocations and rigid rules of secrecy, though the latter refer only to the recipe itself and do not otherwise restrict the use or disposal of the medicines. The invocation consists of the proper name for the medicine and of its particular *emisa* or 'greeting'. The names themselves do not necessarily distinguish this species of *cigbe* from the other, profane, variety; for several of the barbers' remedies similarly have names, which serve as labels and abbreviated references to the composition or efficacy of the medicine. Some of the names given to the *cigbeci* medicines, however, are more mystically obscure and as inexplicable as the names of most *kuti* or those that occur in divining. The *emisa* are fully ritual formulæ: they must be uttered, without the slightest deviation and in a respectful and humble manner, at various stages in the preparation of the *cigbe* and whenever it is dispensed. They play much the same part as the 'greetings' used in divining and

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are, like the latter, composed of sayings more or less trivial or apposite. A medicine alleged to facilitate childbirth, for example, is called *lamá*, from *lá má 'gi*, 'causing childbirth', and has a meaningless 'greeting'; the antidote for snake-bite *dabwalé* (an undecipherable word) commands the following 'greeting'—'The thing for washing, when a snake bites a person, (this) thing drives the illness away'. The 'contraceptive' made of grass taken from special ant-heaps, is called *botáfi*, a word derived from *botá*, the name for a species of grass and *fi*, 'to drink'; when the grass is removed from the ant-heap one repeats three times: 'One does not know the father of ants; one does not know the mother of ants'; of which crude allusion to the users of this remedy we have already spoken. The 'greeting' of another contraceptive remedy similarly plays upon an analogy—'A person without speech cannot tell', which means, a woman without fertility cannot bear children. The miraculous medicine alleged to make a person invisible and invulnerable has a name and 'greeting' which are highly suggestive; it is called *akpára*, the Nupe word for 'rifle', and is addressed thus—'The night brings darkness. The eye sees in daylight, the eye does not see at night. There is nothing inside the earth save God' (that is, save things God alone can see, as he alone can see a person who has applied this medicine).

Perhaps the term 'invocations' will seem inappropriate in the case of these nondescript addresses or 'greetings'. But let me leave this point for the moment and only mention that invocations proper also have their place in *cigbe* practice. The *cigbeci*, like the barber-doctor, may add some new medicine to those already known; at least, this is true of the head of the order of 'medicine-men'. And whenever he discovers or invents a new remedy, he must perform a sacrifice composed of beer, a fowl, and a small portion of the new *cigbe*, speaking thus—'God, the medicine that has been prepared, here it is. May the medicine be successful. I am sacrificing to Kpara, I am sacrificing to Tswasha Malu, I am sacrificing to Tswako Dzana.' The names mentioned are those of ancestors of the head of the *cigbeci* guild; and the sacrifice is performed over the vessel in which the new medicine will henceforth be kept. As we shall see, both the invocation of ancestors and the treatment of the medicine vessel almost as a sacred shrine are features typical also of the hereditary medicines, which even more conspicuously reveal their irrational or mystical intent.

To turn to the medicines known to individuals. We may mention first that certain simple treatments are familiar to nearly everyone, being applied in the manner of household remedies or as a kind of 'first aid'; only when this fails or seems inadequate does one turn to 'professional' medicines. And even then one often asks friends

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757 and neighbours first before consulting the accredited experts. One
[431] does not pay in money for this kind of assistance,* but only offers a small return gift of kolanuts or food. The household remedies are mainly laxatives, or cures for toothache, headache, and slight wounds or bruises, though they include also certain crude treatments to induce abortion or prevent pregnancy—by sucking frogs or drinking the blood from the afterbirth. Normally, one uses infusions of common plants, ash-water or natron (both known as laxatives), ointments made of palm-oil or sheanut-butter, or damp earth (applied to cuts and the like); the more complex herbal concoctions and the use of bark and roots, which make up the *cigbe* proper, are entirely absent.

Certain individuals, are known to possess this more 'professional' knowledge as well. Like the barbers, they apply therapeutic treatments in a profane and would-be rational manner, and like the *cigbeci*, practise the non-therapeutic variety with more or less conspicuous mystical intent. Their skill extends to remedies alleged to increase virility and facilitate pregnancy, though contraceptives are outside the scope of the individual practitioner. 'Fantastic' treatments, however, are not. We already mentioned one such cure meant to remove rheumatic pains through 'drawing them from the body'. Two further treatments are of special interest, one because it is empirically sound, the other because it is surgical as well as daring and involves a clear apprehension of the symptoms of a relatively obscure disease. The first example con-
[278] cerns the use of the severely toxic *datura stramonium*. Many Nupe are aware of the effect of the seeds or powdered leaves which produce stupor and insensitiveness, and the experts prescribe small doses, taken in water, as a cure for pains; with less justification, they also recommend the external application of the leaves, soaked
757 in ash-water and mixed with sheanut butter, for aching limbs. The second example is an alleged cure for sleeping sickness, which must
752 be applied in the early stages of the disease, recognized by the swelling of the neck glands. I only met one expert who knew of this treatment, a man from Mokwa, whose repute had spread far and wide. The surgical treatment involves a deep incision in the skin above the glands, charred leaves of a bean variety being rubbed into the wound; the leaves are said to have a caustic effect so that, when the treatment is repeated twice daily for a week, the glands themselves can be removed. As an after-treatment the patient is given an infusion of bark and roots to drink, and a coarse grass and fish to eat. The expert did not claim that his cure was always effective: it would still depend on 'God's will'; but he showed me a man, bearing the scars of the operation, who, he claimed, had completely recovered.

*[i.e., simple medicinal treatments. - Analyst]

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Among the non-therapeutic medicines we meet again with the substance which makes invisible, and with another which enables you to see witches and also protects you from them. The latter consists of various rare roots and four cowrie shells, sewn into a leather bag dyed black and red, which you must keep under your pillow while asleep. Before handing the charm to the customer it is buried for one night together with a live chameleon, which contact communicates to the charm the peculiar powers of the animal (which is said to 'see in the dark'). The invisibility potion is concocted from the head, blood, and claws of a completely black fowl, a creeper torn off a tree while one's eyes are covered by a black cloth, and a mudfish. The emphasis on black accords with this notion of a substance whose effect resembles that of darkness and which is in fact known as *badúfu*, a mixed Nupe–Hausa word meaning 'dark place'.[1] The symbolism of covering your eyes is obvious, as is that of the mudfish, which buries itself in the riverbed. The same substance, in powder form, may also be carried in a black leather bag on the body, though in this case a piece of human skin must be added.[2]

There are several other non-therapeutic *cigbe* of less gruesome nature. The following examples all come from the same source, old Ndakotsu of Bida, a descendant of the old Beni chiefs and a noted diviner and 'wise man'. His medicines were as secret as they were fantastic; yet though they were not for sale, they were freely given to friends and acquaintances or to the young men over whose age grades Ndakotsu presided. Neither the application nor the preparation of these medicines involves invocations, sacrifices and the like; but their professedly mystical character is usually clear from the peculiar nature of their efficacy, which is attributed to the power of *fifíngi* of animals or plants and hence presupposes explicitly religious conceptions. All medicines also imply, more or less clearly, the principle 'like causes like'. One example, mentioned before, is the powder applied to hoes which causes them to 'double' their output; its effect rests on one particular ingredient, leaves from a palm-tree split in two by lightning, the 'doubling' of the tree being responsible for the doubled efficiency of the tool. Another farming 'medicine', meant to secure a rich yam harvest, is made up of the head and left leg of a bush rodent and some grass torn out by the roots, and must be buried annually in the farmland in a new, covered pot; the explanation is that the *fifíngi* of the rodent, which is known to feed on yams, will 'steal' all the yams

[1] For a different meaning of this term see below, p. 159.

[2] I was offered this useful *cigbe*, but the deal broke down since I was unable to supply the human skin, to the great surprise of the expert, who thought that I could easily obtain it from the local hospital.

788 (that is, their *fifíngi*) from the surrounding farmlands and carry them to yours. A rich grain harvest can be obtained by taking the head of an ass or donkey, its saddle cloth, and the excreta of a person who dies of smallpox, tying the three 'ingredients' into a bundle hung from a palm-tree on the farm: the grain will then grow as high as a person, since the *fifíngi* of the donkey, used to carrying loads on its back, will endeavour to 'pull up' the grain 'like a load'. Farmers can finally prepare a potent drink made of a black monkey's left leg, some leaves driven into a heap by a whirlwind, and beer: they will then work 'as fast as the whirlwind' and as 'tirelessly as a monkey'. Ndakotsu's father is reported to have owned also one of those protective *cigbe* which punish evil-wishers; it is said to have been particularly vicious, inflicting body-ache on any person who so much as stared at you. Nothing further, however, is known about this medicine, which has since been lost.

755 The picture changes again when we turn to the medicines hereditary in families or 'houses' or belonging to communities. Let me quote these examples. In Jebba Island I recorded an hereditary *cigbe* called *fúnagba*, which cures headache, pains in the body, and barrenness, and can either be drunk or used externally. Its composition is complicated, including seven ingredients, six of which are roots of specific trees and the seventh the root of any tree growing across a footpath (such roots being particularly 'strong'); these ingredients must be mixed with beer, blood of fowl (that is, the common materials for sacrifices), and some Niger water fetched by a young girl. Apart from its therapeutic effect, this medicine also protects the house from thieves and evil-minded intruders. In another village on the Niger I found a medicine called *atafá*, which has only the latter effect; it could, in fact, never be renewed if it were actually dispensed since its composition is unknown. In several villages I met with a medicine called *wasa* or *gába*, compounded of ten ingredients, one of which is the boiled head of a [752] poisonous snake, severed before it released the poison; this medicine operates as an antidote against snake-bite, as a cure for stomach-ache, and sometimes also as a potion applied in ordeals; while its presence in the house affords protection from thieves and evil-doers. A medicine called *égbo*, from Shari, is used to treat headache and stomach-ache, and is also taken by the devotees of the *ndakó gboyá* before they put on the masks that go with the cult. Then there is the Jebba medicine *zumácikā*, which belongs to the village and is believed to protect the community from smallpox; as we remember, its composition is unknown and it acts through merely being present.[1]

[1] See above, p. 91.

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Most of these medicines, then, are 'multifarious', combining a therapeutic with a mystical or 'magical' efficacy. The latter may 755
even be paramount and take an extreme form, as in the medicines efficacious by their mere presence and of unknown composition. Equally, these medicines are treated as 'magical'. They may only be prepared in certain months and not in others, unlike all other medicines; and while the latter are kept in the usual household containers, gourds or ordinary pots, the hereditary medicines are preserved in special earthen vessels, placed apart and decorated in the manner of sacred objects, with a strip of white cloth, a ring of palm-fronds or a crown of white chicken feathers. They all have mystically obscure names and more or less elaborate *emisa*, and some also involve regular sacrifices, either when the *cigbe* is newly prepared or on the occasion of the usual kinship rites and invocations of ancestoral *kuci*. Finally, all these medicines are extremely secret and never sold for money, if indeed they are disposed of at all; if so, they may be given away only to close relations or perhaps friends, as a free gift 'for the sake of God'. Nor is their recipe (even if it is known) ever taught to others.

The special position of the hereditary *cigbe* is reflected in the 755
nomenclature, for these medicines alone merit the epithet 'great', 182
while all other medicines are called 'little'. Let us note that the verbal distinction refers, not so much to the miraculous effects with which the *cigbe* is credited, as to the procedure it sets in motion; for even a 'great' medicine may only cure headache or stomach trouble, at least with part of its efficacy. But the 'great' medicine alone involves proper acts of worship; and as it is bound up with the identity of kin groups through being hereditary, so it serves as a focus of kinship life, affording its supernatural aid primarily or even exclusively to the group to which it belongs and mobilizing it in the fashion of kinship rituals. The 'greatness' of the *cigbe*, then, lies in its social implications rather than in its concrete efficacy. Let us note also that its very 'ownership' is far from concrete. For the *cigbe* whose composition is unknown is also never examined, being renewed only from the beer and blood of the sacrifice. What is truly 'owned', is not any tangible, physical substance but only the vessel in which it is supposed to exist; so that this becomes a shrine for religious ministrations indistinguisable from ritual proper.

3. THE FAITH IN MEDICINE

The distinction between 'great' and 'little' medicines is drawn 755
only by the practitioners and 'owners' of *cigbe*. The bulk of the 184
people know little about these implications, and so grade the

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755 medicines differently. For them, medicines are simply either easily
184 procured or not, available to the 'public' or monopolized, by families or perhaps communities. And they conclude, equally simply, that the more secret and private a medicine, the more powerful it must be. Experts and public, we may say, speak different languages. And here certain other discrepancies also arise. There are a great many stories current about extremely powerful (and extremely secret) medicines 'owned' and rarely if ever disposed of by certain villages, families or occupational groups (blacksmiths, hunters). When you know the 'owners' you will usually discover either that they credit the medicine with far less impressive powers or that it is by no means as secret as the public believes, or even that the medicine in question does not exist. Again, the people generally are convinced that certain very 'private' and miraculous medicines can yet be acquired at exorbitant prices: in reality, the medicines so described may not be for sale or, once more, may not exist. The public is also impressed or swayed by certain clever tricks which the experts perform with the ingredients of medicine in order to astonish the layman and advertise their skill but which they never regard as a true part of their craft. Thus a certain medicine for headache and stomach pains can be shown to extinguish flames or, more wonderful still, to make hands and feet insensible to burns; a piece of ironwood used in a very secret anti-witchcraft medicine can be shown miraculously to sink in water. But the Nupe expert rarely resorts to this method of self-advertisement; rather, he strongly insists on the difference between *cigbe* and *enya mā*, mere 'conjuring tricks', such as the Hausa charm peddlers and 'magicians' are fond of performing. Nor does he ever offer 'fakes', of this or any other kind, for the 'real thing' or show any cynicism regarding the value of his products. He believes in them as much as do his clients; and if their trust shows in the eagerness and awe with which they approach the expert, his seriousness and scrupulous attention to detail leave no doubt as to his good faith.

755 The question arises, what concrete proof the believers can have of the efficacy of the more fantastic and 'magical' medicines. In the case of the therapeutic remedies there exists, as I suggested, at least the possibility of some apparent if spurious empirical support; also their efficacy is understood to be in some measure uncertain and subject to the will of God. But no amount of belief in those medicines which turn a man into a miraculously successful farmer or make him invulnerable and invisible can conjure up the desired proof. The confidence inspired by their possession may indeed make the owner a keener farmer or a more courageous soldier and hunter; but though fortune may favour the brave it

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falls lamentably short of the absolute assurance the Nupe place in these *cigbe*. 755

The answer to our question can only lie in the rigid secrecy which surrounds these magic medicines. No one using them will talk about it; indeed if he did, the efficacy of the magic would be gone. Thus, though I might use the wonderful farming *cigbe*, my neighbours may, for all I know, also use it, or even a stronger version; and though I could make myself invulnerable, my enemies might have *cigbe* to make their guns infallible. If in these instances the belief in *cigbe* is such that it protects itself from being disproved, this is even more so in the case of the *cigbe* protecting you from witchcraft. For this is clearly itself an imaginary threat whose defeat by an imaginary weapon is altogether outside empirical considerations. To some extent the efficacy of the medicines said to procure invisibility equally belongs to the realm of imaginary happenings. Two of the many informants with whom I discussed this point supplied the clue. The first, who himself owned this medicine and maintained that I too could use it with the desired effect, added this odd instruction: the medicine must be taken at night, before going to sleep. He meant by this that the medicine affected, not the physical body of a person awake, but the *fifíngi*, the disembodied shadow soul, of persons asleep. The second informant was even more explicit. He explained that the person drinking the medicine was able, in *fifíngi* shape, to wander about at night when all were asleep, to enter their houses unseen, to touch the bodies of the other sleepers, give them nightmares, and even to kill them if they struggled or hit out: to which extreme, however, no 'good' man would resort, save perhaps against enemies. 755 828

If we should consider invisibility achieved under such conditions to be hardly worth the trouble, let alone to prove the wonderful powers of the medicine, this is not so for the Nupe. For them, the medicine does two things one cannot 'normally' do; it enables you to control the movements of your *fifíngi*, which otherwise wanders about at will, in the random fashion exemplified by dreams; and it causes the *fifíngi* to be hidden from the people it visits, while ordinarily it would appear to them in their dreams. Furthermore, precisely such willed and hidden nightly visits are thought to be peculiar to witches, so that the *cigbe* makes you their equal. I must add, however, that the rest of my informants did not describe the efficacy of the invisibility *cigbe* in such mystic terms. They spoke of it as being concretely effective and hiding your body from the eyes of others when you meet them, say, in the street. But they would emphasize, as in the case of the other miraculous *cigbe* mentioned before, that this medicine must be used in utter secrecy

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755 828 lest it lose its power. And here, it seems to me, we have the required loophole; for 'utter secrecy' I take to mean that the medicine may only be used at night, when you cannot be seen, or among strangers, when at least you cannot be recognized, that is, in situations when no one can prove anything. My informants refused to commit themselves on this point. But exactly this kind of argument was brought up in connection with another, similar, medicine not previously mentioned, namely, a *cigbe* said to enable a man to feign death and to arise from the grave unharmed and invisible; thus magically equipped he can disappear from his village unbeknown to all, to reappear, now in visible shape, in foreign parts. This seems to be the only advantage offered by this *cigbe*. Now this advantage, my informants assured me, was past, thanks to railways and motor-cars of all things; for nowadays the person using the *cigbe* could reach the strange place no more quickly than would others, using the modern means of transport. But it is not merely the utility of the *cigbe* which has disappeared, but its virtue. Since other people, travelling non-magically, might well arrive together with and run into the person who did so magically, the secrecy of the proceedings has been lost, and with it the efficacy of a *cigbe*. If this argument seems less compelling to us than to the Nupe, it yet confirms the point made before, that this notion of miraculous medicines protects itself from proof or disproof.

755 789 Let us return to the *emisa* which accompany various *cigbe* procedures. Clearly, they must have some share in fostering or confirming the faith which the people put in their mystical medicines. I have so far treated these formulæ mainly as evidence for 'mystical intent'; but they would seem to define a particular species of this intent and one particularly reassuring. For the *emisa* comes closest to a magic spell, having the same rigidity and being similarly indispensable for the desired effects; if so, it would turn the whole *cigbe* practice into a strictly magical procedure, that is, a procedure resting on the mechanical manipulation of substances and words rather than on appeals to some transcendental intelligence.

Neither conclusion, however, is quite correct. The names and addresses of *cigbe*, the Nupe insist, carry no power in themselves; this lies in the 'ingredients' alone. If the *emisa* is indispensable it is so only in the sense in which the titles and formal greetings of men of rank are indispensable, being meant to acknowledge or indicate the power that lies in the rank but adding nothing to it. Furthermore, the *emisa* of medicines is meant to acknowledge also the ultimate source of their power, that is, the presence and will of God. If the wording of the *cigbe* greetings hardly reveals that

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exalted function, the Nupe would point out that other, ordinary 755
'greetings' are similarly nondescript and uninformative. We re- 789
call, further, that on certain occasions the practice of *cigbe* also includes sacrifices and invocations proper, addressed to God or *kuci*.

We may conclude, then, that even the mechanical manipulations of *cigbe* carry some of that awareness of a transcendental intelligence which turns an otherwise 'magical' act into a religious appeal; and though the faith in this manipulation of 'ingredients' is partly a belief in their mechanical efficacy, this is yet understood to reflect, however indirectly, divine intervention. The *emisa* itself is neither fully a spell nor yet fully a prayer; it is an expression, couched in a conventionalized code, for the varieties of power mobilized in the *cigbe* procedure. Those who know the appropriate expressions also know the entities to which they refer and hence can manipulate them: for in the Nupe way of thinking as in ours there is no true and workable knowledge of anything unless that thing can also be named. Thus, though the *emisa* has no share in the powers it identifies and names, the very fact that it does so makes it an integral part of the mystically powerful operation. Finally, since these 'code' expressions are respectful ones, they stand, not for a simple command, but for a command tinged with submission, for a mastery which is half supplication, in brief, for 'invocations'.

4. THE PERSONNEL

The organization of the Nupe barber-doctors has been described 759
elsewhere, and I need here summarize only the main facts.[1] The barbers are grouped in three guilds, centred in Bida, one in each of the three sectors into which the town is divided. They travel a good deal; a number have also settled in the larger villages in the country, and quite a few in towns outside Nupe. Each guild has its own titled head, elected by the guild and confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe, who is also the most experienced and most highly reputed member of the profession; which standing is measured, simply, by the number of treatments known to him. In all my discussions with barber-doctors it was always the guild-head who proved the best informed and to whom all others turned when in doubt or at a loss. The profession is loosely hereditary, some usually following in their fathers' footsteps; but men of other families may join the profession through being apprenticed to an established barber-doctor for about five years, during which period they pay for the tuition by surrendering the larger part of their earnings.

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 289–301.

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759 This, then, is a purely profane craft organization. Side by side with it exists that other, more secret and 'mystical' order, of the *cigbeci* practitioners. 'Side by side' is not quite the correct phrase; for the latter are active predominantly in the rural areas, though a few *cigbeciži* reside in small hamlets quite close to Bida, as does the present Master of the order. Theirs is quite clearly the older organization, which, in the modern capital, has given way to the Mohammedan barber guilds. Nor does the *cigbeci* organization today enjoy the official sanction of the Nupe State or any affiliation with the ruling dynasty. Yet it did so formerly, even in the Fulani régime, where its Masters were appointed and invested with a special hereditary rank by the sovereign of the country. Indeed, the *cigbeciži* trace the growth of their order back to the *fons et origo* of all things politic and traditional in Nupe country, the first kingdom of Tsoede. The somewhat fantastic pedigree of the *cigbeciži* betrays the mystic nature of the craft; for the third Master was no other than that Kpara who, as we have heard, went up to the sky and brought back the wisdom of 'ingredients'.[1]

This pedigree comprises eight ancestors, the son of the last being the present Master (and my informant), one Sheshi Benu. The first ancestor, said to have lived in the days of Tsoede, came of the sub-tribe Cekpã, from across the Niger, which even today is regarded by all Nupe as deeply versed in all kinds of secret knowledge. It was not he, however, who was the first *cigbeci*, but his son Malu, who acquired that knowledge by unknown means and was granted the title *Tswasha* still by Tsoede. He and his successors always lived in the capital of the kingdom, wherever it happened to be, as the king's official experts. The father of the present Master of the order, Mina Gunu, is said to have lived first in Rabah, the then capital, and to have come to Bida when the centre of the kingdom moved there. His son is a 'Master' only to the members of the order, bearing no longer an official rank, and not very well known to the general public.

I have called the *cigbeci* organization an 'order' rather than a 'guild' to do justice both to its dispersal through the country and to its secrecy which yet allows for the admission of new members. The organization is also extremely loose, involving little actual co-operation beyond occasional ceremonial gatherings and a few 'refresher courses' for the specially keen. But it has a common centre and source, constituted by the Master and his 'house'. Thus all known medicines have been discovered by one or the other Master of the *cigbeciži* and were handed on to the other members of the order. My informant claimed that he himself had discovered

[1] See above, p. 18.

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certain new *cigbe*, and that on such occasions he had called together all his disciples, so that they might be present at the ceremonial preparation of the new medicine and learn its properties. Before him, his ancestors had similarly taught their knowledge to pupils, who in turn handed it on both to their offspring and to others, until the order spread through the whole country and even beyond Nupe. Yet all 'great' *cigbeciši* received their training at the source, from the present Master or his predecessors, and he mentioned five of his disciples to me, two of whom I also knew and from whom I obtained confirmation of this account.

During the period of tuition the pupil lives with his teacher, paying in gifts for the instruction. The secret of the more complicated medicines, known to the Master alone, the pupil must buy for money; which course is also open to any other *cigbe* practitioner even if he never underwent tuition proper. The period varies with the ambition of the pupil; those who wish to become really great experts must study continuously for three to four years, while those with lesser ambition can become proficient by intermittent tuition, for a month or so at a time, during a period of five to six years.[1] No one is refused; anyone who wishes to learn can do so if he has the required intelligence, and the time and funds. No *cigbeci*, however, can live merely on his professional earnings; even the Master practises, at least today, farmwork besides.

The individual *cigbe* experts are once more part-time practitioners, even if, occasionally, they own hereditary medicines at the same time. Nor do they confuse the two kinds of expert knowledge, one possessed by them as individuals, the other vested in the lineage or 'house' to which they belong. The former is often said to have been acquired, more or less fortuitously, on travels, especially to foreign parts; sometimes it is inherited, though only in the fortuitous way in which sons may (or may not) follow their fathers' interests or professions. One owner of *cigbe* thought that his grandfather, from whom he had inherited the skill, had learned it from the *cigbeciši*; but all other informants denied any such connection. The medicines differ greatly in secrecy according to whether they are therapeutic or not. The former are readily disposed of, against payment or return gifts, while the more miraculous medicines are given only to persons one knows well, or with some formality and ostensible hesitation. Let me quote this

[1] My informant drew a terminological distinction between the 'greater' and 'lesser' practitioners; the former alone, he claimed, were legitimately called *cigbeci*, while the proper name for the latter was *boci*. No one else, however, made this distinction, which seems to reflect only the familiar predilection of the Nupe 'intellectual' for neat linguistic categories. *Boci* is in fact only the Nupe-ized version of the Hausa word *boka*, 'native doctor'.

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759 description of the procedure by an expert of great repute; it is interesting also since it illustrates the Nupe bent for neatly schematic and enumerative arrangements. When the expert is approached by a would-be customer he will at first deny all knowledge of the *cigbe* in question and maintain this attitude on three successive occasions; the fourth time, if the client still insists and so shows his eagerness or anxiety, the expert will at last relent and promise to prepare the *cigbe*.[1] He will not, incidentally, communicate the recipe itself; for the individual expert does not teach his craft, save to his own offspring or, perhaps, to a great friend.

We turn to the hereditary medicines proper, hereditary not only incidentally like the individually owned *cigbe*, but as it were *ex hypothesi*, being bound up with the identity of lineages or 'houses' and descending from family head to family head. We already discussed most of the features which set this species of medicine apart from others or, as the Nupe would say, make it 'great' where all others are 'little'. It now remains to examine the role of the sacrifices involved in this possession of *cigbe*.

The sacrifices are of two kinds. A first variety is still concerned with the practice of *cigbe* only. The owner of the 'great' medicine *fúnagba*, for example, who knew numerous other *cigbe* besides, performed a sacrifice of fowl and beer at the *fúnagba* shrine whenever he brewed any of the other, 'little', medicines. Sometimes he added a small quantity of the 'great' medicine in order to make the others more potent, thus using the former as a 'master medicine', unspecific and almost pure force or power. He would accompany the sacrifice with a brief invocation in which the *emisa* is followed by a proper prayer addressed to God and *cigbe*, thus:

'*Fúnagba!* The carpenter who uses the *nunci* tree (i.e. the wrong kind of wood) will fail to build a canoe. *Fúnagba* that now drinketh, Lord God, cause (that it) give us health.'

We note the close similarity between this invocation and those usually addressed to *kuti* or ancestors. The second variety of *cigbe* sacrifice in fact serves the latter purpose; more precisely, it overrules and replaces the normal kinship rites and sacrifices to ancestors. For while ordinary people perform such sacrifices (at birth, marriage, death, and so forth) over a grave or perhaps at a twin shrine, the owner of a 'great' *cigbe* does so over the vessel containing the medicine. In other words, the more rare and more specific instrument of supernatural appeal overrules the more common kind. It seems logical that the owners of such *cigbe*, who are usually well known even though everything else about it will

[1] My own experience bears out the necessity for repeated approaches, though not of the rule 'fourth time lucky'.

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be secret, should be considered more fortunate than the ordinary run of people. Yet why this should be so, why some families should have this special standing *in rebus sacris* and others not, is not a question in which the people show any interest. 'There is no fixed number of medicines,' they say, and hence no rule governing or accounting for their distribution. 759

We need not speak again of the community medicine *zumácikā*, which represents an isolated instance.[1] But we may note certain transitional forms, in which ownership by lineages shades over into ownership by the community. For certain of the hereditary medicines are vested in 'houses' which equally hold hereditary ranks and offices, so that the two possessions go together. When the family head succeeds to the rank, he also assumes charge of the *cigbe*; and the people in fact say of this kind of medicine that it is 'owned' by such-and-such a rank (not person). Now as the rank represents a privileged position ultimately derived from the community and entails duties on its behalf, so the possession of the medicine assumes the aspect of a privilege and duty delegated, by the community, to the particular lineage and its head: these are not so much 'owners' as trustees or guardians, much as the hereditary village priests are appointed guardians of a community *kuti*. Usually the analogy remains on this abstract level; but in one instance it becomes more tangible, when the properties of the hereditary *cigbe* include efficacy as an ordeal: here, then, the possession of *cigbe* ceases to be private, and its application turns fully into a right or duty executed for the well-being of the community.

5. CIGBE AND MORALITY

Excepting the isolated community medicine, no class of *cigbe* is unequivocally good, or for that matter unequivocally evil. But particular medicines may be morally reprehensible, so that all the various groups of *cigbe* experts must in varying degree face the responsibility of practising a craft not above blame or suspicion. 754 x 577

The contraceptive remedies of the barber-doctors and *cigbeciłi* represent the mildest case; for though their immorality is a matter of common agreement, almost everybody ignores it in practice, and the *cigbe* practitioners could easily claim the neutrality of experts catering for a public demand. This is indeed the attitude of the barber-doctors. The *cigbeciłi*, whose craft is bound up with mystic rules and sacred knowledge, are also more fully aware of the moral conflict; their attempts to justify the dubious practices

[1] There may of course be others, in parts of Nupe which I did not visit. But it is certain that their number is very small.

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thus reveals the underlying conviction that their skill should be morally blameless.

Yet it is precisely the adepts of the more mystical or sacred craft who must face this moral conflict in much graver form. For *cigbeciži*, individual practitioners, and the 'owners' of hereditary medicines alike also have knowledge of medicines not only morally dubious but straightforward evil and in fact called *cigbe benágũ*, 'evil medicines'. Now this means, for the Nupe, several things. It means that the use of the medicine 'harms innocent people', as does the farming *cigbe* which increases your crops at the expense of your neighbours, or that the medicine 'kills people', as do those vindictively 'protective' medicines which punish thieves, evil-wishers, or personal enemies. Again, a medicine is evil if it is apt to be abused by evil-minded persons, which is true of the invisibility *cigbe* and perhaps also of the 'protective' variety, though my informants could not say precisely what kind of abuse there might be. Finally, the efficacy of the medicine might be mistaken for witchcraft, and is for this reason adjudged 'evil'.

The last reason seems to be the crucial one. To begin with, it applies in every case and also reinforces all the other reasons. Thus the person made unexpectedly prosperous with the help of the farming *cigbe* might easily be taken for a witch by his neighbours; much the same might happen in the case of the vicious 'protective' *cigbe*; while the medicine which makes you invisible or enables you to feign death endows you with precisely the gifts with which witches are credited. Furthermore, where some of the other reasons appear inconclusive, the resemblance to witchcraft is decisive. It is clearly inconsistent to condemn the 'protective medicine', meant to attack only evil-doers or evil-wishers, while accepting without qualms the efficacy of deadly ordeals, which do precisely the same. Admittedly, there is a difference; while in ordeals and the like it is the law of the country that takes its course, the *cigbe* places the power of life and death within the reach of individuals, and this power works, though not at random, yet blindly, not measuring [628] punishment against offence. In a society like Nupe, where the self-help of blood revenge is unknown, this is logically adjudged immoral and evil. Yet in argument the Nupe do not reason this way; rather do they fall back on the stand-by explanation, that this 'punishment' and 'killing' may be confused with witchcraft.

Undoubtedly, the medicines which bring harm or death upon people (innocent or otherwise) are as such condemned. 'There is nothing nice about these medicines,' said the Master of the *cigbeciži*, with some understatement. Yet they are evil also because they meddle in something that has the appearance of evil. And when the Nupe are reluctant to talk about these medicines, the

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reason is, again, their resemblance to witchcraft, with which subject no one wishes to seem conversant. I know of no case where accusations of witchcraft were later withdrawn and admitted to have been caused by some such mistake; and there can of course be no other proof to show that these mistakes are in fact apt to happen. But linguistic usage proves how tenuous is this distinction between witchcraft and things that look like witchcraft. I mentioned before the generic name for the medicines alleged to make invisible—*badúfu*, 'dark place'; now the same word is also used for the medicines which, in popular opinion, are employed by witches, and hence by the adepts in an art itself called 'black' or 'dark'. Again, the 'male' farming *cigbe* called *eshe* shares its name with the male variety of witchcraft. The experts among my informants insisted that the linguistic connection was entirely fortuitous; and it is true that the two names are identical only in Beni country while in the riverain area, for example, one denotes male witchcraft differently. But the ordinary man in Beni country is convinced that the efficacy of this *cigbe* and witchcraft are one and the same thing. Whether these medicines have merely been unhappily named, so that their names came to suggest the identity with witchcraft, I cannot decide: as they are now used they clearly stand for such a judgment (or confusion) of identity.

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Let me anticipate one further point concerning witchcraft beliefs. Since so many *cigbe* look like witchcraft it is pertinent to ask if some do not also serve (or are believed to serve) witchcraft. In Nupe popular opinion witches do use particular *cigbe* to make themselves invisible and, generally, to equip themselves for their nefarious activities. And if persons do not become witches merely through having the required medicine, the latter yet helps, or may even be indispensable since the witch can by no other means defeat the other, protective, medicines which their victims might possess.[1] Witchcraft and anti-witchcraft, in that view, is a battle of *cigbe*. Among the experts, opinions varied. All were agreed on the existence and efficacy of the protective *cigbe*; but while some thought that 'real witchcraft needs no *cigbe*', others considered it at least likely that witches possessed a particular medicine which lent them their sinister powers. None of the experts admitted to possessing or preparing this utterly evil kind of *cigbe*, but a few suggested that certain of their colleagues—always living in other parts of the country—did so and were lying when they disclaimed such knowledge. And here the question must rest.

The fact remains that the medicine experts, though they may deny the knowledge of this most evil *cigbe*, yet admit knowledge

[1] This view is documented in the statement on witchcraft quoted on p. 165.

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*754 of medicines almost as unequivocally evil. The same men, let us
note, will also administer helpful, beneficial, 'good' medicine. On
577 the whole, the latter are more numerous, and are considered more
important when it comes to discussions or arguments. As for the
others, the experts would claim that they take due precautions,
giving the medicine away only to 'good people' and 'for the sake
of God', not for ordinary gain. But these personal qualms do not
explain away the confusion of moral standards and do not answer
the question why practices contemptible by common agreement
should yet be accepted and actively pursued. The answer seems to
lie in the amoral character of the Nupe universe. There it is,
composed of good things and bad, the handiwork of a deity which
unconcernedly sets good beside evil. Man, it would seem, has no
call to improve upon creation. The qualms of the *cigbeciži* are a
concession to social conscience not to religious scruples; in the
last resort they are concerned only with appearances—that their
craft should not look like witchcraft. As regards the evil poten-
tialities of 'medicine', they are accepted with the same optimistic
cynicism with which the Nupe view the very world in which
they live.

6. MODERN INFLUENCES

177 Islam has on the whole brought little change. It bans the hered-
itary medicines, since they approximate to the pagan worship of
755 *kuci* and *kuti*, and may well have caused some of them to dis-
appear. But the craft of the barber-doctors enjoys the respect-
ability of a truly Mohammedan profession; while the medicines of
individuals and the craft of the *cigbeciži* flourish among Moham-
medans no less than among the pagans. Indeed many of these
experts would regard themselves as good Moslems. Even the
Master of the *cigbeciži* dresses like a Moslem, goes to the mosque,
observes the fast and other rules of Islam, and boasts of his
descent from men who served the Mohammedan Emirs of Nupe.

Nor do specifically Moslem practices compete seriously with the traditional craft. A great many mallams administer cures and sell charms or amulets, both prepared in strict accordance with the Moslem creed as they understand it. The cures all take the same form: the attributes of Allah or certain verses of the Qoran are written in ink on a wooden slate which is then washed clean, the inky water being drunk by the patient. The amulets, called *laya* (a Hausa word), consist of pieces of paper similarly covered with sacred writing, which are sewn into small leather cases and worn on the body. But Nupe religious conscience is accommodating: pagans wear the Mohammedan charms as often as Mohammedans

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consult a pagan (or semi-pagan) *cigbeci*. That the powers of *cigbe* are greater as well as more varied few will doubt; nor do the mallams themselves deny that many of the cures and other effects of *cigbe* are beyond their ken. It was, for example, a Moslem scholar of high repute who put me in touch with the *cigbeciži*, being himself a firm believer in the excellence of their art. 177 755

Modern medicine, as practised in hospitals and dispensaries, is a more serious rival. Nupe men and women who for the first time face this novel version of *cigbe* may be suspicious or openly afraid; often they will discontinue the visits to the doctor or dispenser, or leave unused the drugs they are given. A steadily increasing number, however, now have fair confidence in doctors and drugs and would be prepared to admit that our cures are on the whole better than theirs. This is true especially of minor surgical treatments and of injections of all kinds, that is, of treatments utterly unlike the indigenous practices and often 'miraculous' in their effect. This may seem a lukewarm statement; but I do not think that it can be put more positively or optimistically, at least as regards the average Nupe. Administration officials, teachers, and others who have been in close contact with Europeans are exceptions (though only to some extent).[1] Certainly, the Nupe are turning to European medicine much more slowly and waveringly than other African groups I know. 177 755 757

Now these other groups are also more primitive than the Nupe or without a similar, highly organized and would-be rational therapeutic skill. The diverse reaction is thus no accident. Fear and suspicion there would be in either case. But in the more primitive groups organized medicine, as a purely profane skill or knowledge, is entirely novel and unprecedented; it may have to fight religious prejudice, but not its own kind: while in Nupe precisely this is true. Other Africans might feel that European medicine clashes with their religious notions, or identify it with evil magic or witchcraft. The more sophisticated Nupe merely mistrusts the knife which, as everyone knows, 'cannot heal', or cynically suspects the doctors of poisoning patients who fail to recover. At best, he regards the European remedy as one of several possibilities, which he is wont to try out one after the other. And here the odds are not all in favour of the former.

[1] To wit, the following extract from an English composition on *The Hospital*, written in 1936 by a Nupe secondary school boy and corrected by his teacher. 'The disadvantage (of hospitals) is that when a man is taken there to be cured and if the nurses see that they cannot cure him, or perhaps he is given any kind of drugs and he still is exactly opposite as he was brought in, they give him a kind of medicine which makes he will die away.' The teacher found that only the last sentence needed correction, thus—'they give him a poison and he will die'.

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177 755 757 Many cases are already hopeless when they reach the doctors and hospitals, with the result that their remedies will appear to be no better than those of barbers or *cigbeciži*; above all, the European doctor does not profess to cure impotence or sterility, or to procure sterility; so that the most widely sought treatments are also an admitted gap in this new knowledge of 'medicine'.

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VI

WITCHCRAFT AND ANTI-WITCHCRAFT[1]

I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF WITCHCRAFT

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WHEN I first came to Nupe, early in 1934, the topic of witchcraft was one to be avoided. Three years before, the acquittal by the Chief *Alkali* of three alleged witches, a mother and her two daughters, had led to mob violence and to the stoning of the accused in the streets of Bida. Political passion, never quite dormant in the Nupe capital, at once flared up, the town was thrown into violent disorders, and troops had to be called out to quell the riots. Eventually an uneasy peace was restored, severe punishments having been imposed upon the main culprits; but for some years afterwards the relations between Government and the people remained strained and clouded by mutual distrust. The political repercussions of the witchcraft trial do not concern us here.[2] What is important is the strong and deeply rooted belief in witchcraft which the events revealed. And what was important to me at the time was the aftermath of suspicion and fear which the events had left.

When I started work in Nupe no one wanted to talk about these unhappy matters or indeed about witchcraft in general. For the people were not sure that the law had run its course; many feared that it would strike again should new facts come to light. Nor did the people quite know what to make of that law. They well knew that the White Man did not believe in witchcraft, as they also remembered that, not so long ago, the Government had banned the secrect society which had the aim of combating witchcraft; but they did not know what were the Government's intentions concerning the victims of witchcraft. Were they to be left unprotected while the witches went free? Or would the White Man's odd manner of justice perhaps recoil on the complainants? The following story will, I think, illustrate this general bewilderment. In the

[1] A preliminary account of Nupe witchcraft, written after my first expedition, was published in *Africa*, vol. VIII, 1935. The present account, apart from being more complete, also corrects certain errors contained in the earlier one.

[2] See op. cit., p. 423, and *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 126–7.

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small riverain village of Kpatsuwa the nephew of the chief had suddenly disappeared and the people suspected a certain woman of having bewitched the young man. When the chief decided to report the matter to the District Officer, he was given this advice by his more knowledgeable friends in Jebba: 'Just tell him that your nephew has disappeared and no more; the White Man does not like to hear about witchcraft.'

In due course I could overcome the suspicion of the people and their reluctance to discuss witchcraft with a 'white man'. But there remained another, more deeply ingrained, reluctance, which is bound up with the very conception of Nupe witchcraft. Witchcraft is an evil thing, and thus an unpleasant matter to discuss. And witchcraft is also an intangible, mysterious thing, shrouded in secrecy for all but the initiates; and since only witches can really know about witchcraft, no one will wish to betray too much knowledge. It was no accident, then, that those informants who, eventually, gave me the fullest account were by others regarded as witches or at least as the helpers of witches. They themselves denied this; nor was their knowledge as positive and comprehensive as others assumed it to be. Often they admitted that certain aspects of witchcraft were beyond their definite knowledge, and food for speculation only. Let me make it clear that this did not mean that they too were insufficiently informed; it meant that this information did not exist, and could not exist by its very nature. As we shall see, it is this residue of intangible and unknowable things which keeps the belief in witchcraft alive.

There are, then, degrees in the knowledge of witchcraft. To begin with, there is the knowledge of the 'man in the street' as against that possessed by men whose profession bears on matters religious and mystic—the priests of certain cults; diviners who might be consulted when witchcraft is suspected; *cigbeciži* who traffic in medicines which 'look like witchcraft'; and Mohammedan scholars who take a general (and far from contemptuous) interest in the subject. But even the 'experts' are agreed only on the essentials of witchcraft belief, on the doctrinal points as it were; on other issues opinions differ widely and are only stated as such, as personal views, put forth tentatively or speculatively.

As an introduction to the 'doctrine' I propose to quote an account of witchcraft, translated literally, which was dictated to me by a Bida mallam and schoolteacher. The author's somewhat aloof standpoint is reflected in his use of such phrases as 'the people say' or 'the Nupe believe'; but what he says is on the whole what everybody believes, though we shall have to add one or two further facts which are equally matters of general knowledge.

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'The women are those who have witchcraft. The *Lelu* is the one who is the elder (i.e. head) of the witches. If a woman should wish to practise witchcraft, she would go and visit the *Lelu*, saying she desired witchcraft-doing. The witches are wont to forgather at night under a tree; they would hold council as to the place they would be going to that day. The people say that the witches eat the body (*nakã*) of human beings. But it is one by one that they kill a person, the person whose turn it would be that day. The witches would go and look for someone to kill, they would then bring along the body, they divide and eat it. If the witches have no (other) person to kill, they will kill one of their own people, divide the body and eat it. One witch would do thus—kill her son or brother or grandchild, she would bring the body along, they would divide it and eat. But if the witches want money, they would take the man (the victim) to another country and go and sell him (to the witches there).—The Nupe believe that witches have medicine which makes them fly. They would be flying for example from this town to the place where the Hausa live, inside the night, they would return at daybreak. If they intend to kill a person they keep on looking for a person who is not healthy. Then, people say, they have a medicine which eats the life (*rayi*) little by little. They keep him so that he may be eaten, but if they find a person who is not sick, they would seize the shadow (*fifingi*) of the person who is healthy. Then he would begin to be ill, then they keep on eating his life (*rayi*), little by little, until he is dead. But if they find a person who has a medicine against witches, it would help him, he would recover, he would not happen to die.'

Let me add these comments. The word for witchcraft is *ega*, and for witch *gaci* (pl. *gacihi*), the suffix *-ci* indicating the actor or owner,[1] used by itself, *gaci* always denotes females. As the first sentences show, one can 'have' witchcraft, or 'do' and 'practise' it, much as one 'has' or 'practises' a faculty or skill. It is not hereditary; many examples are quoted of witches whose children 'have' no witchcraft or of girls who became witches in a family not otherwise contaminated by witchcraft. But a mother who is a witch may make her child one also, by feeding it on witchcraft *cigbe* or in some other fashion initiating it into the secrets of witchcraft. The method of acquiring witchcraft described in the text, by an approach to the head of the witches, is not the only one; a woman desirous of becoming a witch may also approach another woman who is known to be one and through her gain entry into the circle of witches; or she may buy one of those [193]

[1] Cp. *lati*, farm, and *latici*, farmer; or *cigbe*, medicine, and *cigbeci*, medicine-man.

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mysterious witchcraft medicines we spoke of before. As regards the role of *cigbe* in witchcraft, the text faithfully reflects popular opinion; and if it does not take account of the doubts of the 'experts', it yet makes clear a fundamental point in Nupe doctrine, namely, that witches must *want* to be witches (the infant who is inducted into witchcraft by her mother being an exception). Their evil actions are thus willed, and it makes no sense to speak of a witch who does not know that she is one or acts as such against her will.

The description of how the witches seize the victim's shadow and 'eat' his body or life is ambiguous and less precise than popular opinion on this point. When the witch attacks a person at night in his sleep, it is always his *rayi* or *anima* she feeds on, thus causing the body (*nakã*) to fall ill and waste away. But when the witch takes her victim to the gathering place, where all other witches will feast on him, it is only his shadow soul or *fifíngi* that is brought along and devoured, not the person in the flesh, who remains asleep in his house. Only in rare cases would the witches spirit away the body itself (as in the Kpatsuwa case mentioned before). Normally their handiwork is visible only in the sudden onset of an illness which no ordinary *cigbe* can heal. Often, there is further evidence; the person attacked by witches will have nightmares, see the witch in his dream and cry out her name.

The realism in the mallam's description is again misleading. That witches meet at night in the open, that they hold council, go out on their errands and later share in a communal meal, all this is part of Nupe belief. But no one believes that the witches do these things in the flesh, that is, with their whole and real body. It is only their *fifíngi* which go on these nightly excursions, their bodies, like those of the victims, remaining asleep in their homes. Thus, ultimately, it is a shadow which feeds on shadows, a shadow (of the dreamer) which sees a shadow (the witch), and it is invisible beings who meet at night, when no one is abroad, to commit invisible crimes. In this piling-on of intangible facts lies the unassailability of the Nupe belief in witchcraft: like an imaginary language it cannot be proved to be gibberish.

Though everything about witchcraft happens in an imaginary realm, this comes to earth as it were at two points. First, the accusations of witchcraft are made against real persons, not against shadows or invisible beings, and refer to victims equally real; and secondly, the alleged head of the witches, the *Lelu* mentioned in the text, is again a concrete person. As regards the first point, we shall later discuss the grounds upon which the accusations are founded. But we may at once ask—Does any woman really believe that she has joined the 'society of witches'? And,

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since witchcraft is something you consciously will and have, does any woman in fact entertain such intentions and put them into practice (whatever this may mean)? I cannot answer these questions directly. None of the alleged witches I met confessed to being one, which is hardly surprising; such confessions as might have been obtained in the past under the threats of punishment prove of course nothing. But I see no reason to doubt at least the possibility of individuals believing themselves to be or intending to become witches. The 'medicines' which make you 'like a witch' exist and can be obtained; the wish to avenge oneself on some other person by magic means undoubtedly also occurs, and is again catered for more or less openly by the various protective *cigbe*. Indeed, the Nupe would argue that a woman revengeful in everyday life is likely to entertain also the more sinister desires which make the witch. For my part, I would argue that in the case of neurotic or near-pathological individuals ordinary vindictiveness may turn into the desire to destroy and kill at random, which is precisely the desire witchcraft fantasies would satisfy. Whether such persons employ a 'medicine' or trust the power of their wish alone, does not really matter; in either case its fulfilment is imaginary: so that they cannot *know* if their intentions have been realized. But by the same token they cannot know that this is not the case; for as the imaginary nature of Nupe witchcraft precludes any disproof of its existence, so it precludes the possibility of proving (to oneself or others) that one is not a witch.

To turn to our second point, the acceptance of a real, live head of the witches. Let me admit that this notion puzzled me not a little. Yet there is no ambiguity about it. The head of the witches, the people maintain, is identical with the titled head of the women, who in every Nupe town or village is elected by the women traders and confirmed by the village chief or, in Bida, the *Etsu*. Her normal office is concerned with market affairs and the control of the commercial activities of women. The actual title *Lelu* is said to have been abandoned in Fulani times, having been replaced by two other titles now in use, in Bida by the title *Sonya* (the Nupe-ized version of the Hausa title *Sarauniya*, 'queen' or 'chieftainess'), and in the villages by the title *Sagi* (of unknown derivation). It is difficult to argue about matters of this kind, but the explanation does not sound convincing; I feel tempted to assume, rather, that *Sagi* has always been the woman's official rank, quoted in connection with her secular duties, while *Lelu* was the name for her mystic office, used only in that context. At least, this is the position today. In ordinary conversation the people always refer to the woman in question as *Sagi*, and you ask for her when you wish to meet the head-woman of a village; but when the

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+754 talk is about witchcraft the same woman is referred to as *Lelu*. Whenever, in various villages, I asked to meet the *Lelu*, the question caused neither surprise nor confusion; I was usually quite readily taken to a woman who was introduced to me as the *Sagi* so-and-so.

Now, the *Lelu-Sagi* is said to be elected by the rest of the women because she is known to be a witch, and to be confirmed by the chief on the same grounds. But she is held to be a 'good' witch, who would employ her secret knowledge for the good of the community. Whether she had 'reformed' before being entrusted with the responsibilities of her office, or whether these caused her moral reform, is not a question the Nupe ask themselves or care to answer. The *Lelu* is certainly not a witch who has previously wrought harm (so far as ordinary people can tell); but equally certainly she must 'have' witchcraft to fill her office. For this consists, on the mystic plane, in controlling her colleagues, restraining their nefarious activities, warning the chief of the presence of alien witches, and generally acting as his trusted agent in these matters. Thus, though the *Lelu* is believed to admit new members to the 'society of witches', she is also believed to refuse admission to those whom she considers too dangerous or headstrong. But the *Lelu* is not expected to eliminate witchcraft altogether: she only keeps it within reasonable bounds. To quote a typical information: 'If there is much witchcraft in a village, many people dying of illness, the chief would summon the *Lelu* and order her to restrain the witches, so that the troubles may diminish.' When in a conversation I suggested that the *Lelu* was something like a 'policeman of the witches', my informants agreed that this was an admirable way of putting it.

The principle behind the conception of the *Lelu* thus seems to be that you must set a thief to catch a thief. The question still remains how one knows that one has really got hold of a 'thief' (or a suitable one). I got to know five *Sagis*, one of whom had recently 'discovered' and accused a witch. None admitted that she 'had' witchcraft; but two claimed that they could tell a witch because they had the required *cigbe*. They would not produce it; but since I myself owned this wonderful medicine I was not in a position to argue. As for the other people in these villages, they either knew nothing about the *Sagi's* possession of the *cigbe* or considered it to be further proof that she was indeed a witch; while the women who disclaimed all knowledge of witchcraft were simply thought to be lying. I can only conclude that the *Sagi* is elected and appointed because she is in a strictly concrete sense qualified for the position of a female 'elder', being of a suitable age, the most respected among the women traders, and the ablest

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in this or other female professions; all these things I found in fact to be true of the *Sagis* I met. And I would conclude further, that the position of leadership among the women who practise a trade or profession is apt to be identified with power of witchcraft, as the whole market organization of the women is in a sense identified with the fantasy organization of witches. So that the economic independence of women, which is so largely a moral independence as well, seems to furnish the logical basis for the ascription of witchcraft. Let me break off at this point, which we shall reach again by a different route.

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2. MALE AND FEMALE WITCHES

The Nupe text from which we started requires a final correction. Its summary assumption that only women are witches is somewhat inexact. Women alone are *evil* witches, who would desire to do all the things that witches are supposed to do; but there exist also male witches, who are in some measure their partners in crime. They are odd partners: they do not work evil themselves; they do not go out on the nightly search for human victims; on the contrary, the male witches are said to be 'good' people, who would curb the evil desires of the women. Yet precisely the most sinister effect of witchcraft, the killing of the victim (as against merely weakening his health), is thought to depend on the co-operation of both sexes.

We note the exact parallel to the two fatal 'diseases of God', leprosy and sleeping sickness. There, too, the two sexes appear as the two components of the supernatural threat, which is less grave if one alone is involved, and deadly only when the two are combined; and there, too, the female agent plays the decisive part. In the sphere of witchcraft, that part stands for the active evil will; while the role of the male agent is merely permissive or perhaps negative, that is, consists in *not* willing that the evil intentions be frustrated.

Thus far all Nupe are agreed. But on all other details concerning the alleged partnership of men and women opinions are once more divided. Only in Beni country and around Kutigi are the male witches called by a special name, *esha*; elsewhere one uses *gaci*, and specifies the sex if necessary. If this is not done, the word is taken to refer to women. Most people hold that the male witches are much fewer in number than the female ones; thus it is thought that all the witches in a village, or seven, or three, share one male helper. They would visit him at night to solicit his help; but while some think that it is only the *fifingi* of man and woman who meet in this fashion, others are certain that it is the real persons who do

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so. In the former view the man's share lies merely in giving his consent; in the latter, he supplies the woman with witchcraft *cigbe* and perhaps divines for her a 'lucky' day and the most helpful procedure. In the latter view, too, the male partner in witchcraft is not really a witch but a *cigbeci* or diviner, though one who made a compact with witches. It is interesting to note that this was the opinion of informants who were themselves *cigbeciži* or diviners and claimed to have 'heard' of others (all now dead) who had done this sort of thing. Other informants, who believed in the existence of male witches proper, supplied all manner of details. The male witch, like the female one, must acquire the appropriate *cigbe*, which is prepared by the hunters from grass they pulled out of the mouth of a grazing buffalo. The neophyte must drink an infusion of this grass and wash himself with it for five days, during which period he must refrain from sexual intercourse: afterwards he possesses all the powers of witchcraft so far as they are attainable to men. But he must never eat porridge out of a cracked gourd, lest his powers desert him. Also, the male witch keeps his *cigbe* in an iron bell hidden in the roof of his house, while women carry theirs in a belt or in their hair.

There are no attempts to explain why the true or the more dangerous witches should always be women; and though no one assumes that every evil woman becomes a witch, the question, why some women are only 'bad' in the ordinary sense of the word, and others so evil that they turn to witchcraft, is never raised. In either case 'God made it so', that is, he implanted in certain women that stronger will of evil. Nor can the ordinary person at once tell when evilness is of the less and when of the more harmful kind. The tree is known by its fruits: when a mysterious sickness or sudden death appears in the community, one is clearly in the presence of the greater evil. There are certain procedures, to be discussed presently, whereby the crime can be traced back to the culprit. But more basic than these procedures is the conviction that the person guilty of witchcraft must be a 'bad' person. It is thus that suspicion starts, which the various methods of proof may then confirm (or not). And the suspicion fastens upon the most visible clues of 'badness', the character and everyday behaviour of a person. All informants agree, stating their views in much the same phrases, that a witch is always a woman 'who does not laugh', who never 'plays', who dislikes and resents jokes, who gets angry over trifles, who is always morose and forbidding and never cheerful, who talks little and has no friendly words for anyone. 'Our witchcraft is in the mouth', the Nupe say, that is, is shown by the absence of smiles and pleasant speech; while among the Hausa, for example, 'witchcraft can be seen in the eyes of a

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woman'. Certain of these clues will be borne out by the biographical sketches which I shall later quote. But let me emphasize that they represent merely a 'theory', firmly held though it may be. When I visited a noted witch with one of my informants (who had strongly stressed the morose and stern aspect of witches) I found her to be a pleasant-spoken young woman, whom I could easily make laugh by some small joke. When, later, I pointed out this apparent anomaly, my informant retorted that the woman had merely put on an act to throw off my suspicions; towards her own people she would still be morose and unfriendly. 754x

But even if these clues are mere theory, they help us to understand the ascription of witchcraft to particular persons. If I tried to sum up briefly the Nupe character as it appears to the observer, I should say that the average person is always friendly, pleasant-spoken and polite, very fond of jokes, chatty, and given to ready laughter. To some extent such behaviour is consciously cultivated. To be unfriendly or unpleasant in intercourse is definitely 'bad form'; polite etiquette has been developed to a fine art; and in the routine of social life joking and playing have their appointed place. Whether the rules of etiquette do not sometimes serve to repress fiercer and less placid leanings, we may for the moment disregard: the point is that politeness and pleasantness constitute the accepted ideals of behaviour, the sort of morale the Nupe believe in. And this morale is valid more fully for the women than for the men, since the women stand outside the two provinces of social life where placidity and friendliness are, on occasion, out of place, namely, esoteric ritual and political struggle. [157] [576]

It is, then, the absence of the accepted morale which makes the Nupe suspect witchcraft. The woman who behaves as the Nupe think witches do is one whose character belies the common precepts and ideals of conduct; she is ill-conditioned, eccentric, 'atypical'—what Margaret Mead would call a 'deviant personality'. In other words, the suspicion of witchcraft fastens upon 'abnormality'; not the physical abnormality, say, of cripples, hunchbacks, or strikingly ugly people, which is merely a matter of ill-luck; nor the mental abnormality of lunatics, which is the handiwork of spirits: but the abnormality of social and moral deviants.

Yet ill-conditioned and eccentric individuals, morose and quarrelsome characters, are as frequent among the men and as openly disapproved. The question therefore remains, why this argument should apply to women only. And unless we are prepared to consider this concentration upon female witchcraft to be sheer accident, we must assume that it is in some fashion symptomatic of the life of the society which created the belief. I

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x754 shall in fact make such an assumption, more precisely, I shall assume that the fear of female witches is causally related to certain threats and tensions pervading the social life of the people, being a 'symptom' of these disturbances. Like any psychopathological symptom, too, the witchcraft beliefs contain an indication of the causes from which they spring. As we shall see, the symptoms are easy to read; for the Nupe witchcraft beliefs express the social threats and tensions from which they spring with little disguise. These become visible, in particular, in three sets of facts: first, in the explicit reference, mentioned before, to the market organization of the women; secondly, in the concrete accusations levied against alleged witches; and thirdly, in the existing legends about witchcraft. The first kind of evidence belongs to the formulated statements on witchcraft, and hence to the 'doctrine' proper; the other two, however, to some extent conflict with the doctrine, emphasizing traits of witchcraft which are disregarded or passed over in direct statements and discussions. This fact seems itself important; for it suggests that the traits in question betray fears or desires too vital and too disturbing to be openly admitted. Which assumption, too, will be borne out in the further discussion.

3. SEX ANTAGONISM

x754 773 Let me first quote the witchcraft legends, though this means anticipating a little; for they are concerned less with witchcraft as such than with the origin of the anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá*, which will occupy us later. In fact, the legends do not even mention the words 'witch' or 'witchcraft'; but the implication is clear since they describe how the evil doings of certain women could only be suppressed by a 'secret' which everybody knows is employed against witches only. There are two such legends, one esoteric, being known only to the adepts of the *ndakó gboyá* cult, the other widely known and quoted.

The first legend tells about a 'certain king of Nupe' whose mother was an interfering woman, constantly meddling in his affairs. Whatever the king did his mother would frustrate, so that 'she caused the *Etsu* to be powerless'. At last he consulted a diviner and asked for his help. The diviner instructed the king to procure ten lengths of cloth. The diviner then sewed the pieces together, in the form of a tall, hollow tube, and used a 'secret' on it. The cloth rose up, flew through the air, and dropped upon the king's mother, covering her. It carried her up into the sky, and she was never seen again. From this day on the 'secret' remained a *kuti* of the kings. Whenever a woman is guilty of witchcraft, the king will employ the *kuti*, which is the *ndakó gboyá*.

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The second legend, apart from being more widely known, is also more precise in its 'historical' allusions, naming the Nupe king in whose reign the critical events are said to have occurred; he is the same *Etsu* Shago whose reign saw the discovery of *cigbe*.[1] At the time, the people lived a lawless life, behaving insolently and 'refusing to listen to the Great Men'. Men would steal each other's wives and commit adultery without shame. The older women, especially, caused much trouble; they quarrelled among themselves and 'gave no peace'. The more law-abiding among the men grew angry and spoke harshly to the women; but these 'replied with insolence'. To continue *verbatim*: Now there was a young man, who had great strength. He set out and went into the bush. He then covered his head with cloth, like this (here the informant veiled his head with his gown, holding its end above his head, imitating the cloth mask of the *ndakó gboyá*). He reached the place where the women were causing a disturbance and yelled thus—'*Yi-i-i-i*' (the cry of the *ndakó gboyá*). When the women heard him they fled in fear. But one old woman did not run away. The old men also came, they waited for the woman to give way until they were tired: but she did not run away. The younger ones had all fled and left her alone. Thereupon the old men said to her—'*ezo, ezo*' (the ritual salute of the *ndakó gboyá*).[2] Thus they caught the woman. At last they killed her with an iron rod (*sāyi*). The men said: 'Even though she saw the *kuti* she did not run away; thus she was killed.'

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We note two things: in the legend the evilness of the women implies striking at men or at least at their authority; also, the truly evil woman is pictured as old and as older than her victim or the man helpless against her (the king in the first legend and the young man in the second). On both points the legends side with the practice rather than with the theory of witchcraft, that is, with the concrete accusations, not with the formulated belief. According to the latter, the witch attacks human life at large, not only men, and she can be young or old, married or unmarried. The concrete case histories, however, show that the majority of victims are males, and usually younger men who have fallen under the influence of an older woman, who is then readily identified as the witch; while the alleged witch is always married, and often middle-aged or old. There is a further cleavage between 'theory' and 'practice'. As will be remembered, our text suggested that witches attack their own kin only exceptionally. This notion is

[1] See above, p. 17.

[2] This is not strictly correct. '*Ezo*' is the salute of the *gunnu* priest, but it is here used as though it belonged to the *ndakó gboyá* cult. These and other references to the cult will become clear later (see below, pp. 190 *et seq.*).

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further elaborated in popular belief; for it is generally held that a witch who would attack her own flesh and blood cannot do so alone but must enlist the help of other witches, not related to the victim. Kinship, then, in some measure deflects and frustrates the evil designs of witches. It is in fact true that witches are only rarely accused of harming their own blood relations; I recorded only two cases of this kind, both referring to the witch's own children. But the victims are not necessarily strangers; as often they are affinal relations of the woman witch (her son-in-law, her husband, his brother or the brother's children, or the husband's children by another wife).

From this varied evidence the following picture of the witch emerges: she is the enemy of men and of male authority; she seeks to dominate men; her evilness is somehow bound up with married state and occasionally with old age, that is, age beyond child-bearing; and her evilness is often directed against a husband and his kin. Now all these traits fall into place against the background of that other belief which links witchcraft with the economic position of the women; for seen against this background, and allowing for the fantasy disguise, the witch is accused of doing mystically precisely what the women, in virtue of their economic power, are accused of doing in real life. So that the witchcraft beliefs and fears paraphrase a true state of affairs and the anxieties and frustrations arising from it. Consider, then, for a moment that 'true state of affairs'.

To begin with, a great many Nupe men, peasants as well as craftsmen or members of the 'free professions' in the town, are heavily in debt to their trader-wives, on whom they often have to rely for money for tools, for some unforeseen heavy expenditure, and even for such items as the brideprice of a son or funeral expenses, which it is the man's duty to defray. If this dependence on the wife must detract from the man's proper status as the 'breadwinner', his authority is seriously diminished also by another factor. In the Nupe kinship organization most rights and obligations descend in the paternal line; and as sons (to a lesser extent, daughters) derive their kin group membership (membership of a particular 'house') from their fathers, have a place in their father's home and labour team, and inherit his property, land or profession, so they normally look to him or his male kin for economic support. But where the mother is the richer, the inheritance she will leave will be at least as important, and even while she is still alive her sons or daughters will turn to her for financial help. Frequently, in fact, the mother will pay directly, and not only through loans made to her husband, for a son's marriage, buy him clothes or luxuries, or shoulder the cost of a more expensive

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education. Let me make it clear that the mother is always expected to do the best for her children, and to pamper them in small matters, by giving them sweets, tasty tit-bits, and occasional presents. Nor is her more consequential economic help strictly unexpected and against the rule: but it is a rule of *faute de mieux*, whose coming into play inevitably connotes the failure of the more basic rule, that it is the father's role to meet the economic requirements of the household. Here, as in the instance mentioned before, the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men. 754x 562 593

There is a further point, already touched upon in a previous context. In Nupe, the women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes. This is true even of the many women who only visit the market in the town, the Bida night market being a recognized place of assignation. All this is bad enough in the case of childless women; but in their case such immoral conduct is condoned, if with a shrug of the shoulders. As proverbial, however, as the moral laxity of the women traders is their desire to avoid having children. It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'. They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness. 754x 562 593 842 837

Whether the woman exceeds the proper role of a wife and mother or rejects it, in part or entirely, she has successfully set aside a believed-in social norm. Now, this is no longer an instance of social abnormality, rather the opposite, if by 'normality' we mean all that is common, usual, expected: but it is a normality one hates and regrets, and contrasts with a desired state of affairs unhappily uncommon. This is borne out in every conversation; in the many quarrels between husbands and wives; in the many divorces and separations (and equally in the resigned attitude of husbands); in the comments of the medicine experts which we quoted before; in nostalgic talks of the men about a happier past when 'women knew their place'; and in the exclusion of unchaste and childless women from religious ceremonials. 754x 562 593

This, then, is a clash between ideal and reality. But it is in no sense seen as fortuitous or transitory, as the result of some unfortunate maladjustment which could have been avoided and can conceivably be set right if one only made the effort. The harking-back to 'the good old days' is merely an escape from a reality which one is helpless to alter. For no one speaks about a future when everything should be better than it is now; and though the 754x 562 593 183

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*754 impact of alien influences and the vast increase in trade and traffic
562 in the last few decades may well have aggravated the situation, all
593 the available evidence (of genealogies and life histories) proves that
183 the morals of women and the fate of marriages were, for the last four or five generations at least, much what they are today. Nor is this harking-back more than half-hearted; no one would claim that there was a time when all women were chaste and submissive, when they did not trade and earn money, and when contraceptive practices were unknown. Indeed such a claim, were it ever made, would be belied by the character of the *gunnu* ritual and by various legends and stories. Briefly, for the people the ideal was always out of step with the reality; so that we must judge this conflict to be inherent in the make-up of the society, whose economic system (which has certain moral consequences) is as unquestioned as are its ethical conceptions (which condemn these consequences).

*754 This is important: for it is the inescapable nature of the conflict
154 which finds expression in the belief in women witches. Nupe
562 society, forced into an ambivalent attitude towards the role of women, which it cannot but accept and cannot but hate and call evil, also ascribes to them the powers of witchcraft. The coincidence as such is a matter of observed fact. But we can go further, and interpolate the psychological mechanism which turns the coincidence into a causal nexus, and hence enables us to call one thing the 'cause' and the other the 'symptom'. The mechanism is familiar: it lies in the projection of internal conflicts and of the frustrations so caused upon an external agent, real or imaginary. In our case, the awareness of an ideal state disturbed fastens upon the successful disturber; the helplessness in the face of a threatening situation turns into the positive fear of persons; and while one is incapable of dealing with the situation, one can at least deal with concrete individuals, whom one can accuse, persecute, and punish. So that in being made the witches of the society, the women are made to carry its fault or failure.

It is clear that this explanation holds good only on the assumption that the beliefs in witchcraft have been fashioned by men; for on almost every point we argued from a male standpoint. The legitimacy of this assumption need hardly be defended. The assertion of mundane morality, through legal institutions, falls to the men exclusively; above all, Nupe religion, its practices and doctrine, are fundamentally a male concern; and as it is the men who know and speculate about religion and have charge of the transmission of religious knowledge, so the notions of witchcraft must have been their creation. Situations of this kind are of course common; a great many societies are in this sense men-made and men-run; and if, like Nupe, they also afford considerable initiative and import-

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ance to women, they often, once more like Nupe, take back with one hand what they give with the other, that is, punish the permitted presumption by producing some belief in female witchery (whether taken literally or not). 754x 154 562

But the male standpoint does not hold throughout; for the Nupe condemnation of voluntary sterility represents the women's judgment as much as the men's. From earliest youth the women accept child-bearing as the mission of their sex. If later in life they deny it, they deny what they know to be 'human nature': hence their furtive dealings with the medicine-man abortionist and the admitted shamefulness of this traffic. Let me stress that this means more than an attempt to evade the moral judgments of others. The Nupe woman has her lovers openly, and as openly flaunts her wealth and independence, the adverse moral judgments of the men notwithstanding. So that, in hiding the shame of not wanting children she hides a shame of which she is aware and a guilt which she accepts. This guilt is probably shared much more widely; for every woman who takes concrete steps to avoid child-bearing there must be another who at least harbours the secret desire. However this may be, like the frustration of the men, the guilt of the women, open or secret, is projected into the picture of the female witch. For the women equally accept this picture. Though they may not have created the witchcraft beliefs, they yet have a hand in transmitting them and keeping them alive; at least, they share in gossip of this kind, if less openly than the men, and fabricate such stories. Whenever they do, they speak as accusers, vehemently denying that the role of the witch could apply to them. Even so, they accuse their own sex and, circuitously, themselves.[1] [837]

The men, then, in the witchcraft fantasies, condemn an antagonist; the women, in the same vicarious fashion, condemn their own guilt. In the concrete punishment, however, which witches are expected to suffer the male standpoint once more emerges paramount. It is the men alone who battle with witches, defeat and chastise them, through the male society of *ndakó gboyá*, as it is also the men who, in the legends about witchcraft, are credited with the discovery of this weapon; and this, as we shall see, is employed, not only to trace and punish the culprits, but also to threaten and to subdue the womenfolk at large.

There is a certain twist to this picture of male vengeance. In the legends the men, in the person of the diviner and the 'old man', are straightforward destroyers of witches. But general

[1] Margaret Mead has drawn attention to the nexus between witchcraft beliefs and willed female sterility (see *Male and Female*, 1949, pp. 232–3). Her views, stated in a broader context, bear out much of what I have tried to say.

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belief assigns to them a more ambiguous role, holding that some —the diviners, medicine-men, and 'male witches'—also assist the female witch and hence become her partners in crime. This may still seem to be only a fantasy paraphrase or 'projection' of real life, where the man's role is similarly ambiguous; for he will both claim domestic authority and surrender it, thus so-to-speak aiding and abetting the female ambitions. In a more subtle sense, however, the witchcraft fantasies stand for the triumph of the male. Consider that the woman witch, to be successful, must make a compact with men—diviners, *cigbeciži* or male witches. Her fullest, that is, deadly powers depend on male aid, so that the men can curb her activities and frustrate her designs. Indeed one firmly clings to the belief that this is nearly always so, and that the male witch is 'good' and the female alone 'evil'. If a few men, whom no one can name, are willing to 'aid and abet' women witches, they have as it were betrayed their own sex; even so, their help has to be begged by the female witch. In brief, the men, victims of female ascendancy in real life and victims of female witchcraft in fantasy, are on the same fantasy plane also the masters of the women; and if in one sense female evilness may prevail, in another it exists on sufferance, subject to male permission and, ultimately, revenge.

So understood, the fantasy picture of witchcraft conjures up a relationship between the sexes which reverses reality, putting power for helplessness and dominance for submission. The projection of the conflict between reality and ideal thus merges with its resolution in terms of a wish-fulfilment. We conclude that Nupe witchcraft beliefs afford a double relief: the frustrations caused by a hated 'normality' are not only externalized so that they can be vented on concrete victims, but also spirited away and compensated in fantasy.

Both the projective mechanism and this other mechanism of 'compensation', which we interpolated between 'cause' and 'symptom', between certain conflicts and frustrations and the belief in female witchcraft, operate unconsciously, though the conflicts and frustrations themselves are fully conscious. But it might be asked if the 'causes', too, are not likely to reach down into the unconscious and to a level deeper than that represented by conflicts over authority, kinship position, or morality. These are all motives entailed in a particular social organization. And since the belief in female witchcraft is widespread throughout human society it would seem legitimate to search also for a cause of a more fundamental order, over and above those peculiar to this one type of society. The Nupe witchcraft beliefs, with their dichotomy of 'good' male and 'evil' female witches, indeed seem to point in that direction, towards some basic antagonism of the sexes.

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To substantiate this hypothesis I may be allowed to digress a little. It is, I think, true to say that man surrenders to woman his virility in the sex-act and his independence and self-containedness in the love relationship; the fulfilment of his desires is thus bought with the sacrifice of Ego-completeness. If we take this sacrifice to be unconsciously hateful, as I think we must, and accept this ambivalence of love-hatred as the source of an inescapable antagonism having no normal or legitimate outlet, then the belief in female witches (of the Nupe or any other people) represents a 'displacement' and licensed expression of the repressed hatred. The phrase 'having no normal outlet' requires some comment. Different cultures fashion the normal social relationship between the sexes in widely diverse ways, as has been amply demonstrated in the work of Margaret Mead. But few societies can by this means fully resolve the conflict of sex antagonism. If the society makes the men the socially dominant sex, it is able to compensate for the surrender of virility but fails to express the importance of the woman as sexual partner and procreatrix, and hence invites male fears of female revenge; and if the social dominance of men is reduced, either by design (as in some societies) or in consequence of uncontrollable social processes (as in Nupe), this produces the kind of situation we have been discussing. There is some evidence that a carefully balanced relationship between the sexes can avoid this impasse.[1] But where it does not, the psychological mechanism of projection, with its offer of vicarious or fantasy hatreds, comes into play.

Now this is only a bare formula, couched in terms of universal validity. Let me fill it in with details from Nupe society. To begin with, the 'surrender' and loss of 'completeness' on the part of the men may be felt more strongly in some societies than in others, that is, reach consciousness to a different degree. The Nupe men, certainly, make much of the physically weakening effects of sexual intercourse, and teach the younger generation to husband their strength; they also, as we know, readily employ aphrodisiacs and so betray their fear of the loss of potency. At the same time, they will comment on the sexual voraciousness of the women, who never seem to have enough lovers. The Nupe, incidentally, do not conceive of erotic relationships that could avoid this threat to their virility: homosexuality among the men does not seem to occur and is thought absurd as well as repulsive. Yet again, homosexuality does occur among the women, which fact is well known to the men.[2] For the Nupe, then, the woman is more 'complete'

[1] See my chapter on 'Dual Descent in the Nuba Hills', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, pp. 354 ff.
[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 152.

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in herself than the man and her sex less vulnerable; above all, her satisfaction, more insatiable than the man's, threatens his virility. So that everything we said before, in general terms, about male 'surrender' and 'incompleteness' is sharply accentuated in Nupe culture.

Everything, too, reappears, appropriately rephrased, in the witchcraft fantasies: witches feed on the life and strength of a man as women do on his virility; and his anxieties are allayed or compensated in a wish-fulfilment which sees the female witch incomplete, possessed only of half her power without a help she must beg of men.[1]

Admittedly, the witchcraft legends fail to corroborate this view, containing nothing that could be construed into a reference to the sexual dominance of women. Rather on the contrary: in the first legend the witch is a 'mother' dominating her son; and though the second legend enlarges upon the licentiousness and sexual greed of the young women, the really dangerous 'witch' is pictured as an old hag against whom younger men are helpless. But the aspect of female dominance is there; and if it is removed from the sphere of sex it is brought closer to the overt anxieties and frustrations of the Nupe men. They face precisely this threat, from 'mothers' who assume an illegitimate power in the family, and from overbearing women who abandon their role of partners in marriage. Perhaps the 'old woman' too fits into the picture; for being 'old' means being beyond child-bearing; so that the figure of a woman who has left child-bearing behind would seem to stand for all the women who reject it. If then, the legends fail to express the antagonism between the sexes in its basic and universal form, they express instead the immediate, concrete conflicts of the society. In other words, of two possible motivations the legends embody one.

This leads me to my final point. This new explanation, in terms of a basic sex antagonism, neither overrules nor clashes with those previously suggested, in terms of other motivations. Rather, they are all valid, relating to different aspects or elements of that total phenomenon, the Nupe witchcraft beliefs. It is indeed a fundamental feature of social phenomena, if they are of any complexity, that they tend to embody a plurality of motives, belonging to varying levels of human concern, impulse, and consciousness. Our several explanations reflect this plurality of motives; more pre-

[1] I am aware that psycho-analysts may read the facts differently and relate the fantasy picture of female witches to a love-hatred of women which has its roots in the man's mother-imago, or in the conflict between 'tenderness' and 'sexuality' in love, or perhaps in the sadistic components of the sex act. I will only say, briefly, that my analysis of Nupe society does not bear out these alternative explanations.

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cisely, there had to be three explanations, corresponding to different levels of motivation, which are levels of generality as well. The first was concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to concrete individuals: this we related to the overt value judgments of the people, that is, to the conscious assessment of socially desirable conduct and character traits. The second explanation was concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to the female sex: here the processes creative of the belief were unconscious though set in motion by judgments on socially desirable behaviour and by the conscious conflict between ideal and reality. The third explanation, once more concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to women, was in terms of unconscious impulses springing from an unconscious conflict: and this we took to be determined, no longer by particular social circumstances, but by events on that 'deeper level' on which sex antagonism, in man everywhere, has its play. There is perhaps a further, most general level of enquiry; for we may clearly ask why there should be witchcraft at all? why people should believe in such a deadly evil inexorably vested in some of their kind? This question must for the moment be postponed.

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4. SYMPTOMATOLOGY: CASE HISTORIES

As has been said, only a witch, or a person possessing the appropriate *cigbe*, is able to tell a witch; others can only suspect the presence of witchcraft, however reliable the indications. The clues employed in this work of detection are similarly divided, into esoteric signs visible only to the fellow witch or sorcerer, and the crude indications which everyone can read. The former are, needless to say, entirely intangible and mystical. Thus at night you may see witches breathe fire (if you are yourself a witch); if a lesser witch meets a more powerful one, tears will spring to the eyes of the former; witches, finally, see one another in their dreams. Persons possessing a *cigbe* which makes them like witches should also be able to see or recognize them, and such medicines, as I have said, are in fact produced; but a few sceptics dismiss these claims as so much idle talk. It is a highly qualified scepticism, casting no doubts on the witchcraft beliefs as such. The Master of the *cigbeciti* summed it up most clearly, in this analogy: 'We see the lightning; we say *Sokó* causes it: but has anyone seen him do it? So we see what witches do, but who says he has seen a witch is lying.' The mystery which surrounds the manner of beholding witches extends also to their appearance; for the Nupe have no clear picture of what a witch looks like save that she looks horrid and fearful.

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Though ordinary persons cannot see witches, dogs and cats can,

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x754 and will give sound when witches are about (one of the case histories to be quoted presently, mentions a 'clue' of this kind). Ordinary mortals find their clues only in the tangible effects of witchcraft. Some of these sound rather childish. If, for example, you walk on the road and pass a person, and you suddenly fall into a hole which you feel quite sure 'has not been there before', then the person you passed was a witch; or if you watch two persons fight, one strong and powerful and the other thin and weak, and the former has it all his own way until, without apparent reason, he suddenly collapses and feels pain, then his opponent is obviously a witch. These two 'clues' refer both to male witches and female ones, and so do not necessarily indicate the truly evil and dangerous power of witchcraft. A more serious sign is mentioned in a number of stories. They are about men who had some quarrel, however slight, with a woman and immediately afterwards suffered from severe pains in the head and eyes, the eyes becoming inflamed and the sight affected, which proved the woman in the case to have been a witch. We note the quarrel which preceded the illness: the specific 'clue', then, implies that more general belief that witches are always vindictive women, who cannot stand opposition and are ready to punish the slightest injury.

The case histories supply few further criteria. The witch may be pretty or ugly, a local woman or a stranger, old or young (though more often the former), married, divorced, or widowed, childless or a mother. Oddly enough, the suspicion of witchcraft against a widow or divorcee does not always discourage suitors, nor does the charge of witchcraft always cause the husband to seek divorce. Yet the husband faces an unpleasant future (the chances of being 'bewitched' apart), since he will be as friendless and disliked as his wife. This is no heroic indifference, but the indifference of men resigned to their wives' misdemeanours, real or mystical.

Let me, in conclusion, quote four case histories, selected both for their variety and their intrinsic interest.

(1) The women in the case are the three accused in the Bida witchcraft trial, the husband of one of them being my informant. Her name was Wusa, and my informant her second husband. She was first married to a farmer in a hamlet outside Bida, but there was a quarrel and the marriage broke up. After her divorce Wusa returned to her home in the town, both her parents being still alive. There she met my informant, who fell in love with her and married her. The couple lived happily for ten years or so, having no children. Wusa had a younger sister, Aramatu, also married in Bida. That marriage was an unhappy one; husband and wife often quarrelled, and the husband used to beat his wife. On one such

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occasion the mother of the two sisters was present, and spoke harshly to the husband, who shortly afterwards fell ill and died. It was then that people began to suspect Wusa and her family of witchcraft; there was plenty of gossip, and when Aramatu later married her late husband's younger brother, in the usual Nupe levirate, people called him a 'witch's man' and avoided his company. The couple were living on the farm but frequently came to town to stay with Aramatu's mother; this gave rise to new gossip, for it is very unusual for a Nupe man to pay such visits to his mother-in-law, and the people concluded that Aramatu's second husband had come completely under the influence of the two women. 754x

The matter was brought to a head a few years later, by an event that happened in Wusa's household. She was then about thirty-five or forty, and had a guest, a Hausa employed as Muezzin in a Bida mosque, staying in the house. One day he complained about the food Wusa gave him to eat; she resented his remarks and the two quarrelled. Shortly afterwards they had another quarrel, over a trivial matter, the Hausa flying in a rage and striking Wusa in the face so that her nose bled. Wusa's mother happened to visit her that day, found her crying, and was told the reason; apparently nothing further happened then, though my informant was away at the time and found his mother-in-law gone when he returned. He comforted his wife, who was still crying as well as furious, and thought no more about it, until, a fortnight later, the Hausa fell ill, suffering from severe headache and inflammation of the eyes, and suddenly died. Now everyone, the husband included, was convinced that Wusa as well as her mother and sister were all dangerous witches. The three women were formally charged with the crime, with the results described before.

(2) The events here described happened shortly before my second visit to Jebba Island, in the up-river village of Kpatsuwa. The story, much fuller of mystery and miraculous features, was well known in all the riverain villages, and it is interesting to quote two versions, one from Kpatsuwa itself, where I learned it from the people most closely concerned, and the other from Jebba, where it was told me by a man who knew about the events from hearsay only. The two versions, as we shall see, differ not a little, the hearsay version representing clearly something like an incipient myth. To begin with the local account.

The brother's son and prospective heir of the old chief of Kpatsuwa, a young man called Braima, was married to a pleasant young woman, but was also friendly with a much older woman, called Ketswamasa, who was the wife of a friend of his, a local drummer. The relationship between Ketswamasa and Braima was 754x 572

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754 of the kind known as *nnâkata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. Influential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

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754 Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

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The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

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out to relieve nature, called out to him, heard him say that he was coming, but never saw him again. The house where all this happened stood far away from the water, so that Braima could not have fallen in the river. The people knew at once that this was witchcraft, and the *Sagi* (my informant said, 'the *Lelu*') denounced Ketswamasa to the chief; for she claimed that she had seen Ketswamasa hide the young man's body in a baobab tree. Also, the day after the disappearance, Braima's dog started barking at the tree, keeping on for three whole days, which seemed to confirm the *Lelu's* story. The chief was too afraid to take action at once; eventually, he summoned Ketswamasa and ordered her to surrender to him her witchcraft 'medicine', which he in fact obtained, though he never mentioned the fact when the police began investigations. The people of Kpatsuwa, however, were still worried, and sent a deputation to the missionary in Mokwa, to the *Alkali*, and to Bida. The deputation returned, having failed to obtain any promise of help against the witch. Ketswamasa, the informant admitted, had never previously done any wrong, but was sure to 'do more now'. He concluded by advising me, on my forthcoming trip to Kpatsuwa, to ask the chief straight out for the 'box' in which the witch had kept her *cigbe*. (I did so, but was told that there existed neither a *cigbe* nor a 'box'.)

The Jebba version, then, fills in certain miraculous details (the hiding of the body in the baobab tree), adds certain accepted *motifs* of witchcraft (the barking of the dog, the witch's 'medicine'), and so, in a sense, conventionalizes the story. It equally increases the mystery and precludes more firmly any conceivable rational explanation, for example, that Braima might have slipped in the dark and fallen in the river. This explanation is probably the true one; for the whole thing happened in November, when the river was high, and outside a house standing on a slippery buff overlooking the river. Perhaps, too, Braima, who had been drinking all evening, had not been too steady on his legs. Some time later, the body of a drowned man was in fact fished out of the river at Jebba. The police made enquiries, and though the face of the drowned man was too disfigured to permit complete identification, he wore a ring which Braima's wife identified as having belonged to her husband.

It is interesting to record the reactions of the interested parties when I taxed them with this fact. The Kpatsuwa people said doubtfully that the drowned man 'might have been' Braima, but added that, in any event, this was only his *nakã*, while the witch destroyed his *fifingi* and *rayi*; my informant in Jebba maintained that the body was definitely not Braima's, the ring being only proof of another witchery. As regards the alleged witch, I gathered

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from the comments of the Kpatsuwa *Sagi* and other women, that they all disliked Ketswamasa, whom they called unfriendly and overbearing, though they admitted that she was a clever and successful woman. But it is likely that the accusation of witchcraft was inspired, not only by this general and orthodox disapproval of an unpleasant personality, but by specific jealousies—on the part of the *Sagi*, who may have feared a future rival, and on the part of Braima's wife, who may have hated her husband's patroness.

(3) This case history contains a number of unusual features. It concerns a middle-aged woman from Jebba Island, called Adi, who seems to have led a blameless life until certain events in 1934. There was one thing, though: Adi had become a frequent visitor of the local mission, in spite of several attempts by her husband and family to stop her. Now, the Nupe attitude towards missionaries is not hostile or even unfriendly; but the missions gain their following and their converts only from among strangers or people without kin or friends, all 'decent' persons keeping aloof. Perhaps, then, Adi's intimacy with the missionaries made her unpopular; certainly, suspicion readily fastened upon a woman who was thus flouting her kin and disregarding the common rules of conduct. Thus, when a woman in the Kede camp on the island, whom Adi knew but slightly, died suddenly and mysteriously, it was generally believed that, before her death, she had cried out Adi's name; gossip at once called her a witch, and when, shortly afterwards, a child of Adi's husband by a co-wife died, everyone was convinced, the child's mother being the first openly to accuse Adi of witchcraft. Her husband drove her from the house, and she went to live with a daughter. Her daughter firmly maintained to me and others that her mother was not a witch; but about that time an attempt was made, probably by someone in her family, to poison Adi. She was saved by the missionaries, but continued to be regarded as a dangerous witch, so dangerous that her story was told me in utmost secrecy and on condition that I reveal it to no one in Jebba (an odd request this, considering that nearly everybody knew it).

(4) The last case history is the least circumstantial. I am quoting it for this very reason; for it shows how the suspicion of witchcraft can arise and grow without being helped either by precise 'clues' or by definite personal hostilities. This is the case of the young woman whom I visited and found so conspicuously different from the accepted notion of gloomy, severe, and unfriendly witches. She was a native of Doko, where she had first been married to a peasant, bearing him two children. Both died in short succession, and the husband shortly afterwards divorced her, though only on

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the grounds that she had neglected her children and so caused them to fall ill and die. If anyone suspected her of witchcraft at the time, he did not say so openly. The young woman then married a trader in Bida, engaging in trade herself. The second marriage was childless and apparently happy, until, four or five years later, the husband's young sister, who lived in the same house, fell ill and died. Also, the husband's trade seems to have gone badly, while his wife's business prospered. It was then that the suspicion of witchcraft began to be voiced. When I was in Bida all the neighbours were convinced that the woman was a witch; so was her husband, who told me so himself in strict confidence. All the same, he continued to live with her. He admitted that 'he was afraid' as well as that his wife was unfaithful to him and had many lovers. But, he added, there was nothing he could do about either of these things. And this was the state of affairs when I left Bida.

I recorded five other case histories, which add little that is new. Let me then draw up a brief summary. In every case the accusation seized upon an unexplained sudden death or some rapid deadly illness. The latter was not always mysterious; in two cases it was a well-known disease, smallpox and dysentry: invariably, however, death was said to have come within a few days. In seven cases (out of nine) the victim was a male, and in five of these, a young man bewitched by an older woman; in the remaining two cases and one other the 'witch' attacked children (her own, her husband's brother's, or a co-wife's); only in one case was the victim another woman. The case histories make it clear that one does not invariably look for reasons to explain the witch's anger or vindictiveness against her victim; three of the instances quoted and one other are without motives of this kind. Rather, the suspicion fastens upon the woman's character as a whole, which always betrays the wish to dominate or oppose men, or at least to reject the submissiveness expected of women. Our first two case histories, where the 'witch' is a mother-in-law, an unpleasant hostess, and the ambitious patroness of a young man, are as it were textbook examples. But the crucial character traits are as plain in the case of the woman who runs off to the mission or in that of the wife who neglects her children, is unfaithful to her husband, and becomes his successful rival in trade. The case histories not quoted complete the picture: there the witch is a woman who cheats a young man of his pay (and bewitches him when he complains); who berates her husband's younger brother for contributing too little to the household budget; or lords it over a husband feeble in character and sick in body.

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5. COUNTERMEASURES

x754 794 Neither the evidence which should precede the countermeasures nor these themselves are uniform or rigidly laid down; rather, there are a number of alternative procedures, employed as chance and expediency may dictate. One can, to begin with, rely on the official 'witchfinder', the *Lelu* or *Sagi*. Then there is that incontrovertible 'proof', the naming of the witch by the victim in dream or delirium, which must occur five times to be truly conclusive; but this testimony is not always applicable nor does one always wait for it. Nor yet does proof by ordeal seem indispensable, although the Nupe know two such methods. The first consists in the application of the snake-bite medicine *wasa* mentioned before, which the accused is made to drink, the belief being that a true witch would be killed by a snake. The second ordeal is administered by the masked members of the *ndakó gboyá* society, who would take the suspect woman into the bush and make her scratch the ground with her finger-nails; if after a time (left to the discretion of the inquisitors) blood comes out from under her finger-nails, this proves her to be a witch. No informant could remember a concrete case when the first ordeal was applied; while the second disappeared with the official ban on the *ndakó gboyá*.

683 x754 794 A witch convicted by one or the other method might be warned by the village chief, perhaps also fined, and if possible ordered to repair the harm she had done; an unrepentant witch was formerly flogged and driven from the village. Several informants maintained that a witch was never killed, since this would bring the revenge of all other witches upon the community; but according to others a dangerous witch was denounced to the *Etsu* Nupe, who would hand her over to his executioners. Above all, there are various magic means whereby witches are killed or at least frightened and subdued, though several of these have disappeared in most of Nupe country and are today known from hearsay only. One such method appears to have employed the bull-roarer (called *vúgu-vúgu*;[1] another consisted in a dance called *kútúkpa* (a word [535] denoting the clanging noise made by a galloping horse), which is said to have afflicted witches watching it with a swollen throat, so that they could not swallow or eat and must die of hunger.[2] Only

[1] I met with an amusing 'secularized' version of the bull-roarer in Katcha, where the nightwatchman of the Niger Company used it to frighten off burglars.

[2] This method, too, has in a sense been secularized. For the steps and passes of the dance and the fantastic dress worn by the dancers have been preserved in another dance, called *sorogi* (a species of tortoise), which is meant for entertainment only and is frequently performed by groups of young men touring the country after the end of the farming season.

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two deadly weapons against witches have survived. The first is private as well as casual, and consists in the anti-witchcraft *cigbe* which individuals can acquire; the second, public and ritualized, lies in the *ndakó gboyá* cult and in the activities of the society of that name. In Nupe eyes, it is the most powerful weapon of its kind, and since its inception, probably several generations ago, it seems to have overshadowed all other anti-witchcraft measures.

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As we know, the cult has merged with the main ritual of Nupe, the *gunnu*, where the *ndakó gboyá* masks appear during the vigil in the bush, to frighten novices, warn the youths to obey their elders, and whip offenders.[1] If in this context the apparition of *ndakó gboyá* is suggestively called 'the policeman of the *gunnu*', the 'police' duties extend to witchcraft also; for the masks reappear later, during the public phase of the ceremonial, to frighten all women, to discourage would-be witches, and to weaken, by their very presence, the evil powers of witchcraft. If the *ndakó gboyá* is thus thought of as a deterrent and preventive, it may also assume the character of punishment proper; for the masks are expected to drag the suspects into the bush, subject them to the ordeal described before, and kill the 'proved' witch—unless she pays a heavy ransom, which loophole, as we shall see, has far-reaching consequences.

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But this is only the combination of two distinct cults. It is well understood that the peculiar powers of the *gunnu* do not depend on this addition to its ceremonial, customary though it had become. And as each cult has its own specific aims, so it can, at least on occasion, be performed independently. Nor have the officiants of the *ndakó gboyá* anything to do with the officiants or the priest of the *gunnu*. Normally, in fact, the former are strangers in the village where they perform, being members of a 'secret' society represented only in a few localities and called in specially for the occasion. Furthermore, in the north and east of Nupe, where this society never established its influence, the combination of the two cults is unknown. It is true, however, that in the rest of the country popular opinion, unaware of the esoteric organization of the *ndakó gboyá*, often confuses the two.[2] It is possible that this view was encouraged by the society itself since it kept that organization in the dark. A line in the *gunnu* songs, for example, seems cleverly designed to obscure by its ambiguous meaning the relationship between the two cults. It reads—'*gunnukó u yi Gboyá*', which may mean either 'the *gunnu* priest calls the *Gboyá*'

[1] See above, p. 83.

[2] This applies especially to foreigners. Thus the Yoruba neighbours of the Nupe call the *ndakó gboyá* cult *igunnu*.

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*754 (a correct statement of the fact that the secret society is called in
794 by the *gunnu* priest), or 'the Great *gunnu* is the *Gboyá*'.

The full name of the cult means 'Grandfather' or 'Ancestor *Gboyá*'; the latter word is neither a personal name nor a word that has any other meaning, though it contains the recognizable root *gbo* 'to be large' (in a physical sense). The expression 'Grandfather' in this connection has no ancestral connotation but merely indicates a show of respect. The masked apparitions also command a special address or salute, namely, *nyentso saǵba*, 'One who puts to flight'. The name *ndakó gboyá* is employed for the ritual performance as such, for the masks appearing in it, and for the 'spirit' the masks are thought to represent; the cult members are simply referred to as *ndakó gboyáži*, 'the *Ndakó gboyá*-ones', and their organization is called the 'society' of *ndakó gboyá*.

*754 The masks of the *ndakó gboyá* are unlike any other masks used
794 in the cults of Nigerian peoples. They bear no similarity to human
532 or animal features; each mask consists of a long tube made of white cotton cloth, just wide enough for a man to stand inside, which is suspended from a wheel-shaped bamboo frame fixed to the top of a tall pole, about twelve feet in length. The man representing the spirit stands inside the cloth tube which comes down to the ground, holding the pole in his hands. He will move about with varying speed, occasionally jumping and running, and lift and lower the pole or incline it this way or that, making the cloth tube swing and sway: which motions make up the 'dance' of the *ndakó gboyá*. There are two small slits at eye-height in the cloth; but the dancer can see little through them, and depends on the help of assistants (two or four in number and known as the 'servants' or 'interpreters' of the *ndakó gboyá*), who lead him along and clear the way for him, carrying sticks to drive back the onlookers. In large ceremonials up to ten masks may be employed, though normally there will be two or three, or even one only.

*754 It is always a strictly kept secret who is inside the mask. Even
794 when you know every member of a local *ndakó gboyá* society (as I did) and therefore know that one of them must be the dancer in the mask, the people will refuse to answer such questions. Nor will they agree to an informal rehearsal merely to show you the technique of the thing; for to step inside the mask is already a magic or mystic action, which requires the appropriate setting and preparations. The performer must first drink and wash himself with the *cigbe* which alone gives him the 'strength' to represent the *ndakó gboyá* and, before this, must sacrifice beer and fowl over the *cigbe* shrine and the cloth masks. Nor does the profane phrase 'to represent the *ndakó gboyá*', do justice to the situation. To begin with, the 'medicine' used by the performer is the *badúfu* kind

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which makes you 'like a witch'; once more, then, the rule holds that it needs Beelzebub to drive out Satan. Furthermore, once the performer is inside the mask he is inseparable from the thing he 'represents'; he *is* the *ndakó gboyá*, the people insist, and no longer so-and-so, whom you know and have talked to. Once during the ceremonial I offered food and drink to the 'man in the mask', suggesting that he must be in need of refreshments after his exhausting performance. My offer was ridiculed and I was told (as I had expected) that 'spirits do not eat'. Any person who has not been initiated into the *ndakó gboyá* society or has omitted the preparatory rites would be killed by the mask as soon as he entered it. The mask, of course, is just cloth, and must be cut and tailored; many masks also show patches and signs of repair. But again, once the sacrifice has been performed over them, they are no longer merely a material object, but the thing itself which they signify.

It is not easy to say what that 'thing' is. I have called the *ndakó gboyá* a spirit, partly for the sake of convenience and partly because this is the popular interpretation. But its nature is more indefinite. It is not one of the numerous *aljenúši* which people the world: it is only 'like an *aljénu*', that is, non-human, powerful in a mystical sense, normally invisible (unless embodied in the dancing mask), endowed with the same kind of voice spirits have—an inarticulate, whining falsetto, sounding 'like the wind'—and a creature of *Sokó*. Now understood like this, the *ndakó gboyá* stands apart from the whole body of Nupe belief. But to say it again, this is only the cruder, popular view. There is another, esoteric explanation, which links the *ndakó gboyá* belief more closely with the conceptual framework of Nupe religion. It is rarely offered in so many words. It was given me by the Master of the *ndakó gboyá* society when he said that the *ndakó gboyá* was not a spirit, but *asiri gboká*—a 'strong secret', that is, a knowledge or skill of a mystical and powerful kind. We remember that the same interpretation is expressed in the two legends about the origin of the *ndakó gboyá*. They do not describe it as a 'spirit', but merely as a 'secret', as something implying 'great strength', and as the knowledge of some mysterious, supernatural way of acting. They equate the *ndakó gboyá* with that principle of a mystical force, capable of being invoked and manipulated by man, which is embodied in the Nupe concept of *kuti*; indeed, in the concluding phrases of the legends it is referred to by that name.

The legends also illustrate certain other features of the *ndakó gboyá*, such as the voice of the apparition and the salute due to it. The iron rod (*sāyi*) mentioned in the second story is one of the paraphernalia of the cult; and the description of the cult in the first story as a '*kuti* of kings' bears on the important link between the

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secret society and Nupe kingship. The legends, however, are silent both about the society itself and the beginnings of its organization, dealing only with the origin of the 'great secret', not with the machinery devised to exploit it. For an account of the latter we must turn to the more prosaic and rational traditions preserved in the family of the Masters of the cult. Oddly enough, in this quarter the legends are unknown; the present Master was unacquainted even with the esoteric version which, according to my informants, was taught to their forefathers when they were initiated into the society. I can only conclude that, with the growth of the purely secular (that is, political) machinery of the secret society, the men at the centre lost interest in these, to them, recondite stories. The present Master did not call them untrue; he thought that they might well be true, referring to events in other parts of the country of which he no longer had any knowledge. This was also the way he thought of the *ndakó gboyá*, as a 'secret' somehow discovered, and later put to organized use by his society: it was this 'later' phase of which he was eager to speak. I must add, finally, that in certain places on the south bank of the Niger the legends are entirely unknown. There the people hold that the *ndakó gboyá* had been among the various magic secrets which Tsoede brought to Nupe. They thus regard the anti-witchcraft cult not only as a 'cult of kings' but as bound up with the very origin of kingship.

The headship of the *ndakó gboyá* society is held in a lineage whose remembered pedigree goes back only four generations, to one Mamako Gana, a hunter of Dibo extraction.[1] He is said to have already possessed the magic of *ndakó gboyá*, to have practised it against witches, and to have taught it to others. His son, Sara Jiya, was a great traveller, and finally settled at Kusogi Danci, a small village on the river. When Masaba, the younger brother of the first Fulani Emir of Nupe, rebelled against his elder brother and founded his rival kingdom south of the Niger (1838), he met Sara Jiya and, so it is said, was greatly impressed by his magic powers. Recognizing the importance and value of the *ndakó gboyá* cult, Masaba made its master his servant and gave him the most appropriate title *Majī Dodo*, 'Master of the Terrible'. After Sara Jiya's death, when Masaba had become *Etsu* Nupe in Bida, he made one of Sara Jiya's pupils the new *Majī Dodo*, a certain Ndasaba, a Bida man and a diviner and barber-doctor by trade. After the latter's death the title reverted to Sara Jiya's sons, whom Masaba called to the capital; four of the six sons obeyed the

[1] The Dibo sub-tribe of Nupe occupies the easternmost district of the country. The descendants of Mamako Gana still wear the facial marks of the Dibo sub-tribe.

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summons and settled in a hamlet near Bida, which they called Kusogi, in memory of their old home. When the then *Majī Dodo* died, the eldest of the four brothers succeeded to the office, receiving his title at the hands of *Etsu* Abubakari. He was in turn succeeded by his son, Yizufu, the present *Majī Dodo* (and my informant), who was appointed by *Etsu* Bello (d. 1926).[1]

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The society itself appears to be only some eighty years old. It was only during Masaba's reign in Bida (1860–73) that the Masters began to accept novices and to train initiates from outside their lineage, thus transforming a kinship-bound observance into a cult society. The membership spread indirectly as well, each man initiated by the Master in turn initiating his own kinsmen and sometimes also strangers from other villages. Each of the groups so founded acts in a body on all ritual occasions, thus forming a local cell or 'lodge' of the society. I listed eight lodges north of the Niger, all founded by men initiated in Kusogi; they are widely dispersed through the country, being found, for example, in Sakpe and Shebe in the centre of Nupe Emirate, in Epa in the extreme west, and in Esā in the north; many more are strung along the south bank of the river. The founders and heads of lodges are lesser Masters, being called the *nūsaži* ('elders') of the society while the men whom they have initiated are their *bara* (dependents or servants).

Neither the headship of lodges nor ordinary membership are simply hereditary; the sons or younger brothers of deceased members (the usual heirs) must be specially initiated by the head of the lodge, while his prospective successors must be formally accepted by the Master. Ordinary members, whose initiation was second-hand, are not permitted to make further proselytes. Nor could they do so since the indispensable cult paraphernalia are in the possession only of the Elders, who received them at their own initiation. The distinction between the two grades is somewhat blurred by the factor of kinship; for the sons or brothers of the Elder, who share his house (which contains the paraphernalia) and will one day succeed him, are by these facts placed on a slightly different footing from ordinary initiates, who cannot claim such privileged intimacy. For the Master of the society, however, this

[1] There is a separate branch, under its own Master, at the original Kusogi. It was called into being by the first *Etsu* of Patigi, the small Emirate on the south bank of the Niger, which the British Government granted to the dispossessed original Nupe dynasty. The *Etsu* felt that he needed a *Majī Dodo* of his own and appointed one of the two sons of Sara Jiya who had stayed behind when their brothers emigrated to Bida. The male line becoming extinct, the office later went to a sister's son, who had, however, to be initiated by the Bida Master. The latter is, in all other respects as well, regarded as the superior and true head of the cult.

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distinction does not exist; for him, every member of the cult alike is his 'child' or his 'father's child'.

The procedure of initiation was described to me as follows. The candidate presents himself to the Master or Elder, bringing with him a gift of beer and fowls, intended for the sacrifice which will conclude his initiation. He stays for ten days, having 'lessons' every day. He is taught the procedure of the ceremonial, the ways of manipulating the mask, the special dance steps and drum rhythms, and the legend of the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] He also learns a number of ritual rules: that he must not eat snakes, lest his children will 'never walk'; that he must refrain from sexual intercourse for a week before performing the *ndakó gboyá*; and how to use the medicine which is to give him 'strength' for the performance. If the novice is to become an Elder or the founder of a new lodge, he will also be taught the manner of sacrificing beer and fowl over the cult objects and the prayer formula—'Iron rod, do not permit anyone to do evil things. Tsoede, may he give us children. The children we have, and our wives, God may give them health.' The novice is repeatedly examined, and beaten with a twig if he makes mistakes. Should he prove incapable of learning his 'lessons' after ten days, he would be dismissed as a hopeless case. Normally, the period of tuition proper will now be at an end, and the final sacrifice will be performed jointly by master and pupil. For three years afterwards the novice will frequently visit his master, now merely to 'salute' him, bringing a gift of five kolanuts each time. During this period the novice will join in every performance of the *ndakó gboyá* arranged by his master, being lent a mask for the occasion. When the three years are over, the novice becomes a fully fledged member of the society; upon a final payment he receives a mask of his own, and will henceforth be able to perform the *ndakó gboyá* independently, though he would still need the help of his master, who alone owns the required *cigbe*. Only if the novice becomes the founder of a new lodge, will he receive the 'medicine' itself, in its usual decorated earthen vessel, together with two other cult objects, a number of iron rods with small bells on the top (called *sãyi*) and a small iron chain, described as a piece of the 'Chain of Tsoede'. We note this use of the royal emblem; it fittingly appears in a cult protected by royalty, including an invocation of the ancestor king in its ritual, and called a '*kuti* of kings' in the legends describing its origin. Initiation into the society is expensive, especially for the prospective founders of lodges. The grandfather of one of my informants, for example, paid the equivalent of £20 (or twice the customary

[1] In the branches of the society unfamiliar with the legend, this is replaced (quite consistently) by the story of Tsoede (see above, p. 192).

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brideprice). Since few can afford the high fee, the membership, at least in the higher grade, is perforce restricted. 754x 794

As will have been seen, the organization of the *ndakó gboyá* society shares certain features with that other 'closed society', the order of the *cigbeciti*. I knew of no case, incidentally, in which the same individual belonged to both. But there are certain relevant differences. The *ndakó gboyá* society rests upon a network of lodges and centres of ritual collaboration, not upon a number of scattered individuals; it is much more highly centralized as well as closely knit; and its growth is restricted not only by the high initiation fees but also by the rule, unknown among the medicine-men, that not every member can recruit new ones. It is interesting that no new initiations have taken place in the lifetime of the present generation. My informants could offer no explanation for this. The spread of Islam is certainly not responsible: the various Masters received their rank from Moslem Emirs, and the present incumbents, at least, consider themselves good Mohammedans.[1] Also, the increasing wealth of the country should have made entry into the *ndakó gboyá* easier, not more difficult. I suspect that the Masters of the society, or perhaps their royal protectors, stopped further recruitment precisely in order to prevent the society from growing too large and unwieldy; for as we shall see, its very power, its efficiency under centralized control no less than its financial success, would seem to depend on the smallness of the group which shares in the secret activities.

These activities fall into three groups. The first, of more personal character, concerns only the heads of lodges and follows the familiar pattern of ritual observances entailed in the 'ownership' of 'Great *cigbe*' or of a *kuti* priestship. Thus the head of the lodge will perform all his ancestral sacrifices over the *cigbe* vessel and the other cult objects, which are always kept together in a special hut. He performs a similar sacrifice also as a fixed annual rite (in the 7th or 12th month), now on behalf of the local community, to ensure its well-being and the fertility of the womenfolk. On such occasions one mask will also appear and dance in the village, which performance has no bearing on witchcraft or the punishment of witches. The funerary rites for the Elder of the lodge again include this sacrifice and masked dance.

The second group of activities consists in the performance of the masked dance upon request, that is, when the society is called in by some village in the area, either because it is celebrating the annual *gunnu* or because it feels itself threatened by witches. It is on such occasions that the masks will cleanse the village of witchcraft by 'frightening' the women or bringing an individual witch

[1] The tiny hamlet of Kusogi, for example, includes a small mosque. [368]

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to justice. Let me here say a few words about the secrecy of the proceedings. I have called the *ndakó gboyá* organization a 'secret society'. It is clear, however, that the existence of the society is no secret; everyone knows about it, and everyone has at one time or other seen it in action. Nor is there any mystery about the localities which harbour the lodges. But certain weighty secrets remain: the rules and observances of the *ndakó gboyá*; the training of the adepts; the very source of their power; and, above all, the identity of the masked actors. When a village chief or *gunnu* priest summons the members of a lodge he addresses himself only to the head, and does not know whom the latter will choose for the masked dance; the rest of the people may not even know the master of the lodge, and would certainly not know his helpers or 'servants'. This mystery becomes both deeper and more formidable when the masks appear uninvited and unannounced: this is the final group of activities of the cult members, which makes them a 'secret society' in the full sense of the word.

For it seems that the members of a lodge also made a habit of touring all the neighbouring districts, unexpectedly appearing in the various villages, on the pretext that these had to be 'cleansed of witchcraft'. They would scare the women and threaten 'witches', demanding a heavy ransom before they let them go, and a heavier ransom still (up to £100) before they would leave the village. Often, the villagers had to appeal to the *Etsu*, so that he might finally order the *Majī Dodo* to recall his 'children'. No one doubted that both the Master of the society and its royal protector connived in these extortions; equally, they shared in the proceeds, two-thirds of which went to the society and its Master, and one-third to the *Etsu*. Sometimes, too, the *Majī Dodo* would take the initiative, requesting the *Etsu's* authority (never refused) to send his agents to a 'witchcraft infested' district. Or the *Etsu* himself might mobilize this *kuti* of kings, ordering a 'great' *ndakó gboyá*, staged by all the lodges of the country together, with very similar results. Traditionally, it is claimed, these performances by royal request never took place in Bida; nor was there any pretext for it since the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the city amply protected its people from the threats of witchcraft. Whether this rule was meant to uphold the 'king's peace' in the capital or to protect its wealthy citizens from the greed of the secret society, we cannot decide. However this may be, the rule certainly no longer applied under *Etsu* Bello, under whom the abuses of the *ndakó gboyá* remained altogether unchecked.

My information on this point is supported, not only by official reports, but also by the testimony of the present *Majī Dodo*, who held office then and frankly admitted the whole story, naïvely

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adding that 'the *ndakó gboyá* people were doing beautifully'. 754X
When, in the peace celebrations of 1918, the Nigerian Government 794
encouraged the people throughout the territory to perform their tribal ceremonials and festivities, *Etsu* Bello ordered a 'great' *ndakó gboyá*, with twenty masks, to be staged in Bida. Afterwards, the cult society went 'on tour' through the districts, in the customary way. According to the *Majī Dodo*, every village asked for a visit, a great fear of witchcraft suddenly sweeping the country. Invited or not, the *ndakó gboyá* people continued their tour for a whole year, sucking the country dry and collecting vast sums. A final performance, again ordered by *Etsu* Bello, took place in Bida in 1921; it lasted for a whole day and ended once more in a prolonged and profitable 'tour' of the country. This time the effects were even more disastrous; complaints began to reach the Administration, many villages were unable to pay their tax, while some even emigrated to other parts. At last Government stepped in and banned all further performances.

The proscription of the *ndakó gboyá* only applies to Bida Emirate, not to the Nupe districts south of the Niger which lie in a different Province. There the *ndakó gboyá* society is still active, though it seems to have reformed its character, and a memorable performance, vividly remembered, took place in Ilorin in the Jubilee year 1935. It is remembered especially because it demonstrated the power of the *ndakó gboyá*; a Yoruba man who scoffed at the masks and refused to take off his cap (as all onlookers must do) is said to have at once been 'struck down' and killed. Nor is the prohibition taken literally in the smaller, out-of-the-way villages, where the masked dance is still performed, if without its witch-hunting aspects. Let me here insert the description of such a performance.

6. A NDAKÓ GBOYÁ CEREMONIAL

I saw it in October 1934 (the 7th month in Nupe counting) 794
at Kutigi, where it was staged by men from Shebe, a *ndakó gboyá* lodge a few miles away. The performance represented the annual ceremonial of the Shebe lodge, repeated in Kutigi (where I had been staying) in my honour: or so it was claimed.[1] I need not describe the preparatory sacrifice and the other ritual preparations which took place in Shebe, in the house of the Elder. The public

[1] I later found that this was not quite correct. My presence in Kutigi was regarded merely as a convenient pretext (and protection) for the resumption of the customary 'tours' of the *ndakó gboyá* people. Apart from a perfunctory 'salute' at the beginning of the ceremonial, neither the dancers nor the public took much notice of me, which I for one was glad to observe.

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794 performance began at dawn, when one of the masks suddenly appeared in the streets of Kutigi, making its presence known by its shrill falsetto scream. There were only two masks in this performance; but they were never seen together, one disappearing in the bush before the other appeared from some unexpected quarter, so that this impression of a Nupe onlooker was not so far off the mark—'the masks are numberless: they spring from the ground and are swallowed by the ground'. Later in the morning, people began to appear in the streets and two drummers took their position on the market place. Soon the market place was crowded with men, women, and children. The drummers were drumming and singing, and the mask began to dance, now and again rushing at the crowd, which would disperse with shrieks of fear and sometimes with laughter; but the laughter was forced and nervous, and certainly did not stop the people from running away. The younger women, especially, would escape to the nearest house, to hide in the doorway. The masked dancer always appeared accompanied by two 'servants', who were guiding his steps, made room for him with the help of big sticks they carried, and also acted as his 'interpreters' when, later on, the chief and other notables joined the crowd; the 'servants' would 'translate' the respectful salutes of the newcomers to the 'spirit', and the latter's shrieks and weird noises to the audience. These spirit messages were always the same and pretty nondescript; they assured the people that God would give health to the community and children to the women, and would keep evil from the village.

An hour or two later the gathering assumed a more definite shape, having until then moved this way and that in an irregular and amorphous fashion. Also, more firmly arranged in distinct groups and made to take an active part, the crowd was losing its earlier nervousness and fear. Old men were playing the part of organizers and ushers, forming the onlookers into a large circle, men on one side, women and children on the other, the mask and the drummers in the centre. The younger women were clapping hands, hesitatingly at first, an old woman here and there indicating the rhythm with her hands high in the air. Finally, both men and women started to sing. A number of old women from Shebe formed a prominent group, leading in the singing and shaking gourd rattles in rhythm. Suddenly an old woman, the *Sagi* of Kutigi, stepped into the middle of the circle, and began to dance opposite the mask. She was followed by two of the Shebe women, who were shaking their rattles, singing as though addressing the mask, and occasionally breaking into a long-drawn, high-pitched shriek. The mask continued to dance inside the circle, with varying speed, now calmly, now excitedly. From time to time

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the servants, as though listening to the mask and translating its wishes, would order the drummers to change the rhythm; or the mask, silent until then, would stop and talk some gibberish in a falsetto voice, which meant another 'message' or salute, duly translated by the interpreters. Or finally, the mask would set out on a sudden excursion, breaking through the circle, run down a side-street and temporarily disappear. 794

The mood of the gathering grew more and more excited until, about noon, just when it seemed that the excitement would reach fever pitch, there was a sudden hush. The drumming paused, as did the dancing and singing. The mask stood still, flanked by the 'servants', and a number of old women walked up to it and, on their knees, with bent head, saluted the mask. They handed small gifts of money to the 'servants', which were meant to buy the 'protection of the *ndakó gboyá*'. (This, I was told, was only a token payment: formerly heavy sums were paid in the same fashion.) Soon afterwards the mask disappeared, now without returning, and the pause turned into a midday break, when everyone went home. At about 3 o'clock the mask reappeared on the market place, which soon filled with people, and the proceedings of the morning were resumed. The drumming and dancing went on into the night, to the light of torches and hurricane lamps, uninterrupted even by a gathering thunderstorm. At about 9 o'clock the mask danced out of the circle and disappeared in the dark, not to return. 'You see', a bystander pointed out, 'how it is swallowed up by the ground'.

The crowd of onlookers included not only every soul in Kutigi, among them all the local notables and the Fulani District Head (a 'royal prince' from Bida), the contingent from Shebe, but also many strangers who had learned of the forthcoming performance. The attitude of the crowd was an odd mixture of enjoyment and fear. Of the former there could be no doubt; for a long time afterwards people were talking about the 'nice' and 'beautiful' performance as though they were commenting on an ordinary festivity, and the 'servants' of the mask several times pressed me to say whether the '*ndakó gboyá* had pleased me'. But there was no question either of the fear. It was clearly voiced already in the women's songs; for unlike many ceremonial songs of Nupe, those sung at the *ndakó gboyá* are far from nondescript or ambiguous. 794 781 794 539 781

(1)

One does not call him friend
When he comes to stay in the bush:
A friend (he) is when he leaves.

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(2)

794 We are saying—'A stranger has come (in the night)'
539 He is greater than the chief.
781 We are saying—'being greater than the chief,
May he go away when day comes.'

(3)

We are desiring the cloth (mask)
Which covers the Great One.
God is in front,
He is in the back (i.e. being everywhere and all-powerful, God will protect us).

794 The attitude towards the *ndakó gboyá* could not be better
781 expressed: he is a 'friend' only when he leaves, a powerful 'stranger' whom one wishes to see gone; and while one must invoke the secret of the 'cloth', it is yet so terrifying that the thought of God alone gives comfort. But let me stress that this is not merely the unthinking expression of conventional sentiments; the fear and awe referred to in the songs were clearly visible even in this ceremonial, devoid though it was of the more sinister implications of witch-hunting and punishment. When the old women presented their gifts of a few pennies to the mask, they were acting genuinely and in all humbleness; and any person whom the mask approached, man or woman, was as genuinely terrified. Men whom I knew to be sophisticated and 'enlightened', such as the local dispenser and one of my servants, ran and hid behind a hedge when the mask suddenly towered over them.

794 Nor can there be any doubt but that the people believe in the magic effects of the ceremonial. Even after the mild version I happened to see I heard the remark that the village was now clear of witchcraft. This attitude does not really conflict with the well-known extortions practised by the *ndakó gboyá* society; the admission of the abuses is one thing, and the belief in the anti-witchcraft cult quite another. Thus the Government's ban of the *ndakó gboyá* was thought regrettable if indeed not disastrous; everywhere the people spoke with envy of their cousins in Patigi who had kept their *ndakó gboyá* and hence preserved 'the only sure protection against witchcraft'. Often have I been told that in the rest of Nupe there was now no means of fighting witches, and no protection 'save God', who, as we know, is inscrutable, idle, 'far away'.

To be sure, even the *ndakó gboyá* is not a full protection. Though it may frighten witches and temporarily 'cleanse' a community, it cannot exterminate witchcraft. For not only must the cere-

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monial be repeated, at least year by year, but each performance does no more than restrain the evil machination of witches. When I asked if the *ndakó gboyá* society, given its former power, could suppress witchcraft altogether, the answer was invariably the same: '*u jī táimako*', 'it would help'. As in the belief in the *Lelu*, the Nupe expect their anti-witchcraft magic only to keep down witchcraft, 'so that it would not be too bad'. If the Nupe knew our saying about poverty they would no doubt say that witchcraft, like the poor, will always be with us; all man can hope to do is to keep it within reasonable bounds. 794

7. ON THE MEANING OF WITCHCRAFT

The discussion has led us back to a question previously raised— Why should there be this stubborn belief in witchcraft? I am not now referring to the ascription of witchcraft to women or to particular individuals and personalities, but to the notion of witchcraft as such which underlies these specific ascriptions, that is, to the basic premiss that some mystic power of evil is simply given and ultimately ineradicable. As regards the specific ascription of witchcraft in Nupe thought, we explained it as a projection or displacement of hatreds and aggressive desires from the sphere of rational social life into one mystically sanctioned. We may now add that, through such projection and displacement, the doctrine of witchcraft both permits anxieties to become articulate (if in fantasy language) and shows them an outlet, or scapegoat. Other scholars have viewed witchcraft beliefs in much the same light.[1] And they would agree also with this calculation of the 'gain and cost of witchcraft' (to quote Kluckhohn's suggestive phrase). The individual gains inasmuch as he is shown a legitimate outlet for his frustrations and tensions, legitimate since the society has licensed the aggressive talk and action through which the frustration and tension are relieved or 'ab-reacted' (as psychiatrists would say). And society gains inasmuch as the 'ab-reaction' is not random but canalized; indeed, society utilizes the very mode of ab-reaction in turning it into an attack upon behaviour and character traits held undesirable. 754x 182

None of these explanations, however, touches upon that premiss of 'witchcraft as such'. The former concern, essentially, the social canalization of anxieties, frustrations, tensions, hatreds, into variants of the belief in witchcraft. And these will depend on the make-up of the given society or culture: while in Nupe certain features of the social structure seem to be the determinants, in

[1] See C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, *The Navaho*, 1946, pp. 172–81.

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*754 182 other societies, differently organized, different factors might prove relevant (for example, among the Navaho, the smallness of the group, envy of wealth, and irregular, autocratic leadership).[1] But might it not be that the whole belief in witchcraft (of any kind) is similarly a variant, one of several possibilities of canalizing anxieties and tensions, which would once more depend upon something in the make-up of cultures? It must be so, since there exist societies (if few in number) which are without this kind of belief even though they are not without conflicts or tensions. And it must be so also for another reason.

Granted that suppressed hatreds, unresolved conflicts, and the like occur in most (or all) societies, they could surely be offered adequate relief by means other than beliefs in witchcraft. The hatreds and the persecution of aliens; licensed occasional outbursts of hectic excitement; or the licensed aggression of war or of sectional combats, are familiar instances; all three also occur in Nupe. It may of course be that they offer insufficient relief, or themselves add further anxieties or tensions. But there is no way of measuring the potential of these different chances of relief; we cannot compare them and say 'each can only do so much', as we might say of the lack of vitamins in one kind of food that it must be made good by their presence in another. If the incidence of neuroses and other psychopathological derangements is an index of unrelieved mental tensions, then the reliefs just mentioned are indeed 'not enough' in Nupe; but they are not enough even combined with witchcraft beliefs. However this may be, witchcraft beliefs exist *although* there are these other possibilities of relieving tensions; which is true not only of Nupe but of most societies in the world. We must conclude that they have a *raison d'être* of their own, apart from that implied in the psychological mechanism of projection, displacement, and the rest: which *raison d'être*, as I have suggested, must lie in 'something in the make-up of cultures' (of most cultures).

*754 182 114 In a paper written many years ago I attempted to formulate that reason. As I now know, I was wrong; my attempt was vitiated, above all, by the fact that I had considered Nupe witchcraft in isolation from the rest of the religious system. But since my error too is instructive I may be allowed to repeat here the main argument.[2] I argued that religious faith, if it clings naïvely to the promises of religion—of guidance as to how to act; of supernatural or divine protection if that guidance is followed; and of some ultimately just and benevolent order of things—must on occasion face failure. For only too often are these promises belied, by

[1] Op. cit., pp. 174, 177, 178–9.
[2] See *Africa*, vol. VIII, pp. 444–5.

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disease, sudden death, misfortune, injustice, that is, by the evil things in the world. Thus in all religions there are attempts to justify or resolve, or to dismiss as merely apparent, this contradiction of promise and fulfilment. The attempts vary in philosophical refinement. The religious doctrine may, in the vein of stoic philosophy, explain the presence of evil as a foil for the visibility of the good; or it can make the evil things, like the sufferings of Job, a touchstone of faith; or it may lay their cause into the imperfection of man, so that his sins (willed or not, actual or intended) are behind the apparent failures of divine providence. Or finally, and more crudely, the religion may contain a loophole within itself, admitting a province where evil is simply allowed to reign. The devil of naïve belief is one embodiment of this loophole-idea; the witch another.

It is true that the belief in the evil actions of witches bears only upon a narrow variety of that abstract 'evil in the world' meant by philosophers or theologians. Even so, the 'loophole' remains. Let us remember also that the belief in witches safeguards itself from being 'found out' and proved or refuted by empirical means; in embracing this incontrovertible belief, then, religious faith itself is safeguarded from being found illusory and refuted by reality. Speaking practically, the acceptance of witchcraft (or of the devil) saves the believer from false hopes or disillusion; speaking philosophically, the acceptance of an ultimate X within the divinely ordered universe saves that order. Admitting that there is a province where the believed-in guidance and protection do not fully reach, we save the belief in laws to guide us and in that promise of protection. Witchcraft, in brief, is a chapter in apologetics, albeit crudely written.

So far my original conclusions (somewhat paraphrased). Now though they are, I believe, correct for other systems of religious belief, they do not seem to apply to Nupe religion. Granting that beliefs in witchcraft can save faith in a divine order of the universe, in Nupe religion, there is nothing of the kind to save; if in other societies or cultures there must be the admission of that ultimate X to account for, or explain away, the failure of religious guidance and promise of protection, in Nupe, this guidance and promise have never been offered. Nupe religion, as we know, admits accidents at every step; it promises only fallible guidance and protection; the observances or ethical rules it upholds are not meant to be counted upon against the many evils which are also in the world—malevolent spirits, diseases, uncontrollable misfortune. Indeed, the deity himself has put them in the world and suffers them to exist, being unconcerned with the fate of his creation. Why, then, should there be this further, special

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assumption of the evil of witchcraft? The problem which it might serve to solve simply does not exist.

Yet there remains another problem, requiring a kindred solution. With the admission of accident, with the conception of an unpredictable and amoral universe, the problem of the presence of evil is solved intellectually or, at least, argued away on the intellectual plane. But this solution leaves an emotional gap. For I hold that there is a deeply seated desire for certainty, which demands satisfaction of an essentially emotional kind, that is, the awareness that the world is not only certain, but concerned with *you*—your fate, your happiness. And where this demand is refused (as in Nupe) anxieties and frustrations must again arise and press for some abreaction and solution. But now those other outlets which might relieve the pent-up tension, through random acts of aggression or some explosive catharsis, would prove inadequate; they would take care of the symptoms but not of the conflicts from which these spring. Nor can the disturbance of the longed-for certainty be overcome save by discovering the disturber; the vague dissatisfaction with an abstract state of affairs must be capable of crystallizing into the accusations of concrete agents. Above all, there must be the chance of practical action, so that the people aware of the threat also have the satisfaction of dealing with it. In other words, precisely because you know that the world around you holds out no promise of certainty nor any supreme design, you conjure up an arch-enemy with whom at least you can reckon, on whom you can vent fears and hatreds, and over whom you may hope to triumph, be it Satan or the witch.

The witch is, perhaps, less of an arch-enemy, since only some of the evils of the world can be laid at her doorstep. Yet the conjured-up picture of human beings who are unaccountably evil and unaccountably cause death and disease does take care of a portion of the uncertainty in the world. Now, we previously said that the admission of a province of life where the benevolent design of the universe does not reach saves the faith in that universe: this clearly does not apply. We must now say—the admission of a province of life where malevolent forces can be defined (and attacked), makes it possible to bear a universe devoid of such design. To be sure, this is no longer our 'loophole' theory; but it is as it were its photographic negative, or the same mathematical formula with all pluses changed into minus signs. Crudely speaking, you may have a God of Justice and Mercy, naïvely conceived, and devils or witches in the background; or you may have an Idle God, remotely in the background, but at least devils or witches to grapple with.

That the notion of witchcraft may arise from such opposed con-

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ceptions is, I think, borne out by the history of witchcraft beliefs in our own civilization. For these flourished both when faith was naïve and when it was weakened by the first scientific revolution. Science, of course, did not attack certainty at large; rather, it opened the vista of new laws and a new order governing the universe. But it destroyed the subjective certainty, that emotionally satisfying awareness of a universe concerned with man. So that this sudden loss revived the search for some arch-enemy.[1] Among the Nupe, it was not a question of a sudden loss; they had misconstrued their universe from the first.

One final comment. The preceding discussion may seem to imply that the belief in witchcraft serves to maintain or 'save' a state of affairs worth maintaining and saving; previously too, we argued that witchcraft beliefs and practices 'attack undesirable behaviour', 'resolve conflicts', and 'relieve tensions and anxieties'. One might conclude that societies can do no better than foster beliefs in witchcraft, and that our balance sheet of their 'gains and cost' must show a heavy credit side. Such views are sometimes expressed; it has been pointed out, for example, that witchcraft beliefs provide a 'harmless outlet in imagination for impulses forbidden in real life;' that they direct aggressiveness 'into socially non-disruptive channels' and so resolve 'the problem that every society faces: how to satisfy hate and still keep the core of society solid'.[2]

Let me stress that I presumed no such absolute utility of witchcraft beliefs. I suggested that they resolve certain conflicts or problems: but I did not say that this is a 'good' solution or a final one. The aggression invited by witchcraft beliefs is as harmful as anything a society can produce in the way of 'disruptive' practices; the relief offered by witch-hunting and witch-punishing is no more than temporary and their capacity to allay anxieties no more than illusory: for if witchcraft beliefs resolve certain fears and tensions, they also produce others. Nor is there anything unique in this. If witchcraft beliefs represent a very imperfect 'solution', cultures are full of similarly shortsighted reliefs and spurious correctives. In a sense, the remedies are always better than the complaints; for they enable individuals to go on living and societies to go on functioning without having to face the task, often impossible of achievement, of completely re-fashioning the social system. But they are the kind of remedy which both becomes

[1] Cf. this passage from H. Butterfield: 'It would appear to be the case that astrology, like witch-burning, was considerably on the increase in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in spite of what we say about the beginning of modern times' (*The Origin of Modern Science*, 1949, p. 21)

[2] C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, op. cit., pp. 173, 177.

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a drug and poisons the system. Or, to change the metaphor, we may liken witchcraft beliefs to a safety valve: but let us be clear that the engine which needs it has been badly constructed; nor is the safety valve itself safe.

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VII

STRANGE GODS

In this chapter I propose to discuss the adoption, by the Nupe, of originally alien beliefs and practices. We shall not be concerned with the pure mechanics of 'borrowing' or 'diffusion'; at least, we shall be concerned only with the motives behind these processes. For we cannot but assume that the adoption of novel or alien elements into any religious system, far from being haphazard, does follow from intelligible motives, which must in turn relevantly bear on the character of the religion and, ultimately, of the whole culture of which it is a part. So that the information so gained will either confirm our interpretation of that character or correct it, bringing to light hitherto unperceived aspects.

This may only be a heuristic assumption to begin with; and other, more specific ones, could at once be added—that the novel features must bear some affinity to the traditional pattern; or that they serve to redress some pre-existing inadequacy; or that they offer a chance of expression to some new trend, say, a changed outlook of the people, which the traditional beliefs and practices failed to satisfy. It must be admitted that in the anthropological field the prerequisite evidence is not easy to procure and that even the first step, the mere discovery of the alien elements, may be difficult or uncertain. Fairly recent additions are usually readily traced; but in the absence of historical records originally alien features long since absorbed may remain unidentifiable. Which proviso holds fully in the case of Nupe religion. Furthermore, the inferences we might draw from our study of 'adoptions' must be corroborated by the appropriate negative evidence, that is, by instances of 'rejection'. But though here we are likely to meet with further technical difficulties, mainly because there might be no record of the rejected chances, the situation in Nupe does afford relevant evidence of this kind. It lies in the religious observances practised by close neighbours of the Nupe or by immigrant groups in their midst, with which the Nupe people are fully familiar, yet which they did not choose to adopt or imitate. Finally, the adoption of alien features, or indeed of a whole alien creed, may conceivably have taken place under pressure; in which

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case none of our assumptions would apply, or would apply without considerable qualifications. Again, the situation is simplified in Nupe; for only in the case of Islam was the adoption of the alien creed backed by social and political pressure; all other adoptions (or rejections) were spontaneous and voluntary. Let us make this aspect our starting point and begin with a brief outline of the chances of this nature that were offering to the Nupe.

I. ADOPTIONS AND REJECTIONS

The southern neighbours of the Nupe, the Yoruba, possess a religious system which contains many features diametrically opposed to those characterizing Nupe religion. Yoruba religion is based upon a pantheon of deities, all anthropomorphously conceived, who severally govern the universe. Each deity has his (or her) definite sphere—the sky, thunder, rain, land, sea, forests, animals, fishes, crops, special diseases, special skills, divination, and so forth; so that the universe is as it were split up and departmentalized in detailed fashion. The deities are served by a number of specialized orders of priesthood; they are represented, with beautiful realism, in bronze, wood, terracotta, and stone; and masked dances and ritual drama, employing again realistic likenesses, play a prominent part in all Yoruba cults. As has been mentioned, the average Nupe is familiar with the main features of Yoruba religion. Not only has he encountered them on his many travels, but in the area west and south of the Niger Nupe and Yoruba settlements are interspersed, and in certain cases even joined together in twin villages (as in Shari or Shonga). Above all, since 1860 or thereabouts colonies of Yoruba known as *Konú* have been settled in numerous villages of Nupe country, where they form well-defined sections and specialize in their traditional crafts of weaving and indigo dyeing. Though today wholly 'Nupe-ized' in language and mode of life, they still publicly perform one of their masked ceremonies, the *eguggug*, known as *gugu* to the Nupe, which serves both as a funeral rite and as an annual ritual safeguarding fertility and well-being. The northern and north-eastern districts of Nupe are conquered territory, inhabited by people of Gwari extraction, who came under Nupe domination in the last hundred years and are still referred to as 'Gwari slaves'. Their traditional culture must have closely resembled that of Nupe, while an effective process of Nupe-ization has obliterated most of the differences that did exist. But a few sections of the Gwari-Nupe have preserved a cult alien to Nupe practice; it is called *sogba* and is concerned with childbirth and the cure of barrenness, with the conviction and punishment of

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criminals, and with the special burial rites for people killed by lightning. Again, there is a large and influential colony of Hausa in the capital Bida. These immigrants too have kept alive one of their typical cults, the *bori*, which they stage publicly in the streets and squares of the town. Another group of immigrants settled around Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, towards the end of the eighteenth century; they were Mohammedans hailing from Bornu and brought with them one of their traditional ceremonials, the *gani*, which contains several features strikingly 'un-Nupe' in character.

All these, then, were potential models for the Nupe to follow; as we shall see, the Nupe reaction towards them was neither uniform nor, at first sight at least, consistent.

(i) *The Hausa Bori*

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To begin with a clear case of 'rejection'. It is represented in the *bori* cult, which can at once be described as utterly uncongenial to Nupe religious conceptions. It is based upon the shamanistic idea of spirit possession, revealed in hysterical or cataleptic fits and in trance states, when the person so affected is believed to speak with the voice of a spirit and to behave like one. These states may occur spontaneously or may be artificially induced, especially by the use of music, which is again distinctly foreign to Nupe, employing the monotonous, arhythmic playing of a single-string fiddle. When spontaneous, the fits or trance states are regarded as spirit-caused mental disorders, while the induced states are regarded both as therapeutic measures and as means of spirit control in general. The 'theory' behind the cult is briefly this. There exists a wide variety of spirits (*aljannu*), some benevolent, others evil, each bearing a special name and character, and revealing itself in the particular gestures, gait and voice exhibited by the possessed person. Each spirit also has a tune and dance step peculiar to it, and one believes that the playing of the tune and the performance of the dance both evoke the spirit in normal individuals and placate and control it in those 'possessed'. Any person exhibiting the spirit-caused disorders is therefore placed under the observation of a cult member, who is expected to identify the spirit, and to placate and exorcise it. The latter act does not mean the final departure of the spirit; the aim is, rather, to bring the spirit 'visits' under control, so that they materialize only when evoked in the *bori* dances but do not otherwise threaten the human host. Each person so cured becomes a member of the *bori* cult; but many others will try to join it without this particular qualification, seeking the occasional trance induced in the *bori* dances. The *bori* cult thus has its own society, which is loosely organized (though

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it has a number of officials of varying rank) and is constantly enlarged through the inclusion of 'cured' patients and of those 'normal' individuals who have been successful in soliciting the 'spirit possession'.

There is no secrecy about the cult and its dance performances; they are staged at frequent intervals, both in private houses and in public, and are always watched by interested Nupe crowds. But no Nupe will join in the dances or has ever entered the society. Note that the cult thus rejected revolves upon a 'treatment' of mental derangements, of diseases, that is, for which Nupe therapeutic art admits to have no reliable remedy. Yet, though always ready to experiment with new cures, neither the Nupe public nor the medicine experts have been persuaded by the *borí*. Admittedly, the *borí* is not simply another cure or remedy: it involves the wholly strange experience of auto-suggestion and hysterical abandonment or ecstasis. It equally involves, on the intellectual plane, the acceptance of new premisses (the detailed spirit universe). But as we shall see from our next example, a somewhat similar intellectual readjustment did in fact occur in the case of another alien cult and 'cure'.

(ii) *The Sogba Cult.*

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This cult occurs among a section of the Gwari who call themselves Gwari-Basa and live near Wushishi, to the north of Nupe, and also in a number of villages belonging to the conquered, Nupeized parts of Gwari country. Its name, *sogba*, means 'lightning', both in Gwari and Nupe. The cult is widely known also in other parts of Nupe country, and is everywhere regarded as alien, in spite of certain obvious 'Nupeisms'.[1] The name for the hereditary priest, for example, is *Žigí*, while the Gwari priests bear different names, and the whole cult is called a *kuti*, which is once more not Gwari nomenclature. In its more elaborate form the *sogba* cult culminates in an annual communal ceremony, fixed for the 2nd or 7th month, at which the men sacrifice a dog in great secrecy and the women sing and dance, carrying iron rods with bells closely resembling the *sãyi* of the *ndakó gboyá*.[2] The cult further includes a small-scale ritual of the movable type, performed by the priest at the request of clients, both fellow villagers and strangers.

These *ad hoc* ministrations are invoked for one of two reasons,

[1] It is not certain that the cult is in fact of Gwari origin; according to some informants it came originally from Yagba (a southern section of the Yoruba), and has been brought to Gwari and Nupe by immigrants from that country.

[2] This annual ritual was absent in the place I visited, Wushishi, its sketchy description being derived from verbal information only. The account that follows, however, is based on direct observation.

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either to procure the fertility of childless women or to bring about the punishment of offenders, especially of thieves, whose identity is unknown. In either event a small payment in kolanuts and money is made to the priest. The ritual involves the use of a special cult object unknown in the rest of Nupe; it consists of a forked wooden post, cut from a certain tree in such a manner that it resembles a 'tree cut in two by lightning' and planted in the ground in the priest's house, either inside a hut or in the open. Around the foot of the post there are a number of flat, black, polished stones which are described as 'thunderbolts' (*sogba* or *sokógba*). Nothing is known about the origin of the stones save that some had been collected by the grandfather of the present priest and others inherited from more distant ancestors. The priest also owns a few of the bell-rods mentioned before and a *cigbe* shrine containing a nameless 'medicine'.

The client is made to sit in a hut away from the scene of the actual rite, which is executed by the priest and two assistants (his sons or brothers). The priest crouches in front of the forked post, his assistants standing on his right and left, each gripping one of the branches of the fork. The priest pours a little beer on the 'thunderbolts' and on the ground, and briefly and informally invokes the *kuti*, explaining the nature of the request. The operative phrase is—'*Sogba*, may the woman bear a child', or—'*Sogba*, may the evil person (for example, the thief) be killed'. If the aim of the rite is to procure childbirth, the priest afterwards goes to the woman, touches her with one of the bell-rods and gives her a little of the *cigbe*, which she must drink daily for four days. The barren woman will then hope to bear a child; and the person who had suffered injury at the hands of an unknown culprit will be assured that the latter will be killed by lightning—not at once or within a definite period, but surely some time in the future. The latter notion bears on a final duty of the *sogba* priest, which is to bury all persons killed by lightning and to perform the appropriate rites for these victims of divine punishment.

The children born after the intercession of the *kuti sogba* are tied to the cult for life. Immediately after the birth of the child the *Žigí* must be informed, so that he may in turn 'inform the *kuti*' by means of another sacrifice. Afterwards the *Žigí* presents the infant with a special charm in the form of a tiny dagger, which the child (and later the grown person) must always wear around the neck. Invariably, the child is given the name *Sogba*, and is generally referred to as *egi sogba*, 'child of *Sogba*'. If such a child falls ill, his parents will seek help, not from some other *kuti* or from professional medicine-men, but again from the *Žigí*, who does not charge for this further assistance: the child thus remains

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N G 771 177 794 the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

N 771 177 So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

N [766] At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

N [821] N 771 177 842 The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

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communities all over the country, have made the pilgrimage to the nearest shrine and priest, and numerous persons, both young and old, bear the tell-tale name *Sogba*. The degree to which the alien cult has taken root is best seen from a text on the practices surrounding childbirth which I recorded in Bida long before I knew anything about the *sogba* cult, and which contains this straightforward statement: 771 177 842

'If a woman has no child and she is a pagan, she would go and visit the place of *sogba*, she would go and pray for a child. The pagans have a hut with a *kuti* inside. The priest will translate (talk to the *kuti*) on behalf of the woman or man who come to visit the *sogba*. The priest receives money from the person who comes. If God agrees and that person has a child, it will be named *Sogba*. It will wear a charm round his neck, everybody seeing that person will know that he is a child of *sogba*.'

The traditional religious or quasi-religious practices of Nupe certainly do not lack 'cures' of sterility. If here a further magic treatment has been added to the numerous existing ones, this would seem to bear out the ever-visible desire for children. Nor do the religious conceptions of the people, which so readily allow for alternative practices and several trials, conflict with the desire behind this addition. But let us note this. Though the Nupe make use only of one particular feature or benefit of the alien cult and disregard its wider context (of which, in fact, they are mostly ignorant), this piecemeal adoption yet commits them to a radically changed outlook. For they accept, with the miraculous powers of *sogba*, also the tie forged between these powers and the beneficiary. And this whole idea, that an ordinary person can for life be dedicated to a *kuti* and stand under its protection, has no parallel in Nupe religion. The practical consequences of this dedication are neither burdensome nor very important; even so, they clash with the conventional way of looking at 'medicines' or *ad hoc* rituals as at so many expedients, solicited when one needs them, paid for, and then forgotten.

(iii) *Yoruba Influences*

Yoruba religion, the third on our list, has hardly touched Nupe. The elaborate cosmology of the Yoruba, their pantheon, and their effigies or idols had no influence upon the beliefs and practices of the Nupe. Nor has the *gugu* cult of the Yoruba settlers in Nupe found any response other than detached or amused interest. 771 177

There seem to be two exceptions. The first is exemplified in the bronze figures on Jebba Island which have been accepted as sacred

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effigies and cult objects.[1] It is unlikely, incidentally, that these figures are Yoruba in origin; but they are of the same kind as the effigies of deities worshipped by the Yoruba. Now, the Nupe do not regard their figures as representations of deities; indeed the whole question, what or whom they represent, evokes no great interest. For the Nupe, the figures are merely 'likenesses' of a man and a woman (who is sometimes called the man's mother) and, more importantly, relics of Tsoede. Their possession is understood to be exceptional and indeed unique; and even though they figure prominently in one of the Jebba rituals, they do not add anything relevant to the purely religious conceptions. The images are simply the unusual objects of an unusual, 'royal' cult, but not more magically effective or possessed of special meaning because they happen to be shaped in human likeness.

The second exception is more important. In Mokwa and one or two villages in the river valley, we meet with a masked dance called *elo* (a meaningless word in Nupe), which is quite unlike any Nupe dance or ritual.[2] It does, however, somewhat resemble the Yoruba *gugu*, which equally occurs in Mokwa, not only in its paraphernalia but also in certain gestures and motions of the dancers. [532] The *elo* dancers wear long-sleeved hoods of coloured cloth cut like those worn in the *gugu* and cover their faces with coloured wooden masks, carved in grotesquely human features and surmounted by horns. The masks resemble those of the *gugu* only in that both are meant to represent a human face; but in the *gugu* the design is produced by cowrie shells sewn on to the cloth, while the *elo* type is reminiscent rather of the masks used by the southernmost sections of the Yoruba, or by the Ibo and other tribes in Southern Nigeria. The people who perform the *elo* know little about the origin of the masks or, indeed, of the whole ceremonial. It is said that Tsoede brought it from the south and established it in certain villages of his small river kingdom 'because he liked the dance so much that he wanted to see it again and again'. The masks now used are the work of the wood-carvers of Shonga (a mixed Yoruba-Nupe village on the Niger), though this particular skill has since disappeared; one or two masks are quite recent, having been made by a craftsman at Rabah who has preserved the old art. The hoods of cloth, on the other hand, are an innovation; in the youth of one

[1] As has been mentioned, similar figures, though both smaller and cruder, are found in Tada, another riverain village. What is said here about the Jebba figures equally applies to the Tada 'idols'.

[2] I recorded the *elo* in Mokwa, in Rabah (a few miles away on the river) and in Gbajibo, north of Jebba. In addition, smaller villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood, which do not themselves possess the *elo* masks, perform the dance annually with masks borrowed from Mokwa.

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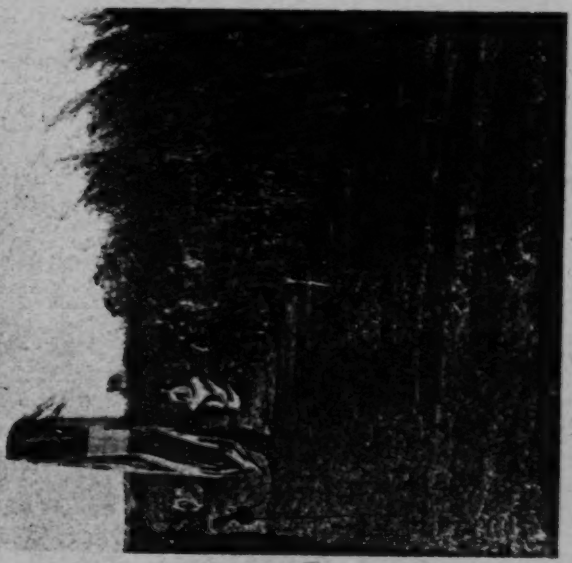
25. *Bori* dance of the Hausa

N 794



24. The appearance of the *ndakó gboyá*

[p. 214 (A)]

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Hausa MS12
Gbari FF23

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26. A *bori* dancer in a cataleptic fit

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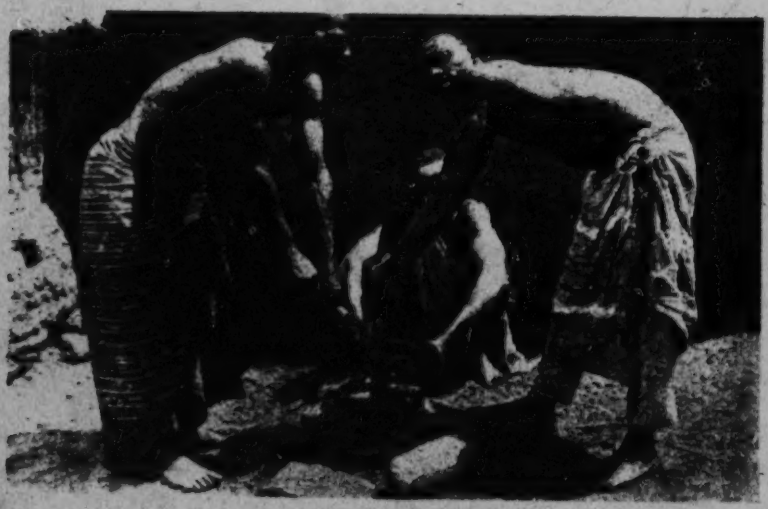

27. *Sogba* sacrifice of the Gwari

[p. 214 (B)]

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of my Mokwa informants, a man of about sixty, the *elo* dancers used to wear skirts and cloaks made of dried grass, probably like those worn in the *mamma* ritual of Jebba; it was only later that the cloth hoods were adopted, 'because they looked nicer'. I have no doubt that they were modelled on the almost identical dress of the *gugu* dancers, with which the Mokwa people at least are so thoroughly familiar. They themselves disclaim any such connection, which is admittedly not borne out by any other features of the two cults. 771 177

Granting the alien origin of the *elo*, we must add that it has been fairly thoroughly Nupe-ized. To begin with, it has taken its place among the 'fixed' ceremonials, being performed annually in the 9th month (in Mokwa and Rabah) or 6th month (in Gbajibo). Like the other Nupe ceremonials, the *elo* is in the charge of one of the titled elders, whose office includes the responsibility for the annual performance and the tuition of the dancers. The most important mask, called *elokó* ('Great *elo*'), is also stored in his house, while the other masks and dresses are kept in the houses of other rankholders. When the masks appear in the dance they are addressed, in Nupe fashion, by a special salute, *eluló* ('Bird of *elo*'); the songs are in Nupe, the style of the music and most dance steps are typically Nupe, as are also the drums which are played throughout the dance.[1] But the dance performance itself has retained its uncommon character. All the dancers are men; but among them are three, wearing highly ornamented masks with curved twin horns, who are said to represent 'female' figures, the mask of the 'Great *elo*' belonging to this category. Two other dancers, wearing hoods pulled over their faces and head-dresses of feathers, are described as 'male'. Two more figures, wearing simple masks surmounted by one straight horn, are called *gara* (lit. 'robber'). These last figures are perhaps the most unusual; for while the 'male' and 'female' masks stalk about, or jump and dance much as do ordinary dancers or the masks in the *ndakó gboyá* and *mamma*, the *gara* plays the part of a bogey-man who frightens the children, and of a clown whose pranks delight old and young; which double role is otherwise unknown in Nupe dance ceremonial. The behaviour of the 'male' and 'female' masks, incidentally, is in no way suggestive of this ascription of sex. In addition, there are two unmasked young men who join in the dancing and clowning and wear fringed skirts made of leopard skin, their bare legs being painted with white spots ('like the spots of leopards')—another conspicuously non-Nupe feature. 771 177 535

The most incongruous aspect of the *elo* lies in its purpose, or [534]

[1] The *elo* includes only one musical instrument uncommon in Nupe, an iron double-bell, beaten with a stick.

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rather in its absence of purpose. Although it has a definite date like other rituals and although the masks must dress in secrecy, there is nothing sacred about the performance. No sacrifice or ritual preparations precede or accompany it; and the *elo* is positively stated to be nothing like a *kuti*, but merely *dzodzo*, 'play'. The dance seems to contain the remnants of some plot or dramatic theme; the various roles of 'male' and 'female' figures and of 'clowns' or 'robbers' can suggest nothing else. But again, the people deny that there is such a plot or that these 'roles' have any meaning. The *elo* songs, certainly, betray none. Here are a few of them, each consisting of a brief line which is endlessly repeated throughout the corresponding phase of the dance.

> *Zwákule, zwákule* (meaningless).
> I am calling Kolo (a name, here applied to *elo*),
> he is coming slowly.
> The *elo* matures every year.
> They are calling Kolo, he swings his leg,
> *ebi du, ebi du* (meaningless).
> Every year we are making *elo*.
> The *gara* appears, there is his face.

In a sense, the *elo* is a mixture of ritual and entertainment. But unlike the usual Nupe ceremonial, in which the ritual part precedes the 'play', the *elo* involves ritual only as it were in its administration (in the fixed date, the secret dressing-up of the actors, the formal apportionment of relevant duties); the rest is pure entertainment. Perhaps, in its original form, the *elo* was more fully a ceremonial, with some religious purpose as well as a plot. But even this the Nupe would deny; for although they sanctify the practice by ascribing it, in familiar manner, to the ancestor king, they impute to him no reasons other than (we might say) aesthetic ones. Nor have these reasons quite ceased to work. At the Bida *salla* in 1936 I saw a dancer with an unusual headdress which I had never seen before, neither at the previous *salla* nor on other occasions. The dancer himself was one of the *sorogi* dancers mentioned in a previous context;[1] but on his head he wore a brass cap with two horns. Subsequent enquiries elicited the fact that the headdress had been made by a Bida brass-smith to the specifications of the dancer: and the latter had meant to copy the horns of the *elo* masks which he had seen and admired in Mokwa.

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(iv) *The Gani of Kutigi*

I have elsewhere described this cult and the manner in which it took root in Kutigi and the adjacent communities, so that I need

[1] See above, p. 188.

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only summarize the salient facts.[1] Unlike the *elo*, the *gani* can clearly be traced to its alien origin, and its importation into Nupe, by Moslem immigrants from the north, can even be dated with fair accuracy (having occurred probably about 1760–70). The Moslem character of the ceremonial is visible, above all, in the esoteric part, which takes the form of a symbolic burial in the Mohammedan manner; it is further emphasized by the often voiced claim that the whole ceremonial represents an observance of Islam, namely, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet—a claim which has little validity.[2] Even so, the *gani* has been firmly adopted also by the pagan population and, what is more important, has been adopted as a ritual or at least as a ceremonial of serious and sacred import. Yet in calling the *gani* a ritual or ceremonial I am stating my own conclusions, couched in our conventional terminology. The Nupe have no suitable name for this performance which has many aspects of a ritual act without conforming to a 'ritual' as the pagans understand it. They all emphasize that it is not a *kuti*; but neither do they call it *dzodzo*, mere 'play', in spite of the great scope given to mummery, display, crude pranks, and merry-making generally. They either use the non-committal term *nya'nya*, 'dancing', or simply argue that 'the *gani* is the *gani*', that is, unlike any other tribal festivity. Linguistic usage, it seems, has not quite caught up with this novel and ambiguous species of ceremonial.

The *gani* ceremonial has for its main theme the periodical reconstitution of the village age-grade associations, that is, the acceptance of novices into the first grade and the promotion of older boys and youths to higher grades. These corporate promotions go hand in hand with a reshuffling of the various ranks held in each age-grade association, and hence with an upgrading or downgrading of its members. If the age grades thus appear dominated by competition and the notions of rank and career, they merely mirror as well as anticipate interests paramount in Nupe political life. As I phrased it elsewhere, age-grade life serves as an 'education for citizenship';[3] and this aspect too is given expression in the *gani* ceremonial, together with other ideas of more general import, bearing on growth and maturity.

In the ceremonial each age grade is assigned a specific role, acting under its leader, who bears the title *Ndakotsu*—'Grandfather of

[1] See 'The Gani Ritual of Nupe', *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949.

[2] This is clearly shown by the discrepancy in the dates. The Birth of the Prophet (*Ma'ulid*) falls on the twelfth day of the first lunar month of the Mohammedan calendar (in 1934 the 29th March), while the *gani* celebrations start on the tenth day of the 4th month in Nupe reckoning (in 1934, the 25th June).

[3] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 383 *et seq.*

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771 the king'. Thus led, the age grades walk in procession through the
177 village to salute the chief and all the other notables of the com-
561 munity, join in the dancing, engage in wrestling matches, and meet one another in a realistic 'battle', to be described presently. The esoteric rite of the *gani*, the 'burial service' mentioned before, is performed by the leaders alone, in a secret place away from the scene of the public festivities. The younger boys are all dressed up as girls and imitate, in exaggerated and ridiculous fashion, the walk and dance steps of the women. This masquerade, though highly elaborate and considered a most relevant aspect of the celebration, is not further explained; but the context makes it clear that it carries the same meaning of a change of roles which underlies the similar mummery of the *gunnu*.[1] For this meaning is again expressed, now by means of a conspicuous symbolism which everyone understands, in certain other episodes of the *gani*, meant to dramatize the admission of the novices and the various promotions from grade to grade. There is the 'death and burial', loudly mourned by the crowd, of a 'little girl', indicating the abandonment of infancy by the young boys about to enter the first grade. In a preceding phase a 'little boy' is similarly buried and mourned, that is, shown to abandon boyhood for adolescence. Lastly, the youths of the most senior grade appear dressed up as 'warriors' and 'horsemen', meeting their juniors in a mock battle which seems to symbolize the final stage of adolescence, when youth must hold its own against adults, compete and struggle with them, and break into their ranks. All these things actually happen in the 'battle', whose very realism seems symbolic of the severe competition for position and power which characterizes Nupe life. In brief, the *gani* ceremonial is a typical *rite de passage*, dramatizing the crucial phases of male adolescence and adoption into manhood. Seen against this background, an ususual feature of the *gani*, too, falls into place. Obscene sexual jokes and allusions, normally never used, appear in the *gani* songs and are freely bandied about during the festivities, both by old and young: we may conclude that they serve to throw into relief a final aspect of adolescence, sexual maturity.

771 The ceremonial lasts three days, and each day concludes with a
177 hectic dance in which the sexes meet in utterly unrestrained
786 fashion. Nor does this unrestraint end with the dance; for during
561 the three nights all the normal rules of sex morality are in abeyance. This temporary abandonment of moral restraint, which applies to every person in the community, implies, of course, more than merely a symbolic reference to adolescence and sexual maturity. It represents one of those periodical concessions to moral

[1] See above, p. 113.

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or sexual licence which are familiar from many societies, primitive and advanced. We know that they occur also in the traditional annual celebration of the *gunnu*. And here it seems significant that the people of Kutigi and the other communities now performing the *gani* have abandoned the *gunnu* in this fixed, annual form.[1] Whatever other reasons have contributed to the abandonment of the annual *gunnu*, the fact that it shared with the *gani* this one feature may well have been decisive; for it would seem to be in the very nature of this concession to unrestraint that it must not be duplicated.

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There is evidence to show that the sexual licence belonged to the *gani* already in its original form in which it reached Nupe country. This original *gani* equally included some connection, apparently broad and unspecific, with age-grade life and male adolescence.[2] To some extent, then, the Nupe found in the *gani* a cult fortuitously congenial to their own interests and ideas. But let us note that the *gani* expresses them with unaccustomed sharpness: the masquerade of boys as girls, sketchily treated in the *gunnu*, is fully exploited in the *gani*; and nowhere else is age-grade life dramatized with such effect.

Other 'Nupeisms' in the *gani* are clearly the result of adaptation and remodelling. Thus, though the ceremonial retained its original name, its songs and prayers are in Nupe; the latter, spoken at the secret 'burial service', conclude with the typical Nupe formula—'May the whole town have health'; the musical instruments, the music itself, the dance steps, and the whole design of the ceremonial, with an esoteric part preceding the public 'merry-making'—all these are taken from the traditional practice. Yet equally, the *gani* contains conspicuously novel and 'un-Nupe' features. The very notion of a ceremonial having a proper plot and being staged as a drama with consecutive scenes has no parallel in Nupe. The same is true of the precise symbolism of the *gani* and of the masquerade of warriors and horsemen; the latter, incidentally, appear as riders of hobby-horses, which mummery is equally unknown in the rest of Nupe. So are the standards with which the age grades parade during the ceremonial, some of which are combined with crude symbols of the sexes. The open eroticism of the *gani*, finally, contrasts strikingly with the normal mood of Nupe ceremonials.

[1] See above, p. 83. It will be remembered that the performance of the *gunnu* as a movable rite (which is still practised in Kutigi) does not include the 'mixed' dance and the period of erotic licence.

[2] The evidence in question is based on accounts of the *gani* celebrations in its country of origin and among the nomadic Fulani. See *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949, p. 177, n. 2.

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Let me stress that the 'congenial' aspects of the *gani* did not cause it to be simply accepted into the ceremonial repertoire of Nupe; nor do its 'uncongenial' features represent merely unassimilated remnants. In a sense both such a straightforward acceptance and complete assimilation were precluded by the circuitous manner in which the *gani* was adopted and which was meant to preserve rather than to obliterate its alien character. Here I must explain that the community where the *gani* took root represents, on a small scale, a composite or 'plural' society. It is composed of three distinct sections—the Bornu immigrants (called *Benu*); a group of hereditary hunters (*ndaceži*); and a group claiming the status of aboriginal inhabitants and calling themselves 'Owners of the Land' (*kintsoži*). In this heterogeneous community the alien provenance of the *gani* ceremonial remained intact; its esoteric rites are performed only by members of the immigrant group, and the whole *gani* is still, for the people of Kutigi, an observance unequivocally 'belonging to' or 'owned' by that section, even though all others join in the public celebrations. They in turn remained the 'owners' of their own traditional cults, the *žikinta* (performed by the group of hunters) and the *gunnu* (performed, as a movable rite, by the *kintsoži*). But in performing its proper ceremonial each congregation acts on behalf of the whole composite community; and all three ceremonials are considered indispensable, in a supernatural sense and in their diverse ways, for the well-being of that wider group. The *gani*, therefore, came to be adopted, not through simply diffusing to the other sections, but through being acknowledged by them as a vital contribution which its 'owners' can make to the common weal. The sectional 'ownership', in other words, was transformed into a sectional 'task', and the divided congregation, into a religious division of labour.[1]

It is clear that this manner of adoption is adjusted to the particular problems of a 'plural society', helping to maintain or buttress its precarious, divided unity. And other societies, facing the same problems, have evolved much the same solution. Yet though the religious division of labour has this very wide application, it may be pointed out that, in Nupe, it remains 'congenial' to the character of the religious system; for it only develops further the ideas underlying Nupe priestship and the Nupe form of ritual, 'owned' by kin groups but operating for the 'common weal'.

[1] Let me note briefly that the same conception reappears, somewhat modified, in the attitude of the Nupe people at large towards the *gani*, which they regard as the 'possession' of the people of Kutigi. This aspect, which has been fully treated in the article mentioned above, is not relevant to the present discussion.

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2. ON MOTIVES

We turn to our crucial problem, the motives underlying these adoptions and rejections of alien observances. Since in our examples both responses were voluntary, not imposed by extraneous pressure or constraint, we may legitimately argue that the acceptance must have rested upon some appeal, some kind of pull, which the novel practice exercised upon the recipients-to-be, and the rejection upon the lack of such an appeal or perhaps its opposite. This 'appeal' or 'pull' is clearly a complex thing. First and foremost, it is a pull of interest; in other words, we may search for some specific interest or 'need' pre-existing in the recipient culture, which the novel practice seems capable (or incapable) of satisfying.[1] The relevant factor, however, is not the pre-existing interest or need as such, but a residual interest or need; what we must show is not so much that the society is deeply concerned over such-and-such issues (for example, the fecundity of women) but that this concern is unsatisfied even where it is met by pre-existing institutions. The *gugu* ceremonial, for example, answers interests strongly pronounced in Nupe life in the fixed rituals promising communal well-being, and in the ritualization of death; but since a series of traditional ceremonials profess the same aims, the residual interest must be small, if it is felt at all. The concern over childbirth, on the other hand, is by its nature such that it would always remain active and press for additional promises or safeguards.

The concern or aim of the alien observance may obviously be expressed in a form more or less novel and unprecedented; and the degree of novelty must clearly itself affect the ease of adoption. But this effect is difficult to assess. Often, we shall no doubt argue that, the more novel a practice, the more uncongenial must it be to people still thinking in terms of traditional ways of acting; so that the novelty would act as a brake upon the free play of interests, as a counter-pull as it were. Yet we cannot exclude the possibility that the novelty of the practice will help rather than hinder the adoption; for its 'uncongenial' form may itself correspond to some pre-existing interest, that is, to a diffuse desire for unusual and unprecedented experiences. Now all the alien religious practices which the Nupe have adopted contain some 'uncongenial' or unprecedented features. Shall we then say that the latter must have exercised a certain appeal in their own right? Perhaps—though

[1] The term 'pre-existing' is here used in a somewhat loose sense, without the implication of precise chronological evidence. It implies, however, that the interest or need in question can be established independently, that is, can be shown to obtain apart from the adopted (or rejected) practice.

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the same lack of congeniality also characterizes the practices which have been rejected. Or shall we assume that, for the adoption to occur, the pre-existing interest must have outweighed the uncongenial character, while in the case of rejected practices the balance was the other way? There is evidence for this. The *gani*, with all its alien elements, clearly answers powerful pre-existing interests, and indeed improves upon the respective traditional institutions; the *gugu*, conversely, has nothing of the kind to offer: it is only another fixed ritual, duplicating the aims of the traditional rites, so that, apart from being uncongenial in form, it also appears redundant in content. The *bori* could answer at least a weak pre-existing need, since it offers a cure for lunacy of which the Nupe are deficient; yet it also clashes utterly with their religious beliefs and, above all, with the psychological tenor of their religious life. The *sogba* cult seems to exemplify this balance between interest and congeniality even more clearly. For the Nupe adopted only that aspect of it which corresponds to a strongly pronounced and in a sense inexhaustible interest (in fecundity), while rejecting both the annual ceremonial, whose aims seem redundant, and the *sogba* ordeal, which was altogether alien to the pre-existing aims or interests. Much the same is true of the bronze figures of Tsoede, which were embodied in Nupe ritual only as emblems of kingship, without any of the features normally implicit in the worship of 'idols'.

Let us be clear that this assessment of a balance between interests and congeniality holds only with two provisos. First, it is largely based on *ex post facto* arguments. The *gani*, for example, fits a 'pre-existing need' only in the form in which it exists today. If we judge this affinity of interest to be sufficiently great to have outweighed the uncongenial features we do so because in the event the latter proved no insuperable obstacle; but we cannot be certain how much remodelling, of content and purpose as well as of form, has gone into the acceptance. Nor can we say that the *bori* or *gugu* would have proved incapable of such remodelling. All we can really say is that no such attempts have been made. Have they not been made because there was no sufficiently strong interest to make the effort worthwhile? Again we can only answer—perhaps; for the *elo* would seem to contradict this argument. There, an uncongenial practice has been fitted into Nupe life for no apparent 'need' at all, unless we are prepared to consider the addition of a pleasurable (and novel) occasion a felt 'need'. And if we do so, the mummery of the *gugu* and the unusual dance of the *bori* would seem similarly acceptable.

Secondly, our arguments hold only if other factors in the situation can safely be neglected; and of one of these, the relationship

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between the potential donors and recipients, this cannot be assumed *ab initio*. Rather, this factor must be added as a likely third determinant of adoption or rejection. Surveying our data from this new angle we meet with a wide variety of situations. The *elo*, the Tsoede 'idols', and the *sogba* cult were adopted strictly from outside, without any corresponding fusion or integration of the 'owners' with the recipient groups. But here a further distinction must be drawn: while the Tsoede idols and the *elo* were taken over from fully distinct and in fact unknown donors, the *sogba* was found among neighbours and was 'taken over' only in the sense in which people turn to some promising, if otherwise unfamiliar, place of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the 'owners' of the *sogba* cult, viewed with Nupe eyes, occupied the inferior position of a conquered 'slave' population. Perhaps, then, the barrier of status was readily overcome only in the case of the fertility ritual, with its strong affinity of interest, while in the case of the other aspects of the cult it added to the 'counter-pulls' which made for their rejection.

The *gani*, *gugu*, and *borí* represent observances adopted or rejected in circumstances which involved the fusion or integration of donor and recipient groups. But again, the conditions differ in relevant respects. The Pornu and Yoruba immigrants arrived *en bloc*, maintained themselves as compact groups, and were thus integrated, as segments, in the host communities; the Hausa colony in the cosmopolitan city grew haphazardly, as the result of the irregular immigration of individuals of all classes and occupations, and never achieved internal cohesion; it only fused amorphously with the host community, but was not integrated in it. The kind of adoption, therefore, which turned the *gani* into a 'sectional task' was neither feasible nor called for in the case of the *borí*. It might, on the other hand, conceivably have worked in the case of the Yoruba ritual, even though this cult answers no 'residual' need. But here we must consider that the Yoruba came to Nupe, not as immigrants claiming equal status (as did the Benu), nor yet as free immigrants, but as prisoners of war freed and settled by royal command. Whatever the effect of the other 'pulls' in this rank-conscious society, the barrier of status must have weighed heavily on the side of rejection. Admittedly, it did so effectively only as regards the cult as such; minor features, such as the dress of the dancers which reappears in the *elo*, were adopted across the barrier, for their aesthetic attraction and novelty. Yet the barrier has at least prevented this 'borrowing' being acknowledged.

In brief, the acceptance or rejection of the alien observances involves the efficacy of several conditions and results from their

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varying combination and interplay. I have tried to tabulate the relevant data in the form of a synoptic chart capable of exhibiting the multiple correlations. The features listed are those discussed above, plus and minus signs indicating their presence and absence respectively. I also attempted to grade the interests satisfied by the various cults by doubling the plus signs in the appropriate cases; a similar grading of 'congeniality' seemed irrelevant in the light of the final result.

	(I) *Integration of donors and recipients*	(SD) *Status distinction operating against donors*	(C) *Congeniality of form*	(SI) *Satisfaction of interest*	*Outcome*
bori	−	±	−	+ (as therapeutic measure)	Rejection
gugu	+	+	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Rejection
gani	+	−	−	+ +	Adoption
sogba (fertility cult)	−	+	−	+ +	Adoption
(general cult)	−	+	−	−	Rejection
elo	−	−	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Adoption
Tsoede idols	−	−	−	+ +	Adoption

In other words, adoption (of a voluntary kind) occurred when

$$I^{\pm} \ldots SD^{\pm} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{++}$$

and when

$$I^{-} \ldots SD^{-} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{+}.$$

That a strong interest should outweigh the absence of congeniality and render the factor of integration irrelevant is hardly surprising; but it is puzzling that this should be true also where the interest appears to be small and even uncertain (as in the *elo*). Perhaps, then, we have underrated the residual 'need'? If so, it must have sprung from some inadequacy in the pleasures and excitements afforded in the pre-existing situation. Although this

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assumption cannot, for obvious reasons be fully substantiated, it is not altogether unwarranted. Mokwa and the other communities practising the *elo* are in fact poor in ceremonials offering, apart from occasions for worship, also the purely pleasurable stimulations of dancing, singing, and conviviality; for while most Nupe communities have two or three ceremonials of this kind, Mokwa has only one apart from the *elo*—the *gunnu*,—the remaining rituals being sober esoteric sacrifices, unaccompanied by music, dancing, and public 'merry-making'.[1] We mentioned in a previous context that the number of fixed ceremonials is fairly uniform throughout Nupe;[2] we may now add that the proportion of ceremonials of such combined appeal is similarly uniform. This I take to indicate that the Nupe need for regular pleasurable stimulations has as it were found its own level. Which would mean, further, that Mokwa and the other communities were only balancing a psychological deficit when they adopted the *elo*. Certainly, several of the communities which exhibit the normal Nupe level of ceremonial-*cum*-pleasurable occasions had an equal chance of embracing the *elo* or of copying the similar *gugu*, but have not done so. So that the adoption, by a few groups, of the alien ceremonial for no motive other than that of adding another festivity did yet answer an unsatisfied 'need'.

But let us note a final source of error. We have spoken of the 'pre-existing' interests or needs as though they were bound to be constant, the measure of their satisfaction alone being variable. It is conceivable that this assumption is unwarranted, and that the adoption of the new observance reflects, not a pre-existing interest unsatisfied, but an interest strengthened owing to some change in social conditions. As regards the *elo* and *sogba*, there is no evidence to support this alternative hypothesis. It is, however, borne out in the case of the *'ani*. This ceremonial, as I put it before, improves upon the traditional Nupe institutions which ritualize adolescence and age-grade life; it dramatizes these events in a specific and detailed manner where the equivalent traditional ceremonial, the *gunnu*, merely deals summarily with the transition from youth to adulthood, embodying it as one aspect among others in its design. Now, though the age grades have undoubtedly always served to mirror the dominant interests of Nupe life, in rank and in promotion in status, the interests themselves must have gained in

[1] The same is true of Rabah, though there Mohammedan influence has today obliterated the *gunnu*. Gbajibo, the third community practising the *elo*, has two other ceremonials which combine religious with generally pleasurable stimulations, the *gunnu* and the *mamma*; but the latter is celebrated in secrecy, by the men alone, and only as a mortable ritual.

[2] See above, p. 70.

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importance with the growth of the Fulani Emirate. As the latter gave greater impetus to desires for a political career and imparted greater severity to the competition for rank and status, so the age grades assumed a novel, and more weighty, significance. With this, the fuller and more specific ritual elaboration of adolescence seems entirely consistent. It was not so that the pre-existing desire to give ritual elaboration to important things had been inadequately expressed; rather, things became important in a new way: so that, when the Nupe adopted the *gani* ceremonial, they were seizing upon a chance to express a changed outlook and a desire reoriented.

As we shall see, the more far-reaching conversion to Islam similarly involves such changing interests and newly emerged trends. Are then, perhaps, any trends visible in Nupe today which may in future lead to further adoptions of alien practices? I will hazard this prediction. The pressure of competition and the obsession with promotion in status, grown strongest in the capital, are visibly leading to anxieties and frustrations, and to mental instability. The incidence of neurotic disorders seems to bear out this tendency, though inadequate records forbid a more definite statement.[1] The mass hysteria of the witchcraft trial mentioned before offers clearer evidence. Such increased tensions may well seek relief in some form of self-abandonment: the *bori* possession cult seems to offer precisely this chance, which might one day be seized upon, its 'uncongenial' appeal notwithstanding.

3. THE CHARACTER OF TRIBAL RELIGION

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The preceding discussion referred only to the adoption of isolated practices and items of belief but made no mention of individuals or communities wholly converted to an alien pagan creed. Nor is this unexpected. The religions of pre-literate peoples are not normally of a proselytizing kind. They promise no particular reward to the converted, nor do they place any premium on the conversion of others. Indeed, it seems true to say that this issue never arises, for, as we anticipated, primitive religion is essentially a tribal or national religion, conceived of as inseparable from the particular identity of the group professing it. Expressed differently, primitive religion does not constitute a 'church' which exists in its own right and can be entered (or left) solely by reason of its creed and of the transcendental benefits promised to the believers.[2]

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 402.

[2] Durkheim's famous identification of 'religion' (of any form) with a 'church' seems to me to rest on an arbitrary use of the latter term; for whatever else may be meant by a 'church', it must mean 'a community organized

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No machinery therefore exists to deal with such contingencies—no provision for tuition of the converts-to-be, and no formal procedure of admission or perhaps excommunication. To say it again, that sum-total of beliefs and practices we call Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari religion, is simply the religion of the people who, on other grounds also, call themselves Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari; and though it is possible for single observances or even items of belief (such as the belief in the significance of death by lightning) to be adopted or 'borrowed', the notion that the religion as a whole can be exported or changed for another is inconceivable.

This self-sufficiency of the Nupe faith goes together with a marked detachment and tolerance towards other creeds. The Nupe, as we know, are greatly interested in discussing the religions of others; but they do so dispassionately, and indeed think it possible that the radically different beliefs of their neighbours are justifiable and, in a vague sense, as 'right' as their own. The coexistence of widely varying practices in Nupe itself must have helped in fostering this tolerance towards alien beliefs; certainly, any person showing such tolerance is not for that reason considered an apostate or even a doubter. The Nupe creed simply lays little claim to any exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Yet it is not for that reason less securely held. If the Nupe do not argue that their creed is the best of all possible creeds, neither do they question that, for them, it is simply given, as is their language and all the other features that go with 'being a Nupe'. Their detached tolerance thus seems only the obverse of this self-sufficiency of 'tribal' religions.

The fact that alien observances are sometimes adopted for their apparent utility or some other attraction is not felt to be inconsistent with this notion of a 'given' tribal religion; at least, the inconsistency is corrected by tacitly granting that alien practices could yet 'become Nupe', that is, could be added to those which, at that stage, were indicative of the social identity. The accomplished fact, then, re-establishes the *status quo*; the new religious practice, now regularly executed by a population which by numerous other criteria regards itself as one, as 'the Nupe', becomes itself 'of Nupe'; so that the people can again detachedly view 'alien' observances or beliefs. Let me restate this in more general terms. The conscious identity of Nupe, as of any society, comes from the awareness of a large stable array of modes of behaviour understood to be typical of the society; any single

by officials into an institution which bestows gifts of grace' (on all who seek it), which makes 'the sacred generally 'accessible', and under whose authority members can 'be 'enrolled' (see Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', *Essays in Sociology*, p. 288).

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change in this array does not alter the continued consciousness of identity, but is subsumed in it.

This is, of course, a familiar situation, which ultimately accounts for the continuity (or continued self-awareness) of societies even when their cultural possessions, or for that matter their populations, change. Much will depend on the gradualness and restricted scope of the change; a sudden change in which new modes of behaviour greatly outweigh the 'array' of pre-existing ones may disrupt the continued identity. But it need not always do so. For the process just outlined may also be reversed: the society facing such far-reaching changes may yet fasten on to some particular cultural possession which remained unchanged, and consider it sufficiently relevant to furnish a criterion or symbol of the continued identity. Often, as we know, a creed or some religious observance preserved amidst the changes will prove to have this relevance.

This process, too, can be observed among the Nupe, among the colony of emigrants in Lagos, who have lost nearly every feature of culture, including language, which would normally sustain that awareness of 'being Nupe' or 'still being Nupe'. But they have preserved one traditional cult, the *gunnu*; and they still regard themselves as Nupe (calling themselves either Nupe or, more often, Takpa or Tapa, by the Yoruba name). The two things go together; in discussions, when the people wish to emphasize their tribal identity, they at once mention the possession of this cult which, to them, seems decisive.

Let me say a few words about the Nupe colony in Lagos. It numbers perhaps 5,000 people, both scattered over the outlying hamlets and villages and occupying a special quarter in the city of Lagos.[1] The Nupe settlement is claimed to be of considerable antiquity, going back to the Portuguese era, and to have attained its present important and honoured position towards the end of the last century, when the self-made head of the Lagos Nupe, a certain Gana and a 'noted warrior', was elevated to high rank by the Yoruba town king. This Gana, who incidentally was taken to England to be presented to Queen Victoria, was the grandfather of the present chief of the Lagos Nupe, a man of about seventy. Gana's rank, *Osode*, is still held by his descendants, and with the rank goes the priestship of the *gunnu*, which Gana had somehow assumed. The Lagos *gunnu* is a combination of three rites all subsumed under the same name, the *gunnu* itself, the *ndakó gboyá*, and the ritual of the Chain of Tsoede, the paraphernalia of the three

[1] The Nupe quarter in Lagos is known to everyone; its main thoroughfares are called *Tapa Street* and *Osode Street*, the latter deriving its name from the title held by the head of the Nupe colony (see below).

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rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *kuso*, 'bush'.

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We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu* and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults. The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos ceremonials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Paradoxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their traditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

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28. Mask of the 'Great *elo*'

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29. Dancer at the Bida *salla* with headdress modelled on the *elo* mask

[p. 230 (A)]

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30. The Nupe quarter in Lagos

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31. The oldest mosque in Bida

[p. 230(B)]

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of the same territory; political autonomy; and numerous norms of behaviour and types of relationship.

With all this the next chapter will deal. Let me here only explain an apparent omission; if this discussion made no mention of that other religion demanding complete conversion, Christianity, the reason is, simply, the unimportance of Christianity in Nupe life. The number of converts is extremely small and the progress of Christianity insignificant. The Nupe generally are not hostile to those who have become Christians; they do not subject them to special disabilities; nor do they despise them; only mallams will sometimes call Christians, contemptuously, *káfiri*, 'unbelievers'. Here, too, the general attitude is one of tolerance, though it is more pronounced among pagans than among Moslems. The former (including nominal Moslems) quite often send their children to mission schools, and most Nupe keep on friendly terms with missionaries or African evangelists. But this tolerance always goes with the conviction that Christian missionizing will remain ineffectual; friendliness with Christians is unobjectionable only because it is of no consequence. Nor do the Nupe ever commit themselves by their association with Christians. They do not intermarry with Christian converts; they do not ask them to their family feasts; and the converts never come from solid, stable families, but from among unattached individuals—old people without relations, young orphans, or the children of strangers. Even among these, I was told, apostasy often occurs in later life. And here it is not the pagan religion which is the greatest rival of Christianity, but the steadily encroaching Islam.

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VIII

ISLAM IN NUPE

I. THE CONVERSION TO ISLAM

If the pagan religions surrounding Nupe lack the features essential to complete conversion, Islam has them all. It is a proselytizing and super-national creed; it is embodied in a church; it provides for the requisite tuition and for special procedures of admission; also, the conversion to the new, non-tribal, religion went together with a significant restructuring of the society so converted.

The historical background of the Islamization of Nupe is fairly clear. According to Nupe tradition, the fifteenth king after the mythical Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned about 1770, was the first to adopt Islam. But the names of even earlier rulers seem to indicate Mohammedan influence (Abdu Waliyi, 1679–1700, Ibrahim, 1713–17, Abubakari Kolo, 1742–6). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, under Etsu Ma'azū, the impact of Islam had gained both in strength and purpose. It was then that Mallam Dendo came to Nupe as an emissary of the Fulani Emir of Gwando, entrusted with the double task of spreading Islam and of paving the way for the Fulani conquest, which was itself a phase in the Holy War that had been raised in the north of Nigeria. Even before Mallam Dendo's arrival, apparently, it had become customary to include mallams among the court officials of the Nupe kings, as diviners, chaplains, and advisers on matters spiritual and secular. Dendo filled this role with great efficiency, so great that he soon became the actual ruler of the kingdom. Aided by other mallams and agents of the new regime, and by a mercenary army officered by Mohammedans, he effected the overthrow of the old dynasty and turned Nupe kingdom into a vassal state of the Fulani Empire whose supreme head, the Emir of Sokoto, styled himself *Sarkin Musimi*—'King of the Moslems'. From then onwards, Islam became the official religion, not only of royalty, but of the state, spreading through all the channels of bureaucracy, to the craft guilds and merchants, and along the main trade routes of the country. Though its firmest hold is still upon the capital it has

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reached also the peasantry in the districts and some of the riverain population. 794

From the beginning, then, Islamization in Nupe was bound up with political interests and represented a change 'from above'. 794 During the long-drawn internal wars which accompanied the Fulani rise to power acceptance of Islam meant identifying oneself 174 with the new regime. Even today Islam stands for some such identification, with the powers that be, with the social élite, and implicitly with the culture that grew up in the capital where that power is centred and the élite resides. Islam thus added to the unification of the conquest-state, extending the area of a common culture over a population otherwise unified only by political means. More precisely, it transformed a mere holding-together, ultimately by coercion, into a belonging-together—the conscious belonging-together that goes with a shared creed.

This twin machinery of unification, political and religious, was not an entirely new thing. When the Fulani established their rule over Nupe they did so over a society itself held together essentially by political means. For though the older Nupe kingdom had grown from within the Nupe tribe and largely coincided with it, it did not rest on 'tribal' solidarity or unity alone. Rather, the political unity of the kingdom was superimposed upon heterogeneous tribal sections, autonomous communities, and a population bound to widely diverse religious practices. So that on this level already the state had to create its own religious supports. The emblems of the ancestor king Tsoede and the myths and rituals associated with his person stand in this sense for the kingdom and its overriding unity; much as the 'state church' of Islam stands for Fulani rule. But there are these differences. Islam, of course, is a religion in its own right, and one open to any country or regime; while the religious observances surrounding Nupe kingship derived their sacred import only from this association and have no meaning outside the political or national setting. The 'royal cults' and myths, therefore, specifically buttressed sovereignty and tied the population to the institution of kingship; Islam does so only incidentally and indirectly, through being the faith of sovereign and ruling class. Finally, the royal cults were merely added to the series of rituals peculiar to the various communities and tribal sections; their diverse religious life was left intact, being only made to include some observance expressive of the new 'belonging-together'. Islam supersedes all the diverse beliefs and practices; it makes proselytes, not scattered cult members, and involves complete identification, not merely the acceptance of tokens of identity.

These contrasts reflect both the different potentialities of Islam

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and of the pagan cults, and the different conditions in which the religious unification occurred, here following upon an alien domination; and there buttressing an indigenous kingdom still 'tribal' in many respects. It is difficult to draw any general conclusion from this fortuitous combination of two sets of factors. It may seem suggestive that the alien conquest and the indigenous state employed religion in radically different ways. But then, the particular employment of religion in support of the alien conquest also accorded with the potentialities of the religion professed by the conquerors. In other words, the alien ruling group happened to carry with it a creed which, being proselytizing and non-tribal, seems to have offered precisely the support their regime demanded; and this being so, it is futile to speculate on the kind of situation that would have arisen had the conquerors not professed such a suitable creed. Indeed, without the impetus of Islam the whole conquest would probably not have taken place or taken that particular form. We may point out two things, however.

The Islamization of the country is far from complete, both in that it reached only a portion of the population and in that it often remained superficial. Thus Islam, far from superseding the indigenous ceremonials, often merely furnished new, additional ones. The new ceremonials stand for a common cult, no more; and this in turn stands for a new unity, of the Mohammedan regime and the conquest-state: but it stands for it only as another 'token of identity'. So that the regime based on conquest is still employing the same religious support which characterized the indigenous kingdom. If this means that the potentialities of Islam have not (or not yet) been fully utilized, in other respects they required correction. For Islam points beyond the state which may adopt it for its church; for the Nupe, it means conversion to a creed uniting a vast population in Nigeria and West Africa (though few Nupe would think of Islam as a world religion). Also, as we have said, this creed of a ruling class lacks the explicit reference to sovereignty which the pagan 'royal cults' possessed. Thus, to serve as a buttress of 'State and Throne', the broad conception of Islam needed some narrowing down and its practice some remodelling. As we shall see, this has indeed been achieved.

Let me first say a few words about the motives which induced individuals and whole communities in Nupe to embrace the new faith. The Fulani did not resort to mass conversions imposed by force. But the prestige value implicit in this creed of a ruling class was only one of its inducements. It offered, besides, two more specific material advantages. First, conversion to Islam promised safety from slavery; secondly, the patronage of nobility, which peasants and craftsmen would seek for economic reasons as well

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as to secure legal protection, involved accepting the religion of the rulers.[1] The rough and ready conversions which were the result cannot have involved any elaborate rules of spiritual preparation. Indeed, during the early Fulani regime, there were no such rules, though there was a set procedure. A man declaring to his chosen patron, not to any member of the clergy, that he wished to become a Mohammedan, and the gift, in return, of a turban and sword, sealed at once the conversion and the grant of patronage. Today, the procedure is, at least in theory, a little more elaborate and less worldly. The would-be convert is supposed to turn to a mallam for the necessary tuition, which is brief and superficial, consisting only in memorizing a few *surat* of the Qoran. In due course, he will make the declaration of faith (that is, speak the first *surah*) during the service in the mosque, after which he can don a turban, the visible sign of the accomplished conversion. A few older men I met had in fact undergone this procedure. But nowadays most adults as it were slip into Islam; they simply decide to attend the mosque (however irregularly), to perform the prescribed observances (however perfunctorily), and to exchange the indigenous phrygian caps for turbans. They may, however, seek tuition afterwards, many mallams having such 'self-made' Mohammedans among their pupils. The younger people professing Islam have mostly grown up in that faith; many received tuition in a Qoran school in their youth; others merely had parents who, in spite of their own pagan beliefs, arranged for their children a birth and naming ceremony in Mohammedan style.

The observances followed by the Nupe Mohammedans are as simple and liberal as is the procedure of conversion. The five basic duties of Islam—bearing witness to the One God; reciting the five daily prayers (*salât*); giving alms; observing the Fast (Ramadhan); and making the pilgrimage to Mecca—are, for most Nupe, reduced to two. When you ask a Nupe what makes a Mohammedan, the answer is invariably this—*jĩ salla* (i.e., saying the daily prayers) and keeping the Fast. The declaration of faith in One God has slipped into the background of things taken for granted. This is not unnatural; since the traditional belief of the Nupe knows one deity only, as abstract and remote as the God of Islam, the testimony to His uniqueness strikes no one as a point of great importance. Nor are the Nupe greatly exercised over the finer theological distinctions between *Sokó* and *Allah*; mostly they regard them as two names for the same being. The giving of alms (*sádaka*) is, as we know, embodied in numerous institutional occasions; but it is regarded merely as a desirable thing, not as an obligation in its own right, deserving to be listed among the

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 142–3.

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794 'foundations' of the faith. The pilgrimage to Mecca does not even fall under the heading of desirables; at least, it is desirable only in a very abstract and remote sense, the whole notion being, for most Nupe, utterly unreal and impracticable.[1]

The duties just discussed are only as it were minimum obligations, referring to the explicit practical tasks incumbent upon Moslems. In addition, there is the whole body of learning, theological and more general, that goes with this creed the very first steps of which concern scholarship, reading, writing, and knowledge of the 'book'. Furthermore, Islam is a way of life—*sunna*—no less than a doctrine; as such, it bears on kinship rules, the position of women, ethics, and law; on art and forms of recreation; and on the attitude towards other creeds.

2. DAILY WORSHIP

Yet even the basic, 'minimum', duties represent a mode of worship, and hence a 'way of life', utterly novel to people reared in traditional Nupe culture. The prayers in an alien tongue, which must be memorized and repeated in word-perfect fashion, have nothing in common with the variable and informal addresses of the deity typical of the Nupe ceremonials. This is true equally of the whole notion of daily prayers, that is, of a routine of worship pervading workaday life and not restricted to rare festive occasions or times of need and anxiety. The worship inside buildings is similarly unprecedented; and so is the idea of individual worship in the place of group ceremonial. Even the gatherings at the mosque on Fridays or festive days represent only the massed worship of so-and-so many separate individuals, not a collective act, resting on collaboration and a division of tasks, such as the Nupe know. It is true that most Islamic countries possess orders or sects (*tariqa*) whose rules of worship aim at overcoming this separateness of individual devotions. These are turned into a collective response in which inter-stimulation has full play and which may reach a state of frenzy through the endless repetition in unison of prayer formulæ, through prescribed movements of the body, or with the help of music and dancing. But the self-abandonment of these practices (*zikr*) and their aim of achieving a mystic union of worshipper and deity seem alike alien to the mood of Nupe religious ceremonial. Certainly, neither the religious orders nor their collective acts of devotion have influenced Moslem worship in Nupe.

[1] Significantly, among the many hundreds of Nigerians I encountered in the Sudan and on the Red Sea coast, at varying stages of their pilgrimage, I met only two Nupe men. And in the whole of Nupe country, there were, during my stay, only three returned pilgrims, two of whom were of Fulani extraction.

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Finally, the character of the Moslem priesthood has no counterpart in Nupe. Strictly speaking, Islam has no priesthood; any person of sufficient scholarly standing can hold services or administer the religious rites, though it is common for selected individuals to become the officiants (*Imam*, *Liman* in Nupe) in particular mosques and for the head of the clergy to be appointed or confirmed by the sovereign of the country. Often, too, these appointments stay in the same family, if only incidentally. But normally, there is no trace in Mohammedan priestship of rigidly hereditary tenure, nor of a 'miraculous birth' or similar mystical qualifications. Again, in other Islamic countries the widespread cults of holy men, or holy families, descended from saints or from the kin of the Prophet, have superseded the more prosaic, ordinary priestship. These ideas are once more absent in Nupe, though there is one significant exception. For around the historical and political figure of Mallam Dendo something like saint worship has sprung up. A mosque erected over his grave has become almost a place of pilgrimage, at least for the Fulani aristocracy; and stories of a legendary character about his life and exploits are current throughout the country. The Arabic name for such holy leaders, *sayyid*, is unknown to the Nupe; but they have coined a new word for their one saint—*Mankó*, 'Great Mallam'.

These various divergences have to some extent been resolved by Nupe-izing the orthodox Moslem practices. A minor instance are the open-air mosques found in many smaller or half-pagan villages. They consist of a ring of stones laid out in the open usually under a shady tree. This simple arrangement does not reflect only the simple needs of a small congregation, or its rational desire to economize; even a small congregation could build a mud-hut of the usual type and call it a mosque. Rather, the arrangement seems to indicate also some perseverance in the old manner of worship, which disappears only when Islam is more firmly rooted. The mosques, of whatever kind, introduced a novel social feature also in separating the worshippers from different neighbourhoods; for any fair-sized village will contain several mosques, scattered over the locality, so that each *efu* or ward has its own building. In other words, the coincidence of the actual congregation and the community at large, typical of the pagan ceremonials, no longer holds. It is reintroduced, however, on special occasions. In addition to these local mosques, where the daily prayers are said, any populous Nupe village also possesses a large, central mosque for the service on Friday and on feast days, that is, for the worship of a congregation made coextensive with the community.[1]

[1] This does not apply to Bida town, whose tripartite division is reflected in the three main mosques of the town (see *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 43, 89).

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794 The daily prayers (*salla*) spoken in Arabic (which few understand) and the weekly service in the mosque (*aduwa*) have become fully part of Nupe life, and if they lack the stimulus of pressing needs or the thrill that goes with rare occasions, this is not felt or ever commented upon. But the Moslem observances have also been remodelled, partly in a revolutionary fashion. As they exist today, they afford expression to the same pressing anxieties which animate the pagan rites, and do so with the same persuasiveness of a direct, articulate appeal to the deity. Over and above the stereotyped prayers, the Nupe have others which ask for special benefits and are meant to take care of such contingencies as a drought or the threat of an epidemic. These prayers may be said both privately, by any family head for his household, and publicly, in the mosque, by the *Liman* on behalf of the whole community. The special prayers are always said after the regular ones and, most important of all, are spoken in Nupe, not in Arabic. In addition, any household or kin group which faces some deep anxiety or threat will [illegible], that is, a ceremonial meal at which a fowl is killed and a mallam, specially invited, utters a brief prayer; again, an invocation in Nupe follows the Arabic formula, so that this observance differs only in minor details from the communal meal of the pagan ceremonial.[1]

794 782 Let me here quote four Nupe-Mohammedan prayers, concerned with harvest and rain. They have been recorded in two different places, Bida and Lemu, and show the familiar looseness and variability of phrasing, which no orthodox Moslem prayer ever permits; above all, they invoke *Sokó*, not *Allah*, and thus wholly recapture the content and style of the pagan invocations.

Prayer at Harvest time (Bida).

Lord God (*Tsoci*), protect the house from the dangers of the harvest season, such as fire, such as falling ill with fever, such as drought. Give us health, *Amin*.

The same (Lemu).

The harvest is cleared: *Sokó*, protect us from fire; *Sokó*, protect us from smallpox; *Sokó* protect us from the heat that dries up everything.

Prayer at the Beginning of the Rains (Bida).

Sokó, may he give rain in plenty. May he give food that thrives beautifully. The grain, may it thrive beautifully. *Sokó*, send us

[1] The Nupe would in fact say that *walima* is only the 'Mohammedan name' for the ceremonial which the 'pagans' know as *biki*. (See above, p. 110.)

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water which falls down upon man. And the man who is in a canoe on the water, and the water in the bush, protect them also for all of us. 794 782

The same (*Lemu*).

Lord God, protect us from the danger which is in the rain, and the storms, and also the lightning. Protect the house from it. Give us health, *Amin*.

3. CEREMONIALS

We turn to the big religious feasts of Islam which, in their annual recurrence at least, should come closest to, or rival most fully, the fixed pagan ceremonials. Of the seven orthodox Moslem festivals, the Nupe celebrate only three: the Mohammedan New Year, *Muharram*, and the two feasts known in Arabic countries as *Id el Fitr* and *Id el Azha*, the former concluding the month of *Ramadhan*, the latter falling in the 'month of pilgrimage', at the end of the Mohammedan year.[1] The Nupe call the Moslem New Year's feast *navũ* or 'Torches', and name the first month of the year after it; the month of *Ramadhan* is called *etswa azũ*, 'Month of the Fast', and the feast which succeeds it *sallagi* or 'Little Feast' (lit. 'prayer'); the *Id el Azha*, also known in Arabic as *Id el Kibir*, Great Feast, is called *sallahó*, which has the same meaning. The months in which these two feasts fall, the 10th and 12th, respectively, are known by their names.[2] Let us note that in embracing only three of the festivities of Islam the Nupe have retained that 'normal level' of regular ceremonials which we could discern in their traditional religious life.[3] 794 796x

In all Moslem countries the purely festive aspects of the *Id* tend to outshine the strictly religious ones. These are represented in a religious service held in the open, attended by vast crowds and led by the *Imam*; in the generous giving of alms; and (on the 'Great Feast') in the sacrifice of an 'unblemished animal . . . to commemorate the name of God over the brute beasts which He has

[1] A third, the Birthday of the Prophet, is identified by the Nupe with the *gani* ceremonial, as we have seen, on very little evidence. (See above, p. 217).

[2] These dates correspond to general Moslem practice. But the correspondence is purely nominal since the Nupe calendar operates with the intercalation of a 13th month while the Moslem calendar keeps strictly to the lunar year. In consequence the Nupe feasts always fall roughly in the same season while the orthodox Moslem celebrations correspond in no way to a seasonal calendar.

[3] See pp. 70, 225. This applies only to communities fully Islamized; in a first phase, one of the Mohammedan feasts, the *navũ*, may simply be added to the pagan cycle of rites (see below, p. 244).

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provided' (Qoran, *Surah* XXII). All three features occur in Nupe, the animal being always a fattened ram, killed and eaten in every household that can afford the expense on the third day of the feast. Few Nupe, however, know anything about the meaning of the sacrifice save that it is ordered by the Prophet as a 'sacred occasion'. Much more important is the holiday atmosphere which pervades the three days of the feast. Everybody dresses in his best clothes and visits friends and relations or pays his respects to a noble patron. In Bida, the people throng the streets and gather in the public places to watch the *Etsu* and the 'great ones' of the country ride in resplendent procession from the service to the royal palace. There, outside the palace, a vast crowd is entertained, at the *Etsu's* order and expense, with food for body and eyes; there are equestrian displays, and the performances of professional dancers and musicians, clowns and jugglers.[1]

We note that the two-phase pattern of the pagan ceremonials, in which esoteric and sacred activities always precede the public merry-making, no longer applies: there is nothing esoteric about the religious service, 'merry-making' pervades the whole feast, and one of the 'sacred' activities, the sacrifice of the ram, does not open but concludes the ritual proceedings. Indeed, the *salla* is a spectacle rather than a ritual, at all stages open to all—to men and women, to townsfolk and strangers, and to people of every age. Its main significance lies precisely in this: the *salla* brings together nearly the whole Moslem community, not only symbolically, through being a common observance (or a 'token of identity'), but concretely and physically. At least, it does so potentially. The *salla* is also performed outside Bida, though on a lesser scale, all the larger villages having their own celebrations, when the local District Head, that is, the Emir's representative, plays the part which, in the capital, falls to the sovereign. But the Bida *salla* remains the centre and always attracts visitors from the country, so that at one time or other every Nupe Moslem will attend the celebrations in the capital.

If the *salla* lacks the thrill of secret preparation and esoteric observances, it yet provides others—the thrill of a splendid spectacle and, above all, that of being brought close to the powers that be. Altogether, the emphasis of the *salla* is as much political as religious. It serves as a display of kingship and hence as a buttress of sovereignty no less than as a sacred occasion. In mobilizing the religious community it mobilizes also the population of the Moslem state; so that the religious appeal blends with the confirmation of political allegiance. It is in this fashion, then,

[1] For a fuller description of the 'Great *salla*' in Bida, see *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 143–4.

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that the all-too-broad unity of Islam is (as I put it before) narrowed down to the scope of a national church. 794

The *navũ* is to some extent a smaller replica of the *salla*, including, again, the state procession to the mosque, with all its display of royal splendour and evoking the same festive mood of a large city bent on enjoyment. But the royal display occupies only a brief phase, on the morning of New Year's Day; and the enjoyment has a new emphasis, on youth, and on moral licence. 796x

On the eve of New Year, at nightfall, the young people of Bida, both youths and girls, forgather at the three streams that cross the town. The girls come in little groups, while the boys and young men are formed into companies, each composed of an age-grade association under its leader. They sing and dance on the way, and the youths all carry torches, which they swing or throw high up in the air, and sometimes brandish at one another in playful attacks. Arrived at the river the youths remove their gowns and the girls their upper garments, and thus stripped to the waist wade into the water. They splash about, with much shrieking and laughing, try dance steps, jumps and somersaults, and the boys engage in brief wrestling bouts, invariably terminated by a ducking. Now and again this clowning gives way to a mock battle, when the boys will thrust and throw the torches at one another, age-group fighting age-group, not seriously, but keenly and with marked excitement. It needs skill to catch the wildly flying firebrands or to parry those aimed at you. Nor are narrow escapes uncommon, and first-aid treatments for burns are a regular aftermath of the *navũ*. The excitement of the fight, moreover, is matched by the openly erotic excitement provoked by the occasion. This is indeed unique; at no other time will Nupe girls disrobe in the presence of men or show themselves with bare breasts. The girls will keep to the dark side of the river; but the youths throw torches in their direction to surprise a girl while she is undressing or bathing. There is cruder horseplay, too, the boys trying to seize the girls or to bump into them as though unwittingly; while in the shadows and under the bridge couples pursue their amorous play unseen. But though there is plenty of teasing and joking, the language is never obscene. About midnight the bathing breaks up and the young people return to their homes. 786 794 796x 883

This prelude to the *navũ* was not always so tame. Until fairly recently the mock battle of torches was meant quite seriously.[1] The three different bathing places are chosen in accordance with the threefold dynastic division of the city, and are visited by the age-grade associations in the respective local division. The diverse

[1] The word 'battle' has been chosen advisedly. All informants describing the usage emphasized that it was 'like a war'.

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786 loyalties which govern the town hold their sway over youth as well
794 as adults; and on the occasion of the *navũ* the factional jealousies,
x 796 never fully submerged, were allowed to come into the open. Thus
883 the torch processions invariably led to organized and heated fights between the three groups; on the way back from the river, especially, one would ambush the other or try to invade the rival territory. The battle is said to have lasted the whole night, being fought with torches, sticks, stones, and any handy weapons. Injuries (some say, even death) inflicted in the course of the *navũ* went unpunished; for on this one night the law of the land was suspended. Eventually, in 1920 or thereabouts, the excesses of this all-too realistic play forced the Government to intervene and to forbid this phase of the *navũ*.

In spite of its realism, however, the mock battle not only legitimized factional hostility but also diverted it into relatively harmless channels. For though the boys and youths would give vent to sentiments commonly felt, they themselves were still outside serious politics and not yet genuinely caught up in factional strife. They would still be play-acting, however realistically, much as their whole age-grade life, with its imitation of adult ranks and ambitions, is play-acting and a make-believe copy of 'real life'. For the population of the city, whose sons and brothers took part in the 'battle of youth', this was in the nature of a vicarious and controlled catharsis of tensions grown over the year; for the young fighters, it was the climax of age-grade life and a seal set to this 'education for citizenship'. Needless to say, the practice is still vividly remembered. And it is not only the older people who talk nostalgically about their more exciting youth; the young people today have preserved at least the idea of the thing. Small boys with whom I talked before the *navũ* explained to me with great glee all that they and their age mates were going to do to their 'enemies'. In the end, of course, they did nothing; so that today the 'battle of youth' has moved a further stage towards mere make-believe.[1]

794 The licensed aggression of the torch festival reappears on the next day in a new context, that of kinship. For the *navũ* is also
602 an occasion for *ma dzo*, for 'joking', that is, for the licensed liberties
x 796 commonly referred to as 'joking relationship'. Though much less formalized than in other African societies, the institution of joking relationship plays a clearly defined part in Nupe social life. The individuals standing in this relationship are called *dzomanci*, 'playmates', the relationship itself being derived mainly from kinship position. Thus the joking relationship obtains between grandparents and grandchildren of the opposite sex; between cross

[1] See also *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 396–7.

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cousins; between a man and his elder brothers' wives; between a man and his mother's brother's wives; between a man and his wife's *dzomanci*; and between a woman and her father-in-law and her mother-in-law's sister's sons. The relevance of this arrangement for Nupe kinship organization does not concern us here; nor need we consider the joking relationship as it affects everyday life. Let me only stress that the active partners in this relationship, that is, the individuals entitled to take the liberties, are always young people; older persons cease to engage in the joking relationship or become engaged in it only as passive partners, as the victims exposed to the liberties. In practice, then, the joking relationship is asymmetrical, amounting to liberties taken by children or youths with their elders and, in the majority of cases, by one sex with the other.[1] The liberties themselves take this form. Whenever an 'active' partner in the relationship meets his playmate he would lightly beat him or her with a stick until the victim appeases the assailant with a small gift of money. Or boys and young men would visit the home of a playmate, tie his (her) hands and feet with a grass rope, until once more a small ransom is handed over. Throughout the *navũ* this play goes on. Everywhere you see boys armed with sticks or carrying grass ropes handy; and whole bands of them will swagger along the streets looking for their 'playmates' among the girls and women, shouting at them, brandishing their sticks, and trying to seize them, with unequal success. For the 'passive' partner is allowed to evade the punishment, to retaliate, and even to cheat. Quite a few of the older men when they are caught by their young assailants do not pay the required ransom, but merely press their fingers into their playmates' hands as though handing over a coin, and escape by this ruse. And the women and girls on the market sit behind their wares with a stick or grass rope ready in case a 'playmate' tried his extortions on them. There is no serious note in all this: it is fun, and nothing else, taken in good part by everyone. Throughout this play another *motif* is also visible. The *dzomanci* will often be aided by his friends, and during *navũ* you will everywhere see youths walking in pairs and holding hands, two friends facing together the adventures of the day. Thus the *navũ* becomes a multiple occasion for mobilizing and demonstrating the main social relationships governing Nupe life—age-grade solidarity; political allegiance; kinship bonds; and friendship.

It is difficult to define precisely the Islamic kernel in the Nupe celebrations of the *Muharram*, mainly because the character of

[1] Joking relationship also occurs outside the kindred, between certain Nupe sections and other tribes, or within Nupe communities between occupational groups. As these relationships play no part in the *navũ*, they are here disregarded.

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794 the feast varies widely in Moslem countries. The bathing in the river is a common feature of the *Muharram*; but it does not con-
x 796 cern the young particularly. Now in Nupe, the older people, too, perform the prescribed New Year's ablutions; but they do so at home, in water fetched by the women from the river; the bathing in the river, then, with its erotic suggestiveness, is an instance of Nupe-ization. Again, the play with fire, in the form of bonfires or torches, is fairly common; and in Shiite countries especially, the celebrations also include mock violence and battles. But these have a specific religious emphasis, being a commemoration of the last battle and martyrdom of Husain: of which association no Nupe is aware. Indeed, no Nupe knows or has any theory about the meaning of the 'torches'. Whatever the origin of the feature, the fact that it has come to serve political motives and the organization of adolescence, is plain evidence of its remodelling by Nupe hands.

The *navũ* has spread widely through Nupe Emirate, and today occurs even in villages almost entirely pagan, such as Doko, Sakpe, and Jebba Island, where it is simply added to the cycle of traditional rituals. The public service in the mosque, of course, disappears, as does also the realistic 'battle', that is, the political emphasis peculiar to the situation in the city. Each locality performs the ceremonial independently, and no one thinks of visiting the capital to watch or join in the celebrations there. Yet though there are these numerous independent congregations, the *navũ* is understood to be an identical ceremonial and one which each community shares with the capital and royalty. Its specifically Moslem character is entirely obscured; but no Nupe links the origin of the *navũ* to pre-Mohammedan or pre-Fulani times. Rather it is always thought of as a new ceremonial, bound up with the new regime and as such added to the diverse observances of the country. Thus, though it has become part and parcel of the separate life of villages, it is also identified with the kingdom that embraces them all. So that a rite of Islam is again 'narrowed down' to the concerns of the state and employed in the manner of the older 'royal cults', as a mere 'token of identity'.

4. THE MOSLEM WAY OF LIFE

794 Our attempt to assess the influence of Islam on the Nupe way of life is rendered difficult by the fact that we do not know precisely in what shape or form the new creed reached Nupe country. Indeed, even in 'typical' Moslem countries the observances of Islam vary extremely widely. And though this difficulty is somewhat less serious in the case of the strictly religious aspects, since these are, at least in their fundamentals, embodied in a written

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doctrine and uniformly transmitted through the teaching of the Qoran, even this teaching can vary within wide limits; above all, it can be reinforced or belied by the models of practical conduct exhibited by the teachers. Thus we shall presently speak of the confused notions of the Nupe on Moslem cosmology and hagiology, and of their lack of interest in the historical background of Islam. But how far this attitude reflects the Nupe reaction towards the new creed or merely their faithful acceptance of a creed loosely and confusedly taught, it is obviously difficult to say. Quite probably the latter is the true picture; for there is no reason to assume that the first emissaries of Islam were more erudite or theologically-minded than the majority of mallams today. According to some accounts, in fact, the famous Mallam Dendo was little better than a peddler of Mohammedan charms. However this may be, when it comes to the general moral precepts or codes of conduct that go with Islam, we are more uncertain still. Islam reached Nupe through many hands and by many stages, and in a form probably considerably affected by the modes of life of the Sudanese and West African societies where it first took root. Furthermore, many of these are closely akin to Nupe. If then, we find Moslem practices more or less closely attuned to Nupe traditional culture, this may only represent some previous 'remodelling' and, from Nupe point of view, a fortuitous correspondence, not any effort on their part to render the new creed more 'congenial'. 794

Let me illustrate this by one example, the position of women in Moslem-Nupe society. In orthodox Islam the woman is man's inferior by the will of God, and made to obey him (*Surah* IV). Though women may be as true believers, they are permitted no share in religious activities and rarely given the chance of religious tuition. Legally and socially they are subjected to various disabilities; women (not men) must 'observe continence and not display their ornaments' (that is, must be veiled before strangers—*Surah* XXV, 31); and Mohammedans marrying 'infidel' women must not let 'them go back to the infidels', being responsible for their spiritual welfare (*Surah* LX, 10). None of these tenets applies to Nupe Islam. Women are as free as men and legally as fully qualified; the veiling of the women is unknown; and though the Nupe do not admit women to the mosque or other religious observances, girls of the upper classes are often taught the Qoran. Is this, then, an adjustment of Islam to traditional Nupe notions? Hardly that, for this contrast is true only in comparison with Moslem practices, say in India or the urban society of Arabia and the Eastern Sudan. It disappears when we compare Nupe with the nomadic Moslem tribes in the Sudan or with the Mohammedan Emirates in the north of Nigeria. The Fulani invaders of Nupe, 794 562

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who started the great wave of Islamization, were probably as liberal or unorthodox in their attitude to women. So that the Nupe would have received their new creed already remodelled by the donors, and the true contrast would be, not between orthodox Islam and the Nupe version, but between the former and African Islam.

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To turn to the other aspects of the Moslem 'way of life', first, to the high value placed on scholarship. Even the most humble follower of Islam is aware of it. Tuition in the creed and *jī katũ* (reading, book-knowledge in general) are to him almost one and the same thing; and greater religious perfection coincides with wider learning. The title mallam, 'scholar', freely accorded to the pious, already indicates the trend of thought. One mallam friend of mine expressed it aptly when he spoke of the *ciŋwa katũ*, the 'greatness of learning', which makes any Mohammedan scholar equal to the other great ones in the country—rankholders, noblemen, or wealthy landowners. Not that the mallam is necessarily poor or a commoner; many mallams are wealthy, and many members of the titled aristocracy pride themselves on being scholars as well. But the professional scholar does not require the badge or rank nor the backing of wealth to be granted the privileges of high status. His learning makes him the companion of the 'great ones'; his ministration at naming ceremonies, weddings or burials opens him their houses; and even a poor mallam can marry into rich or noble families if his scholarly repute is high; for in this case the bride's father will defray the costs of the brideprice, counting this expenditure as a pious gift of alms.[1]

There are, of course, degrees of learning, and hence distinctions in the status of mallams. In largely pagan villages anyone who has learned to recite a few *surat* of the Qoran and performs his daily prayers is called a mallam; in the Mohammedan capital the name is reserved for those who also teach the Qoran, though the adepts in the art of sand-divining and the sellers of charms are equally included in that class. Mostly a further distinction is drawn between the simple, humble mallam, who knows only the Qoran (or, more often, only small portions of it) and the true scholar, who must have studied *litafi* (books) or *kpikpe* (knowledge) as well. Men of the latter class read eagerly and widely, and acquire books where they can or copy out rare manuscripts. Ignoring, however, the few mallams who practice as judges and have studied the various relevant legal digests and commentaries, the reading of these 'learned men' tends to be indiscriminate and their 'know-

[1] The social position of the mallams and the whole question of Moslem learning and tuition has been fully discussed in *A Black Byzantium*; see especially pp. 102, 378–83.

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ledge' a miscellany of incongruous items. Often the 'books' they get hold of are merely odd assortments of bits of literature, the same volume perhaps containing an extract on marriage law, a page or two on astrology, a treatise on the human body, and a fragment of some Hausa chronicle. Nor does the specific knowledge of Moslem theology fare any better. Again it is a medley of incongruous bits of information and in no way approaches the orthodox teaching of Islam. 794 875

The further down you pass in the scale of Nupe Mohammedan scholarship, the more confused and fragmentary becomes this knowledge. Take this summary account of creation and the powers of God which was given to me by one of the 'simple' mallams: 'Mohammed was the first man on earth; the devil (*Sheitan*) sends illness and misfortunes; after death, the good people become kindly spirits (*aljénu*), while evil persons are turned into dust'. Which last statement was the only reference to the ethical sanctions of Islam I encountered in Nupe; for hell or heaven or the last judgment are never mentioned. The notion, incidentally, that Mohammed was the first man is widespread; but otherwise the ideas about creation and the universe are far from uniform. Here is a different and fuller account, recorded from another mallam of this class: Formerly, when all the people lived together in the same place, there existed 'little gods' (*sokó tetengi*), whom God (*Allah*) sent down to earth to take away the souls (*rayi*) of the persons whose life was nearing its end. But the people grew frightened at this mysterious and unannounced demise and tried to evade it by scattering over the earth. So God introduced a new kind of death, heralded by illness, or overcoming man suddenly, through lightning or other natural disasters. These 'little gods' are the *malaika* (the Arabic *mal'ak*, 'angels'). In addition to the messengers of death there exist also *malaika* who bring rain, cause the crops to grow, and watch over man; the chief one amongst them is Jibelelu (Gabriel); others are Mikailu, Ismailu, Ibrahimu, though my informant did not pretend to know them all. [775]

The knowledge possessed by the 'true' mallam is hardly less unorthodox, even though it is fuller and more ambitious. The following text was dictated to me by a gifted pupil of the most famous mallam of Bida and fully conformed to the master's teaching. 794 773

'In the beginning there were Adama and Mother Adā. They had three daughters, Mureamu [Miriam, Mary], Fatima [daughter of Mohammed], and Barkisa [Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba], and numerous sons. These were all prophets. God then divided the world into pagans and Moslems. The greatest king of the pagans

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794 was Firauna [Firaun, Arabic for Pharaoh], who conquered the whole earth and had immense wealth. He had seven houses, in 773 each of which a fire was eternally burning; criminals were thrown into these houses, to be burned to death. He also had seven houses filled with wonderful things and a hundred beautiful women in each. Good people were rewarded by being admitted to these houses and being made free of the things they contained. Once there happened to be a great drought and famine; but Firauna prayed to God, and rain fell. Thereupon Firauna said to the people: "Have I not sent rain? I am your God." Thus he claimed that he himself was God, and all who denied him, the Mohammedans among them, were fettered and left lying in the sun until they perished. Firauna decided to make war on God in the sky. He called all his men together and made them build a huge tower. This lasted sixty years. When the tower reached up to the sky, Firauna ordered his soldiers to shoot at the sky with bows and arrows, for two years. But God destroyed the tower and innumerable people perished. Then God called his prophet Musa [Moses] and ordered him to rise against Firauna. Thus Musa called together an army; but it was much weaker than Firauna's, so that the true believers, led by Musa, were turned to flight. Pursued by Firauna they reached a river as wide as the Niger; God caused the water to dry up so that they could cross, but when Firauna's army followed, it was swallowed up by the river. Now Musa ruled over the world and established the reign of God. When he died, he was succeeded by the other prophets, Abraham, Yisa, Haruna, Idirisu, and finally Mohammed.'

794 There is no need to point out the motley nature of this account. Yet the people uncritically accept these crude narratives as evidence of 'learning' as they similarly accept the lists of 'angels' and the string of names with which diviners bolster up their 'astrology'.[1] Since the traditional Nupe beliefs possess little or nothing of this kind, it might be thought that Mohammedan lore fills some pre-existing lacunae. But this is not really so. The average Nupe Moslem is no more interested in the pseudo-Mohammedan cosmology or hagiology than is the pagan Nupe in myths of this kind.[2] But the former remains 'book-knowledge', which goes with the new religion and is expected of its teachers; so that a great many topics

[1] See above, p. 59n.

[2] The experiences of Christian evangelists offer interesting corroboration. The theological cosmology of Christian teaching evokes no interest among the Nupe. An evangelist told me about his abortive attempts in this direction, when his converts-to-be frankly admitted that they 'knew nothing' about the creation of the world but could not be convinced of the value of knowing more.

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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events.

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed.

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

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794 Islam. In all these cases the result has been an odd compromise.
582 In Bida, the Moslem type of marriage is now more frequent than the traditional type; while among the Mohammedans outside the former is absent and the latter still fully in force. The observance of the levirate is somewhat puzzling. Islam permits the marriage with a brother's widow whether the brother is senior or junior to the deceased; in pagan Nupe, marriage with an elder brother's widow is forbidden, but marriage with a younger brother's widow greatly encouraged. Now, in the villages these rules still obtain; in Bida, however, the first kind of marriage is practised, though not very frequently, while the second never occurs. It seems, then, that in the type of marriage which Islam permits but the indigenous custom disallows, the hold of the latter is still sufficiently strong to prevent any widespread adoption of the novel practice; while the type of marriage both permitted by Islam and strongly pressed by local custom has been abandoned by the more 'orthodox' Moslems. This instance contradicts our previous argument as to the fortuitous fit and hence ready acceptance of certain Moslem customs. Rather, we must admit that such a given fit may, paradoxically, entail the rejection of the custom in question. Has it been rejected so as to prevent any blurring of the division between Moslems and non-Moslems, and thus to emphasize the new, different 'way of life'? It would seem to be so; but since this is the only instance of the kind I can only suggest the possibility. The strong hold of the indigenous practice is finally shown in a type of marriage as definitely forbidden by Islam as it is encouraged by Nupe custom, namely, the nominal marriage of a boy with his paternal grandfather's widow. This *yawó suna* ('marriage in name') is practised both in Mohammedan Bida and in the pagan districts. It is clearly bound up with the idea of reincarnation and with the corresponding practice of naming a grandson after his father's father: identical in name and 'soul', the grandson also assumes the nominal status of his *alter ego*. And as the traditional belief remained unassailed by Moslem doctrine, so the practice rooted in it withstood the impact of the new usages.

794 The most serious divergence between indigenous custom and
428 Moslem ideas occurs in inheritance. The Moslem law of inheritance implies, briefly, the division of a man's property among all his offspring (both male and female) as well as his wives, their respective shares varying in amount.[1] Nupe custom, on the other hand,

[1] The inheritance of women's property can be disregarded. Women in Nupe own only personal belongings and money, and can dispose of them more or less as they like—to sons, daughters, or their husband. Though the Nupe practice is more fluid than the Mohammedan usage, the two do not clash; nor has the former changed under Moslem influence.

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makes a younger brother or, in the absence of surviving brothers, the eldest brother's son the main heir, excluding wives and daughters. It must be borne in mind that the main property in rural Nupe is land, worked co-operatively by a 'house', that is, by the male members of the extended family—a man, his younger brothers, and his and their sons.[1] The traditional rules of inheritance thus prevent the fragmentation of land and keep intact the large labour team bound to it; for the land descends together with the headship of the family group, and thus with the command over the 'house' and labour team.[2] The acceptance of the Islamic rules of inheritance would change all this: the land would be progressively fragmented, the labour team broken up, and the headship of large families would disappear. But the Nupe have not turned to the new system in summary fashion; they still exclude wives and daughters from inheritance and largely kept intact the succession to the titular headship of the 'house'. But that most critical innovation, the division of landed property among sons, has steadily been gaining ground. It is important to note, however, that this is not simply a result of the pressure of Islam. I have shown elsewhere how the political and economic changes which began with the Fulani conquest and continue to the present day encouraged individual as against family enterprise and deprived the productive organization of the large family group of its former economic advantages.[3] My point now is that the 'individualistic' type of inheritance exemplified in Islam was also the type the new situation demanded, so that the changed outlook which happened to coincide with the impact of Islam provided additional motives for its acceptance, or for the acceptance of the way of life it represents.

In a wider sense the mere presence of the new religion in such circumstances answered the 'demand of the situation'. The political and economic events which were disrupting family co-operation also assailed the whole authority of family heads and their hold over the younger generation. In consequence the latter, sons or younger brothers of men still pagan, were turning away from the traditional cults (and are doing so even today), not for any particular benefits they were expecting of Islam, but because there was logic in the mere 'turning-away'; for this meant abandoning religious practices which, more or less openly, stood for the *status quo*, for parental authority and an outmoded family structure. The great appeal of the *navū*, which concedes greater freedom to

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, chap. III.

[2] This situation is somewhat modified among the craftsmen in the town (see op. cit., chap. XIV). The conclusions drawn further on, however, apply to the labour teams of craftsmen as much as of peasants.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 124, 374–6.

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794 youth, or of the *salla*, which is silent on issues of family authority,
[178] is the obverse of this picture.

Here I am repeating facts mentioned previously, though the emphasis is now not on the 'vulnerability' of the older cults in the face of change, but on their dislodgment by the new religion in the country.[1] Islam, as we have seen, proved the stronger mainly because these other changes had prepared the ground; it was a beneficiary of the social upheaval as much as a cause contributing to it. Differently expressed, Islam acted in the manner of a new model, inviting to be followed since it happened to appear at a critical moment, when older norms were breaking down. To be sure, it was a model doubly inviting; it both typified upper-class behaviour and offered alternatives for usages no longer satisfactory, and hence placed a premium on non-conformism. Without it, the dissatisfactions might not have crystallized so easily and the process of change would have been more erratic. As it happened, they found a ready focus or 'model'.

794 We turn to the final aspect of the Moslem 'way of life', the
186 attitude of the believer towards other creeds. I have called Nupe religion tolerant. Islam, as we know it from other parts of the world, is the exact opposite. It has all the self-righteousness and intransigence of a fervently proselytizing creed; and it lays claim not only to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth but also to an ultimate ascendancy over all other religions—to the 'inheritance of the earth', promised to the believers and meant to be secured by secular domination and 'victory in the field'.[2] In Africa, where Islam now faces pagan peoples as it did in its early history, this claim to supremacy must stand in a literal sense, meaning the superiority of believers over utter unbelievers, of people who have seen the light over mere barbarians, and of Lords and Masters over some lower species of humanity. In the Sudan, for example, this attitude is well marked. But in Nupe there is, by and large, little trace of it.

Undoubtedly, all Moslems pride themselves on being true believers and many, more or less contemptuously, look down upon the pagans. But as I mentioned before, scholarly mallams will yet frankly admit their interest in the pagan cults; few would consider it incongruous or invidious to discuss, in a purely academic spirit, the beliefs and practices of the 'unbelievers'; and the average Nupe Moslem views them as tolerantly. Nor would a Mohammedan bar all social intimacy with pagans (as I have seen it done in half-Mohammedanized parts of the Sudan) or decline to visit them in their houses or receive their visits in his. Even friendship occurs

[1] See above, pp. 97–114.
[2] See D. S. Margulies, *Mohammed*, 1939, pp. 67–8.

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across the barrier of religion. The following comments by the chief of Pichi illustrate perhaps the extreme of Nupe tolerance, 'There are three benefits', he said, 'Islam, Christianity, and the *kuti*. Some of us have chosen one, others the other. One may be stronger than the rest: but this we do not know.' To be sure, this tolerance cuts both ways; and indeed, this Nupe version of Lessing's Nathan saw nothing strange in 'making *salla*' and attending the *gunnu* as well. But then, he was only a self-professed Moslem, whom others considered a pagan at heart. 794 186

Yet, though his attitude may not be typical of the Nupe Moslems, it is typical of the outlook of the people among whom Islam finds its converts. The final step of conversion changes it but little; indeed, it can hardly be otherwise since conversion is so loose an affair and not a real 'step' at all. But in so far as the outlook of the confirmed Moslem is changed, carrying with it that pride and awareness of superiority, the pride and superiority are social rather than specifically religious. What counts is, first and foremost, the assimilation to upper-class culture, and only secondarily the deliverance from unbelief.

5. CONTACT AND INTEGRATION

In this chapter we were dealing with instances of a much-discussed social process, 'culture contact' or 'acculturation'. The wider theoretical issues involved are beyond our present scope; but no discussion of this kind can avoid touching upon one such general problem, namely, the relationship between the cultures brought into 'contact' and the 'resultant' culture emerging from it. Now, this is a question of end-states, of the final outcome of these processes of change and contact; and logically, we should start with their analysis. 177

The physical model of 'contact', of a 'clash of cultures', or of their 'impact' upon one another, is more misleading than helpful when picturing these processes. We revert, therefore, to our paradigm, a group possessed of given modes of behaviour, habit patterns if you like, which comes to face new models of behaviour of such-and-such pull or attractiveness. That the reactions are likely to be complex and intricate no one will deny; more importantly, they are progressive, that is, take the form of chain reactions. It is clearly not so that the new models are simply accepted, rejected, or exchanged for the habitual ways of acting as it were once and for all, after which no further readjustment will occur. The religious conversion of a people certainly is not a simple all-or-none affair, but a process of many stages in which an initial acceptance may spread further, be deepened or changed in

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177 some other way, and an initial rejection might similarly be modified. My point is that this is not a coherent process moving towards completion, in which a given goal exercises an unvarying 'pull' and steadily gains over the counter-pull of traditional norms; rather, the process is piecemeal, determined by pulls and strains that emerge stage by stage and only operate from one stage to the next.

It might be argued that the Nupe do have before them the 'given goal', namely, the complete observances of Islam as they are taught by its missionaries and practised by the confirmed Moslems. But as we know, the Nupe often resort to half-measures and compromises. Let us not dismiss these as preliminary steps or instances of 'cultural lag'. They clearly represent attempts at reconciling, at a particular stage, the pulls and counter-pulls of customary and novel observances. But no ideal or permanent balance is calculable in advance, partly because the social strains set up by any change in the customary observances will not at once be visible, and partly because the 'pull' of the new models does not remain constant.

The people who accept one or the other new model of behaviour cannot at once assess all the implications of acceptance. They may understand roughly (though even this need not be true) that, say, worship of *Allah* and the observances of *kuti* are mutually exclusive, so that accepting the former must mean abandoning the latter; but they cannot anticipate certain more remote consequences entailed, for example, in the lack of emphasis, in Moslem ceremonial, on paternal authority, in the absence of specific assurances on the productivity of the land, or in the character of the new congregation which no longer coincides with the village community. Yet these consequences will eventually be felt, as strains of one kind or other and as problems requiring solution. The solution can only be achieved by further changes, either through readjusting the pre-existing modes of behaviour or through turning once more to the new model. Stated somewhat crudely, cultural change, once it makes the first breach, is carried on by its own momentum. But we must note that the 'pull' of the new model is itself altered in the process; for any previous response to it, entailing as it does strains and instability, also alters the way in which the people will now view the model, as a solution for hitherto non-existing difficulties, or as itself requiring remodelling. Thus adoption of Moslem inheritance follows logically when Moslem ceremonial (among other things) fails to sustain paternal authority; and Moslem worship is at some stage remodelled to recover the direct appeal to the deity for rain and fertility.

But these processes cannot really be reduced to a precise chronological sequence, the multiplicity of motives effective at any stage forbidding such a reconstruction. Nor can we isolate any first step,

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forced upon the people, from others that followed spontaneously. 177
What was forced upon the people was essentially a total situation, at once political, economic, and religious; any step may be the first, nor need the others follow immediately.[1] Only theoretically can we conclude that they all hang together, though occasionally we can trace the nexus more firmly, even into the future, towards adjustments yet to come.

Let me illustrate this on an example bearing on the widest efficacy of Islam, its very success in proselityzing the Nupe. Coming as it did as a religion of conquerors and ruling class, it both endorsed the social barrier and provoked attempts at overcoming it. In keeping conversion loose and easy, and in utilizing the emphasis on learning, which, on an elementary level, was widely accessible, the Nupe turned Islam into a means of social mobility. But the result, a religious division cutting irregularly across the society, even across single communities, clearly presented new problems; and their solution took the form of a 'remodelling of the model'. The ('unorthodox') tolerance of Nupe Moslems towards pagans is one such reaction to a cleavage which, if it were allowed to retain its sharpness, would break up every community. Another, though it occurs in one case only, lies in that 'religious division of labour' between Moslems and pagans which we recorded from Kutigi. But consider also that the spreading of Islam must tend to obscure the class barrier which it formerly sustained and on which Nupe society is still based; and if one day Islam sweeps the whole country, that problem will arise with even greater acuteness. To some extent the commonly accepted distinction between grades of mallams tends to preserve or re-establish the class barrier; for the 'knowledge' which makes the 'true' mallam is more readily accessible to the leisured and wealthy than to the craftsman or peasant. However, the full consequences of this conflict are not yet visible. Indeed, we cannot predict if the conflict itself will stay; for extraneous changes (political or economic) may well weaken or remove the class barrier. Yet if it remains, the model of Islam might again show the solution, its sectarianism offering the possibility of diverse and even opposed religious alignments.

So much for the processes of change and 'contact'. As regards 177
that end-state, it has become almost a dogma of many anthro- 182
pologists that it always represents a unique cultural situation, something in the nature of a '*tertium quid*' which has no precise

[1] This should be taken literally. I found communities still observing the *gunnu*, where the economic co-operation of the large family group had disappeared (e.g. Doko or Mokwa); while in others, which had abandoned the *gunnu*, the old system of inheritance was only beginning to break down (e.g. Lemu).

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177 antecedents in the 'parent cultures' and invariably amounts to more than a mere 'fusion or mixing'. Rather, 'the clash and interplay of two cultures produce new things'.[1] In cultural changes 'old elements are abandoned and new ones developed in close and constant relation to the existing configuration'.[2] To quote Herskovits' summing up of this school of thought: these scholars hold that 'the arithmetic of culture contact is never a process of addition. . . . A culture of multiple origins is different from any bodies of tradition that have contributed to it. The dynamics of acculturation . . . are creative.'[3] In the terms of our subject matter we should have to admit that Nupe-Islam is not so-and-so much Nupe religion plus so-and-so much Islam but a fundamentally novel phenomenon, unprecedented, integrated, self-contained.

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Now the processes we outlined, devious, piecemeal, involving partial adjustments and often unstable compromise, make it clear that their end-result is indeed a 'new thing'. Yet equally they suggest that it is not, at any stage, fully integrated or self-contained. Whichever way we understand 'integration', or for that matter its antithesis, the mere 'fusion or mixing', no summary judgment of this kind is possible.

Taken at its most concrete meaning, the integration of a cultural item in a new setting would imply that the respective modes of behaviour are performed regularly and in predictable situations. But clearly there are degrees of this regularity. The Moslem *salla* or the pseudo-Moslem *navũ* represent fully regular, predictable modes of behaviour; so do the Fast of Ramadhan, the daily prayers, and the observance of alms-giving. But Moslem-style divination or medical practices, the Moslem solemnization of kinship events, and the Moslem rules of preferential marriage, are much less regular and predictable. They represent ways of acting which people may or may not choose, having become established only as cultural 'alternatives', to borrow Linton's phrase.[4] The visits to the mosque are even more irregularly observed, while the concern with Islamic mythology or theology is purely sporadic if not exceptional.

Nor is the picture more uniform when we understand 'integration' to mean, more abstractly, a firm fit between the originally alien elements of culture and their new setting. This fit can only be of three kinds: it may be one of purpose, the alien elements exhibiting some rationally intelligible utility or appropriateness in the new setting; or it may be visible in the logical consistency

[1] B. Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change*, 1945, pp. 21, 25.
[2] R. Linton, *The Study of Man*, 1936, p. 360.
[3] M. J. Herskovits, *Man and his Work*, 1948, p. 534.
[4] Op. cit., p. 273.

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obtaining between the two; or the 'fit' may be psychological, in that the old and new modes of behaviour exhibit the same emotional 'tone' or 'ethos'.[1]

Undoubtedly, there is evidence for the nexus of utility or appropriateness, even though its character varies widely. The great ceremonials of Islam conspicuously serve political interests and the regulation of adolescence; equally they have been fitted into the cycle of routine and recreation. The daily prayers, the fast, and alms-giving have no such momentous part to play; yet precisely because they are inconsequential and depend on private decisions alone, they have come to exemplify adherence to the new creed in a manner both conspicuous and easy to assume. In other words, they serve as distinguishing marks, as badges of Islam, much as do the turban or other suggestive items of dress. Yet worship in the mosque rather than in the open, a flexible system of priestship rather than one based on inheritance or supernatural vocation, or the Moslem variants of marriage in the kindred have no particular utility. Indeed, worship in the village mosque tends to weaken the solidarity of the community which all other features of the social organization aim to uphold; while the inadequacy of the Moslem rules of widow marriage had to be corrected by a remodelling of the funeral customs.[2] Again, the Moslem funeral ceremonial fails to express the important social distinction between old age and youth.[3] And the muddled pseudo-Islamic mythology is surely nothing but an incongruous, valueless 'addition'. All we can say about the appropriateness of these novel practices is that they conform to the rules of Islam; which is only repeating that Islam has in fact been adopted, with all these features, whether they have an ulterior purposefulness or not.

Logical consistency, even the interest in simulating it, is widely absent: think of the employment, by the Mohammedan sovereigns, of the *ndakó gboyá* cult; of the *navũ* performed without any notion of or, for that matter, curiosity about the meaning of this ritual of fire; or of the preservation of the pagan marriages between grandmother and grandson by people otherwise consciously committed to Moslem practice.

Only on the plane of psychological effects is there a close and indeed convincing 'fit', the result, quite clearly, of selection and remodelling. Thus the mystic and ecstatic observances of Islam are absent; and the hectic, sexually excited mood of the *gani* or *navũ* merely duplicates the mood formerly evoked in the *gunnu*. Integration, then, is complete only where it bears on the ethos of

[1] For the theoretical basis of this argument see my *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, 1951, pp. 384–5 *et seq.*

[2] See above, p. 122.

[3] See above, pp. 129–30.

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177 Nupe religion; but integration here means persistence, so that in the one instance in which the adoption of the new creed is truly not 182 a mere 'addition' it also ceases to be a 'new thing'.

It is hardly surprising that this 'fit' should apply to the emotional 'tone' of religion and should prove the tenacity of predispositions so deeply rooted in the personality. Even so, there can be no finality about it; this is only the picture as we see it today, and it is possible that further developments, or strains only slowly gathering weight, will bring a change here also. In a previous chapter I ventured a prediction of this kind.[1] Let me now add that traces of such a change are already visible. For the *navũ* is more violent than the *gunnu* or any traditional rite used to be, and focuses its violence more sharply. Also, it was left to the new ceremonial to embody the 'licensed liberties' of joking relationship, which are otherwise played out privately and sporadically. As we remember, they are enacted mainly between the sexes and between boys and older men, and hence set aside respect, relationships and rules of etiquette normally scrupulously observed. Thus publicly staged, the 'licensed liberties' clearly provide a gratification sharper and more consciously aggressive than traditional usage could have afforded. Here, then, the greater political tensions in the city and the greater strain set up by changing moral standards seem to demand this more explosive relief: certainly, the older 'ethos' would not have condoned it.

[1] See above, p. 226.

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IX

CONCLUSIONS

I. ON TYPES OF RELIGION

We possess no systematic typology of religion, either of the great world religions or of the forms typical of 'primitive' societies. Perhaps indeed, as Max Weber suggests, the 'historical individualities' and the 'highly complex nature' of most religions preclude any truly comprehensive conspectus; so that we could aim only at partial typologies, concerned with one or the other aspect of religion, such as its effect upon the 'economic ethics' of societies, which was Weber's own theme.[1] However this may be, we cannot hold Nupe religion *in toto* against a given and agreed series of religious types, comparing it with them or identifying it among them. We cannot summarily say—'Nupe religion conforms to such-and-such a type of religion': which is clearly the sort of thing one would wish to say in a chapter on 'Conclusions'.

Yet we have a wide (if unsystematic) knowledge of diverse religious systems with which that of Nupe would bear comparison. At least, it can be so compared if we consider separately the various kinds of efficacy which we generally ascribe to any one religion. Let me here speak of 'competences' of religion; for what I mean is, crudely speaking, the things religions 'do' for individuals or societies; the effects they have upon their lives and actions or, if you like, the 'needs' they are capable of satisfying. There is no need to refine our terminology further. We are all agreed that religion 'does' certain things, has particular effects, and satisfies particular desires, needs, or purposes. We can, I suggest, distinguish four main 'competences' of religion, though the division between them is probably never very sharp: (1) The capacity of religion 'to furnish certain supplements to (the) view of the world of experience' which 'our intelligence is driven to demand';[2] (2) its capacity to announce and maintain moral values or, more generally, an

[1] Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', *Essays in Sociology*, ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills, 1947, p. 292.
[2] Herman Lotze, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, 1892, p. 7.

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'economic ethic', that is, its competence to guide 'the practical impulses for action;[1] (3) its competence to hold together societies and sustain their structure; and (4) its competence to furnish individuals with specific experiences and stimulations.

The first three instances refer to the nexus between religion and other, autonomous, spheres of interest—the understanding of the universe; morality; maintenance of the given society. The last 'competence' refers to an interest intrinsic to religion, which, however, merges with all the others and imparts to them their peculiarly 'religious' character. Clearly, without that added interest the desire to understand the universe would belong to science; the efforts at maintaining society in a given form would represent civic or political aims; and the ethical tenets would be just that and no more. In other words, we should not be speaking of religion but of something else.

It may therefore seem impossible to define this 'intrinsic' interest of religion save in circular fashion, as a 'religious need' or a need for 'religious experiences'. But we can at least analyse 'religious experience' further and describe it more explicitly. For it always contains two things—something in the nature of an emotional state or a psycho-physical stimulation, and a more or less articulate assurance. William James means the former when he speaks of the 'organic thrill' which 'comes over us' with 'the thought of supernatural relations';[2] and Max Weber refers to the latter when he speaks of the 'annunciations and promises' that go with every religion.[3]

The circle reappears, however, between these two components of religious experience. For since the 'organic thrill' is religious (and not, say, aesthetic, or purely organic, as in fear) only when it goes with the awareness of 'supernatural relations'; it presupposes some prior, more basic assurance or belief that there *is* a supernatural that can be experienced or a divinity in some manner knowable. Yet equally, that assurance and belief (if they are 'religious') are not in the nature of assurances given once and for all or of beliefs learned and held in a detached, theoretical manner. Rather, they depend on the repeated, vivid acts of experiencing the 'supernatural', which strengthen the belief and give substance to the assurance. Religion, as it were, both announces that there is the realm of the transcendental or divine and provides occasions for experiencing and hence proving it. Mystics will hold that there is no such division and therefore no circle either, but that there exist experiences simply creative of belief and revealing that basic

[1] Max Weber, op. cit., p. 267.
[2] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1928, p. 27.
[3] Op cit., p. 270.

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assurance. Rationalists may, with Bishop Berkeley, argue that belief is inescapable but 'for want of attention' and a 'wilful shutting of the eyes'.[1] And philosophers have been trying to break the circle by adducing logical proofs for the existence of God and divine providence: so that these might be shown of necessity to exist, while the religious experience only enables man to behold them.

We need not concern ourselves further with this circle. The people we study are neither theologians nor philosphers who must save religious faith from doubts and criticisms. Theirs is a simple belief and, as we know, an unambitious one. As for ourselves, we take that basic assurance to be simply the crucial assertion of all religious doctrines and the premiss of all religious experiences and actions.

To return to our four 'competences'. It is, I suggest, in that light that we usually compare diverse forms of religion and make statements about their character or 'type'. Thus we should point to the greater or lesser interest of religions in cosmological speculations and the construction of a *Weltbild*, and to their varying concern with morality and pragmatic norms of action. Again, we should compare tribal or national religions with universal ones; 'churches' differently organized; and the diverse emphases of religions, here on the solid mass of worshippers, and there on exceptional individual efforts, on what Weber calls 'virtuoso' as against 'mass religiosity'.[2] Finally, we should distinguish between religions cultivating the peculiar 'thrills' of mystic experience and other, more prosaic ones, between orgiastic and dispassionate, ritualistic and non-ritualistic observances, or between religions exploiting particular aesthetic stimuli and others disregarding this additional appeal. In this connection, too, we might refer to the relative weight of 'magical' and specifically 'religious' features, meaning in the former case, briefly, an assurance resting on the manipulation and enforcement of supernatural benefits, and in the latter the assurance that comes from the appeal and submission to a divine intelligence.

These examples are neither exhaustive nor exhaustively analysed. In each case distinctions of degree will occur side by side with distinctions of kind. More importantly, in each case we should find on closer analysis that the particular 'competence' of any religion derives unequally from the different elements in its make-up. For the complex of beliefs and practices we call a religion is made up of three things or 'elements'—a doctrine formulating the content of ideas; a congregation, that is, an organized collectivity of believers and officiants; and a set of observances, that is,

[1] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Sec. cliv.
[2] Op cit., p. 287.

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actions more or less ritualized. Needless to say, the three elements are inseparable: for ritual actions require the warrant of doctrine and execution by a congregation; while the doctrine finds practical expression in rituals and has validity only for the group of believers.[1] Now, there is a certain correspondence between the different competences and the different elements of religion. The *Weltbild* and the ethical tenets are clearly conveyed primarily by the formulated doctrine; the bearing of religion upon group structure, though it may be implicit also in the doctrine, derives primarily from the character and constitution of the congregation. But in the case of the specifically 'religious' experiences on one side and ritual action on the other, this correspondence no longer holds.

It is true that behaviour ritualized in some manner and perhaps enlisting the aid of poetry, music and the visual arts, acts directly as a psycho-physical stimulus, evoking particular excitements or emotional states. But so does, through cognitive channels, the idea content of religion, both by the very way it pictures the transcendental world (as serene or familiar, and as fearful or mysterious) and by the language it employs (clear or elusive, simple or weighted with stirring metaphors). To some extent such stimulations also come from the element we termed the congregation; for this term includes two kinds of groups, the collectivity for which the particular religious tenets are valid, that is, the community of believers; and the collectivity of individuals who meet together in the acts of worship. In the religious practices peculiar to small groups, say, village communities, the two may in fact coincide; in the religion of a tribe or nation, they will diverge. However this may be, the community of believers has only the one competence of maintaining the given society. The congregation-in-worship, while sharing in this competence inasmuch as it mobilizes particular human aggregates within the society, through its varying scale also brings into play definite psychological stimuli: think only of the two extremes, worship in crowds or in solitude.

We must consider, finally, that ritual action is effective, not only directly, in the manner of sensory stimuli provoking psychological effects, but also symbolically, through pointing to other facts or to ideas about facts in the manner in which signs point to the things signified or a drama demonstrates a moral or message. That rituals may be fully 'dramas' need not be especially emphasized. Whether they are or not, the 'message' carried by sym-

[1] The term 'elements' was chosen only for the sake of simplicity. We should speak, more correctly, of the three *dimensions* to which religion, like any social fact, belongs, viz.—the dimension of physical action (through its rituals), of grouping (through its congregation), and of idea-systems (through its doctrine). See my *Foundations*, pp. 79–80, 83, 85.

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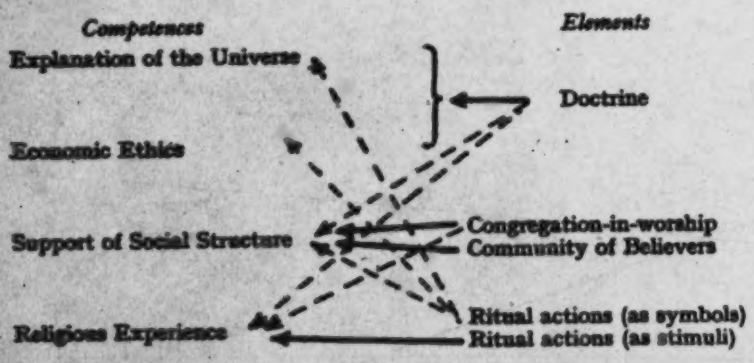
bolic behaviour may concern all the other competences of religion —explanation of the universe; ethical tenets; and support for a given form of society.

This complicated interplay, with all its various possibilities, is illustrated in the diagram below. In practice, of course, only certain of these interrelations will be utilized or emphasized in any religious system, and will thus establish its particular construction or type. Yet in trying to define Nupe religion in this sense we are also doing more than merely placing it within such a theoretical typological schema. For since this is constructed on the basis of the 'competences' of religion and upon the premiss that religion 'does' something for people, it clearly bears on why's and wherefore's and permits us to explain why a particular religion is what it is. It is clear, further, that this explanation will be in terms of some intelligible nexus between the religion we wish to understand and the society where it happens to occur and achieves or proves its competence.



Now, in the case of the first three competences the position is simple. Since they refer to interests or purposes existing in their own right, the competences already indicate the nature of the nexus, which will be one of subservience, on the part of religion, to the given interests or purposes; in more general terms, the nexus will be one of purpose and means-to-end relations, religion contributing means for the attainment of the other ends. Only this must be added. In speaking of religion as having this or that competence we are referring only to the nature of its capacities: we are predicating nothing about the completeness or success with which they are realized. This can only be discovered through examining concrete instances, when we may well find that the

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employment of religion falls short of its potentialities or leads to conflicts rather than to success.

In the case of the 'intrinsically' religious interests, however, this viewpoint is inapplicable. We cannot now measure what religion 'does' or is capable of 'doing' against given things outside that 'need doing'. Indeed, we conclude that the things in question need doing, that particular mental states and assurances need to be provided, only because religion, which provides them, in fact exists. Yet the competence of religion to offer occasions for such experiences is not for that reason self-contained and irreducible save to a postulated desire for this kind of occasion. Clearly, even this desire does not exist in isolation, forbidding all further search for some explanatory nexus with the circumstances of human and social existence. But the nexus is now of a different kind, namely, a causal one. We no longer view the various interests or purposes that exist in social life as ends towards which religion contributes such-and-such means, but as causes making the people living with such interests and purposes seek the experiences we call religious. So that we interpolate psychological mechanisms between the two. Religion still 'does' something for people; but this something is now a matter of mental states expressed and of pressures relieved. There will be little disagreement on this point; we must, however, guard against over-intellectualizing this efficacy of religion. William James, for example, saw in religion a 'solution' for a felt 'uneasiness', for the 'sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand.' [1] The formulation is not perhaps very fortunate. More importantly, it is one-sided, referring only to the share of the 'annunciations and promises' of religion, that is, to its content of ideas. Yet the anxieties or stresses arising in social life ('as we naturally stand') are also resolved in religion by the sheer dynamics of its excitations and reliefs.

To these two viewpoints a third one must be added; for the nexus between religion and the other circumstances of social life may also take the form of logical consistency, when we can point to identical premisses or formal principles embodied in the religion and in the social facts surrounding it. This aspect has so far escaped us; for it does not constitute a special competence of religion; rather does it run (so far as it is visible at all) through any or all competences. But so far as it is visible it enables us again to state, or explain, why a particular religion 'is what it is'.

I will not pursue this general discussion further. The three categories of explanation here suggested—in terms of purpose, of psychological causality, and of logical consistency—underlie all attempts at understanding social facts; which thesis has been fully

[1] Op. cit., p. 508.

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discussed elsewhere.[1] Let us, then, turn back to Nupe religion and summarize its character or 'type' on the lines of our list of competences.

2. *Weltbild*: MORALITY

Nupe religion offers practically no cosmological knowledge; what there is of it is conveyed only by the doctrine and not, symbolically, by ritual. There is no interest in any far-flung picture of the universe such as a detailed mythology might present, nor in any closely reasoned account, the 'supplements' of rational knowledge being restricted to positing a remote, vague creator and enumerating a few of his creations. And here speculation stops at the phenomena intimately affecting human life (health and disease, procreation and death, dreams, certain features of inanimate nature). The rest is simply tacitly accepted. Nor are there attempts to interpret the world in anthropomorphous terms and so bring it nearer to human comprehension. The only link between man and this featureless transcendental world, apart from the supernatural controls somehow placed at his command, is vouchsafed by the belief in reincarnation and in an eternally active life principle. The humanly appealing theme of an other-worldly life is left untouched.

The language in which all this is conveyed is the familiar language of everyday life, simple and intentionally clear. Where the vagueness of the subject precludes satisfactory precision, there is recourse either to a simple 'we don't know' or to attempts at exploring linguistic meanings. The former does not imply any suggestion of a relevant mystery behind the visible world, but merely the placid admission of things unknowable. The latter betrays the conviction that the knowledge about the world, such as it is, is meant to be clear and can be clarified if the workaday tool of language is only carefully examined. This aimed-at clarity is further suggested by the predilection for parables and analogies, for juxtaposition or opposition, and by the many enumerations by twos and fours which pervade the doctrine.

This schematicism is essentially abstract, involving no visual or similarly palpable aids, such as an alignment with colours or spatial orientations. Nor are these invested with symbolic meaning save in a few isolated instances (when black stands for secrecy and evilness, red for prosperity, and right and left for male and female respectively). Enumeration again serves only to order things schematically and clearly, the symbolic potentialities of numbers being ignored: thus there are no lucky or unlucky numbers, no numbers in any other way meaningful (save, in a crude form, in divination).

[1] See my *Foundations*, pp. 256–7 *et seq.*

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771 divination). The belief in lucky or unlucky days and months is not really an exception; for the numerical order underlying their selection is neither systematic nor valid apart from this one context.

It is important, however, that the tendency to enumeration and schematic juxtapositions does not characterize the formulated doctrine alone ('There are four things in the world'); it is as typical of the way in which individuals express their own speculative and occasionally unorthodox views, for example—'There are two gods, one in the sky, the other on earth'; 'The female spirits live in the water, male spirits on the land.' Thus there is some interest in speculation, which is often keen and readily engaged in. But it relates only to the given topics of religion, that is, to notions already formulated, and does not attempt to break new ground. In other words, the people are content with a bare and fragmentary *Weltbild*, but feel the desire, though not for wider knowledge, yet for greater clarity in the knowledge they possess. In either case the treatment is schematic rather than syllogistic, and nominalistic in that it leans on the intelligibility of words and on semantic exercises.

771 The religious knowledge so framed exhibits close consistency
182 with other sectors of the culture. The non-anthropomorphous and abstract character of religion tallies with the non-realistic art of Nupe, and the emphasis on schematic arrangements in the former, with the geometrical-ornamental accent of the latter. Perhaps, too, there is a logical nexus between the unconcern with deities or humanized features of the universe and the absence of any drama proper (either in art or religion). The tendency to enumerations is visible also in Nupe folklore and in the Nupe calendar (where months are referred to by numbers). The same is true of status differences, political ranks, and age grades, which are always presented in schematic form and precisely numbered, even at the cost of inaccuracy; let me add that in a large number of communities the senior and politically important ranks number four. Nor are dichotomous arrangements less frequent; think only of the common juxtaposition of *Žitsú* ('town king') and *Žigí* ('town priest'). The dualism of the sexes, in particular, is carried to a considerable extent through Nupe language, which assigns a gender, expressed by adding the attribute 'male' or 'female', also to trees and plants. The interest, finally, in analogies and semantic exercises is amply exemplified: in Nupe literature, where whole stories are based on puns or on the ambiguity of words; in attempts at producing persuasive pedigrees for present customs by means of etymological speculations; and in ordinary conversation.

These are all preferred ways of handling and ordering material (of whatever kind); and since they are visible both within and

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without the sphere of religion we may say of the latter that it is an expression (among others) of the basic intellectual orientation of the people. There is one exception, however. In the secular sphere the Nupe are keen historians, always interested in tracing things back to their past. In their religious conceptions this interest is almost entirely absent; so far as it exists, it ceases to be religious, being satisfied with summary references to extraneous, political-historical events, such as the introduction of a cult by Tsoede or the origin of some religious practice in the reign of a particular king. At this point the attitudes towards things sacred and profane diverge; only the latter require a precise time perspective; the former are simply given, or adequately explained by that timeless *ultima causa*, the deity. [814]

To return for a moment to the Nupe bias for dualistic conceptions. Though we have grouped it with the other 'intellectual orientations', with predilection for enumerations, parables, and so forth, it clearly betrays more than this kind of predisposition, serving also to articulate the sharply felt and emotionally weighted antagonism of the sexes, as in witchcraft fantasies and in the belief in the deadly female 'germ' of the 'diseases of God'. And since the awareness of this antagonism springs from unconscious sources, it would seem to be of a different and more fundamental order than the other expressions of the dualistic bias. Shall we, then, hold the two apart? Even so, there remains the uniformly dualistic *Weltbild*, whether it expresses the unconscious sexual anxieties of men or their dispassionate intellectual efforts to order the phenomena of the world. Or shall we assume some play of cause and effect between the two, taking the awareness of sex antagonism to be at the root of the intellectual bias, in the sense that it shaped a predisposition towards finding dichotomies also in all other areas of experience? Clearly, we might equally assume the opposite, that is, that the conception of sex antagonism in witchcraft and elsewhere would not have crystallized had it not been facilitated by a congenial intellectual predisposition. There is, I think, no answer to these questions. The dualistic viewpoint is simply one of the cardinal possibilities upon which the human intellect can seize in structuring the world of experience; and the antagonism of male and female represents once more one of very few possibilities available to societies, or to man in society, in their efforts to structure the universe of human relationships. All we can legitimately say is that the two emerged together, in mutual consistency.

The witchcraft belief simply that other dichotomy, of 'good' and 'evil', as does the belief in spirits and in the character of humans inscrutably fashioned by God. But this dichotomy is formulated only on this cosmic scale, referring to the 'things that are in the

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771 world', and has no narrower, pragmatic or ethical application. As
for the realm of ethics, Nupe doctrine is altogether silent. It up-
182 holds no ideal man, nor condemns his antithesis. There is no eschatology, no mythology exemplifying rights and wrongs, crime and retribution, and no promise of reward to the law-abiding. Nor is the formulated doctrine concerned with norms of action of more common currency, the simple rights and wrongs of everyday morality. 'Economic ethics' has its place in ritual; since this turns upon such things as birth, marriage and adolescence, crops and the exigencies of the seasons, prosperity and wealth, that is, upon events and conditions involving practical decisions, the respective courses of action are implicitly upheld as desirable, worthwhile and 'right'. But they are not 'announced' or 'revealed', neither commanded nor yet conspicuously dramatized. Their significance is left to preliminary knowledge, the worshippers knowing at the outset what to expect of the ritual, both as regards its aim and the promises it vouchsafes. And these are again silent on ethical issues. The fortunes anticipated and the misfortunes that may befall you imply neither merit nor punishment: they simply happen, while religion means no more than an aid in attaining or evading them.

[577] Only two explicit ethical commands occur in the whole range of Nupe rituals. They refer to filial obedience (enjoined in the *gunnu*) and to the blessedness of fecundity. But we remember that the relevant episode of the *gunnu* is also the first to fall victim to change, and that other religiously sanctioned aids, the services of the *cigbeci*, are dispensed in disregard of the moral condemnation of childlessness. On balance, then, Nupe religion is amoral. As we anticipated, the crucial issue in most religions, how to reconcile the discrepancy of religious merit and practical rewards, simply does not arise. Nupe religion takes life as it is, offering no 'annunciations and promises' that would redress its iniquities, and hardly even endorsing the equity that should govern it.

This equity is largely left to the care of secular agencies alone. Religion plays a part only indirectly, through sanctioning the persons—kings, chiefs, executioners—who act as guardians of the accepted good. The sanction lies essentially in ritual, that is, in the various ceremonials involved in the assumption of these offices or entrusted to their holders. But let us note that these men guard, not really morality, but only that part of it which has solidified in the form of politically enforced law. Differently expressed, Nupe society knows mainly crimes and few 'sins', and only lawful, not saintly behaviour. On occasion religion abandons even this indirect support for the conventions of morality; for certain rituals deny these conventions, as in the sexual licence of the *gunnu* and *gani* or in the condonation of violence in the *navũ*. At this point, then, the

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logical consistency between religion and the rest of social life ceases to be valid. Morally, the rituals in question have no message; or their message is a circuitous one, exemplifying the rule by the exception. Their 'competence' cannot therefore lie in this topsy-turvy picture of common morality: rather, as we already suggested, does it lie in the offer of explosive relief from normal constraints.

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Let me say a little more on the amorality of the Nupe creed. Nupe religion, as we have seen, sanctions only the powers that be, the machinery of political control, and hence the claims of secular society to declare what is right and wrong. Religion by itself vouchsafes no direct and 'higher' assurance of this kind. It does not as it were speak for society, but only stands behind the appointed spokesmen. Needless to say, most religions go beyond this *carte blanche* for secular society. And in doing so they achieve two things: doubts and conflicts arising in mundane ethics can be resolved by the assurance that there are these other, 'higher' or 'eternal', values; and these can in turn serve as ideals which man is called upon to approach, however imperfectly. So that religion can both absorb the iniquities of human existence and give it an impetus towards making the world better than it is. Nupe religion can do neither. Thus conflicts over mundane ethics can be absorbed into religion only in the one province which itself proclaims the inevitability of conflicts, namely, in the hostile fantasies of witchcraft. And offering nothing 'higher' than an endorsement of mundane ethics, religion is emptied of its impetus towards world improvement: it is static, non-progressive, non-messianic, and once more content to take 'life as it is'.

3. RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

There is a certain overlap between this new nexus and the one just discussed. For since any group, of whatever structure, is such only in virtue of the norms of acting enjoined upon its members, the pronouncements of religion upon 'right' and 'wrong' conduct (say, 'thou shalt honour thy father and mother') already serve to uphold the group so constituted (the family, or the society based upon filial piety). Yet there is that special competence of religion to uphold group existence and structure as such, and not only such specific manners of acting as may form the subject of ethical commands. Nor can group existence and group structure be 'commanded': they can only be demonstrated or circuitously affirmed, though occasionally they are explicitly asserted, as in Judaism with its tenet of a 'chosen people', serving a tribal or national God.

Again, Nupe religion lacks such explicit assertions, as it lacks

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also that conspicuous focus of group existence, a tribal god. There is no conception that the deity is concerned with this one people only or that the Nupe people are the sole or chosen possessors of true religion. To be sure, there are the legends explaining how the Nupe acquired *cigbe*, the Chain of Tsoede, and particular rituals; but it is understood that other peoples also have medicines, rituals, and supernatural skills of various kinds. The Nupe tribe lays claim only to the possession of certain *particular* instances, not of the *genera* ritual or medicine. Even so qualified, this claim or title becomes an aspect of group identity and hence one of the supports of the tribe's existence as a group. A similar possession of particular observances and sacred skills also identifies the groups of diverse or lesser inclusiveness: the state (which possesses the 'royal cults'); the village community (which may possess a special *kuti*); and the kin group (which possesses hereditary *cigbe* and ancestral sacrifices.

This possession is adjusted even more finely, so that it comes to affirm, not only the corporate identity of this or that group, but also its internal structure. For as the administration of the village *kuti* is vested in single kin groups but serves the whole community, so it endorses the make-up of a group in all other respects similarly segmented yet co-operative; and as the administration of kinship rituals falls to the senior man in the lineage and descends in that line but is meant to benefit also wives, mothers, daughters- and sisters-in-law, so it endorses the basic kin group, the extended family or 'house'. All of which implications are contained in the Nupe conception of the 'ownership' of cults.

This ownership, though corporate, does not *make* the group in question; it pertains to groups already constituted as such by other criteria, whatever they may be—common language, territorial possession, citizenship, descent, cohabitation, and so forth. The possession of the religious observances is thus a feature of group identity only in combination with all the others and in fact presupposes them. This relationship is reversed only once, in the case of the Nupe emigrants whose title to 'Nupedom' rests solely on the retention of the traditional cults.

The Nupe congregation, in the wider or narrower sense, is such inevitably, mainly by descent, and not by individual choice, as is the case in a 'church' open to all comers. Fundamentally, this is a closed religion, bound up with membership of tribe, nation, village or kin group, and part of the 'estate' of these groups. In a few instances—most (not all) *cigbe*, divination, the unimportant sacrifices to spirits—the benefits of religion are accessible to individuals *qua* individuals, even to strangers from other tribes. In all other respects individuals share in the ministrations of religion only in

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virtue of their membership of the respective groups, and share in them on equal terms. For there are no qualifications which might make one unpredictably a vessel of divine grace, nor degrees of sacredness attainable by personal endeavour. The miraculous birth of the *gunnu* priest comes closest to the former conception; while the technical skills of *cigbe* and the *ndakó gboyá* society with its open recruitment at least enable individuals so inclined to become active agents of the supernatural. Even so, these are not qualifications for religious excellence nor calls for spiritual leadership. The Nupe congregation has equal access to grace and blessings; it knows no spiritual leaders or chosen vessels: it is a 'mass', not a 'virtuoso' religion.

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But consider that secular life, with its ranks and status differences, is governed by precisely these notions of individual effort after excellence and of unequal access to existing benefits. In a sense, then, the ideals of secular and religious life are opposed to one another. Yet if they were not thus opposed, if effort after excellence held good in the religious congregation as much as it does in the mundane society, the diverse achievements might easily clash and lead to divided leadership. As it is, this cannot happen. One of the results is that Nupe religion, unlike other creeds, is incapable of compensating the failures of secular ambition with the promise of spiritual success or exaltation; another, that religion can achieve that other competence, of fully supporting 'mundane ethics'. It need not have been so. The egalitarianism of this 'mass religion' might have meant the promise, and hence that other 'compensation', of equality before God, as against the inequalities of which Nupe life is full. But this potentiality is left unexploited. In so far as Nupe religion deviates from the values governing secular life, it does so with insufficient emphasis to carry such a message of hope; indeed, the message it might have carried would be belied by too many other features of the creed and manner of worship.

We have so far considered the 'congregation' in the wider sense, as a community possessing such-and-such observances and means of communing with the supernatural. Understood as a collection of individuals worshipping together, the congregation again endorses or upholds the relevant groups existing within the society, now through mobilizing them in the act of worship. The tribe is not a congregation in this narrower sense, and the nation becomes one only intermittently and partially; but the presence of these inclusive groups is recalled in the prayer formulæ which mention the ancestor king Tsoede and on occasion call divine blessing upon 'the whole land of Nupe'. The village community is invariably a congregation-in-worship (and is mentioned in the prayer), as is

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also the kin group, in the different kinship ceremonials. As for individuals, they may by themselves solicit the more technical supernatural aids; but there is no true worship by individuals, only worship in groups or, in solitary sacrifices and the like, on behalf of groups.

The congregation-in-worship, over and above mobilizing a particular group, also mobilizes it in such manner that its internal structure is thrown into relief. We recall such features as the 'inner circle' of worshippers, composed of mature men; the roles of officiants, vested in titled elders or family heads; the precedence of rank, observed in the communal meal; the subordinate tasks assigned to adolescents, the obedience demanded of them, and the partial exclusion of women and strangers. The arrangement of the congregation, then, mirrors the status arrangements meant to be valid in mundane society, so that the latter is demonstrated so-so-speak, in model form, dramatized, and endorsed by the sacred context.

We note again that religion has no message of its own, transcending or reversing the secular norms: there is no preaching of, say, 'the first shall be last'. Even the festivals of youth, *gani* and *navũ*, though they grant to the adolescents a freedom and initiative not normally enjoyed, also exemplify in various ways respect for rank and loyalty to political leadership. Nor does religious practice cancel that paramount factor in secular society, wealth: we remember the cost of rituals (communal or kinship) and of supernatural aids privately solicited, which causes the former to vary in scale with available means and may make the latter inaccessible to the poor. This point is important since one feature of ritual procedure may seem to indicate a reversal of the secular ideal. I am referring to the uniform, simple dress obligatory in the pagan rites, which thus excludes the visible tokens of wealth from the circle of worshippers. It was left to the Moslem ceremonials with their chances for display to remove this egalitarian touch. But it is only a touch and no more, representing no effective symbolism; for the people do not derive any message or moral from it but regard it merely as a ritual rule among others, meant to draw the line between sacred and profane occasions.

Let us therefore call Nupe religion conservative, non-revolutionary, and again, non-messianic. Only in one respect does the congregation fail to 'mirror' social reality correctly, in that it upholds a subordinate position of the women which is not true in real life. For the men, religious practice thus expresses an ideal frustrated in every-day experience. But in this one sphere of conflict where religion no longer endorses 'life as it is', it is also incapable of contenting the believers, forcing them to resort to the fantasies

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about female witches and to the vicarious satisfaction of witch-hunting. Nupe religion, we must conclude, cannot hold its own as a messenger of ideals. 771 182

4. ASSURANCE AND STIMULATION

We have already mentioned the circular efficacy linking these two components of religious experience. Yet they can be separated in analysis, as much (or as little) as the mere knowing and learning of religious truths can be held apart from the actual living through acts of devotion. 771 781 182

Concerning the assurances about the world and man's place in it which can be known and learned, there is little to say, and most that can be said is negative. Nupe doctrine does not teach that the universe is benevolent or that the deity is closely concerned with human fate. Though man has skills and ritual procedures to invoke supernatural aid, their outcome will often remain uncertain. Thus these skills and procedures contain only traces of the calculable forcefulness of 'magic'. The strictly technical manipulations of *cigbe* come closest to this conception; yet they, too, are subject to the will of God, or accident, and even the miraculous medicines in which one places absolute confidence involve 'invocations' (not 'spells') and hence an element of submission. In the last resort, man can only appeal and supplicate; if, on balance, Nupe religion is optimistic, this only means that it holds out hopes in the face of a world governed by accident, not that there is an assured or reassuring design behind it.

To turn to the 'stimulations'. We need not stress again that the self-abandonment of the mystic or visionary is utterly foreign to the Nupe. Never does the worshipper face his god in solitude, drawing only upon his inward experience or seeking private illumination. Nor is the mood he seeks in his worship entirely religious, that is, unattainable save through the 'thought of supernatural relations'; for in all the major rites at least, that mood emerges also from the added stimuli of music, dancing, crowd behaviour, and perhaps sexual excitement. Generally, the mood of Nupe worship is restrained and calm, leading to no extremes either of fear and stress or of exultation. The absence of elaborate ritualism precludes the tensions that go with rigidly prescribed gestures or speech; in avoiding nocturnal performances most rituals also avoid the sharp accents of fear and mystery; and the rules of ritual etiquette usually curb abandoned behaviour.

Above all, the mood of Nupe worship lacks development. The ritual prepares and holds a sense of the sacred in various, familiar ways—through rules marking off the ritual occasion from ordinary

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ones; through the subdued, solemn manner of applying oneself to the ritual task; and through the serious import of the supplication. But this mood is merely 'lived through'; it involves no mounting expectancy, pressing for some culminating experience or final fulfilment. In the act of worship proper, embodied in the esoteric phase of any rite, the prayer or the sacrificial meal might play that part. Intellectually, the prayer represents the crucial moment, when the whole purpose of the ritual is made clear and the appeal or hope articulately expressed. In the large-scale ceremonials, too, there is some emotional preparation for that moment, drumming and singing being abruptly silenced when the prayer is about to be uttered. Yet it is uttered too early in the proceedings and uttered too informally to come as a culminating stage. The sacrificial meal stands out in that it concludes the act of worship proper; but just then the solemn mood is also visibly fading.

The movable rites and minor observances; consisting as they do only of prayer and sacrifice, do not progress beyond that short-lived 'sensing of the sacred'. And if the great ceremonials offer further excitements and something akin to a final climax, these no longer grow out of the awareness of transcendental events, but are achieved through the massed stimuli of more common appeal —music, dancing, and so forth. As I suggested in an earlier context, some anticipation of the final stimulations must fuse with the mood of the worship proper; as the congregation in turn retains some sense of the sacred even in the phase of the 'merry-making', though in the absence of elaborate symbols acting as 'reminders' that sense is none too secure. What is important is that the worship as such does not work up to any final 'fulfilment'; rather, the emotional tensions remain diffuse and without climax. They only sensitize the congregation to the 'annunciations and promises' voiced in the ritual but do not prepare the worshippers for revelations.

The bush vigil in the *gunnu* may seem an exception since here certain pronouncements are made to a congregation previously exposed to fear and the thrills of mystery. But again, this is not a true climax of religious experience; this episode is only a prelude to the actual rite (and can in fact be omitted); while the pronouncement is concerned with nothing more momentous than an admonishment of adolescents. Indeed, the very mood of fear and mystery, which would seem so congenial to the expectancy of revelations, must be called exceptional. One other ritual, the *mamma*, is staged in a similar atmosphere; but it occurs only in a few communities and is performed with little excitement or awe; nor does it carry any message or 'annunciation'.

Another exception is more important. In each Nupe community the calm and restrained mood of worship is reversed once, in the

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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

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a sense crude, containing no intellectual insight or gain; nor perhaps is the gain a lasting one. In a cruder form still, much the same change is entailed in any exciting or pleasurable interruption of workaday routine and in the consequent readiness for further work; which effect, too, must be ascribed to the Nupe ceremonials and festivities. But clearly, the fusion of 'stimulation' and 'assurance' can operate also on a higher, that is, more conscious, plane. It is in this sense that theologians think of the access of faith or fortitude entailed in acts of worship and William James speaks of the 'assurance of safety' and the 'new zest which adds itself like a gift to life'.[1]

Undoubtedly, this is true also of Nupe religion, even though its acts of worship are without precise revelations and merely voice hopes impressive only because they are reinforced by diffuse excitements. Yet if we grant this access of faith, we must grant also that it will have to prevail against difficulties, failures and disappointments. Acts of worship, therefore, both build up faith and draw upon it. Somewhat differently expressed, we have made this point in an earlier context; there, too, we suggested that only the fixed rituals, whose aims are fundamentally unspecific and whose design brings into play all the more stirring stimulations, can assume the former role; while the movable rites and all the other contingent observances, being prosaic and meant to be successful in specific needs, apply faith and draw upon it as much as, fortuitously, they may strengthen it.[2] Let me add this observation only. The fixed rituals, though they engender faith, are not meant to be repeated or changed for the sake of greater efficacy. They are prescribed occasions when man can commune with the deity and touch divine power, and through this alone a source of assurance. Also, their number is small, so that Nupe life is not punctuated with occasions creative of faith. Here, then, we meet with something like an economy of faith which seems to have found its own level.

In other religions this economy may work differently. Certainly, it seems to work in Nupe, where it goes together with an unambitious doctrine allowing for the failure of specific appeals and upholding no firm over-all assurance. For by and large, the tenor of Nupe life is optimistic; nor are there any instances of individuals turning cynics or being driven into unbelief by disappointed hopes. Does this mean that the zest and assurance evoked in the acts of worship (but tempered and hence protected by the cautious doctrine) are sufficient to endure and pervade all the efforts of practical life? or only that religious experience is not meant to be enduring and pervasive?

[1] Op cit., pp. 403–4.

[2] See above, pp. 105–6.

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We cannot precisely measure this psychological aftermath of acts of worship. But we can assess it indirectly, from the concern with religious experiences visible in everyday life. And here it is quite clear that our second assumption is the correct one. For the acts of worship do not leave any vivid awareness of the achieved communion with the deity nor any lasting sense of the holy. There is nothing of 'religiosity' in the Nupe character. He knows, of course, at all times, that there is a God and a realm of the supernatural; but ordinarily this is tacit knowledge, of no practical relevance, neither permanently awe-inspiring nor permanently exhilarating. Crudely speaking, the Nupe are religious only on religious occasions; in between, life is an affair of secular values and rules-of-thumb. That even sacred places are 'sacred' only at certain times of the year is part of the same attitude; so is the absence of any conception of personal holiness. Even Islam, with its daily prayers, its Friday service, and its pious scholars, has hardly affected this attitude. For the daily prayers have become unthinking routine, without any touch of the mystic; being a mallam is a profession among others and often combined with them; and the Moslem cult of saints or 'holy men' found no response.

All this means that the spheres of religion and the profane remain clearly separable. Probably few religions merge completely with secular life so that every possible action bears some reference to transcendental notions. Nor, of course, can we conceive of religions which would at no point coincide with mundane interests. But the border zone between the two can be more or less wide and more or less sharply circumscribed. In Nupe, this zone is narrow and sharply outlined. Wherever the 'competences' of religion bear on mundane interests we can readily mark the point where the coincidence ceases. There is no 'carry-over' from one to the other. Thus religion sustains the offices of chiefs, kings, and other exponents of authority and law: but their person is not sacred, and criminals convicted by these holders of supernaturally sanctioned offices are not treated with any show of awe or sacred horror. Religion helps to bind together the kin group through the belief in reincarnation, through ancestral sacrifices, and through the solemnization of marriage and birth: but the Nupe do not, on normal occasions, speak the names of the ancestors with bated breath or constantly worry about placating their spirits. Marriage is in no sense sacred, and children are not holy; even children whose birth is ascribed to the efficacy of sacrifice are not treated in any special way.[1] Nor, finally, are the sick who recover with supernatural aid or the crops that thrive after some rite has been duly

[1] The only rules of this kind are entailed in the *sogba* cult, of alien origin.

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performed subject to special taboos or other rules meant to recall the divine intervention.

Nupe religion, then, has a defined place in the scheme of things. It is not that scheme itself, embracing or giving meaning to all other things with which human life is concerned. If religion engenders assurance and optimism, human life yet relies equally on the assurance and confidence that go with rational skills and mundane experiences. This is hardly unexpected. A religion which provides no *Weltbild*; which keeps aloof from moral judgments; which upholds no messianic ideals; and which rejects the incalculable revelations of mystics, is also a religion content with its own province. That province still 'supplements' or completes all the others and 'transcends' whatever they offer in the way of rational understanding, practical measures, and exhilarating or reassuring experiences. But this careful fit of a province among others, even though it completes their series on a higher, transcendental plane, has something of the rational. It savours of some plan of giving unto religion only what is hers, by some right that can be reasoned out. Perhaps we should say that Nupe religion is as rational as religion can be.

But this is, in religion, not a golden mean. The Nupe case does not prove that a religion thus rationally tempered saves the believers from disturbing doubts or cosmic fears just because its claims and promises are so unambitious. Nupe religion may well aim to be a sort of Plutarchian creed, steering a middle course between unbelief and too much belief, where man neither 'directeth and opposeth all his plaints and lamentations against fortune and casuality', nor yet 'will think and say that every disease and infirmity of his body, all his losses . . . and his repulses and disgraces are so many plagues inflicted upon him by the ire of the gods and the very assaults of divine justice.' [1] But in thinking neither wholly one thing nor wholly the other, the Nupe yet invite one sharp repulse to their mood of optimism: for they know the deep fear of witchcraft. And this is not, in their case, a fear of the consequences of impiety or of 'divine justice'; rather is it born of the awareness that the universe is inadequately controlled, and hence that the province of religion is too narrow.

[1] Plutarch, 'Of Superstition'; *Moralia*, translated by Philemon Holland, 1911 edition, p. 380.

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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA
EDITED BY DARYLL FORDE

WESTERN AFRICA

PART X

PEOPLES OF THE NIGER-BENUE CONFLUENCE

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WESTERN AFRICA

ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA
EDITED BY DARYLL FORDE

PART X

PEOPLES OF THE NIGER-BENUE CONFLUENCE

THE NUPE by DARYLL FORDE
THE IGBIRA by PAULA BROWN
THE IGALA by ROBERT G. ARMSTRONG
THE IDOMA-SPEAKING PEOPLES by ROBERT G. ARMSTRONG

[p. iii]

LONDON
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DOD

This study is one section of the Ethnographic Survey of Africa which the International African Institute is preparing with the aid of a grant made by the Secretary of State under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, on the recommendation of the Colonial Social Science Research Council.

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FOREWORD

THE International African Institute has, since 1945, been engaged on the preparation and publication of an Ethnographic Survey of Africa, the purpose of which is to present in a brief and readily comprehensible form a summary of available information concerning the different peoples of Africa with respect to location, natural environment, economy and crafts, social structure, political organization, religious beliefs and cults. While published material has provided the main basis for the Survey, a large number of unpublished documents—reports and records in government files and in the archives of missionary societies, as well as field notes and special communications by anthropologists and others—have been generously made available and these have been supplemented by personal correspondence and consultation. The Survey is being published in a number of separate volumes, each of which is concerned with one people or a group of related peoples, and contains a comprehensive bibliography and a specially drawn map.

A committee of the Institute, to determine the scope of the Survey, was set up under the Chairmanship of Professor Radcliffe-Brown, and the Director of the Institute has undertaken the editing and organization. The generous collaboration of a number of research institutions and administrative officers in Europe and in the African territories was secured, as well as the services of senior anthropologists who have been good enough to supervise and amplify the drafts.

The work of the Survey was initiated with the aid of a grant from the British Colonial Development and Welfare Funds, on the recommendation of the Social Science Research Council, to be applied mainly though not exclusively to work relating to British territories. A further grant from the Sudan Government has assisted in the preparation and publication of sections dealing with that territory.

The Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer and the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire were good enough to express their interest in the project and through their good offices grants have been received from the Governments of French West Africa and the French Cameroons for the preparation and publication of sections relating to those areas. These sections have been prepared by French ethnologists with the support and advice of Professor M. Griaule of the Sorbonne and Professor Th. Monod, Director of I.F.A.N.

The collaboration of the Belgian authorities in this project was first secured by the good offices of the late Professor de Jonghe, who enlisted the interest of the Commission d'Ethnologie of the Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales. The collaboration of the Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale has also been readily accorded. Work relating to Belgian territories is being carried out under the direction of Professor Olbrechts at the Centre du Documentation of the Musée Royal du Congo Belge, Tervuren, where Mlle. Boone and members of her staff are engaged on the assembly and classification of the vast mass of material relating to African peoples in the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. They work in close collaboration with ethnologists in the field to whom draft manuscripts are submitted for checking.

The International African Institute desires to express its grateful thanks to those official bodies whose generous financial assistance has made the carrying out of this project possible and to the many scholars, directors of research organizations, administrative officers, missionaries, and others who have collaborated in the work and, by granting facilities to our research workers and by correcting and supervising their manuscripts, have contributed so largely to whatever merit the various sections may possess.

Since the unequal value and unsystematic nature of existing material was one of the reasons for undertaking the Survey, it is obvious that these studies cannot

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FOREWORD

claim to be complete or definitive; it is hoped, however, that they will present a clear account of our existing knowledge and indicate where information is lacking and further research is needed.

We are grateful for help given in the preparation of the present volume by Professor S. F. Nadel, who read the first draft of the Nupe section. Thanks are also due to Miss Freda Hands and Miss Barbara Pym for editorial assistance in the preparation of all the sections.

DARYLL FORDE,
Director,
International African Institute.

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INTRODUCTION

The confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers has for long been a focal area of migrations, commerce, and conquest, which have set up cultural cross currents of many kinds. The Igala, the Jukun, and the Fulani have at various times conquered large parts of the region and these wars have left deep impressions on the institutions of the peoples.

The area as a whole is fairly open savannah or "orchard bush," but it is fly-infested and cattle cannot be reared successfully. The agriculture, which dominates the economy, includes the cultivation of crops, such as guinea-corn and yams, characteristic of Northern and Southern Nigeria respectively, hence the term "Middle Belt" which is frequently applied to the Niger-Benue region. The Nupe country is one of the northernmost areas in which the oil-palm and kola nut are found; the Niger watershed in Igala and the southern fringe of districts in Idoma also lie within the "palm belt." Settlement is fairly continuous over the area as a whole and there is considerable intermixture of ethnic groups. Population is moderately dense—between 30 and 60 persons per square mile over wide areas—though it is considerably sparser north of the Benue and in some Nupe districts west of the Kaduna River.

Continuous European contact with the Niger-Benue region began with Lander's descent of the Niger in 1830. In 1832–33 the Laird and Oldfield expedition succeeded in getting some distance up the Benue and visited the whole river front of the Igbira and Igala countries. They found the country north of the Benue much disturbed by Fulani raids. The markets around the confluence were major centres of the slave trade[1] and in 1855 Crowther heard Igala, Igbira, Nupe, Kakanda, Hausa, Yoruba, Idoma, Jukun, and Ibo being spoken at the Igbede market at the confluence.[2]

The tribes of the Niger-Benue confluence speak Kwa languages, while to the east the region borders directly on a solid block of tribes speaking so-called "Semi-Bantu" languages.[3] But there has been great terminological confusion, with reference to both languages and ethnic groups, especially concerning the large body of Idoma-speaking peoples lying between Igala and Tiv country, where the name Akpoto or Okpoto was used in various 19th-century accounts to include all the region from the confluence to the Tiv border. Whatever the original situation may have been, however, the only group in the area which today calls itself and its language Akpoto is the peoples of the central and western Idoma-speaking districts. The situation is further confused by the fact that there is a district of Igala called Akpoto, south of Ankpa. This district borders on Idoma, and the people on both sides of the border are largely bilingual. As will be seen from the section on the Idoma, many of the "languages" of this region which have hitherto received separate treatment in the literature can now be shown to be closely related dialects of Idoma. Although north of the Benue the situation appears simpler, this may well be due to continuing ignorance of the ethnography and linguistics of the area.

Politically the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence exhibit widely differing systems, ranging from the highly organized state of the Nupe with a ruling dynasty of Fulani descent, and the Igbira and Igala chiefdoms with their "divine kings," to the fragmentary statelets of the Idoma-speaking peoples and the small autonomous "clans" of the Egede. The Nupe are the only people to have been Islamized to any considerable extent.

In describing these very diverse peoples, who have nevertheless been in contact over long periods, it has been found most convenient to deal first with the Nupe

[1] Clapperton and Lander, 1829, p. 297.
[2] Crowther, 1855, p. 167.
[3] See Crowther, 1855, p. 65, and below, pp. 78–9, 90–3.

128 of Niger and Ilorin Provinces, on whom there is a considerable literature. An account is next given of the Igbira and the Igala of Kabba Province; this is necessarily uneven and provisional in view of the very limited sources. The account of the Idoma-speaking peoples of Benue Province is based mainly on Dr. Armstrong's field investigations and his study of unpublished local records. The peoples have been grouped by him as follows: first the Idoma "Proper" of Idoma Division, with their outliers the Iyala and Nkum and the so-called Arago of Doma and Keana, and secondly other groups speaking languages closely related to Idoma, namely, the Afu of Nassarawa, and the Egede, Akweya-Yachi and Utonkon-Effium of Idoma and Ogoja Divisions.

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[p. 7ν]

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Nupe—Note on Orthography

The symbols employed by Nadel (1942) have generally been followed in this section: ŋ = nasalization of preceding vowel; ɬ = s in lesion; ′ indicates the high tone and usually the stressed syllable in a word.

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THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

105 The Nupe, speaking a number of related dialects, number about 360,000, and consist of the inhabitants of Bida Emirate, Niger Province, together with several politically separate sections. They do not form a territorially united group and, although every Nupe should extend hospitality to his fellow-tribesmen, they are not characterized by close internal cohesion. There is considerable variety of custom among the various "sub-tribes." Outstanding common features are: the cycle of myths of the culture-hero Tsoede, the observation of the *gunna* ritual, belief in the supreme sky-god Soko, and the general structure of political ranks, age-sets, kinship system, and marriage rules.[1]

NOMENCLATURE

101 The Nupe call themselves *Nupeciłi* or *Nupenciłi* (sing. *Nupeci* or *Nupenci*), their language *Nupe* or *Esi Nupe*, and their country *Kin Nupe* ("the land of Nupe"). But Nupe in Zugurma and, generally speaking, north of the Kaduna River, also call themselves *Agabi*.[2] They are known by neighbouring tribes by the following names:[3]

By the Hausa: *Ba Nupe* or *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*).
" " Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
" " Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari: *Ampeyi* or *Nife*.
" " Akanda (Yoruba): *Anupecwayi*.
" " Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
" " Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
" " Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
" " Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie
167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafiagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 24. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organisation more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.
[2] Mathews, 1926.
[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 283 and index.
[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abewa by Hausa speakers.

[pp 1-16 Non-existent]

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131 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba
167 Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[5]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

101 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own
634 dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common
[167] descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunsu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciři): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciři* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiři* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoři* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 434.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Senka, Egwa, Basumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endorigi, Ela, Dits, Gbarsdosi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wanengi, Gungi, Etsumutam, Gidi.

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619 634 *Nupe "Zam":* a group in Trans-Kaduna (Kutigi) believed to be the oldest section of the Nupe; calling themselves *Nupe*, they have no secondary name.

Ebagi: an "original" Nupe sub-tribe, who claim to be the descendants of a dynasty superseded by the Fulani now ruling in Ilorin Emirate.

Ebe (Abewa): an "original" sub-tribe living in Yelwa District, but, according to Mathews, they call themselves *Asu* and claim to have come from what is now Yoruba country.[10]

Gbedye (Gbedegi): on the borders of Yoruba country in Niger Province, possibly of Yoruba origin.[11]

Kupa (also, erroneously, called Gupa; Kupachi):[12] said to be of Ebe origin, having arrived at their present site on the southern bank of the Niger around Eggan and, in small numbers, in Bunu District, in about 1800. Some are also to be found in the Koton Karifi District of Kabba Province, where they form a section of the "host" population and, together with the Dibo (see below), account for some 10% of the population. There are also others in Kupa District of Koton Karifi Division. They are said to be not fully "Nupeized."

Cehpay: on the southern bank of the Niger.

Kusopá: in the Labozhi District, in thick inland forest west of the Kaduna River, where they cultivate the kola-nut plantations of Labozhi and Kudu; they are also to be found in the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. Their origin is unknown but they may be comparatively recent immigrants.

Benu: a recently formed sub-tribe of Bornu origin. They came from Kukawa at the end of the 18th century as wealthy traders and owners of cattle and horses and now predominate in Kutigi and in the neighbouring villages of the Trans-Kaduna area, where they are the economically and politically dominant group.

Dibo (also known as Žitako ("men down below") and Ganagana, a Hausa name: a recently assimilated sub-tribe. As lately as 1931 they were not fully "Nupeized" nor universally accepted as a Nupe sub-tribe.[13] They live in the southernmost part of Lafiagi and Agaie Emirates, also in the extreme north of Koton Karifi Division, on the eastern slope of the Gurara valley north of the Kunama-Okya watershed, their chief towns being Pandegi, Agyana, Ebagi, Rimbo, Kibogi, Rijaya, and Chigbwechi. There are also a few hundred in Toto and Umaisha Districts of Nasarawa Emirate. They are the predominant tribe at Ashera in Abuja Emirate.

Gwagba: a recently formed group, essentially a political section. The name is said to be deprecatory and applied to those living in and around Zugurma.[14] According to Mathews,[15] the Gwagba consist of the indigenous Ebe, Basa, and Bedegi of the district. He suggests that the name Gwagba was given to them at the time of their original conquest by the Agabi (the descendants of Tsoede, among whom are the present "royal family" of Zugurma), and that it may even be the original name of a people.

Basa-Nge: a group speaking a Nupe dialect which appears to have left the mother country about a century ago, before the Fulani conquest. They lived first

[10] Mathews, 1926.

[11] There is a Yoruba sub-tribe called Gbedde in Kabba Division of Kabba Province. One section of the Kyedye sub-tribe is also called Gbéde and also inhabits the upper stretches of the Niger.

[12] The name Kupa is said to be a corruption of Oku-Pari, meaning canoe-men of the Oku river. Kupa and Gupa are enumerated separately in the 1931 Census list of Nupe sub-tribes. Nadel names the Kupa only; Temple gives the Gupa as an offshoot of the Gbari, and the Kupa as a Nupe sub-tribe; Meek uses the name Gupa in his text and Kupa on his map; MacBride refers to those in Koton Karifi Division as Kupachi.

[13] They are, however, listed by Nadel (1942, p. 19) as one of the five "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, according to Nupe tradition, were in existence at the time of Tsoede.

[14] Nadel, 1942, p. 20.

[15] Mathews, 1926.

619 on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved
634 over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

[567] *Konú* (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Bafa* in the
[114] 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

161 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

162 1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op cit., p. 20.
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province, who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

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162 in part from erroneous naming of some tribes and sub-tribes as Nupe and the omission of others.[27] Marked decreases in the population are probably due to continuous small scale emigration, especially since 1930. This has been mostly in a southerly
161 direction, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, i.e., to the wealthy and less heavily taxed districts of the south. In one or two cases, people of one sub-tribe have migrated into the district of another. Other significant reasons for the decrease in population may be venereal disease, abortion, and contraception, and the high infant mortality rate, though abortion is said to be practised only in the larger towns and before marriage. Infant mortality is probably the greatest single cause of the decline; many infants die of malaria.[28]

No detailed analysis has yet been made of the 1952 Census figures which, for the Northern Provinces, show an increase of about 23,000 on those of 1931.

Density of Population

The following estimates are available:

Division or District	*Persons per square mile*	*Date*
Bida	35·22	1931 Census
Agaie-Lapai	21·7	" "
Lafiagi-Pategi	30	" "
Badeggi	22	1934 (local census)
Gbangba	50	" " "
Jima-Doko	53	" " "
Kacha	60	" " "
Mokwa	12	" " "
Kutigi	13	" " "
"Trans-Kaduna" (districts west of Kaduna river)	17·6	" " "
"Cis-Kaduna" (districts east of Kaduna river)	55	" " "

The difference in density east and west of the Kaduna River may be explained by the Fulani conquest of the Nupe and the consequent emigration of the Fulani rulers and their dependents into the area east of the Kaduna.[29]

[27] Nadel (1942, pp. 9–10) gives as examples the Ganagana (Dibo) who were sometimes classed as a separate group, and the "Tapa" (Takpa) who were listed separately in the Southern Provinces until it was discovered in 1936 that Takpa was the Yoruba name for Nupe.

[28] See Brooke, *Census of Nigeria* (1931) Vol. II, p. 29; Nadel, 1942, pp. 6–8; Weatherhead, M.S.

[29] Nadel, op. cit., p. 11.

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND HISTORY[1]

173 The Nupe kingdom was, according to their own traditions, founded by the culture hero Tsoede or Edegi, born, according to the genealogies of the Nupe kings, early in the 15th century when the Nupe were grouped in various small chieftainships subject to the *Ata* of Igala at Idah, to whom an annual tribute of slaves, traditionally sisters' sons, had to be paid. The son of the *Ata* at this time went hunting in Nupe country, fell in love with a chief's daughter, lived with her for some time, and she became pregnant. On the death of his father the son returned to Idah to succeed but he left a chain and a ring with the woman to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede, who, when he was 30 years old, was sent to Idah by his mother's brother as part of the slave tribute. He enjoyed considerable favour and success at his father's court but was eventually forced to flee because of the jealousy of his half-brothers. He travelled upstream in a bronze canoe to his own country and after many adventures established himself as king of the Nupe.

Tsoede is held to have introduced the arts of iron and brass working and the practice of human sacrifices. He died at the reputed age of 120, on one of his military expeditions to the north in which direction the Nupe kingdom was then expanding. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and a sword, are still treasured by the people of Gbagede, who are not Nupe but Kamberi.[2]

175 The first Nupe king to become a Moslem is thought to have reigned about 1770. The Nupe kingdom reached the height of its power during the periods when the *Etsu* Ma'azuŋ was on the throne (1759–67 and 1778–95).

After the Fulani conquered the Hausa states of Northern Nigeria in the Jihad of 1805, the Nupe came under the domination of the dynasty of the Emir of Gwandu. About 1810 Mallam Dendo, a Fulani from Kebbi, who was to play an important part in its history, appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and charm seller. He gathered around him a following of cattle Fulani, Hausa and Fulani mercenaries, merchants and priests. Taking advantage of the dissensions which broke out after *Etsu* Ma'azuŋ's death, he established himself as a military leader. The Nupe kingdom was at this time split into two halves, with *Etsu* Jimada ruling at Gbara, the ancient capital, and *Etsu* Maija at the newly built capital of Raba on the Niger. Maija gained the support of Mallam Dendo and his followers and attacked *Etsu* Jimada, routing his forces and killing him. Eventually, however, fearing that Mallam Dendo might become a dangerous rival, he drove him from his territory across the Niger into the Yoruba country of Ilorin, and later made war against him and the ruling Fulani in Ilorin. Here Maija was defeated and driven back into the interior of Nupe country, leaving Raba open to Mallam Dendo who established himself there as ruler over the Nupe.

After his death in 1833 Dendo's second son Usman Zaki succeeded him and the old Nupe dynasty, exiled to Zugurma, abandoned all claim to the rulership. For some 10 years there were constant intrigues and quarrels among the sons of Mallam Dendo, and wars against other tribes. Usman Zaki renounced the throne in 1841 but reoccupied it in 1850. Bida then became the centre of the new kingdom in a period of comparative peace.

Between 1870 and 1890 the Niger Company established trading posts along the Niger. They, and later the Government of Nigeria, detached outlying portions of the kingdom. The Yagba and Bunu Yoruba, Gbari, Basa, and Kakanda became independent in 1900–05; the territories on the south and west banks of the Niger were taken away and given to the Emirs of Ilorin, Shonga, Lafiagi, and Pategi; the northern Nupe territories came under the Emir of Kontagora, and only Bida Division remained of the former Nupe kingdom. As a result of this fragmentation there are now groups of Nupe in areas under non-Nupe chiefs.

[1] For fuller accounts of Nupe history see Temple, 1919, pp. 524–8; Nadel, 1942, pp. 72–96; Hermon-Hodge, 1929, pp. 102–10.

[2] According to Nadel. But Mathews (MS, 1939) describes them as "pagan Nupe."

LANGUAGE

197 Nupe belongs to the Larger Unit[3] of Kwa languages of West Africa, which also includes the languages or dialects spoken by the Igbira, Igala, Idoma, and other peoples dealt with in this volume of the Ethnographic Survey.[4]

The Nupe Dialect Cluster together with those of Igbira and Gbari[5] make up the Nupe Language Group. But the Nupe are not linguistically homogeneous or exclusive. The bi-lingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai also speak Nupe, while some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe have lost their native tongue. The Kakanda are said to speak a closely related language which may be a Nupe dialect. Although Gbari is a separate dialect cluster of the Nupe Language Group much of its vocabulary is identical with Nupe, which also has a close structural resemblance to both Gbari and Kakanda.

The Nupe cluster consists of five markedly different dialects: Nupe proper; Ebe, spoken by the Ebe sub-tribe; Zitako or Dibo, more closely related to Gbari; Kupa, spoken by the Kupa and Cekpaŋ sub-tribes; Basa-Nge, spoken by the Basa-Nge, a split-off section. The Gbedye sub-tribe are said to have spoken a separate dialect which is now lost. Nupe proper is spoken by the Kyedye sub-tribe and others and there are only insignificant dialectal differences between the areas where it is spoken. Bida Nupe ("higher Nupe") exhibits a fondness for Hausa words and phrases which have replaced many Nupe words. The other four dialects differ con-
[91] siderably from each other and from Nupe as spoken in the rest of the country, but most of the speakers of these dialects are bi-lingual and also speak Nupe proper.[5a]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

133 The Nupe country is low-lying and undulating, not more than 200 ft. above sea level in most parts. A few ridges of rocky hills and some flat-topped hillocks rise above the plain; the highest of these are not more than 800 ft. above sea level. On the banks of the Niger there are stretches of thick riverain forest alternating with shrub and low bush. During the rains, the forest-covered banks and the open bush are flooded far inland and become vast swamps.

The Niger and the Kaduna Rivers form the two axes of the country. A network of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, provides an efficient system of natural irrigation. Upstream from Jebba Island the Niger is narrow, with rapids and dangerous rocky passages. Between Jebba Island and Baro it is broad and navigable for big steamers for half the year.

134 The soil is mostly rich and fertile, especially in the thinly populated districts to the west of the Kaduna River. Round Bida town fertility has been much reduced by over-cultivation. The soil consists of red earth mixed with laterite and is rich in silicates. There is some iron ore which is mined by the natives on the slopes of the low broken hills.

137 The vegetation is typical for an area of transition from the southern forest belt to the northern savannah. Narrow strips or patches of thick forest vegetation lie in the river valleys and watercourses; inland, thick forest, shrub, and orchard bush alternate with open parkland, except round Bida and Agaie, where it has been cleared by intensive cultivation. There is virgin forest west of Kaduna.

Nupe country is the most northern area for oil-palm, yam, and the southern variety of maize; it is at the southern limit for date-palm, shea-nut, and millet. Other trees are: locust-bean, indigo, silk-cotton, mango (a European importation), kola-nut, and banana.[6]

[3] Westermann and Bryan, 1952, pp. 85–6. Their terminology is used here.
[4] See below, pp. 55–155.
[5] To be dealt with in a forthcoming volume of the Survey.
[5a] Nadel, 1942, pp. 13–14, 18, 23, 122; 1940, p. 165; Westermann, 1925; Meek, 1925, p. 127 (and map); Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 117, 320, 324.
[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 1; 1940a, p. 194.

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

General

105 Most of the Nupe participate in a complex exchange-economy. Before the introduction of British money, cowrie shells were used as currency and are still used at funerals, and in reckoning marriage and other traditional payments.

The trans-Kaduna area and the country north of Bida (e.g., in Lemu), where land is fertile and plentiful, is the most prosperous. Wealth is greater where the household has a large labour unit or where a craft is practised in addition to farm work. Bida town exhibits greater extremes of poverty and wealth than the rest of the country but outstanding differences are not between individuals, but between groups, for example, urban and rural populations. It is said to be unusual to see badly-clothed men, women, or children, and under-nourishment is rare.

The traditional political offices are no longer inseparably linked with wealth, though high social status still attaches to them. Members of the *élite* can maintain their prestige fairly cheaply, as symbols of status (glazed turban or silver sword) are either heirlooms or not costly; the inherited house shows status even if in disrepair; polygyny is facilitated by the low marriage payment for " marriage in the family ";[3] travelling can be sustained by claiming hospitality from relatives.[5]

Agriculture[2]

241 Nupe farming shows considerable technical knowledge and little magic or ritual is associated with it. Shifting cultivation is practised but plots are worked for 3–4 years (Doko), 4–5 years (Mokwa), and 6–7 years (Kutigi) before they are allowed to lie fallow for from 4 to 15 years. Rotation of crops is not generally practised, though Line reported it from the area round Jima, where three years of groundnuts were followed by two of guinea-corn. Intercropping is practised and two or three crops are often grown together. The size of a plot worked by one man is usually 2–2½ acres.

A large heavy hoe (*zuku*) is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, and a small hoe (*dugbu*) for weeding and lighter work. A long bush knife (*gada*), nowadays of European manufacture, is used for cutting grain stalks and digging out yams.

Farms are cleared and burnt during the dry season. First-year cultivation after clearing is in mounds; those made for yams are 2–3 ft. high, 4–5 ft. apart, and in rows 6 ft. apart. Subsequent cultivation is in ridges 1 ft. high and 3 ft. apart. Groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and some vegetables are planted in this way. Marsh cultivation is carried out in small areas of 4–6 parallel ridges. Around Doko (Beni sub-tribe) manure is obtained from the cattle of nomad Fulani, who are invited to camp on fallow plots during the dry season.

184 In the area west of the Kaduna River the chief cash crop is groundnuts, and
241 cotton also grows well there. The staple food crops are millet, sorghum, yams, and, to a lesser extent, rice. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes are less important. The most profitable commercial crops are rice, groundnuts, cotton, and shea-nut. There is a poorer range of crops round Bida town owing to the scarcity of land; fewer yams are grown there than elsewhere and there is no bulrush millet.

In the Nupe areas of Ilorin Emirate yams are not regarded as a Nupe crop but close contact with Yoruba farmers is said to have improved the Nupe methods of cultivation. In Share[4] each farmer has two farms, one for grain and the other for

[3] See below, p. 43.
[5] Nadel, 1942, pp. 339–65; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–14, 237–8; Line, 1947.
[4] Anon. 1934–5.

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184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[439] cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and
386] women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

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438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[422] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262] No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
[492] which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go 443 outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for market- 49 ing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Masu Kolo Kolo*, "the hagglers."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

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INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).[21]

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuši*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[22]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three " wards " of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a " closed " craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[23]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for " copper "), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[24]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciši*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[21] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[22] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–69.
[23] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[24] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

467 286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[24] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 467 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[25]

323 467 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 467 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 [285] *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

[282] *Leather-workers* formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 759 467 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 535 467 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[24] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[25] Ibid., pp. 282–3.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

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467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[20]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[21]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[22]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[23]

[20] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[21] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[22] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[23] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

602 LOCAL AND KINSHIP GROUPING

611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man,
592 his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the "house" (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* ("owner of the house"), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or "clans,"
614 for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified "first ancestors."

FORMS OF SETTLEMENT: HOUSE TYPES[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*ezi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 25–33.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–32, 34, 36– , 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 334; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

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361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in
346] the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference
592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-
354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying
[723] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndahó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

643 The ndakó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuŋ* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

Status and Titles[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu, Shaba,* and *Kpotuŋ*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.

[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.

[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.

[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.

[9] See below, p. 35.

[10] See below, p. 36.

[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuŋ* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

565 the highest *gitsi* ranks go with the title. First appointment to a title and promotion to a higher one are granted by the king in council with the royal princes and other officers of state. Any able-bodied man of senior age, proved loyalty, and ability, 662 and good health, of the Fulani families, is eligible for admission to a *gitsúši* title, but favouritism, intrigue, and bribery also play a part, and the titles which a family has been able to accumulate are an indication of its influence at court and its favour with the ruling king. When a title-holder becomes incapable, through age or illness, of fulfilling his duties, a younger man is appointed, the former holder being styled 732 " old *Kpotuŋ* " or whatever the title may be. Nobody with any kind of deformity can hold a title, since the system was originally based on service in war and offices vital to the safety of the state. Investiture takes place in the *Etsu*'s house, in the presence of the *Alkali* or *Liman*, a propitious day having first been selected by mallams or diviners. The candidate is addressed by the *Etsu*, then clothed in a cloak and embroidered gown by the *Alkali* who also places a turban on his head. After prayers in which all join, the new holder rides through the town accompanied by other title-holders, and dismounts to greet princes or heads of houses at their residences.

The second class is that to which the *ticiši* or *rowni* (office-holding nobility) belong. The name *rowni* means " turbans " and refers to the fact that the bestowal of such a title is symbolized by the gift of a turban from the king. There are three groups of *ticiši*, each of which is regarded as a sharply defined social order: the *sarakiši*, the *ena manši*, and the *ena wuši*. The *sarakiši* is a group of civil and military nobility consisting of town elders (*ena ndeji*) and war leaders (*ena 'kuŋ*). The second order, *ena manši*, comprises the mallams, the religious and judicial officials, such as the *Alkali* (judge), and the *Liman* (religious head), with their assistants and scribes. The third order, *ena wuši*, which is the lowest in rank but still possesses great influence, consists of the court slaves.

Many of the *saraki* titles are identical in name with those bestowed on the village elders, but the symbols of status, even when similar, refer to very different social contexts. *Saraki* titles are, like *gitsú* titles, generally granted by the *Etsu* in council with princes and other officers of state. Theoretically, at least, outsiders, even commoners, who have won his favour may be admitted to the ranks. Only a few of the higher titles, which have become the prerogatives of certain families, are hereditary. Several titles cannot be accumulated in a single family. They are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group; no other close relative can then claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his " house." To-day wealth and financial influence are important factors in gaining titles and the *saraki* group includes rich traders, as well as descendants of the old official nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe, and Nupe families who became partisans of the Fulani conquerors. These *sarakiši* received no salary, but were formerly granted land and slaves.

The *Ndeji* (" father of the town "), the head of the *ena ndeji*, is in charge of the affairs of Bida and the most powerful of the officers of state because he is closest to the king. At the head of the other civil title-holders he holds the daily council (*nkó*) with the king himself. The military titles (*ena 'kuŋ*) were formerly those of war leaders, the different titles being associated with special responsibilities.

565 The *ena manši*, the order of mallams, is " a class between classes, a mobile 517 privileged intelligentsia." It includes the *Alkali*, the *Liman*, and their assistants. 554 The detailed knowledge of Moslem law and literature and the specialized training required limits the number of candidates. But the offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* are sometimes hereditary, reflecting a tradition of learning in certain families and political influence, for many eminent mallams are of Fulani stock. Mallams are highly esteemed by everyone and are placed about commoners even when they are without rank or title and have only little learning. They are allowed to marry daughters and sisters of higher born families.

565 Below the *sarakiši* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wuši*, whose
567 members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[13] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiši*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

PATRONAGE[13]

566 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society.
675 The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

AGE-SETS[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiši*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiši*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfuši*, of ages *c.* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

GOVERNMENT[15]

631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[13] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 383–401; 1935a, pp. 209–71, 292.
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–18

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631 countries of Beni and Kyedye; the third comprised a wider ring of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, mostly in Trans-Kaduna; the fourth was Bida town, the seat of the central government, which formed an administrative district of its own.

The "outside" peoples consisted of Yoruba (Yagba and Bunu), Kakanda, Kamberi, Gbari, and Gbira, with some Nupe sections (mostly Dibo and Ebe). Their districts were not regularly administered by the central government, but they were recognized as being under the "protection" of Bida, and paid an annual tribute in slaves, collected by royal agents (*tuci* or *ajele*). Other Emirates and chieftainships were bound by "treaties" not to raid Bida's dependent territories, though Bida itself could raid its own "outside" peoples. The royal messengers visited the territories with small armies and the possession of such a force was an essential qualification for the post of *ajele*.

The kingdoms of Beni and Kyedye,[16] the two small "states within the State," were directly under the king and their chiefs acted as a kind of royal agents, their appointment and succession being subject to confirmation by the king. They could administer law in cases which came into the category of *gyara*, "reparation," and collected tax in their areas on the king's behalf.

The rest of the Nupe kingdom was divided into areas each containing a town with its dependent villages and *tunga*, which were administered as fiefs by their lords (*egba*). The latter might be members of the royal house or of the official nobility, or court slaves. Each received his fief from the *Etsu*, together with his title with which the fief remained permanently linked; the appointment to an *egba* post thus conferred a definite status. Fiefs were also bestowed on individuals, usually relatives or favourites of the king, independent of rank or office. A lord rarely visited his fief; his representative, usually one of his slaves or serfs living on his lands, collected tax for him. The *egba* had to give a proportion of this tax to the king. Among his other duties was the administration of justice in lesser cases.

633 Bida town was administered directly by the king and his officers of state, but, like the kingdom, was divided into areas, the inner city, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida lived, "greater" Bida, and the strangers' quarter. Cutting across these divisions were the small local units, described by Nadel as "factions rather than organized town wards," consisting of the followers of various members of the powerful nobility. In fact, the people of Bida refer to the different parts of the town by the titles of the nobility who have their houses there.

In more recent times the affairs of Bida Emirate have been in the hands of the *Etsu* and a council of four, consisting of the *Ndeji*, President (formerly "father of the town" of Bida), the *Maiyaki* or *Sarkin Yaki*, Minister of Public Works (formerly Commander in War), the *Nágya*, formerly District Head of Mokwa and a member of the nobility, and the *Etsu Tafiey*, official representative of the commoners and formerly chief of the Beni confederacy.[17] Other officials include the *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the *Etsu*'s chief slave and now the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office of the Nigerian Administration. Seven District Heads are appointed by the *Etsu* from the ranks of the higher royal nobility.
634 Exceptions are the *Kuta* of the Kyedye sub-tribe,[18] who is the District Head of Kuta District, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha. The District Heads live in the largest town of their District and make frequent tours of inspection of the area and regular visits to the *Etsu*. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their District and for the collection of taxes.[19]

633 The *Dikko*, head of the nomadic Fulani (*bororoḟi*) in Bida Emirate, fills a
648 traditional position in Fulani social life and ceremonial. He acts as liaison officer

[16] See below, p. 38.
[17] c. 1936.
[18] See below, p. 38.
[19] Nadel, 1942, pp. 158–65.

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633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rasi*, that of Kupa *Mahun*, of Kakanda *Agunshu*, and of Shaku *Kpotuy*.[21]

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*ẽitsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeja*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *ẽitsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *ewaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*yusaẽi*, sing. *yusu*, the "old ones," or *ticiẽi*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*ẽigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Ẽitsu* and *ẽigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1936) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

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623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[24]

The Political System of the Kyedye

634 184 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nuwa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticiki*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaki*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaki*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alhalin* Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[25]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

633 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsóki*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*Iitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndaceki* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benú*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benú* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[26]

[24] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–8.
[25] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1946a, pp. 174–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[26] Nadel, 1938.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[562] 425 Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still comparatively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.

(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* ("borrowing"); land thus acquired is also inalienable.

(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.

(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).

(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.

(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.

(7) By "primary" tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 471 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:

(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).

(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).

(3) The fringe of "reserve" land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[20]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batai every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[21] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settlement. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers' tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[22]

[431] 651

[20] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.

[21] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.

[22] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

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SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before 558 its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 The most important women's titles are those of *nimwoye*, of the royal house of 565 Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya;* she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not 559 reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 103–6, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 321–4, 147–56; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zuŋ'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–18.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 116.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[6]

584 According to Temple,[8] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[8] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

General

771 The majority of the Nupe are now Moslems and there is at least one small
[162] mosque in every village. The 1931 Census gave 235,990 Moslems out of a total of 324,375 for all religions.[1] But in many communities pagan ritual exists side by side with some Moslem observances, the latter being increasingly adopted for reasons of prestige.

Among the pagans there is common belief in a sky god *Sokó*, who is believed to have created the world and then withdrawn himself from communion with man. The Nupe concept of the cosmos is, according to Nadel, fundamentally amoral. God, having created the world, gave men access to certain mystical forces, making them at the same time subject to these and leaving them to make such use of these "powers" and of the material world as they would and could. First among these mystical forces is *kuti*, the compelling power of ritual, believed to be harnessed in varying degrees in a multiplicity of rites belonging to persons, communities, and associations, and conferring both special benefits or protection and increasing general well-being. At the same time, invocation of the ancestors of kinsfolk, of the people at large, and of the ancient rulers, can afford some measure of benefit or protection. This can also be gained through a separate use of "medicines" which are believed variously to combine pseudo-therapeutic and magical properties. Finally, the evil power of witchcraft, which God also put into the world, has to be discovered, punished, and driven out by special rites. Since, moreover, there are these alternatives with reference to both good fortune and bad, divination has a great part to play in determining the rites to be performed in particular situations.[2]

Spirits

776 The Nupe believe that immaterial beings, existing in their own right and with some human attributes, live in the bush or in hills, trees, watercourses, and other natural features. Their Hausa-Arabic name (*aljenúši*, sing. *aljénu*) suggests that some aspects of this belief may be borrowed from Islam. The spirits may be male or female, friendly or hostile, though only two—*Nddduma* (Father Niger) and *Ketsá* (associated with a rock in midstream near Jebba Island)—are thought to possess any considerable powers.[3] Another group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. The least clearly conceived are personal spirits or spirit doubles, which belong to every individual from birth to death and cannot be changed. These may be good or bad.[4]

769 Spirits of the dead (*kuci*) may be reincarnated in their own descendants.
776 Approach to the Supreme Being can be made through ancestral spirits. Special sacrifices are performed either in the house or on the grave of a particular ancestor and the *kuci* are invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death. Otherwise it seems that ancestral sacrifices are performed only sporadically and for a specific reason, such as illness in the family.[5]

776 Tsoede, who is regarded by all Nupe as their common ancestor, is venerated in an elaborate cycle of myths and rituals surrounding sacred objects—chains and bronze figures—connected with him.[6] He is, however, outside the general framework of Nupe religious beliefs.

[1] Census of Nigeria, vol. II, p. 63. Unfortunately there are no later figures available for comparison.
[2] See below, pp. 47–8.
[3] See below.
[4] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 28–31.
[5] Ibid., pp. 22–6.
[6] Ibid., pp. 31–2.

CULTS[7]

Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

794 The Ebe have a *ɗikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the
782 ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konú of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *ndáduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsá* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[8]

794 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility,
crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in
793 times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnukó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[9]

278 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the
789 power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–5; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–5; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[8] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[9] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–62 and *passim*.

278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciši*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciši*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the
789 barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciši* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciši* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[11]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 38–67.

757 widespread in West Africa, based on the patterns made by strings of shells when they are thrown, and a form of Arabic sand pattern divining performed only by Moslem "teachers."

Shell divination (*eba*) is similar in technique to Yoruba *ifa*, and is practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts. The diviner's apparatus consists of the divining strings themselves and a series of marked slabs which serve as a key for interpreting the throws. He receives a small fee—money, rice, or kola-nuts—each time he is consulted, but these payments are regarded as "gifts," and diviners cannot live on what they earn in this way. Most of them are also farmers and some are medicine experts at the same time. The skill is only incidentally hereditary in a family and is generally learned from an expert, payment being made for tuition.

Sand divination (*hati*) is an even more thoroughly learned skill than *eba*, though its performance is less dramatic. The craft can only be acquired by mallams, i.e., men who have at least some rudiments of Moslem learning. The various signs are drawn with the finger-tips on sand smoothed out on the ground. The "key" is carried in the diviner's head, though there is a book on divination written in Arabic which some diviners possess but which they do not consult when actually divining. *Hati* diviners are of widely differing status and learning, but in general the more scholarly mallams do not engage in divination and diviners are often men who have been unsuccessful as mallams.

Witchcraft

754 The Nupe conceive of witchcraft (*ega*) as a supernatural power by which people can be possessed; they then use it for evil and anti-social purposes. It is believed to be practised mainly by women; male witches are said to be "good" people, who would curb the evil desires of the female witches, though the killing of the victim is thought to be the work of both sexes in "partnership."

A witch (*gaci*) is thought to belong to an organization (*ena gaciži*) whose head is known as *lelu*. This title used to be officially bestowed by the Nupe chiefs on a woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could then be used for the benefit of the community. The equivalent title to-day is that of *sagi*,[12] although a change in the significance of the rank has taken place and the *sagi* is now concerned with more prosaic business.

The powers of a witch are not hereditary but a witch may pass them on to her child by feeding it on witchcraft *cigbe*. A person desiring to become a witch may also approach anyone known to be one and thus gain entry into the circle of witches, or may buy a witchcraft medicine.

Witchcraft is believed capable of making its possessor invisible and of enabling her to recognize other witches; a witch is thought to be fully conscious of her secret powers and does not act against her will. Witches attack people at night when they are asleep and feed on the life force (*rayi*) causing them to fall ill and waste away. Only rarely are they thought to spirit away the body itself.[13]

There are two methods of combating witchcraft. One, applied to individual cases and when a definite person is suspected, consists of an ordeal or other test of guilt, whereupon the witch is heavily fined and expelled from the village. The other is effected through the activities of the *ndakó gboyá*, a "secret" but officially recognized anti-witchcraft society which is applied only when a large-scale outbreak of witchcraft is believed to have occurred. The head of the society (*Majiŋ Dodo*) comes from a particular lineage of Kusogi Danci, a small riverain village. Initiations take place here, the training lasting five years. Initiates are said to be able to make spirits materialize and to exercise control over witches. Paraphernalia associated with the society include a medicine for ritual washing, a white cloth mask on a pole, and magical objects for producing rain, etc., including the chain of

[12] See above, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1935c; 1942, pp. 148–9; 1954a, pp. 163–87.

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754 Tsoede which links the society to the paramount political authority of the country. Some of these become the property of the initiate and are kept in a shrine in his compound, where they become the centre of a general magical cult performed annually.

The society holds a special ceremony in which masked dancers[14] single out alleged witches and take them into the bush for ordeals, where, it is said, victims are killed unless they are able to buy their freedom. The ceremony is never performed in Bida town but produces much social and economic disorganization elsewhere. It is unknown among some groups, such as the Ebe and Dibo. It was formerly controlled by the Fulani Emirs who shared the proceeds with initiates, but this exploitation of the society was ended in 1921, when it was forbidden in what was then Nupe Province. It still functions in Pategi Emirate and in small remote villages in Bida Emirate, where it sometimes takes the form of a spectacular display at festival times. A form of *ndakó gboyá*, under the Hausa name of *magiro*, is found among the Kamberi, Kamuku, Gbari, and other tribes in the north of Niger Province. Among the Gbari, however, it seems to be connected with the cult of the ancestral spirits.[15]

[14] The mask consists of a long tube of white cotton cloth suspended from a wheel-shaped bamboo frame fixed to the top of a pole about 12 feet high; the man representing the spirit stands inside the cloth tube, which comes down to the ground, and holds the pole in his hands. The *ndakó gboyá* masks are unlike any others used in the cults of Nigerian peoples.

[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 188–201; Glasson, 1937 (?).

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NOTES ON THE

Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States

OF THE

Northern Provinces of Nigeria

Compiled from Official Reports

BY

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EDITED BY

C. L. TEMPLE

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NUPE.

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Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
171 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[101] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
177 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [144] pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- [152] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

64 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [67a] of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [584 671]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [535] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 696 [86]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [562] 586

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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [574] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 582
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage. 588

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 551
425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

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557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

595 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
[554] the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable,
[272] (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Duff.

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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [262]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [606]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
462 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
139 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
139 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell groundnuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 546
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to
spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in
much the same manner, and children born in captivity were
accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a
medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo,
between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce
fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are
guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven
to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed
"dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It
is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's
milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk
of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom
called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat
different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth
day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain
roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some
is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family
then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine
to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The
guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the
usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 856
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's
parents come and live with her for three months to see that she
fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with
them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-
born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Saphe and Mokwa.

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[843] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

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He may go out to war himself, but more often puts the 701
operations under the War-Chief, Sarkin Yaki, who is himself 562
advised by the Wari-Yaki, a man chosen by the Mallamai for this purpose, and often of so humble a position that the warriors do not know who he is. The Sarkin Yaki, however, obeys him invariably, and indeed it is the Mallamai who direct when and where an attack should be delivered or a retreat made. If the 726
Sarkin Yaki should be killed in war, the army retires to await 562
another appointment by the Emir. It was the custom for the two eldest daughters of the Sarkin Nupe to go to war, each arrayed in two thick rigas, a cummerbund, and carrying a sword and spear. They had large followings, for they gave a big proportion of the spoils to their retinue, but they followed the direction of the Sarkin Yaki. No woman was allowed to accompany them into battle, but many of the sex were discontented with the restriction, and, in consequence, the practice became unpopular amongst the Nupe men. The general feeling became so strong that on the death of the Chief, Umoru Majigi, in 1884, these ladies were no longer allowed to go out to war. Their names were Atiba and Wodiko, names invariably given to the Chief's two eldest daughters. In other respects they lived ordinarily, and were married, but their husbands would never fight in the same war with their wives. Each Chieftain brings his following, and there are bodies of horsemen and footmen, the former armed with spears, the latter with bows and arrows. A war-camp is formed some seven to ten miles from where hostilities are expected to take place, and here the stores and women are left. The Mallamai and a large number of civilian hangers-on advance to the verge of the fight, and wait till success is attained, when they dash in to secure a share of the spoil, the Mallamai giving the word when it is safe to do so. Needless to say their presence is often resented. Envoys may be sent from one army to another in perfect safety, protected by the waving of a white flag, or of green branches; they generally dress in white for additional surety.

Before any campaign is undertaken the Emir consults a [721]
Mallam gifted with the power of prophecy, and he says whether the 875
results would be good or bad. A hundred years ago the advent 787
of a fair race from the west was foretold by the prophets in a MS. still extant, and the resistance to their arms was forbidden. That was why the present Emir of Bida and his family, together with all the Mallamai, refused to come out against the British. There are some prophets who are above worldly interest and desire, and others who give advice for 1,000 cowries, or perhaps sixpence. It is a special art in which they receive instruction as youths, and there are books on the subject. The Mallams are consulted on such questions as marriage, trade ventures, and sickness. They look on the ground for about ten minutes and

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875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child [248 428] inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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77 offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however,
62 losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

197 The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the
634 following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

634 The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the
[304] name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba
[304] Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in
[41] Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 634
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never
marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do
so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [186]
permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida,
whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [481]
and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285]
Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771
rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. 782]
The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

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634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and 771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees." 775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its [245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

[i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

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In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, 634
who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held 771
and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but 776
is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, 634
having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was 776
founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants 634
from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they 304
have adopted the Nupe language. 197
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[1] [i.e. The Kasopa subtribe.--Analyst]

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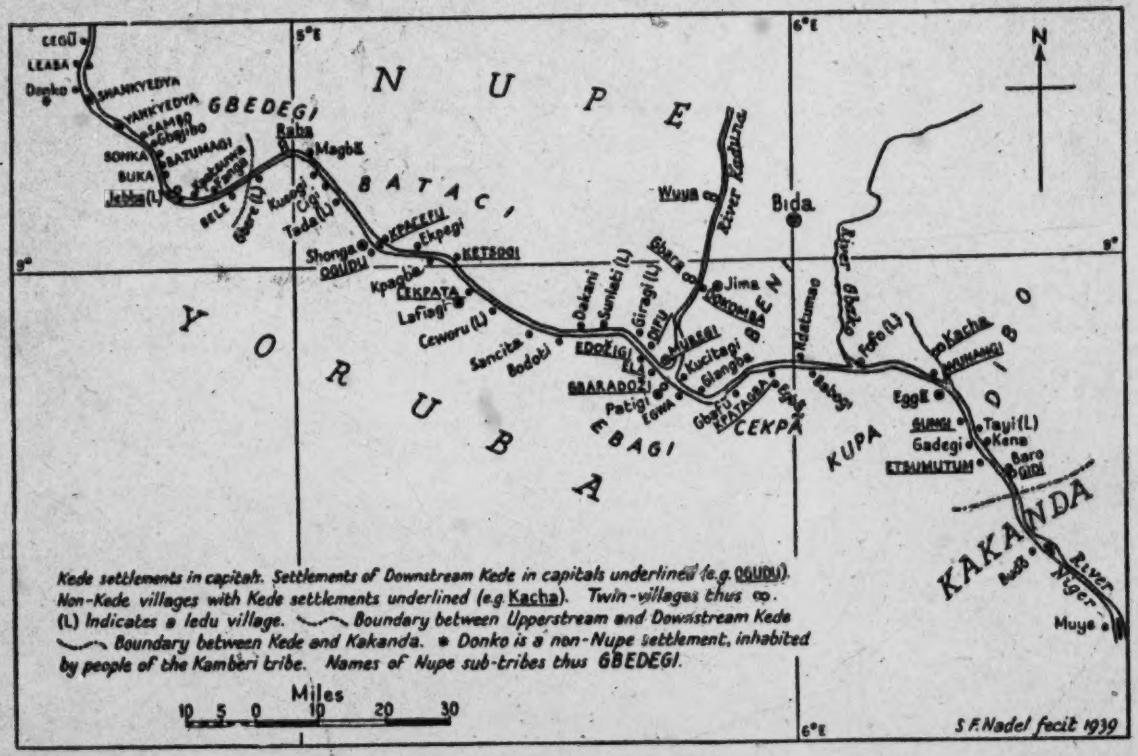

THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

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THE KEDE: A RIVERAIN STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By S. F. NADEL

I. Introduction

THE Kyedye or Kede,[1] with whom this paper is concerned, are a section of the large Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria, whose general culture and social organization I have described elsewhere.[2] The Kede have many cultural traits in common with their mother tribe; their kinship system is the same; they speak the dialect which is spoken to-day by the majority of the Nupe sub-tribes and has become the acknowledged language of the Emirate, Nupe 'proper'; they have also adopted the religion of Nupe kingdom, Islam. Yet combined with this cultural affinity we find certain marked divergencies. The Kede are a riverain group—the only purely riverain group among the various Nupe sub-tribes. Their economic pursuits and general social life centre round the river on which they live and from which they derive their livelihood. This means already that their social and cultural life must present certain features which are absent in Greater Nupe. Their political organization, moreover, contains certain distinctive and unusual traits—unusual even for Africa at large. It is for this unusual nature rather than for its relation to practical problems of African administration that I have chosen the political organization of this small Nigerian sub-tribe for the subject of this contribution.

II. Demography

The main body of the Kede lives to-day on the Rivers Niger and Kaduna between 8° 30′ and 9° 40′ North Latitude, inhabiting a narrow strip of land on both banks. The Kede share their territory with a number of other tribal sections of the Nupe, which lead a semi-riverain life, pursuing—unlike the Kede—agriculture

[1] The proper Nupe name is Kyedye. But the Hausa, Yoruba, and other neighbouring groups (as well as, to-day, Government officials) prefer the more easily pronounced Kede. We shall adopt, for the sake of simplicity, this latter name.

[2] See *Africa*, viii, 1935, and also my forthcoming book, *A Black Byzantium*.

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131 beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are
184 scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage:
101 for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synony-
184 mously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as
[173] *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

161 We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called
634 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group,
184 and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

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political boundaries, came to lie in three different provinces and six different (modern) Emirates or Divisions.[1] However, we shall see later that this distribution of a comparatively small group over so many political divisions is not due entirely to the re-alignment of political boundaries. It is also a result of movements of Kede groups in recent times, after the political boundaries had been fixed by the present Government.

By far the largest section of the Kede lives on the left bank of the Niger and Kaduna, in Bida Emirate. In this area the Kede have also maintained their political status of a separate political unit, with their own chief as the administrative head. In all other areas the Kede communities are absorbed politically in the districts on whose territory they lie, and live under the local, non-Kede chiefs and district heads.[2] The modern political situation has not, however, obliterated the other features of their social life; the characteristics of their political organization, more specially, live on, though on a smaller scale, in the one area where it has been given official recognition. Although many of our political data will of necessity be derived from this one area, we may again take them to be representative of Kede country at large, and when speaking in the following of Kede, Kede culture and social system, we shall mean the group as a whole, disregarding the modern political subdivisions.

There exists, however, one subdivision of a different nature, deep-seated and of old standing, which we may not ignore. I have spoken so far simply of the Kede. But there exist in reality two Kede groups: the Kede *Tifin*, or upper-stream Kede, and the Kede *Tako*, or down-stream Kede, the boundary between the two groups lying roughly at Jebba Island (the two groups overlap for a short stretch north and south of Jebba).[3] Now, what I have said about the specific features of the Kede social and political system applies only to the down-stream group. The upper-stream Kede show none of the traits which give to the culture of the sister group

[1] The Kede on the right bank of the Niger belong now to Ilorin and Kabba Provinces, and to the Emirates, or political divisions, of Ilorin, Lafiagi, Patigi, and (in the south-west corner) Koton-Karifi. The Kede on the left bank of the Niger and on the River Kaduna belong to Niger Province (formerly Nupe Province) and to the Emirates of Bida, Agaie-Lapai, and Kontagora.

[2] In one place (Ogudu) a certain compromise has been effected, the head of the fairly numerous Kede community acting as a titled 'second-in-command' to the village chief.

[3] The upper-stream Kede are also called Kede *Gbede*, after the Nupe sub-tribe (Gbede or Gbedegi) with which they share their territory.

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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsoji* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

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trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

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till their villages covered the Niger Valley between Eggan and 173
Jebba. At the time when the first European travellers appeared 361
in Nupe country, we find the Kede already firmly entrenched in this part of the Niger Valley. Now, of the ten main villages of the Kede which exist to-day only one represents an independent, purely Kede settlement—the Kede capital, Muregi. It is a well-built village, with solid houses of sun-dried mud bricks, each compound walled in in Nupe fashion, with a big mosque and an imposing chief's house. It is, as I have said, a pure Kede town, a town inhabited entirely by the 'ruling race'—'*u de talakazi a*', say the Kede ('it contains no poor'—meaning persons belonging to the subject groups). All other Kede settlements, without exception, are built on or near the site of a village of 'original inhabitants'. In most cases the Kede settlement occupies the river bank itself, and the 'native' village the stretch of country immediately behind; in a few cases we find the Kede settlements on an island off the bank occupied by the 'native' village or on the opposite side of the river. The result is something like a twin-village, half 'native' and half Kede. The scene of Kede tradition, a tribal home and emigrant settlements, seems indeed visible in the present-day organization of Kede settlement, with its one all-Kede town and its many 'twin-villages' along the river valley.

The more recent history of Kede settlement remains true to this picture of a gradual territorial expansion. We know that towards the end of last century the Kede settled for the first time on the Kaduna River. Later, under the Royal Niger Company, the Kede were encouraged to extend their settlements still farther on Niger and Kaduna. It is easy to trace these new settlements, which were founded near the European trading posts and other places which had similarly gained commercial importance. Only some thirty years ago the Kede founded their latest 'colony'—on Jebba Island.

The villages differ greatly in appearance: some villages boast 361
solidly built permanent houses, while others consist largely 184
of more flimsy buildings, grass-walled huts, suggestive of temporary occupation rather than permanent settlements. The habitations of the Kede reflect the flexible, mobile nature of their system of settlement. The degree of permanence attempted in the buildings at the same time betrays the age of the settlement as well as its (past or present) importance as an economic or

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361 political centre. The Kede settlement at Raba is a typical instance
184 of the more solidly built settlement. It was founded about 1840, when Raba was the capital of Nupe Emirate. The first settlers were five men with their families from Muregi, who belonged to one 'house'; to-day the Kede colony at Raba (which now also possesses a Niger Company storehouse) numbers seven 'houses'.

The Kede settlement at Katcha is an example of the other, poorly built, type, which gives the impression as if the settlers had not yet found time, or had not yet quite decided, to build themselves permanent quarters. The present Kede settlement dates back to 1905–10, at which time a group of Kede who had settled previously at Eggan, on the main river, abandoned this colony for Katcha, attracted by the opportunities of the place. Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, owed its rise to importance to the introduction of steamer traffic on the Niger and the building of the first Nigerian railway from Baro, through Katcha, to Minna. Its five or six 'houses' of original Kede settlers have now increased to seventeen.

Our list of Kede settlements would not be complete without the mention of the purely temporary riverside camps, meant to last for one season or a few weeks only, which the Kede put up in the larger villages where they are wont to stop on their journeys up and down the river. During the main trading season, Jebba, Patigi, Wuya, or Katcha are crowded with these lightly built shelters, grass-huts, tent-like structures of grass-matting or —crudest of all—the wattle-and-matting awnings of the canoes simply pulled ashore. Kede settlement has not yet come to a standstill. Places which are gaining in importance still attract new groups of immigrants; and the seasonal shelters in a busy trading centre may at any time be turned into permanent quarters, as, indeed, it has happened repeatedly in the course of time.

361 Reviewing the history of Kede settlement, we find its depen-
166 dence on economic factors fully confirmed. We may conceive of it as of a progressive realization of the dictates of the productive system of the country. The Kede, as we have seen, did not occupy new, uninhabited country, but settled in places where an existing population had already established a certain level of social and economic life. In the choice of places for settlement and in their subsequent development, the Kede were invariably guided by commercial considerations. They were, moreover, not satisfied

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with the position of immigrants who are dependent on the good- 361
will of their hosts, but claimed with the territory in which to settle 166
also the political rule over it. If they are thus not 'colonists' in the strict sense of the word, not caring for settlement in new, virgin country, they are 'colonizers' in a more special, political sense, being settlers, immigrants, and representatives of a ruling race in one.

Here a final point remains to be cleared up: the exact relation 361
between the elastic territorial expansion of the tribe and the 166
necessarily more inert and rigid expansion of political domina- 634
tion. From the history of modern Kede settlement we learn that there is a certain time lag between the first occupation of a new place by Kede immigrants (the nucleus stage of the seasonal camp) and its eventual rise to the status of a political outpost. The Kede, as a rule, attribute the founding of their various colonies to particular chiefs. The initiative taken by the Kede chief in the colonial enterprise refers both to the early growth and the final political incorporation of the new colony. He might himself send out settlers from Muregi to a new place which looked a likely centre for Kede activities (Raba is an instance of this), or he might direct settlers from other places to a promising new settlement (as was the case in Katcha). But not until a settlement was firmly established and numbered several families would he delegate an official representative of his to take charge of it, thus proclaiming the political incorporation of the new Kede dominion.

We learn, further, that Kede territorial expansion did not proceed step by step, in continuous stages, but rather in a series of leaps, which may leave gaps between outpost and outpost, or mother-country and new settlement. Thus there are 'uncolonized' spaces on the Kaduna River between Gbara and Wuya or Gbara and Muregi—that is, stretches of country with native villages which (unlike the interspersed *kintsogi* villages in the 'old' Kede country) have not been absorbed politically by the Kede. We may assume that the early growth of the Kede community followed the same line of development. If this was so, the compact political unit in the 'old' Kede country proves that political rule was later brought up to the new outpost, and the territorial gaps eventually absorbed in the extending political unit. To-day the firmly fixed boundaries of provinces and districts forbid, of course, a similar sequel to the founding of new settlements. The new economic

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361 development of the country, moreover, has attracted Kede
166 emigration to places far outside the orbit of their political organiza-
634 tion: thus at the busy trading-place on the confluence of Niger and Benue, Lokoja, a large and prosperous Kede colony has grown, which combines all the 'stages' of Kede settlement, permanent and semi-permanent houses in which Kede families have made their home as well as a large encampment on the river bank for the Kede canoemen from the north. But it seems that even in pre-British times the territorial expansion of the Kede had to leave certain 'gaps' in its network of settlements and political outposts. Thus the large Nupe town of Eggan on the right bank of the Niger, flanked to the north and south by (presumably old) Kede settlements, remained a powerful, independent political unit, placed directly under the King of Nupe. It is this characteristic scheme of Kede expansion which allows for territorial gaps and the founding of (at least temporarily) isolated outposts that justifies our speaking of Kede 'colonies' and 'colonization'.

V. Political Organization

634 The political system of the Kede corresponds in all important points to the concept of the State. On its small scale, it fulfils the essential conditions of State organization: its dominion is territorial and non-tribal (or inter-tribal); its administration is centralized; its machinery of government is monopolized by a special *ad hoc* appointed or selected body, which is separated from the rest of the population by certain social and economic privileges.[1] The first of these three features we have discussed already; as regards the second, we have learned that Muregi, the traditional home of the tribe, is at the same time the political centre of the country; and as regards the last point, we have seen that in a broad sense the Kede themselves represent, corporatively, the ruling group of the country. But among the Kede we find another, more precisely defined 'privileged group', in whose hands the government of the country is concentrated. This ruling group, in a narrow sense, consists of the Kede chief and his titled councillors and emissaries.

[1] With regard to this definition of the State, see *Africa*, vol. cit., and my forthcoming Nupe book. R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (1927) (chaps. iii and iv), recognizes territorial sovereignty and centralized authority as essential to the structure of the State; the factor of the special 'ruling group' has been elaborated by F. Oppenheimer, *The State* (1926).

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The Position of the Chief. The Kede chief, or *Kuta*, resides in 634
Muregi. In his hands used to lie the ultimate decision on all matters concerning country and tribe as a whole—above all, war and the founding of new colonies. The *Kuta* was also the judicial head of his country. The larger part of taxes, duties, and other revenues used to flow into his private treasury. He was (and still is), finally, the official representative of his country *vis-à-vis* the overlords of Kede, the Emirs of Nupe. Impressive paraphernalia and forms of ceremonial serve to display the exalted position of the Kede chief, the most imposing perhaps being the enormous State [Kai]
canoe, propelled by twelve paddlers (two to three is the normal crew of the Kede canoes), in which the *Kuta* travels. The authority of the Kede chief rests in the main on three facts: first, a moral sanction of Kede chieftainship lies in its hereditary nature and the fact of its being derived, in a straight line, from a mythical first *Kuta*, who had been invested with the rule over the Kede by Tsoede himself, the ancestor-king and culture-hero of the Nupe. (We shall hear more of him later.) Another support of Kede chieftainship, of more practical order, lies in the overwhelmingly strong economic position of the Kede chief. His resources allow him to acquire a large fleet of canoes—not only the chief means of livelihood, but also the mainstay of all military action in this riverain country[1]—and to attach to his household a host of followers and henchmen. The position of the Kede chief is made finally secure by the fact that the most important political offices in the Kede State are allotted to his blood relations.

The 'Offices of State'. Political offices among the Kede fall into two categories. One comprises a small group of rank-holders, *ticiji* ('titled ones'), who reside in the capital and represent the councillors of the Kede chief. A second category comprises titled official emissaries of the *Kuta*, *agbaji* ('delegates'), who are in charge of the various Kede settlements and colonies. To these two groups of 'real' office-holders we must add a third group of what the Nupe call 'private' or 'household' ranks, which the Kede chief bestows on faithful and able followers. The majority of them live with the *Kuta* in Muregi, acting as his messengers, councillors of a lesser order, and such like; a few are entrusted with emissaryships.

[1] Laird and Oldfield (op. cit., ii, p. 279) mention that the Kede chief 'had twenty canoes of retinue'.

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The councillors of the *Kuta* number five ranks, three of which correspond to more or less specialized offices: the administration of Muregi town, the guardianship of the sacred relics of Tsoede, and—in pre-British times—the leadership of military expeditions. In modern Kede, the District *Alkali*, the Mohammedan judge appointed by the Bida Native Administration for the District, is virtually a member of the chief's council in the same capacity of a 'departmental' official. With the exception of this last office, the ranks of the chief's councillors are hereditary and 'belong' to the various families which have held the ranks from times immemorial. The succession to a vacant office is not, however, automatic, but admits of a certain latitude, as for every vacancy there are bound to be several candidates of approximately equal seniority and equal claim. In the appointment of a new rank-holder by the chief and his councillors, due weight is given to the reputation of the candidate, his experience, intelligence, and economic success (as canoeman or river-trader). The position of a councillor appears to have carried no regular emoluments with it, except in the case of the official in charge of the town administration and thus the collection of taxes in Muregi. Occasional gifts from the chief and a share in the booty made on raids and warlike expeditions constituted their official income.

The rank list of the 'delegates' is both larger and more flexible than that of the councillors. It is frequently altered, increased, or decreased, according to the demands of administration. The members of this order of ranks are all recruited from the family of the *Kuta*. Their ranks are graded, and follow a strict system of precedence and promotion. Every promotion means a larger measure of power and influence, for it goes hand in hand with transfer to another, more important, and also more lucrative post. A new as yet untitled member of the chief's kin will as a rule be appointed to one of the lower ranks; the higher ranks and more responsible offices can only be reached by gradual promotion. Promotion and first appointment are, again, decided by the chief in consultation with the other tribal notables; here, however, the personal preferences of the electors count more than rigorous qualifications: in this system of ranks based on promotion, long experience is not regarded as a condition for a lower appointment, nor already achieved economic success for a rise in rank which carries with it increased economic benefits.

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Succession to Chieftainship. Here we must turn back to the 634 position of the Kede chief and the question of succession to Kede chieftainship. For the highest in the series of promotion which we have just been discussing, the ultimate promotion open to members of the chief's family, is promotion to chieftainship. The rank next to the chief's, *Egba* (here meaning 'deputy'), is in fact regarded as the rank of an 'heir apparent', and is as a rule held by the most senior among the titled relatives of the chief, his younger brother, or elder brother's son. Succession to chieftainship, more rigid than succession to the other political offices, thus allows the chief-to-be to consolidate his position in advance of his actual appointment. The tribal notables exercise a certain indirect influence: for in every one of the repeated routine decisions on the promotion of a 'delegate' they already decide to some degree his future chances as a candidate for chieftainship. But then, the ruling chief is himself one of the 'electors' and can easily turn the decision in favour of the candidate whom he supports.[1] Here becomes clear what I have said above about the kinship relation between the Kede chief and his 'delegates' tending to strengthen the position of the chief. The mere tie of kinship between them may conceivably prove a weak and unreliable support of his authority; but the fact that the delegates remain dependent on the favour of the chief for their promotion and political career in general turns it into a bulwark of chiefly power.

With 'councillors' and 'delegates' both dependent upon his goodwill, the Kede chief exercised an almost absolute authority—more absolute, I may add, than any other chief of Nupe. Repeated promotion and transfer, all decided in the capital, tied the delegates closely to Muregi and prevented them from making for themselves too independent a position in their temporary dominions. The 'absolute' power of the Kede chief thus appears as a necessary element in the control of this mobile political system which, with its scattered outposts and colonies, yet depended so much on smooth co-operation and concerted action. The weakness of the system lay in the fact that it allowed no legitimate check on the 634 power of the chief. A more equitable balance of power could 678 only be achieved by illegitimate means—that is, by feuds and

[1] It is significant, in this connexion, that the present *Kuta* introduced a new rank for his son when the list of traditional ranks was exhausted (see the chart of Kede ranks).

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634 factional splits within the hereditary ruling class. The recent
578 history of the Kede contains indeed evidence of such rivalry between the Kede chief and his officers of State, or between different claimants to Kede rulership, and the ensuing division of the country into rival factions.[1] Attachment to one of the rival factions is also the only means by which the subject classes, the commoners with no rank and office, could exercise an indirect influence upon the political management of their country.

634 *Administration of the 'Colonies'.* The following chart illustrates
534 the different grades in the rank list of Kede delegates. The ranks are given in order of precedence, each rank together with the district to which its holder is posted. The last five ranks on the list do not belong to members of the chief's family, but to that group of 'household' ranks which are also occasionally vested with emissaryships.

Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Egba	Elder brother's son (classific.)	Gbara	Kpatagban (right bank)
Sonfara	Son	Lives in Muregi, no emissaryship	(A newly introduced rank)
Kofiẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Raba	Raba
Ekpẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Kpacefu	—
Tswadiya	Younger brother	Ketsogi	Ketsogi
Lefiti	Younger brother of *Egba*	Muregi, no emissaryship	Kpacefu
Liman Gyedwa	Distant relation	,,	Kpasha (right bank)
Tswadyagi	,,	,,	Kpasha

[1] Factional splits of this kind were occasionally utilized and fostered by outside Powers. Thus the Royal Niger Company supported an *Egba* in whom they found a valuable ally against the ruling *Kuta*, promising the former the chieftainship in return for the support of his faction. And once or twice the Emirs of Nupe backed the rival claimant of Kede chieftainship against the 'official' candidate.

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Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Sodi	Younger brother	Katcha (unofficially)	Muregi, no emissaryship
Sheshi Kuta	Household-rank	Katcha	Eggan (right bank)
Tsowa Kuta	"	Muregi, no emissaryship	Egbagi (right bank)
Capa Kuta	"	"	Wunangi
Mijindadi Kuta	"	Jebba	Buka

The list shows that the assignment of posts to political ranks has undergone certain changes. They were due partly to the re-alignment of modern administrative divisions, which placed some of the former Kede areas outside of present-day Kede country (e.g. the Kede settlements on the right bank of the Niger). But partly also to changes in the economic and political importance of certain places and the corresponding change in their official 'appreciation'. Jebba and Katcha are illuminating examples. In Jebba we find a man of comparatively low rank in charge of the Kede community. He was posted there when Jebba was only just beginning to become the important place it is to-day. The *Mijindadi* is to-day a very old man, almost blind, and only nominally in charge of the 'colony'; he is generally expected to be succeeded by a high rank-holder whose rank would do justice to the importance of present-day Jebba. Katcha is, officially, in charge of the *Sheshi Kuta*, another 'household' rank; he is, however, unofficially assisted in his work by the *Sodi*, a relation of the *Kuta*, who also lives in Katcha and, in fact, only waits till this important Kede community will be handed to him as to the more suitable representative of the *Kuta*.

The dominion of the delegate varies in extent and composition. 634
His district (especially if he resides in one of the twin-villages) may comprise both tribal groups, Kede and non-Kede; or the boundary of his dominion may be drawn round the Kede settlement, while the 'native' village (which would be some distance from the Kede settlement or on the bank if the latter is on an island) belongs to the country and political district inland. In

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634 either case, the dominion of the Kede delegate would stretch some way up and down the river, comprising hamlets and villages on (formerly) both banks. The 'native' villagers live under their own chief and elders, and are on the whole left to themselves, except for the political obligations towards the Kede rulers. In the carrying out of these obligations (to be examined presently), village chief and elders become mere subordinates of the Kede government. The Kede families, on the other hand, which live in the district of the delegate are his subjects in a different sense. They too have their obligations towards the government which he represents. But they share to some extent his privileged official position *vis-à-vis* the 'natives' of the country. The family heads of these Kede families assume certain titles in Nupe fashion, which are to mark them as 'elders' of their community. In this case, however, these are not the usual village ranks, nor are they *tici nya Kuta* ('ranks of the *Kuta*'), but are of the order of personal or 'household' ranks, which the Kede delegate may confer upon the family heads in 'his' town.

The official duties of the delegate relate to the three main concerns of Kede administration. He is charged with the collection of taxes on behalf of the Kede chief, the maintenance of law and order in the districts, and he finally acts as the agent of the chief in all matters requiring concerted action of the tribe as a whole. The first two duties have undergone but comparatively minor changes under modern administration. The last duty, the most important aspect of which used to be contribution to the fighting expeditions of the tribe, is reduced to-day to such relatively irrelevant activities as the arrangement of the periodical tours of inspection through Kede country of the Kede chief or the District Officer.

634 *Taxation.* The present system of taxation is based on an income
651 tax on sliding scale, assessed among the Kede on the basis of the number of canoes owned. The tax is collected locally by the official Village Head, and is then transmitted by the District Head to the Native Administration Treasury in Bida. For Kede District read *delegate* for Village Head (a certain number of Kede 'delegates' having been made Village Heads under the Native Administration), and *Kuta* for District Head—in all other respects taxation among the Kede is the same as in the inland districts of the Emirate. This was not so in pre-British times. The *kintsoji* villages,

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like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual 634
money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* 651
and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional 634
Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to 692
whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved 634
in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local 693
delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance 674
with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
693 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

634 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

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arisen. Their occurrence or avoidance is clearly bound up with the interpretation put on Kede political autonomy—a point which we will discuss under a separate heading.

VI. The Claim to Autonomy

Let me say, first, that the administration of Kede country presents an exact analogy to the administration of Nupe kingdom. Emissaries from the capital, delegates recruited from the ruling house, are in charge of the administrative districts of the Emirate as they are of the district of Kede country. This analogy reflects the analogous political evolution in both countries: the rise to power of a small group over a large country with heterogeneous population. The only exception from this rule of administering the districts of the Emirate through royal delegates is Kede country itself, which remained under its own chief, who acted as the representative of the *Etsu* Nupe. Even for this exception there is a parallel to be found in Kede organization: the emissary system did not apply to the area of the upper-stream Kede. Their whole area was regarded as one sub-district of Kede country and was placed in charge, not of an emissary from Muregi, but of one of their own chiefs, the village chief of Bele, their southernmost settlement. The explanation for this privileged position of the two groups, the Kede *Tifin* under Kede and the Kede under Nupe, is most probably the same—namely, that their rulers would have found it difficult to control themselves effectively the territory of these subject communities: the Kede the country of the upper-stream group, which was not easy to reach with their big canoes (note that they made the chief in the place farthest down-stream the 'deputy' for the whole group), and the Nupe kings the whole river area.

To the down-stream Kede their autonomous position in Nupe Emirate is a sacred trust, dating back to their first chief who received, with the chieftainship of Kede, the 'Rule over the Water' from the mythical Tsoede. The Kede chiefs still style themselves *Etsu nya nuwã* ('King of the Water'), and, as their history shows, have always taken this title very literally. It meant to them more than merely the formal concession of assigning to a Kede chief duties normally discharged by a royal delegate, and they have in the past frequently attempted to acquire a larger

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634 measure of independence in taxation, jurisdiction, and political management in general.[1]

634 In this connexion, we must point out an important development
669 in the history of Nupe kingdom, which in turn greatly affected Kede history. The royal dynasty of Nupe, which traced its origin back to the mythical Tsoede, was in power till the earlier half of last century, when Nupe kingdom, like most of the Native states in Northern Nigeria, fell under the rule of Emirs of Fulani stock who had conquered the country and deposed the indigenous kings. We have no data on the relation between Kede autonomy and the Nupe State under the old dynasty. But it is certain that under Fulani rule conflicts constantly arose, partly perhaps because the Kede (like many other Nupe sections) resented the alien rule, but to a large extent certainly because the Fulani kings, much more than the Nupe rulers before them, had to curb in their own interest the autonomous leanings of their Kede vassals. The Fulani, whose wars at that time were directed chiefly against tribes in the south, could not afford to let an all too independent section control the river—the southern boundary and at the same time the vital artery of trade and traffic of the country. Slave trade, the economic mainstay of the pre-British rulers of central Nigeria, traffic in arms and powder, and troop transports for their military expeditions, all had to cross the River Niger on Kede territory.[2] The Fulani overlords enforced their sovereignty in a number of wars and punitive expeditions, in the course of which (if the reports are true) hundreds were killed, thousands of Kede sold as slaves by the victorious Fulani, Kede notables executed in Bida, and whole districts of Kede country devastated. A typical instance is the Katcha War—the answer of the Fulani to the first attempt of

174 [1] There exists certain evidence to show that the Kede chiefs succeeded in
697 enlarging their judicial power at the cost of their overlords and usurped a certain judicial machinery of the Nupe State which had evolved in the river area. To-day, at any rate, the Kede claim that this judicial machinery was under the authority of the *Kuta*, while other, non-Kede, informants state that it represented entirely a prerogative of the kings of Nupe. I am referring to the *Ledu* (lit. prison) villages on the banks of the Niger, which were so called because they served as prisons and places of execution for criminals convicted, by the king's court, of a 'crime of the king'. I have described this system and the attempts of the Kede to claim it as their own in *Man* (1935), 143.

[2] The importance, for example, of Raba as a river port for slave traffic to the south is pointed out by Lander (*Journal of an Expedition* (1832), ii, p. 298). Laird and Oldfield speak of 600 Kede canoes, 'all of which may be employed for Ful troops to cross the Niger on war expeditions' (op. cit., ii, p. 315).

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the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is 634 situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under 669 allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above 634 all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the 669 river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company 648 campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The 634 *Kuta* lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of 634 modern government has not been an unqualified success. Admin- 178 istrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

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634 178 by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

634 565 563 The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 182

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *kintsoji* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

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634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. *Integrative Mechanisms*

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsogi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsogi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsogi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede
[582 marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
1917 villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsogi*.

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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'. 621 182 634

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpã*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpã*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since. 634 173 182

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *tahã* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta dogi*.

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634 is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this
182 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen,
173 concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

634 *Religion.* As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Moham-
771 medans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements
184 you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often
192 pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Nddduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, 634 the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, 771 a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which 184 rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans 182 as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first 634 two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to 771 some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself 182 responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of 782 these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndádúma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndádúma* rituals, the *Ndádúma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndádúma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

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634 *Conclusions.* We may say then, in conclusion, that economic
182 co-operation and community life only underline the political and tribal divisions which cut across Kede society. As integrative forces which could foster a solidarity pertaining to the political system at large, they fail. Only the ideological influences, myth and religion, succeed in this. They anchor the external political unit in more deeply rooted interests and sentiments. They add to political coercion the more subtle persuasion of supernatural arguments, of beliefs in the necessity and fore-ordination of the existing system.

634 I have been using the present tense with some liberty. It was
177 applied correctly if we are thinking of the last ten or fifteen years,
182 but inaccurately if we consider the immediate present and, above all, the future. The rite of the *Chain of Tsoede* is still performed annually, in completely Mohammedanized Muregi. The bull sacrifice at the *Ketsá* was performed when the present *Kuta* succeeded to the chieftainship; whether it will be repeated for his successor is open to doubt. The *Ndáduma*, at any rate, although still existing as a local rite, is no longer carried out by the Kede chief. We have spoken before of the decline of authority of the Kede chief. It may seem surprising that a chieftainship which had been forced to give up most of the qualities from which it formerly drew its strength should so easily discard these 'binding forces' of religion. The explanation lies, again, in the changed conception of Kede chieftainship. Kede rule has exchanged its dynamic and expanding nature for the secure, aquiescent authority under the Pax Britannica. It can dispense with the binding forces of religion, which used to uphold the autocratic rulership of a small minority; it can, above all, afford to discontinue a practice which, to the Mohammedan chiefs of Kede country, appears as a concession to their less enlightened subjects. Kede rule has thus paradoxically weakened itself in its new-found security. And in this the chiefs of Kede do not stand alone; this paradox is, I believe, a not uncommon feature of modern, static, Government-backed chieftainship in Africa.

The incipient dissolution of the 'binding force' of religion in the Kede State is only following in the wake of the general dissolution of the solidarity which it was meant to uphold. The economic development of the country led, as we have seen, to an extensive co-operation with outside groups and to the founding of colonies

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. 634 Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage 177 stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation 182 and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group, but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. The Evolution of the Kede State

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither 634 support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, 121 accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of one ethnic group by another.[1] Our data have shown political domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of paramount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'[2] and a gradual emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds that migration and colonization are never a result of over-population, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enterprise' which is absent in countries with over-population.[3] Can we accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final statement? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political role fully explained by this reference to psychological characteristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

[1] See F. Oppenheimer, op. cit.
[2] R. Lowie, op. cit., p. 40.
[3] A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.

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634 dependence on economic factors and, tied up with them, environ-
121 mental conditions. The impetus to colonization and expansion, as we saw it, was already implied in the way in which the people gain their livelihood. We can render this argument even more conclusive; the cultural situation in the river valley itself offers us the comparative material from which to draw our deductions. We remember the upper-stream Kede, who, neighbours, fellow
634 tribesmen and in many details of culture close relations of the
121 down-stream Kede, yet do not share their political achievements—
184 and also do not share their productive system and economic life in general. We can even go further and point to the environmental factors on which the economic system of the Kede in turn depends. The environment in which the upper-stream Kede live indeed forbids a development of river trade and traffic similar to that evolved by the sister group. The river in their area is narrow, barred in several places by rapids and rocky, frequently dangerous, passages, and generally impassable during half the year. On its banks there are few settlements, and the hinterland is thinly populated, inhabited largely by comparatively poor and backward groups. Hold against this the down-stream country: a broad river, navigable all the year round, the banks covered with numerous villages and the hinterland a rich, populous country with highly developed trades and crafts.

634 It will have been seen that I am speaking here of environment in
121 a rather wide sense, including, beside the physical constellation of the country, also such factors as distribution of population and the existence of a certain type of civilization. Methodologically, these facts stand in the same category as physical environment proper. True, they are essentially historical facts, representing the results of various historical developments. These developments themselves, however, are beyond our line of vision; their results—the fact that the Kede area happens to lie in the centre of a rich and powerful kingdom—are to us 'unique events' in the phraseology of the historian, extraneous factors of chance, which, like environmental facts, we have to accept as ultimate data.

Let me admit that this causal chain, environmental conditions—economic enterprise—political system, is not fully conclusive. It is weakened by another aspect of our comparative evidence—namely, the fact that the *kintsozi*, who are also close neighbours and tribal relations of the down-stream Kede, and who share with

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them the same 'stimulating' environment, appear to have remained 634
unresponsive to it. I have no explanation to give. Does this mean, 121
then, that we have to fall back on the psychological interpretation of the kind quoted above?

But the environmental and economic 'determinism' which these conclusions have put forward was not meant to exclude completely the contribution of psychological factors—that is, the social motive power that may lie in the temperamental and general psychological dispositions typical of a group. Nor was it intended to minimize the decisive part that enterprising and far-seeing individuals must have played in the creation of the Kede State. The river colonization was undoubtedly the work of a people fully deserving the attributes 'adventurous', 'courageous', or 'possessed of a spirit of enterprise'; it must also have been closely bound up with the leadership of certain outstanding individuals: think of the man who was responsible for the Kede throwing in their lot with the British, or the Kede chiefs who so successfully utilized the encouragement of the Niger Company for the expansion of their country. But two facts must be borne in mind when defending this psychological and 'individualistic' theory of social origins. First, the psychological characteristics which might be made responsible for the achievements of the group are not *racially* determined (i.e. by heredity)—the dissimilar social system of the upper-stream Kede proves this to the full; they remain an expression of, and a perfect adjustment to, environmental conditions. And, second, these psychological characteristics do not reflect the effectiveness of some spontaneous, as it were, self-contained, psychological force, but are fostered and formed planfully by the existing social system and its cultural demands, to which the individuals, generation after generation, learn to adjust themselves. How much in the gradual social development of the Kede State was due to the selective effects of environment, and how much to the spontaneous actions of exceptionally gifted individuals who, at one point of Kede history, may have shown their people a new way of life, is one of these questions of social origins to which, again, we have no answer.

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[Information concerning the chief of the Kede sub-tribe has been placed in category 634. --Analyst]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
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[title page]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

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Bangles and bracelets of metal and glass,
soup spoons of aluminium, all made in Bida

Glass-makers of Bida

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Bida

Crafts of Bida

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IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

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The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

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Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

[Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

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"King of the dancers"—
a Bida brass spinning toy

Making a glass bangle. The bellows man sits behind the central furnace

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6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" – A Bida brass spinning toy.

FF52 Nupe FF52 'Bida

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326 [433] The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

326 178 This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine [286] hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

323 The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

Text continued on page 143

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Workers in brass and silver. The goat-skin bellows are similar to those of the glass-makers

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No mechanical aids are used
to help achieve symmetry in design on trays

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FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries

Good examples of Bida silver work attain a high standard of craftsmanship

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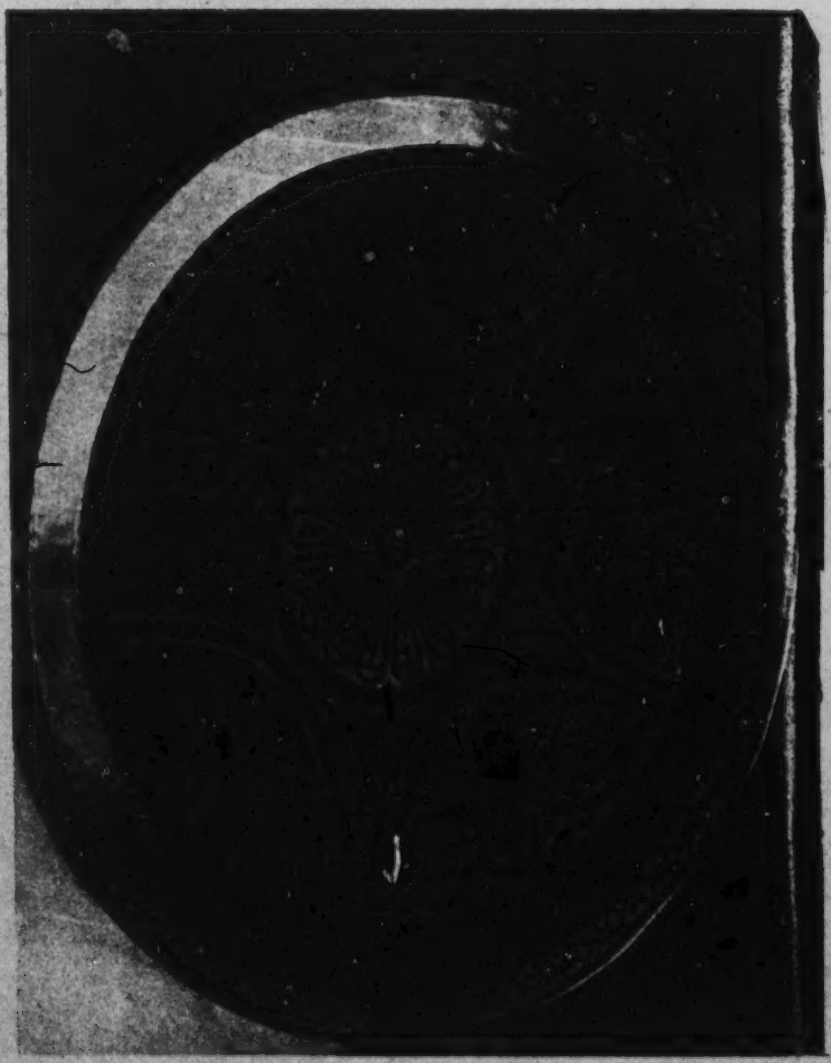

[p. 144]

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Bida

Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries.

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323 with the hands, in an up-and-down movement, for minutes on end with the speed and beat of a slow-running Diesel. The strength and stamina required for this job in the small, round entrance-houses to Bida compounds where these craftsmen work, must be colossal.

The glass-maker himself, a senior craftsman, throws a few handsful of dried wood into the furnace, the pump-man pumps, and soon a metal rod is brought to white heat. The end of this rod is then stuck into a few pieces of broken bottle which are then held in the flame until they begin to melt and become a shapeless but easily-workable mass.

Two rods are then used to separate a small lump of the half-molten glass. The lump is pierced and then waved round and round, still in the flame, until a jointless, glass bangle has been made. White patterns in the glass are made by the addition of white, liquid clay early in the spinning process.

[Text continues on p.147 -- Analyst]

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Punching designs on brass bowls.
No trace of the pattern is made before the punch work starts

323 Beads are made similarly, small amounts of molten glass being allowed to fall fixed distances to determine size and shape much as round shot used to be made in Europe.

323 This trade is suffering badly now. The products are very cheap, but
439 they are in direct competition with more sophisticated, imported products.

One type of Bida bead is *not* cheap. It is very rare and is said to be made from "a sort of stone found a thousand miles away in the desert, only at one place. It is brought here only by women traders who go to Kano and Zinder to buy it from the desert people and very few know how to work on it". Accurate details are very difficult to come by, but this type of bead is very scarce and still greatly prized.

326 The brass workers fashion all but their most involved shapes on small anvils, beating rhythmically with a very small hammer. The patterns are made with a punch without any preliminary drawing of the intended pattern. As may be expected, the results vary but many are remarkably symmetrical and precise.

Much of the work is carried out in "silver", correctly coloured but bearing about as much likeness to real metal as does the average silver coinage. The Maria Theresa dollar, one of the traditional sources of
[439] silver in the North, has been used as far south as Bida but the supply seems to be running out. In some places, craftsmen may be seen making Maria Theresa dollars . . .

Bida metal work is both interesting and disappointing at the same time. The folklore of the Nupe people makes many references to great skill in bronze casting and the Jebba bronzes are there to support the tale (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 43). There appears to be no casting now, though there remains an ability to make thin and very ductile metal sheet in a variety of alloys which can be worked over and over again without harm. Many of these metals have a quite surprising capacity to conduct heat, as anyone casually using a brass ash tray may quickly learn.

There is among the surviving guildsmen of Bida a reservoir of craftsmanship and familiarity with working glass, metals, leather and similar traditional materials. Without outside help, their skills will be lost and their young men will turn to other jobs. Perhaps there can never be an adequate, expanding market for their present products; but with a little help and advice, they could still be of greater value to their town and to Nigeria.

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Bida

MAN

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[Title page]

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Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu. 89 121

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabua, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found. 323 [462] [77] [78]

Two varieties of article are made :—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Man, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukā-nyetā* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunya*—Man 1931, 186). [415]

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated— [317] [343] [936]

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo. [415]

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Horin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any [412] [439]

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suitable piece of the local sandstone or ironstone which may be found is used as beater without artificial shaping.

(*b*) when the pancake becomes sufficiently thin it is placed on the bottom of a small inverted pot and beaten again with the hand-beater to make it slightly convex.

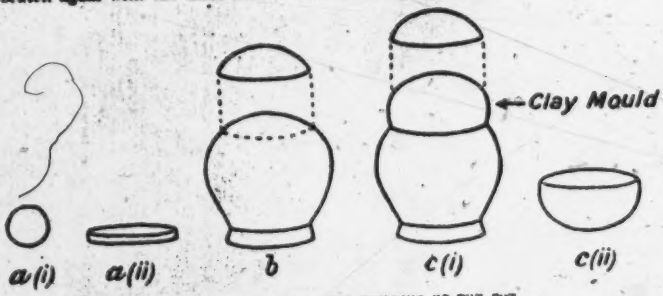

FIG. 1. STAGES A–C IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*c*) A clay mould is then placed upon the inverted pot and the clay beaten over this until it is shaped like an inverted bowl (*c* (i)).

It is then removed, turned over and put on one side to dry (*c* (ii)), and is eventually used as one half of the finished article.

(*d*) Processes (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are repeated and a second bowl identical in size with the first is made to form the second half. When both halves have been allowed to harden a little, one is inverted and superimposed on the other so that the edges coincide. The operator cements the two halves together by smearing clay round the line of junction so that a hollow ball, like a flattened sphere, is produced without any orifice.

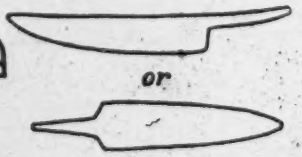

FIG. 2.

(*e*) A small hole, 2 inches in diameter, is cut in the centre of the top with an iron knife.

(*f*) To put the mouth on the pot, the operator takes a thin roll of clay and fits it to the edge of the hole by manipulation with the right hand while the pot is rotated by the left. The lip is shaped between the thumb and finger of the right hand and polished with a wetted rag.

(*g*) A thin roll of clay is then kneaded on to the pot to form a shoulder and the polishing with the wet rag continued.

(*h*) One or two handles are now attached; the operator takes a roll of clay of suitable length, attaches it first to the body of the pot, gives it an outward curve and attaches the other end to the mouth.

FIG. 3. STAGES *d*–*h* IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*j*) The exterior of the pot is polished by rubbing with a smooth, water-worn pebble (? of quartzite) and a piece of wetted rag.

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(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :— 323
(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' 531
chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge.

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, 323
about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests.

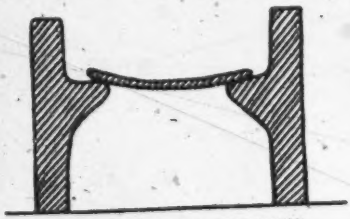

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323
(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now 531
finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [384] [304]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]
(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

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[Title page]

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SAME AS FIG. 4 IN "MAN," 1931, 201.

FIG. 4. (A). REAR VIEW.

FIG. 15. DARK BRONZE FIGURE OF ELEPHANT

SAME AS FIG. 2 IN "MAN," 1931, 201.

GABI FIGURES FROM JEBBA AND TADA, MIDDLE NIGER

Photographs by Mr. S. W. Walker.

[Facing page 169]

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Nigeria. With Plate L. Walker.

Gabi Figures and Edagi, First King of the Nupé. *By S. W. Walker, District Officer, Ilorin Emirate, Nigeria.*

778 532 193 [113]

In MAN, 1931, 261, Sir H. R. Palmer published an account of certain "representations of deities cast in metal . . . in the region round Jebba and Rábá on the Middle Niger." I have recently had an opportunity of seeing these figures, and a fuller account of them may be of interest. For ease of reference the same numbers will be used as in Sir H. R. Palmer's article.

2. The two Jebba figures (Plate M 1, 2, 3) are well known and stand almost unprotected in the midst of the village on Jebba island, close by a dilapidated hut, alleged to be consecrated to their worship. The photographs accompanying the above-mentioned article are clear, and no further description is here necessary other than certain observations which a comparison with the other figures evokes.

3. The other photographs (Plate M 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) show four of seven figures at Tada, a small Nupé fishing village on the high bank of a backwater of the Niger, some 25 miles east of Jebba and some five north of Shonga. They are kept in a round hut and, unlike the Jebba figures, are carefully tended. They are taken out and scoured every Friday, and the floor is thickly spread with clean white river sand.

4. The most noticeable figure is one of dark bronze, 3 feet 8 inches high, bearing a general resemblance to the male figure at Jebba, both in technique, decorative treatment and conventional form. Its head dress consists of what appears to be a tight-fitting helmet, from which hang five coils reaching to the waist. To the front and rear of the helmet are attached medallions which bear the device illustrated in fig. 9, consisting of a horned and mustachioed face, surrounded by an interlacing design. Each medallion is surmounted by a crest behind which are models of birds as in fig. 10. The close-fitting gown reaches below the knees and is richly decorated with designs in low relief as in figs. 11 and 12. Round the neck hang a tasselled stole, a necklace and a chain bearing another medallion as in fig. 13. The design on the latter consists of a ramlike head surrounded by three birds which suggest the lesser hornbill.

5. Though the similarity of this figure to the male figure at Jebba is obvious, the differences are interesting. The quilted attire of the Jebba figure, with its dagger in front and quiver slung at the back, indicates a warrior in the act of drawing a bow, while the rich and perhaps magic ornamentation of the Tada figure may conceivably suggest a king, priest or civil official. The helmet of the former, like that of the latter, bears a medallion, but smaller, and decorated with the figure of a long-beaked bird similar to fig. 11. The top of the helmet is covered by what is now a tangled mass of bronze wire or 'shavings,' which, like the coils of the Tada figure, might be thought representations of hair, were it not for the fact that they appear attached to the cap or helmet.

6. Another of the dark bronze figures is of an elephant of somewhat slender body and long legs. It has a ridge along the back and is 2 feet high (Plate L, fig. 15).

7. The two remaining figures of dark bronze (Plate M 5) are of ostriches, 4 feet 4 inches and 3 feet 6 inches high respectively. Each has a curious plate on the back suggestive of a tortoise shell, only flatter.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

530 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crook and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[305] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

793 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Gbere and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Bussa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Gbere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Rába, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 3 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rectangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

796 [681] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Gbere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Bussa legend, Edegi was chief of Gbere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys.

When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutsin Edegi.

8; Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52 .

532

Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.

Fig. 11.

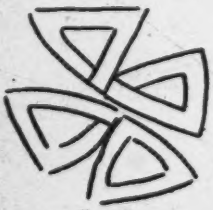

Fig. 12.

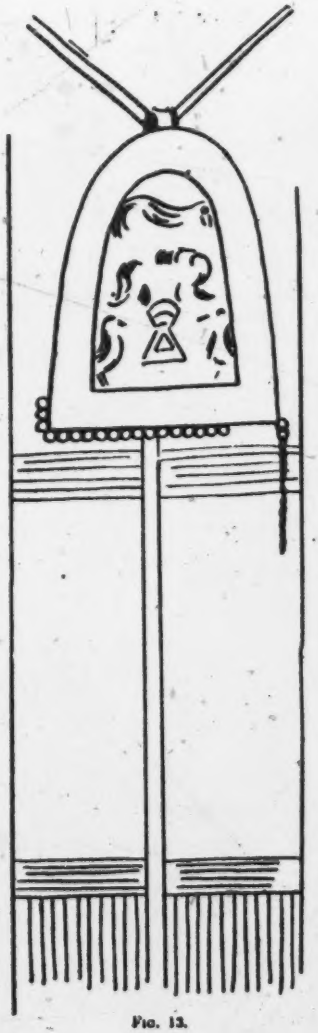

Fig. 13.

8: Walker G-5 . (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

696 and Wangwa claim to have done so. They state the chains were wound several times round the neck of the victim and the ends drawn tight till he was strangled.

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FIG. 14.

15. Besides the chains there were three pairs of manacles as in fig. 14, staple and neck collar.

16. Edegi's expedition or flight, whichever the case may be, is a well-known historical fact and, in the "Notes on the Tribes, "Provinces, Emirates and States of the North-"ern Provinces of Nigeria," compiled by Mrs. Temple, it is said to have taken place about 1505. A study of this curiously assorted group of relics will hardly assist us in coming to definite conclusions about the nature of this incident or in understanding how Edegi came to found the Nupé state. But it provides interesting material for speculation.

S. W. WALKER.

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[Title page]

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MAN

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Africa : West. **With Plate I-J.**

131 **The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

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Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggā in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *ledużhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sūlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ẹ́gbā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsi Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

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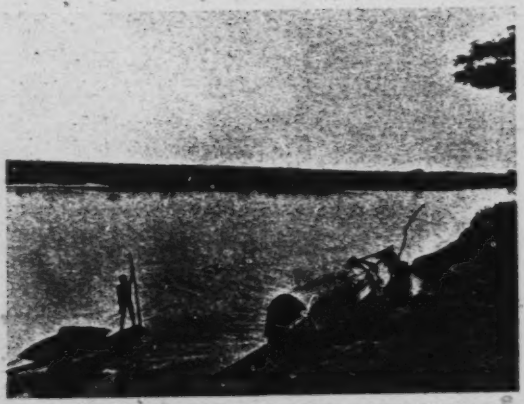

FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT OBERE, ONE OF THE LEDU VILLAGES.

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TOGUDE."

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FIG. 3. THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES AT JEBBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH *ñuñi* TOGUDE.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

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173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'ti dzasa*,
the 'head of Dzasa,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own
696 maternal uncle, Dzasa, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leifi nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndóce*, the 'father of the shooting,' *i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this; whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic, I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical
[774] basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tete-efgbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

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sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralized political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *nádúmo*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361]
Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the [487]
population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (Africa, VIII, 3).

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631 weapon so well suited to their hands. And in their small 'state within the state' this jurisdiction
693 over the 'King's Highway' was still working, a true if smaller copy of the old system, some thirty or forty years ago.

IV.

681 The *ledu* villages are, as we have seen, linked with the king's person by special sacred links;
693 they are made to share the king's guardianship over the law; they thus visibly represent, and almost propagate, the supreme power of the king at what we are tempted to call 'strategic' places. And
642 in this, it seems to me, an important general sociological issue is involved. Strict centralization of legal power, however strong a machinery for political integration it seems, always harbours a disintegrative element as well. For it tends to separate the crime as actually committed from the final act of justice. The element of retaliation and atonement, so essential to the savage mind, becomes meaningless where the criminal is tried and punished a hundred miles away, and by people who are, practically, strangers. The individual community is deprived of one of the most powerful elements of social cohesion, namely, the title to sanction the violation of its laws and of its social order within its own boundaries. It appears to be the meaning of the *ledu* organization to neutralise this influence for that vital area of the Niger valley. For the most conspicuous, final, phase of jurisdiction is returned to a certain extent to the individual community. It is true this applies only to a few selected places. But we remember their surprising regular distribution on the river; and also the rule that the *ledu* village nearest to the place of the crime had to be called upon to perform the execution. These villages are 'representative' places, and 'strategic' places, and their selection is backed by the strongest charter: mythical and religious belief.

S. F. NADEL.

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INTRODUCTION

121 THIS book has been conceived, written, and published under the shadow that darkens the face of the world to-day. We have long believed that the furtherance of knowledge carries its own justification. But in recent years the legitimacy of pure, self-contained, detached science has become more and more dubious.[1] For no field of science is this more true than for the science of society, which has been pressed into the service of ruthless political aims, persecution, and suppression. Historical falsifications, racial doctrines, distorted dogmas of social necessities, have produced weapons no less deadly than those manufactured in factories and laboratories. A science that could be thus abused must no longer hope to recover its spurious detachment. It will find redemption only in closeness to the problems of our existence as society and civilization.

A student of society professing this belief in the social mission of science could not wish for more congenial material than the African society described in these pages. Indeed, I have not been satisfied with the bare description of a remote and strange social existence. I have tried, on a modest scale, to contribute to our understanding of the forces that shape the fate of societies—of our own society to-day as of that West African polity. Wars, suppression, persecution, and the reactions against these forces—you will find them all in this book. And you will find them so presented that their relation to the problems of our own social existence is never obscured. I believe that some lessons might be read from these facts: at least, I have tried to write them out as legibly as I could.

And another thing. Large parts of this book are dedicated to what has become known as 'practical' or 'applied' anthropology. It has been said that modern anthropology is destined to be of great assistance to colonial governments in providing the knowledge of the social structure of native groups upon which a sound and harmonious Native Administration, as envisaged in Indirect Rule, should be built. Let me say that I for one firmly believe in the possibility of such co-operation between anthropologist and administrator. Indeed I hope that this book will bring evidence of the fruitfulness of the co-operation. The form which it should take in the concrete case is perhaps not as yet well defined or universally accepted, and a few words must be said about the view taken in this book.

Obviously, the description of a native society as it might appear if it had never been touched by modern changes, even a mere compilation of facts to which the administrator could turn as to a dictionary or gazetteer, would be misleading because artificially simplified. It must be the duty of the anthropologist to demonstrate the native society in all its complexity, fashioned as it is by a multitude of social causes and effects, in which the efforts of administration represent causes and effects

[1] See J. D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science*, 1939.

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among others. It may be debatable how far the anthropologist can go in this demonstration without introducing values of his own, without venturing criticisms or committing himself to concrete suggestions, and thus going outside his domain. But there can be no doubt about the legitimacy of his task to demonstrate alternative developments that have arisen, or are likely to arise, from administrative measures or their omission, from a new extraneous change or the unbroken continuance of an indigenous institution. If such a view is called implied or indirect criticism, I shall bear the blame lightly. For this 'indirect criticism' is nothing but a legitimate scientific device (used throughout the book) to assess the effectiveness of social forces—internal or extraneous, historical or modern. Moreover, all criticism stands or falls with the conception of principles and necessities of which it is an expression. Anthropologists and administrators may differ about these principles and necessities—we anthropologists are the first to realize this. But we feel that this divergence of view—if divergence there be—should be placed in the full light of knowledge; if our 'criticisms' are discounted, as indeed they may well be, the final decision should yet be inspired by them, and take the form of conscious choice.

Modern anthropologists will not lightly surrender their claim to the name 'explorer'. True, their work no longer takes them to peoples whom no traveller has yet encountered, and to countries which no white man's eye has yet seen. But they probe more deeply into the society of primitive man than any of the early explorers. They have set themselves the task of lifting the knowledge of primitive cultures beyond casual acquaintance, on to the plane of true scientific insight. They are explorers, not of the surface of the globe, but of an unknown social realm.

As an explorer, the anthropologist is faced with the difficulties of method and technique that beset all pioneer work. Anthropology in this new intensive sense is a young science, which is still evolving its methods of approach and has to find its instruments of research as it goes along. It has not yet been able even to map out with sufficient exactitude all the possible forms of society which its field-workers might encounter. Every new field-work may mean the discovery of unknown social structures unapproachable with the techniques hitherto used. This is indeed the plea that this book makes: a plea for understanding—and consideration—of its nature as a pioneer work, and for the difficulties and shortcomings inherent in such work.

The present book can claim to be regarded as a pioneer work in more than one respect. The technique of modern anthropology ('functional' anthropology as it is called by some) has been evolved on small islands in the Pacific, and in the study of small groups and cultures infinitely simpler than our historical civilizations. The West African society dealt with in this book is half a million strong. It is far from 'simple' or 'primitive'. Its social and economic complexity is comparable only with the civilizations of Imperial Rome, of Byzantium, of medieval Europe. Yet if the technique of anthropological field-work in the accepted sense must thus prove inadequate, the method of approach normally applied

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121 in the study of these historical cultures is equally barred. Very few historical records exist, and they are hardly informative from the sociological point of view. [212] The people of Nupe have not yet risen to the stage of education producing written records and accounts of important events or institutions. With the exception of a few educated Mohammedan [126] scholars whose co-operation I was able to enlist in the recording of folklore and historical traditions, I have been unable to use a single literate informant, for example, to keep diaries of important events, or to handle questionnaires. Lastly, the most essential evidence in the study of complex societies, namely statistics, scarcely exists. The statistics in this book were, with few exceptions, compiled single-handed and on a scale of the inadequacy of which no one can be more aware than the author.

121 I have described elsewhere the technique of inquiry which I applied, and need say nothing on that point here.[1] But it is necessary to describe 114 the general plan of research I pursued, for it illustrates the methods by which I attempted to circumvent some of the difficulties just mentioned. I spent two years in the field, in the course of two expeditions in 1934 and 1935–6. From the outset I was confronted with the problem how to cover, in intensive study, the vast area inhabited by the Nupe people. The political configuration forbade the selection of one section to the disregard of others. The widespread political system had clearly to be studied at different points, in its centre as well as on its periphery. Moreover, a short preliminary survey already revealed the existence of considerable cultural differences within the tribe. The further my studies proceeded the more manifest became the significance of these differences as variations of a common pattern, the study of which was essential to the understanding of the forces that moulded the culture of the people. The investigation thus became perforce a comparative study within the framework of one tribe and one culture. At a certain stage of my investigation I even had to go outside this framework and devote some study to neighbouring groups—the Kakanda, Gbari, and Bassa—which, closely akin to the Nupe and partly their fellow citizens in the Nupe kingdom, might throw light on certain aspects of Nupe culture.

The main problem was to discover representative sections and centres for the study of this widely spread social system and its varying culture. I will not speak of the difficulties which I encountered in this task, helped as I was only by records and information which soon proved superficial and inexact. In the first six or seven months I was reduced almost to the method of trial and error: a very short stay in a new place would have been useless even merely to discover whether or not this place might prove a useful centre; and once I decided on a long stay the time was gone and could not be recovered even if the place turned out to be less profitable than I had expected. Let me admit that this did indeed happen in two villages (Mokwa and Sakpe) which I had made my centres upon the advice of various informants and which, as I discovered later, were not as significant or essential as certain other places would have been. However, certain general facts about the culture and the

[1] See 'The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, chapter xiii, 1939.

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people could be obtained there as well as anywhere, and on my second 121
expedition I could to some extent correct the mistakes of the first. On
the other hand, I was unable to study one or two villages (e.g. Yeti, in 114
the oil-palm area, and Kutiwengi, where an interesting variety of a
certain religious cult is reported to exist), partly because I had dis-
covered their significance too late, and partly because my time did not
allow the inclusion of further centres and communities.

The main centres on which I based my investigation were: Bida town, 114
with its surrounding belt of hamlets and small villages; the large villages
of Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, and Mokwa, in the west; and
finally Jebba Island on the Niger, which commands an important stretch
of the river area. Each of these centres I visited several times. The
repeated periods of study enabled me to check my material and to
remedy oversights; often they led to the discovery of new points of view
which only emerged from the comparison of the cultural variations
typical of different areas and local communities. In addition I stayed
for shorter periods in certain other communities in order to study a
specific question or to collect certain comparative evidence. Thus, for
example, I paid several short visits to the village Lemu, twenty miles
north of Bida, because a new commercial crop had been adopted that
year by the people of Lemu; and once I spent two weeks in Patigi (a
quite uninteresting visit, by the way), because there the last descendants
of the old dynasty of Nupe kings hold court.

Bida, the large capital of the country, required the longest time. Here
also I began my studies of the Nupe language with the help of the
English- and Hausa-speaking teachers of Bida Middle School. During
these first months I carried out my anthropological work through the
medium of Hausa, which I had studied before going to the field, and
which is widely understood among the people of Bida, but from the fifth
or sixth month of my stay I used Nupe exclusively. During the first
expedition I spent altogether six months in Bida and the Bida area, in
the course of three visits; three months in Kutigi, in the course of two
visits; and one month each in Mokwa, Agaie, and Jebba Island. During
the second expedition I spent five months in Bida, in the course of two
visits, two months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits, three months,
in one visit, in Jebba and on the river, and two months on travels to the
neighbouring area of Gbari country and to Ilorin, Ibadan, and Lokoja,
where I made a special study of the large Nupe colonies in these towns.

The difficulty of discovering in this large and complex culture repre- 128
sentative areas and group sections, and of distinguishing them from
others whose cultural life must be regarded as a variation of the main
pattern, arises in a different form with regard to documentation. The
problem here is how to prove with scientific exactitude the typical or
non-typical nature of cultural facts and events, and how to present them
convincingly as representative or as in some degree deviating from the
norm. The distinction between typical and non-typical facts is primarily
a question of frequency, and the ideal method of documentation would
be one in which all descriptions and analyses were backed by statistical
evidence. For obvious reasons such a method of documentation is rarely

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rather unusual dichotomous arrangement of certain chapters. It was 128
necessitated by the nature of the material, by the contrasting configurations which dominate the cultural life of Nupe—urban and rural culture, Mohammedanism and paganism, the organization of the state and the organization of the village community. One dichotomous formulation I have made almost the *leitmotif* of this analysis, namely, the twofold classification of social systems, formulated most clearly by MacIver, into *Communities* and *Associations*. Let me quote his definition: Community is a 'circle of people who live together, who belong together, so that they share, not this or that particular interest, but a whole set of interests wide enough and comprehensive enough to include their lives'. And Association: 'a group specifically organized for the purpose of an interest or group of interests which its members have in common.'[1] These two categories are used in this book consistently in MacIver's sense, that is, as descriptive categories defining, not rigidly separated social entities, but rather two poles of a more fluid social reality of many shades and grades.

Again, it might be objected that the descriptive accounts in this book are frequently interspersed with theoretical discussions. I shall offer no apology. Description is meaningless and misleading unless supplemented by a clarification of the concepts and categories with which it operates, and by an assessment in terms of theoretical generalizations of the concrete data which it produces. This is doubly true of the complex and, from the viewpoint of traditional anthropology, unusual culture described in this book. Thus I was forced to devote comparatively long theoretical discussions to the examination of such concepts as 'tribe' (in Chapter II) and 'state' (in Chapter VI), to the analysis of social class in Nupe (Chapter VIII), and to an inquiry into the relation between economics and sociology (Chapter XX).

In the research programme of the International Institute of African 121
Languages and Cultures, under whose auspices the present investigation
was carried out, the study of culture change under the impact of modern 128
Western civilization is assigned a prominent place. Culture contact in Nupe is not restricted to this most recent historical phase; nor does it affect only certain well-defined domains of social life—it pervades the whole history and the whole living culture of the people. Nor can it be said (with some anthropologists) that the study of modern culture contact entails specific methods of approach, applicable only to this one aspect of social development. It did not therefore seem feasible to concentrate its examination in special chapters. Every description and analysis contained in this book bears to lesser or greater extent also on the problems of culture contact and culture change, ancient or modern. Only in a few instances did the material lend itself to a separate treatment of modern culture contact. They will be found in Chapter X, under the heading 'Problems of Adaptation', in Chapter XVII, which is entitled 'Industrial Labour', and in Chapter XIX, in the section on 'Modern Business Methods'.

[1] R. M. MacIver, *Society, Its Structure and Changes*, 1931, pp. 9, 12, 13.

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164 Sleeping sickness is the great scourge of the country. A Sleeping Sickness Commission which visited Nupe in 1936 found 70 per cent. of the people infected—the highest figure in the whole of Nigeria. Bilharzia and other worm diseases are no less widespread. The prominence of venereal diseases is characteristic of Nupe as it is of the whole of Nigeria and indeed of the whole of semi-civilized Africa. Dysentery, malaria, and yaws complete the unhappy picture. It is worth noting, [146] however, that typical deficiency diseases, including boils and ulcers, are comparatively rare. A statistical table, compiled from the attendance figures of the N.A. Hospital and Dispensaries in Bida Division, may illustrate the distribution of the more important diseases occurring in Nupe.

TABLE II

The figures for Bida Hospital refer to in-patients treated during April, July, October 1935 and January 1936. The figures for the Dispensary of Lemu give the attendance in January 1936. For another dispensary (Kutigi) only the order of frequency of the various diseases could be ascertained; it is indicated in the third line by roman numerals.

	Venereal diseases	*Malaria*	*Ulcer, scabies, &c.*	*Bronchitis, pneumonia*	*Dysentery, enterics*	*Eye-diseases*	*Rheumatic diseases*	*Leprosy*	*Bilharzia, worm diseases*	*Various*
Bida Hospital	35	14	15	13	9	3	5	2	80 per cent. of all cases	128
Dispensary Lemu	21	18	3	54	2	2	68	4	?	106
Dispensary Kutigi	II	IV	III	VI	?	V	I	10 cases	?	?

The description of health conditions has a more special bearing on the anthropology of the Nupe people. First, it is of a certain significance in connexion with certain cultural elaborations of the theme of disease among the Nupe;[1] second, it involves relevant questions of mortality and population movement—a subject to which we shall turn presently. Finally, with respect to mental disorders: psychology and sociology have long realized that certain tensions and maladjustments in the social system tend to manifest themselves in the sphere of psycho-pathology. We shall see that this correlation is true also of Nupe society.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

121 It is unnecessary to stress the importance of population studies for the understanding of a society and the nature and working of its institutions. But it may be necessary to justify the inclusion of a discussion on population movement in a chapter on environment. A first justification lies in the fact that, in a study of social organization, environment and popula-

[1] Most instances of this kind, however, I must leave for future publications. To one typical instance, the part which leprosy plays in the mythology and ritual of the *gunnu* cult, I have referred in the description of this cult in 'Gunnu, A Fertility Cult of the Nupe in Northern Nigeria', in *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

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121 tion movement are to some extent methodologically of the same order. Both represent in certain respects 'data', given facts—factors external to the field of social phenomena which we investigate. Moreover, population movement and environmental conditions are inseparable from one another. Population movement reflects the effects of a complex of heterogeneous factors of which physical environment is one of the most important. It bears on possibilities and means of production, on nutrition, health, and livelihood in general.

But we shall also encounter the effects of other factors upon population movement, namely, specific 'cultural' factors—social and economic conditions, 'standards of living', moral concepts—and certain historical events which have influenced the distribution of population in Nupe country.

Birth-rate and Fertility

163 The Nigerian Census places Nupe birth- and fertility-rate at the bottom of the scale.[1] The proportion of live children per mother among 842 the Nupe is 1·8 (the Yoruba are the only other tribe with an equally low rate), as against an average for all tribes of 2·6, and a fertility-rate of 2·4 in the tribe with the next lowest figure. Fifty-eight per cent. of Nupe women in the age group 30–39 are sterile, as against the total average for Nigeria of 22·7, and the next highest sterility rate of 27·1 among the Yoruba. These figures contain certain inconsistencies, and leave certain relevant questions unanswered. Thus the rate of live children per mother is equal among Nupe and Yoruba, while the proportion of sterile women among the Nupe is exactly twice the corresponding figure among the Yoruba. This would imply that infant mortality among the Yoruba is twice as large as among the Nupe—which seems hardly probable. Moreover, the proportion of live children per mother does not indicate to what extent the low figure is due to still-birth, infant mortality, constitutional sterility or, possibly, birth restriction. Finally, the statistics ignore the sociologically most important distinction between rural and urban areas.

The last point can to some extent be answered indirectly. The following figures give the birth-rate of three Nupe towns and one district (Kontagora) which has a very large proportion of Nupe among its inhabitants. Though only approximate these figures are well worth quoting in this connexion as they refer to localities representing different degrees of urbanization: the purely urban area of Bida town side by side with the much less urbanized village-capitals of Agaie and Lapai Emirates.

TABLE III

	Birth-rate per 1,000
Bida town	12
Agaie town	36
Lapai town	27
Kontagora Division	26

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, i, p. 55.

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and Kupa. Nupe proper differs from Ebe, or Bassa from Žitako, no less than Nupe differs from the languages of the other, related, tribes, Gbari and Kakanda. Dialects, language, language group, or linguistic class—these are all fluid categories, shading over into one another, and none of them capable of being identified with tribe or people.

Political group and language group thus imply the existence of the tribe, they do not explain it. The objective reality of political and linguistic organization leaves undefined the nature of that elusive human substratum, tribe or people. Nor can we count on any external symbols of tribal unity to help us with the definition. No tribal costume, or tribal emblems, exist, no tattoos or face-markings characteristic of all Nupe.[1] Yet to the Nupe man himself the Nupe tribe or the Nupe people is a clearly defined, unmistakable entity. He will rarely hesitate whether to describe the population of a district or village as Nupe or to put it down as alien, non-Nupe. This is, of course, an expression of traditional, historically accumulated, and transmitted knowledge. People and tribe themselves represent but the product of complex historical processes, contacts, and ramifications. These processes are no longer traceable to-day; but even if we could trace them they would tell us nothing about the nature of this social fact which we witness to-day, the classification of groups which do not speak the same language and do not live together in 'one country' unified by political organization, under the heading of 'one tribe'. The only definition of tribe that seems possible is the tautological statement that a tribe or people is a group unit the members of which claim to form a group unit. But perhaps there exists some other, objective, social reality which can help us to define this evasive concept?

We have not examined yet that paramount social reality, culture. But culture no less than language or living-together seems a fluid criterion of tribal unity. The only definition of tribe that we can give in terms of culture is to call the tribe a group possessing more or less the same culture—as it possesses more or less the same language or lives more or less in contiguity and 'togetherness'. In Nupe the unit of culture is in certain respects smaller than the unit of the tribe. The different 'countries' of Nupe represent different, and differently organized, cultural 'provinces'. Culture varies with environment and the productive organization which it entails; it expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. We can thus speak of a riverain Nupe culture, a hunters' or peasant culture, and distinguish town from rural culture, or the culture of the ruling group from the culture of the subjects and commoners. The cultural unit is also wider than the unit of the tribe. Nupe shares its political and social system with many tribes in West Africa, its traditional religion with neighbouring groups in the north, east, and south, its modern religion, Islam, with the whole Sudan. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking of a West African culture, or a culture of the inland groups of West Africa (as against the culture of the groups in the rain-forest and near the coast). Finally, culture appears also, as it were, crystallized in the form of

[1] See below, p. 22.

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a tribal culture, and the area of cultural unity reveals itself in some respects as coextensive with the tribe.

This is not merely an enumeration of isolated 'traits' selected at random. Each cultural factor which we reviewed affects, and is interdependent with, a wide range of other cultural factors. Culture, as anthropologists are realizing, is not a sum total of discrete traits; it possesses a definite structure and identity; its traits or elements, interdependent and mutually determined, build up a 'pattern' that tends towards coherence and consistency. This consistency—a functional consistency—reveals its existence to the student of the society in those cultural characteristics which he learns to regard as 'typical' or 'non-typical' of a culture. Each of the three cultural units which we enumerated shows, in some measure, the features of this consistency and identity. We will not here probe deeper into the nature of this consistency which seems to crystallize in different degrees of intensity and comprehensiveness. But we must clarify our concept of culture. So far, we have used the word in a rather vague sense. It is not the same culture, the same category of culture, which we discovered in these three relations between cultural and tribal unit. Cultural unity is, speaking generally, unity and correspondence in forms of social behaviour. When speaking of culture units wider than the unit of the tribe, we referred to a correspondence of behaviour among disconnected groups which we as students of cultures and peoples discover, classify, and name; it is a correspondence upheld by the unconscious processes involved in tradition and the perpetuation of custom; it impresses upon the groups a certain external *uniformity*. When speaking of the smaller cultural units which reflect common environmental conditions and common interests, common spheres, that is, of organized social life, we refer to something that goes beyond an externally visible uniformity. We mean a *conformity* of behaviour, a conscious unity created by, and embodied in, a common group life and the mutual control and adjustment of behaviour among the people who form the group.[1] The identification of cultural group and tribe implies, in the observer's interpretation, something of both.

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But were this all it would enable us only to define the tribe as a natural species is defined—unknown to the subject of the definition. It would amount to colouring a certain space on a cultural map and calling it 'Nupe tribal culture'. It would not explain the crucial point in our argument, that the people are themselves conscious of the reality of the tribe. But culture has also another, new, meaning: it represents the conception of the people themselves. To the Nupe the tribe possesses a certain culture, specific to it and only to it, irrespective of variations within or similarities with groups without the tribal boundaries. Their awareness of this unity is expressed in the form of almost axiomatic statements, 'the Nupe do this or that', 'this and that is a Nupe custom',

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[1] The historian may attempt to link the two, and derive 'uniformity' from an original 'conformity', that is, explain the present cultural correspondence among disconnected groups by cultural diffusion from a centre in which culture was identical with organized common life. But considerations of this kind remain outside this discussion.

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121 contrasting Nupe usages with customs and forms of behaviour characteristic of other tribes. You discuss, for example, the worship of human
183 figures and idols of the kind you see in every village and every house in
619 neighbouring Yoruba; or the face-like masks which the Yoruba and many southern tribes wear in their ritual dances; or perhaps the ceremony of spirit possession which the Hausa who live in Bida town perform on Bida market. Your Nupe informant will tell you positively: no —we have none of this; only Yoruba do it, or Hausa do it, as the case may be. Or you ask a Nupe man what all Nupe have in common. He will, as a rule, enumerate the same few traits. All Nupe, he will say, have the *ena gbarúfuži* (age-grade associations), all Nupe have the same system of *tici* (ranks), and all Nupe have the *gunnu* cult. Of the Nupe community in Lagos, a group which has forgotten its traditions and abandoned its language, I was told that they were still Nupe, because they still practised the Nupe *kuti* (ritual) of the *ndakó gboyá* (a ritual closely linked with the *gunnu*). Yet on closer examination this shibboleth of Nupedom proves only half true. Worship of idols and human figures exists also among the Nupe, in the riverain area; mask dances with face-masks are practised in a large section of the Nupe, in Mokwa and the neighbouring villages. The age-grade associations are common both to Nupe and Hausa. The rank system is common all over Northern Nigeria, but the details in its organization (very significant details) vary considerably among different groups of the Nupe. The *gunnu* cult exists also among Gbari, Gara, Basa Kom, and, what is more important, appears in Nupe itself in strikingly different forms in different parts of the country.[1] Finally, as regards the Nupe colonies outside Nupe country: I have visited the Nupe communities in Lagos and Ibadan. They are descendants of Nupe slaves and serfs, completely Yoruba-ized to-day in language, custom, and everyday habits. It is true they have the *ndakó gboyá* (which they call by the Yoruba name *igunnu*). But the *ndakó gboyá* is completely absent among the eastern section of Nupe, the Dibo, and also, I believe, among most groups of the Ebe, the northern section of the Nupe tribe.

Objectively, then, the rigid distinction of Nupe and non-Nupe on the basis of cultural characteristics often proves incorrect, and must do so, since culture is both wider and narrower than the tribe. True, there exist certain traits, or 'patterns' of traits, which are typical of all the Nupe, and possibly only of the Nupe—facts of material culture, social organization, religious beliefs. Like the Nupe who mean to uphold the identity of their tribe, I shall speak of things 'the Nupe do' or 'do not do'. True it is that the people admit the existence of certain cultural variants which qualify the cultural unity of the tribe. But the essential fact to us here is not the objective constellation of cultural traits. The identification of Nupe tribe with a core of Nupe culture represents a concept, a spiritual reality, rather than a critical interpretation of cultural facts. It reflects not the quasi-scientific calculation of more essential against less essential traits, or of a majority of common characteristics as against a minority of

[1] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

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dissimilarities, but a phenomenon of a different order, a theory and ideology which ignores divergences *ex definitione*. It represents, in one word, the theory of the Nupe tribe. Our tautological definition of tribe then reads thus: a tribe or people is a group the members of which claim unity on the grounds of their conception of a specific common culture.[1]

To define the unity as conceptual does not make it less real or less significant. The awareness of unity is the basic element in all social unity. Consciousness of commonness is the primary element in social commonness. 'Communities, for all their external marks, are not objective things, they are spiritual realities.'[2] The tribe is not a community in the strict sense of the word: it lacks, as we have seen, the element of 'common life' and co-activity. But communities exist in different degrees of intensity; they have a different compass of social inclusiveness; there is not *one* community, but a complex hierarchy of communities.[3] The consciousness of a uniform culture defines the widest, loosest unit in the hierarchy of communities—potential rather than actual 'common life'. One turns easily into the other. 'One of the great processes of society . . . is that thereby the common is built out of the like, common interests growing out of what were at first merely like interests.'[4] We add that the consciousness of uniformity is the first step towards conformity of culture.

At the same time this uniformity of conduct which is conscious of itself is more than merely a potential stage of social existence. It represents, in itself, a specific social reality. Let me define here a vital concept of social existence which will occur throughout this book: social integration. The essence of integration is co-activity—potential or actual; social integration is predictable co-adaptation of behaviour in a group. It reveals itself in the certainty with which, in the group, certain actions of individuals or group sections will call forth appropriate response actions of other individuals or group sections. Now uniformity of behaviour is, sociologically, meaningless. Conscious uniformity, however, is predictable uniformity; the knowledge that a certain familiar pattern of activity will be repeated endlessly throughout the group represents a first form, and a degree at the same time, of social integration.

These two types of integration, uniformity and conformity, do not exhaust the forms of unity of behaviour existing in society. We shall meet in this analysis also with a third interpretation of cultural commonness or likeness, namely, the co-adaptation of behaviour involved in all organized associations. We shall speak of it as *co-ordination* of behaviour, for it represents essentially a planned, controlled organization of behaviour in the group, regulated and enforced by specific social mechanisms. In

[1] This definition claims to hold true for all large tribal groups ('peoples') of a similarly complex structure. It does not apply to smaller and more homogeneous groups. The factor of size and numbers is of importance. Evidently, for a small group on a Pacific Island tribe equals local group; or among American Indian tribes the tribal unit may coincide with the political group (see A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, 1923, p. 232).

[2] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 66.

[3] Ibid., p. 10; *Community*, p. 23.

[4] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 8.

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121 this book we shall be dealing mainly with the political association, which seems characterized by two sets of factors: first, by its inclusiveness, being the relatively widest unit of co-ordination, and, underlining it, by the conception of a collective identity which is emphasized, above all, in inter-group dealings. And second, by the nature of its regulative mechanism (here the 'Government'), which rests, in the last resort, on the employment of force and coercion, and which controls both co-ordination for the purpose of internal stability ('law and order') and co-ordination for the purpose of external, inter-group, action ('offence and defence'). Cultural groups and communities have fluid boundaries; the association (in our case the political unit) is or is not rigid, but its boundaries—the boundaries of the group and sphere of conduct within which the co-ordination is to be valid—are by definition rigid. The consciousness of this validity defines the membership of the political association—in modern terminology, nationality. The political unit, unlike culture and community, is exclusive: one either is or is not a citizen of a country; one either comes or does not come under its laws and restrictions. However, one remains at the same time a representative of a culture which may not simply coincide with the cultural uniformity upheld by the political system. One remains also a member of a community or of communities which may exist apart from the 'common life' embodied in political co-ordination. Planned co-ordination of behaviour cannot ignore these other forms of integration—cultural likeness and commonness. Whether it utilizes them, creates them anew, or simply accepts their existence, they are the cultural raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

The three planes of integration, and the group units which they define, thus cut across each other, overlap, and possibly grow out of each other, It will not always be easy to separate them clearly in the concrete description. The preceding analysis has to some extent defined their theoretical boundaries. In what follows we can attempt to isolate, in our concrete material, these three social realities: the integration of (conscious) cultural uniformity or the tribe; the integration of cultural conformity or the community; and the cultural co-ordination typical of organized society, above all, the political system and its paradigm, the state.

THE TRIBE

619 The conception of a common tribal culture is kept alive, as part of Nupe tradition, by the transmission of traditional knowledge. It forms 184 part of the general ideological background of all institutionalized behaviour. For many forms of customary behaviour membership of the tribe constitutes a convincing *raison d'être*. The tribe, lacking all unity of comprehensive co-operation, also lacks the unity of a common centre of cultural teaching. The consciousness of a common tribal culture is thus maintained by the scattered, disconnected mechanism to which the transmission of traditional knowledge is entrusted in Nupe. It is implied in the nature of this transmission that the same *raison d'être*—'we do this

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CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM

THE STATE

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IT will have become clear that we regard the state as a specific form of political organization. Not every political system represents thus a state. This book can do no more than suggest a descriptive working definition of that difficult and much discussed concept. If we accept the definition of a political system suggested above, on the basis of its inclusiveness and the nature of its ultimate sanctions, we may regard the state as a social system in which these two characteristics crystallize in specific forms. Thus we arrive at the following threefold definition: (1) The state is a political unit based on territorial sovereignty. Membership of the state, i.e. citizenship or nationality, is determined by residence or birth-right in a territory. The state is thus inter-tribal or inter-racial, and distinguishes nationality from tribal or racial extraction.[1] (2) A centralized machinery of government assumes the maintenance of law and order, to the exclusion of all independent action.[2] (3) The state involves the existence of a specialized privileged ruling group or class separated in training, status, and organization from the main body of the population. This group monopolizes, corporately, the machinery of political control. It is regarded as a 'representative' group, and its actions and decisions are accepted by the people as actions and decisions on behalf of the country at large. These three factors must appear combined to justify our terming a political system a state.[3] The three factors of state structure represent interdependent social necessities which follow from one another and can be reduced to the basic principle of territorial sovereignty maintained over groups of different cultural and ethnic extraction. Such sovereignty must involve a certain measure of centralization, powerful enough to counteract separatist tendencies (Lowie), and also the creation—or continued existence—of a group of rulers and administrators who, by special training and tradition, are raised above the complexity of cultural and ethnic groups. Historically, an inter-tribal sovereignty of this nature can only have arisen from the ascendancy of one ethnic group over others. Certain students of society have interpreted this fact as implying the essential identity of state

[1] Cf. Sir Henry Maine's statement that the 'most nearly universal fact concerning the origin of known states' is that they 'were formed by the coalescence of groups' (*Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, p. 386).

[2] Political order in the state is 'distinguished most of all by this trait, that it is a peaceful order which allows of no individual violence and only permits itself to enforce justice' (N. M. Korkunov, *General Theory of Law*, New York, 1922, p. 341).

[3] Obviously, there exist transitory forms in which only one or two of these political principles are manifest. The Beni confederacy represents such an incipient state organization. Yet if Lowie says: 'Some sort of state is a universal feature of human culture' (*The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 44), we feel inclined to alter this to 'some sort of political organization'.

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121 origin and conquest, state organization and alien domination.[1] I will not go too deeply into this controversial question. But we cannot pass without comment the fact that the structure of the Nupe state as it exists to-day, with its ruling class of Fulani conquerors, and also its growth so far as we can with any claim to accuracy trace it back in history, indeed support this theory of the origin of the state.

Our discussion of the principles of state organization has thus led to an historical interpretation. Indeed the description of Nupe kingdom would be incomplete without the description of its growth and development. Its inter-tribal and inter-cultural nature cannot be fully understood without the inclusion of the historical viewpoint. Our three-fold conceptual system of cultural unit, community, and state must itself be envisaged under the aspect of a dynamic process rather than of a static differentiation. For the deliberate political co-ordination of forms of conduct must tend to influence other spheres of cultural activity as well. In Nupe as everywhere, social patterns, common ideal types, spring up by themselves as 'natural products of long association'.[2] Political unification goes hand in hand with dissemination of culture and with an extension and reinterpretation (in the widest sense of the word) of racial and community boundaries. The 'inter-cultural' and 'inter-tribal' state gives way to a new 'state culture' and a new paramount group-unit, the nation.

121 It will be for a later chapter to examine how and how far this unification has been achieved in the Nupe state. But we must point out at once 563 that this absorption of heterogeneous elements could only achieve a relative unity. The antagonism between the original heterogeneity and the subsequent unification is never allowed to disappear completely. It survives in certain forms of cultural and racial discrimination. The culture of Nupe, more correctly the culture typical of that section which formed the core in the historical growth of the kingdom, became the representative culture of the whole country, set up as a standard and 'ideal type' for the heterogeneous population. The sections of the Nupe tribe which were the carriers of this culture became the representative group of 'real' Nupe, sharply distinguished from the groups which have become Nupe-ized and absorbed in the state in the process of political expansion. A tribal and territorial section thus gained the position of a cultural *élite*, considerations of political status came to determine the evaluation of cultural features, and facts of cultural and tribal extraction were re-interpreted in the sense of political class distinctions. Here we understand the anomalies in the application of the name Nupe which we discovered in our discussion of Tribe and Culture: why the people in the capital regard the Nupe spoken in the districts and on the borders of the country as an inferior brand; or why the Nupe still speak of 'Gbari slaves' although culturally this tribal section has become indistinguishable from the Nupe proper. The 'real' Nupe call themselves *kintsoši*, Owners of the Land, as against all who have come later into the country —settlers, aliens, citizens of Greater Nupe. For all the groups outside of

[1] F. Oppenheimer, *The State*, 1923.
[2] A. E. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 222.

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the 'core' of the kingdom, whether they are Nupe, aliens, or Nupe-ized aliens, the Nupe have a common name: *zaži kati*, 'Outside Peoples', and the cultural evaluation implied in this term is felt acutely by these groups. It was extremely interesting to see how strongly the people of Lemu, Nupe-ized since three generations only, resented being called *zaži kati*, although they frankly admitted their Gbari origin. 'This name', they said, 'does not apply to us; we have been Nupe and Beni for a long time. The Gbari in the north and east, in Wushishi and beyond Kataeregi, they are Outside Peoples.'

The Fulani conquest added a new chapter to this ambiguous history of cultural and political unification. But here 'representative' and 'absorbed' groups have exchanged places. The Fulani conquerors of Nupe, numerically an insignificant minority, were absorbed completely by the culture of the people whom they subjugated. Some of the Fulani came from nomadic herdsmen stock; the majority belonged most probably to the 'town Fulani' (as they call themselves), who had long been settled in the northern Hausa states and whose culture had become identical with that of Hausa. The former surrendered their identity completely; the latter had little, if anything, of their own to give. The Hausa traits visible in Nupe culture to-day did not reach the country through the Fulani; and Mohammedanism, the religion of the Fulani conquerors, was firmly established already at the time of the early Fulani infiltration. In Nupe the Fulani lost their language[1] and the last characteristics of their race and original culture. Racially, after generations of intermarriage, they are indistinguishable from their subjects; culturally, they are as much Nupe as the Nupe themselves. Many are even eager to step into the cultural heritage of the country over which they rule. They read and quote the history of ancient Nupe with the same enthusiasm and pride with which they learn or talk about their own historical heroes, the first Fulani emissaries.[2] Yet they remain a separate social group, conscious of its alien origin, and still distinguished by a special tribal name: they call themselves, and are called by their subjects, *goiži* (a name which distinguishes these settled, 'town Fulani' from the nomadic cattle people, who are known as *bororóži*), never Nupe. They are a 'representative' group in a different sense—the small *élite* of conquerors and rulers. The historical memory of their alien origin—for it is only this to-day—buttresses their detached social position. Racial antagonism which might have disappeared in a homogeneous community here, in the framework of the state, blending with the antagonism of class, remains alive, and even strengthens with its sentiments the inner tension of the society. It flares up with every open friction between rulers and ruled. We have again a political and social cleavage in the guise of 'racial' discrimination.[3]

[1] *Etsu* Mohamadu (1897–1914) was given the nickname '*Etsu* with two tongues', being the last Fulani ruler who—already a striking exception—could still speak Fulfulde.

[2] For some time I carried on a correspondence (in Hausa) with two of the most prominent members of the Nupe-Fulani community who had asked me to let them have all information I could obtain on the ancient history of Nupe.

[3] The following is a significant anecdote: the *Etsu* Nupe once confided to me

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121 563 Visualize this intricate racial and cultural pattern: two *élites* of different order—*kintsoźi* and Fulani—and surrounding them, almost in concentric circles, ethnic groups of varying cultural dissimilitude, each cultural grade also a grade on the scale of political evaluation. This is indeed the exact picture of the historical growth of Nupe kingdom. Through conquests and expansion, with fluid, ever-changing boundaries, Nupe kingdom maintained its conspicuous centre, the core of its political and cultural growth. Like a tree, it grew from the centre, and you can still trace the rings which mark its growth.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

121 Before embarking on the historical account we must clarify the concept of 'history' as we propose to use it. For there is a certain ambiguity in the term 'history' as it is used by anthropologists. History can mean two things: first, what we may call 'objective' history, that is, the series of events which we, the investigators, describe and establish in accordance with certain 'objective', universal criteria of connexion and sequence. Second, the 'ideological' history, which exists in the society which we study, and which describes and arranges events in accordance with accepted traditions about past happenings and developments. The two may coincide (as they do in modern history); or the second may at least supply some source of information for the first. But also it may have significance only as a sociological datum *per se*, i.e. as a system of accepted beliefs and traditions influencing social behaviour in the group. As such, it is often indistinguishable from mythology and from what Malinowski has called significantly the 'mythical charter' of customs and existing cultural usages.[1] Different societies may stress in a different measure either the mythical, supernatural or the rational, pseudo-scientific nature of what they accept as an account of their past. The Nupe are what we may call an historically-minded people. The highest, constantly invoked authority for things existing is, to the Nupe, the account of things past—but an account which is clothed in terms of a sober, pseudo-scientific 'history'. Such is also the nature of the Nupe tradition of the origin of their kingdom. Only for the more recent periods do we possess 'objective' sources; the earliest period of Nupe kingdom is described only in their own 'ideological history'.

173 The earliest history of Nupe centres round the figure of Tsoede or Edegi,[2] the culture hero and mythical founder of Nupe kingdom. The genealogies of Nupe kings which are preserved in many places in Nupe country, and which have also found their way into the earliest written records of Nupe history which were compiled by Mohammedan scholars

his grievance against a certain little unruly relative of his whom he believed to have intrigued against him. He added: 'All Nupe are bad people, you know.' The said relative, himself, of course, as much Fulani as the *Etsu*, retaliated by informing me that 'all Fulani were liars'.

[1] B. Malinowski, in *Encycl. Soc. Sc.*, London, 1931, vol. iv, p. 640.

[2] Tsoede is, linguistically, a contraction of *Etsu*, or *'tsu Ede;* the Nupe more often use the name Tsoede, the Hausa the name Edegi.

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CHAPTER XI

ECONOMICS: RESOURCES

121 ALFRED MARSHALL, discussing possible definitions of Economics, says: 'The less we trouble ourselves with scholastic inquiries as to whether a certain consideration comes within the scope of economics, the better.'[1] If any student of society is entitled to follow this practical advice it is the anthropologist. Clearly, his working definition of economics must be as wide and fluid as possible. In his field every fact referring to what Marshall would call the 'business side of life' must claim his attention; even apparently irrelevant details in the technique of production, exchange, or consumption may be significant because new and not hitherto examined under the aspect of economic problems. Such a wide definition of economics must do justice to three realms of facts: (1) the primary resources, in the sense of the physical substratum on which all productive activity ultimately depends; (2) the technical processes and forms of group organization which make up production in the narrow sense, i.e. which actuate and bring into existence the resources; and (3) the specific needs that exist in a society and on the satisfaction of which the efficiency of a productive system must prove itself.

This, then, will be our definition of the realm of economics: the utilization of resources for the satisfaction of culturally (or socially) standardized needs. The description of the needs themselves, elements of culture as they are, is part of the general description of the society. The relation between resources and the satisfaction of the needs will be examined under the heading of Economic Balance. In the description of the technical processes, however, we shall have to limit our field. In accordance with the general theme of this book we shall be concerned more with the group organization involved in production than with technology proper; we shall view productive labour under the aspect of human occupation rather than under the aspect of technical development. The description of the primary resources and their distribution will form the subject of this first section. It will examine above all that primary and ultimate resource of every productive system, savage or civilized, land.[2]

[1] A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1930, p. 27.

[2] For various reasons I have thought it better to omit from this book a discussion on hunting and fishing. Hunting is indeed of little importance in the present-day productive system of the country; it has been reduced everywhere to a secondary additional activity in the nature almost of a leisure-time occupation. In some parts of the country (e.g. in Bida and surroundings) hunting has disappeared altogether. Fishing stands in a different category. It is of paramount importance in the riverain area. But a description of the greatly varying fishing techniques in use in Nupe country, and of the very specific forms of labour organization involved in fishing, would lead too far. For the economic system of the country at large fishing becomes important in so far as it produces one of the most highly valued trading-goods of the country both in local and export trade. This aspect of fishing will best be discussed at a later stage, in the chapter on trade.

[224] [226]

[p.180]

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CHAPTER XIX

ECONOMIC BALANCE: EXCHANGE

121 IN the discussion of economic balance we approach a group of questions which modern economic theory regards as the principle subject-matter of economics, viz. the relation between means which exist in some degree of scarcity and their alternative uses for the satisfaction of needs and wants. We shall examine 'balance' under two aspects: first, the relation between means and their uses in a wider sense, as they exist and are balanced in the economic system of the society at large. In this sense economic balance can be equated with exchange and exchange-mechanisms. Secondly, economic balance can be approached from the angle of the economic unit, and understood in the sense of the relation existing between means and wants in the narrow compass of individual or group economy. Economic balance here can be equated with the relation between capacity to produce and the ability to satisfy existing wants, i.e. between income and expenditure.

Although the two aspects refer to the same phenomenon, and are thus clearly interdependent, it is necessary to point out that the relation between the two does not invariably lie on the surface. Certain wants which greatly influence individual economy do not enter openly into general exchange relations. I refer here to wants which flow from specifically social sources—the dictates of religious obligations, of etiquette, status and prestige, political interests, and so forth. Over and above the overt exchange-mechanisms which we study under the first aspect of economic balance we shall have to introduce, in the discussion of the second aspect, a certain 'invisible' exchange—exchange against such imponderables as moral values, or forms of social appreciation. We will examine these two aspects of economic balance in the order in which we have enumerated them.

CURRENCY, MEASURES, AND PRICES

436 The description of Nupe production has clearly established the nature of Nupe economy as a highly complex exchange-economy based on money. A discussion of exchange-mechanisms may thus profitably begin with the examination of the units of exchange, the currency, and certain fixed measures used in trade.

Before the adoption of British money cowrie-shells constituted the currency of the country. Its use still lingers—not in the currency that is actually used (although this, too, has been mentioned),[1] but in an abstract sense, in the native methods of reckoning money. Certain standardized amounts, e.g. bride-price, certain traditional gifts and payments, are expressed more often in cowrie-shells than in modern money. In the country figures in cowrie-shells are quoted commonly, and in connexion with every kind of payment, including food-prices and suchlike. Cowrie-

[1] See p. 310.

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CHAPTER XX

ECONOMIC BALANCE: MEANS AND WANTS

THE PROBLEM

IN the discussion of economic balance in this new sense we meet with certain methodological difficulties. The wants on which resources are expended form part of culture—they reflect customs, conventions, tastes, fashions. The ideal solution would obviously be to include here a description of the whole culture, political life, social organization, law, religion, education, recreation, and so forth, from the economic aspect. Yet even if this were possible the question would remain whether we could not produce an arrangement more adequate to the present problem than this enumeration based on the qualitative contents of the different domains of culture. As we are dealing here with questions of equilibrium, 'the more adequate' arrangement would clearly have to be in the nature of a weighted or graded order, i.e. a scale of economic values.

How are we to build up this graded order of values? Economists agree that economic incentives can be arranged in an order of intensity.[1] Yet economics can express the intensity of incentives only in terms of the concrete efforts expended on their satisfaction. Broadly speaking, the existence or intensity of wants is derived from the fact that they are satisfied, and that certain wants are satisfied rather than others.[2] This circular argument precludes the possibility of studying wants apart from their concrete satisfaction. As anthropologists, having defined economic relations as relations between means and the satisfaction of *culturally accepted* needs, we must presuppose that the scale of values has to some extent at least an existence *per se*, that is, is of some permanence, and is buttressed by cultural factors independently of actual demands. Without this theoretical separation of wants and their concrete satisfaction we could never attempt to frame such questions as why certain forms of satisfaction are highly in demand while others appear to be neglected although their 'value' is recognized by the society. We could never point out that certain needs may be highly valued in themselves, and may yet be disregarded because of an insufficiency of means. These are questions of the rationality of bonds, of the motives behind wants, and of the efficiency of socio-economic systems in general (the main manifestation of which is the distribution of poverty and wealth). These questions, though admittedly beyond the scope of economics in the strict sense, deeply concern the student of society.[3]

We cannot demolish the circular argument of economics, which is, in

[1] L. Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, 1935, p. 86.
[2] D. M. Goodfellow, *Principles of Economic Sociology*, 1939, p. 28.
[3] The concept of poverty and wealth depends on the possibility of comparing the magnitude of incomes and forms of satisfaction secured by the income of different individuals. An inter-individual comparison of this kind is not admitted by theoretical economics. See L. Robbins, op. cit., pp. 137–40.

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121 fact, intrinsic to all generalizations about human behaviour. But for the purpose of sociological analysis we must attempt to extend this circular argument over as wide a range of interconnected phenomena as possible. Wants are discovered in the way people behave; but in this discovery we are, unlike the economist, not bound by statistical evidence alone, but can with the help of our field methods study the actual behaviour of individuals in all its aspects. Behaviour comes to include also verbal behaviour and expression of beliefs, convictions, and ideals. Verbal behaviour may thus also supply us with evidence of the intensity of incentives. We are driven to admit the existence, side by side with 'concrete' evaluations as revealed in economic decisions, of diffuse 'theoretical' or 'moral' evaluations which may be at variance with the former.

We are, then, operating with a two-dimensional system of wants and values. It has, I admit, no validity in the economic universe of discourse.[1] Seen from the economic point of view the 'theoretical' evaluation merely represents the weaker incentive which, in the eventual economic decision, has been subordinated to the stronger and thus relegated to the sphere of ineffectual theoretical concepts. But the acceptance of the two-dimensional scheme is indispensable to the adequate description of human conduct. The reality which it defines is primarily of a psychological nature: it embraces the motivations and repressions behind the economic decision, and the significant attitudes and responses which accompany it—hope and regret, disdain or resentment, expectations of betterment or the consciousness of failure. Yet every one of these psychological reactions may become a concrete determinant of conduct and thus a potential drive for readjustment either in the narrow sphere of social mobility, i.e. in attempts of individuals to improve their position, or in the wider sphere of collective attempts to bring about (by force, if necessary) changes in the socio-economic system. We need say no more on this point: it is illustrated abundantly in the history of society.

We will make two further admissions: first, that the divergence between theoretical and actual evaluation is frequently the symptom of a merely temporary lack of adjustment, and thus of social change; and second, that the divergence is partly due to a certain ambiguity in the concept we are using of 'wants' or 'needs'. The first does no more than underline the significance of the phenomenon to the student of society. As regards the second, the following examination of the nature of the divergence will show that the ambiguity in the concept of 'wants' is due, not to inexact formulation, but to the nature of society. The divergence between actual and theoretical evaluation occurs in three different forms.

(1) The simplest and most familiar form of this divergence is that owing to time-lag. The actual evaluation frequently takes account of changed wants, while the theoretical evaluation still maintains pre-change standards.

[1] I suspect, though, that this dual definition of 'concrete' and 'theoretical' evaluation forms a parallel to a similar distinction made by economic theory, namely, between the 'real value' of commodities and their 'exchange value'.

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(2) The divergence may be due to a differentiation within the structure of the group whose economic decisions we are studying. To put it schematically: individuals act always as members of groups; but every individual is at once member of different groups of progressive inclusiveness—family, kinship group, local group, tribe, state, &c. His conduct may thus be influenced by possibly conflicting standards of evaluation obtaining in the different groups. His economic decision may follow one standard of evaluation, while he relegates an alternative standard which he is either unable or unwilling to carry into action to the plane of 'theoretical' values. We may then find that the 'concrete' values adopted by individuals as members, for example, of the narrower group, appear as 'theoretical' values in the larger, comprehensive, group, and vice versa. Disregard of the alternative standards of evaluation owing to inability is typical of most forms of class stratification and, potentially, of class consciousness (in the economic sense). For here we see groups act according to evaluations derived from the sufficiency of means in their section, but yet remain conscious of wants and satisfactions obtaining in other, more fortunate, strata of the group at large. Disregard of alternative standards of evaluation owing to unwillingness, on the other hand, will mostly be found to indicate differences in social insight, which varies with position in the social group, with age, and experience. Thus the young labourers who preferred to purchase clothes and other temporary attractions rather than save money for marriage acted according to the ideals of the younger generation and disregarded the value which, as members of the kinship group, they should have recognized—values, moreover, which are upheld by the executive organs of the group, the elders and the family heads. We shall base our examination of the Nupe scale of values mainly on the widest range of social insight and (unless expressly stated) shall assess economic wants from the viewpoint of the family head.

(3) A final, most elusive, divergence is that between felt wants and abstract needs.[1] We must realize that the social significance of organized human conduct, shaped as it constantly is by convention and custom, is not exhausted in the attainment of a certain single satisfaction (which alone was aimed at), but normally implies the effectiveness of other wants and needs besides. Their satisfaction is attained, as it were, automatically, with the satisfaction of the conscious want, and may be embodied in the very conventional form which the satisfaction must take. Radcliffe-Brown has shown that the paramount ubiquitous need of this kind is that inherent in the structure of society itself, of integration and stability. Now, concrete evaluation may in certain cases run counter to that need, which would be relegated to the ideological validity of theoretical wants. These social needs are rarely present in the minds of individuals—except in those of far-sighted individuals acting as executive organs of their group. Rather the student of society hypothesizes their existence; for to him they reveal their existence and effective-

[1] Goodfellow assigns the study of 'wants' to economics proper, and the study of 'needs' to a separate discipline, which he calls Social Economics (op. cit., p. 275).

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●121 ness indirectly, through certain significant changes in the stability of social life.

With these methodological viewpoints in mind, we may now attempt to build up our scale of values. We cannot hope, of course, to make it exact in every grade or detail; but we can trace its outline which gives us the extremes of the scale—its maximum and minimum points—and, between them, certain well-defined marks. I propose to adopt a threefold approach.

(1) We find the 'minimum point' of our scale in the demands upon resources which refer to the satisfaction of the physiological necessities of life—'primary needs', in Malinowski's terminology—above all, nutrition and shelter. With Malinowski, we realize that these needs never exist as such in society, that is, in the form of undisguised elementary impulses, but already appear in a certain conventionalized form, shaped and elaborated by culture.[1] Closely linked with these wants is another group which we may call, with Malinowski, 'derived' wants, in the sense that they refer to the maintenance of the productive organization by means of which the 'primary needs' are satisfied.[2]

(2) On this second stage we shall examine certain more or less fixed demands upon resources which are involved in institutions and customs and which are accepted with little variation, irrespective of status or wealth, throughout the society. Typical instances of these demands are bride-price and taxation.

(3) We study the wants and forms of satisfaction apparent in the conduct of the recognized *élite* of the society. They define the 'maximum point' of our scale, and we may take them to represent the ideals and generally desirable things—the things 'one ought to be able to afford'—in the opinion of the society at large.[3] I must add that this last assumption is justified only if we can prove that no rift runs across the ideological framework of the society separating the desires and tastes typical of the various social strata. We must reckon with the possibility of individuals of the lower social strata being well content with their 'station'; or of tastes and desires of higher social strata showing a caste-like exclusiveness. We shall see later that one of the main characteristics of Nupe society lies in the absence of a self-limitation of the former kind; the latter kind of rift, on the other hand, is negligible, and is restricted mainly to the prerogatives of royalty, for example, to the traditional insignia of rulership, the rules of dress and food of the Nupe kings, &c. In modern Nupe even these caste-like prerogatives have mostly disappeared.

[1] I cannot argue here the question whether or not sexual satisfaction should be included among these 'primary needs'; I have put sexual desires in the second group of wants mainly because they are subject to a much more complete cultural 'elaboration' and institutionalization.

[2] It will be seen that this definition is narrower than Malinowski's definition of 'derived needs', which can, in fact, be extended over the whole field of culture.

[3] In this assumption, which is justified by the stratified structure of Nupe society, we differ from Dr. R. W. Firth, who states that 'there is no final organization in primitive societies in the sense of a single individual or ruling group of individuals who are in a position to dictate all choices' (*Primitive Polynesian Economy*, p. 24).

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But we must reckon also with another ideological rift in tastes and desires, which would affect all three stages of our investigation, namely a rift which might be involved in the complex and composite nature of Nupe culture. It would separate, not social strata, but different sections of the population, different cultural groups within Nupe society. A rift of this kind does, in fact, exist with respect to the different cultural standards valid in town and country, in the Mohammedanized capital and the pagan or semi-pagan districts.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: NECESSITIES OF LIFE

The extent to which the economy of an individual or a family group is able to incorporate into its 'balance' wants placed lower or higher on the scale of cultural values gives us what is generally called the 'standard of living'. We shall find that it is possible to arrange these varying standards in certain well-defined groups or grades, and to embody them in a comprehensive economic stratification of the society.

It will be best to begin with concrete illustrations of the economic balance achieved in Nupe households. Out of fifty household budgets which I have recorded I propose to select five representative examples, taken from different localities and differently organized household groups, in which we can study the main variations that occur. All these examples refer to peasant households. Unfortunately I found it impossible to work out budgets of this kind also for craftsmen and 'free professions' (with two exceptions to be quoted later). Their extremely fluid economy presented great difficulties; to reduce, in their case, income and expenditure to exact figures would have demanded much more time than I was able to devote to this task. However, just because these types of economy are more fluid and more easily adjustable to varying wants, they are of less interest to us than the more restricted and more rigid economy of the agriculturist.

Let me say a few words about the method by which I arrived at these records of Nupe household economy. I have examined households in Bida, Doko, Lemu, and Kutigi. The figures referring to the total farm-yield, and to the proportion of the produce kept for consumption or set aside for sale, were ascertained by inquiry. The nature of Nupe agriculture—the series of successive harvests, and the widely varying arrangements with regard to storage and sale of produce—precluded any more direct approach (e.g. by measuring the yield or the stores). However, there were important safeguards: first, as we have seen, the Nupe farmers are well acquainted with the use of standard measures, and indeed themselves use them to calculate their yield. Moreover, after a number of preliminary inquiries (in which I was helped by reliable informants) I could already form an opinion as to likely averages and individual deviations. Finally, whenever any dubious figures emerged I could verify them by independent inquiries of other household members. In this respect the tendency of the Nupe farmers to keep track of the contributions of the various family members to the common store proved of considerable assistance.

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Kede

634 its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political
184 supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

121 A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

241 We can be very short as regards the economic system of the
226 semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

226 The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of
505 renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. 634 Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage 177 stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation 182 and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group, but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. The Evolution of the Kede State

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither 634 support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, 121 accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of one ethnic group by another.[1] Our data have shown political domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of paramount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'[2] and a gradual emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds that migration and colonization are never a result of over-population, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enterprise' which is absent in countries with over-population.[3] Can we accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final statement? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political role fully explained by this reference to psychological characteristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

[1] See F. Oppenheimer, op. cit.
[2] R. Lowie, op. cit., p. 40.
[3] A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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634 dependence on economic factors and, tied up with them, environ-
121 mental conditions. The impetus to colonization and expansion, as we saw it, was already implied in the way in which the people gain their livelihood. We can render this argument even more conclusive; the cultural situation in the river valley itself offers us the comparative material from which to draw our deductions. We remember the upper-stream Kede, who, neighbours, fellow
634 tribesmen and in many details of culture close relations of the
121 down-stream Kede, yet do not share their political achievements—
184 and also do not share their productive system and economic life in general. We can even go further and point to the environmental factors on which the economic system of the Kede in turn depends. The environment in which the upper-stream Kede live indeed forbids a development of river trade and traffic similar to that evolved by the sister group. The river in their area is narrow, barred in several places by rapids and rocky, frequently dangerous, passages, and generally impassable during half the year. On its banks there are few settlements, and the hinterland is thinly populated, inhabited largely by comparatively poor and backward groups. Hold against this the down-stream country: a broad river, navigable all the year round, the banks covered with numerous villages and the hinterland a rich, populous country with highly developed trades and crafts.

634 It will have been seen that I am speaking here of environment in
121 a rather wide sense, including, beside the physical constellation of the country, also such factors as distribution of population and the existence of a certain type of civilization. Methodologically, these facts stand in the same category as physical environment proper. True, they are essentially historical facts, representing the results of various historical developments. These developments themselves, however, are beyond our line of vision; their results—the fact that the Kede area happens to lie in the centre of a rich and powerful kingdom—are to us 'unique events' in the phraseology of the historian, extraneous factors of chance, which, like environmental facts, we have to accept as ultimate data.

Let me admit that this causal chain, environmental conditions—economic enterprise—political system, is not fully conclusive. It is weakened by another aspect of our comparative evidence—namely, the fact that the *kintsogi*, who are also close neighbours and tribal relations of the down-stream Kede, and who share with

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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them the same 'stimulating' environment, appear to have remained unresponsive to it. I have no explanation to give. Does this mean, then, that we have to fall back on the psychological interpretation of the kind quoted above? 634 121

But the environmental and economic 'determinism' which these conclusions have put forward was not meant to exclude completely the contribution of psychological factors—that is, the social motive power that may lie in the temperamental and general psychological dispositions typical of a group. Nor was it intended to minimize the decisive part that enterprising and far-seeing individuals must have played in the creation of the Kede State. The river colonization was undoubtedly the work of a people fully deserving the attributes 'adventurous', 'courageous', or 'possessed of a spirit of enterprise'; it must also have been closely bound up with the leadership of certain outstanding individuals: think of the man who was responsible for the Kede throwing in their lot with the British, or the Kede chiefs who so successfully utilized the encouragement of the Niger Company for the expansion of their country. But two facts must be borne in mind when defending this psychological and 'individualistic' theory of social origins. First, the psychological characteristics which might be made responsible for the achievements of the group are not *racially* determined (i.e. by heredity)—the dissimilar social system of the upper-stream Kede proves this to the full; they remain an expression of, and a perfect adjustment to, environmental conditions. And, second, these psychological characteristics do not reflect the effectiveness of some spontaneous, as it were, self-contained, psychological force, but are fostered and formed planfully by the existing social system and its cultural demands, to which the individuals, generation after generation, learn to adjust themselves. How much in the gradual social development of the Kede State was due to the selective effects of environment, and how much to the spontaneous actions of exceptionally gifted individuals who, at one point of Kede history, may have shown their people a new way of life, is one of these questions of social origins to which, again, we have no answer.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukā-nyāti* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunyo*—MAN 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds; this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

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A FIELD EXPERIMENT IN RACIAL[1] PSYCHOLOGY[2]

By S. F. NADEL

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(1) *Set phrases and formulae* (pp. 198–199).
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I. The problem

In the present article I shall describe certain attempts at attacking, experimentally, and in the field of so-called primitive cultures, the problem of a possible correlation between diversity of culture and psychological differentiation. This investigation differs essentially from the psychological experiments on the mentality of primitive peoples which have been carried out so far. Most of these experiments were devoted to the study of lower mental processes and to the measurement of psychophysical reactions. Where higher mental functions were involved, as in the investigations of Porteus (1) and Garth (2), the main aim was still a quantitative analysis of psychological responses with respect to some

[1] The term 'racial' in the title needs explanation: it has been used here simply for want of a better term. It refers here not to racial groups in the strict sense but to groups which, in loose terminology, are generally referred to as tribes, peoples, or communities, i.e. cultural groups. The term culture-psychology, however, with its philosophic connotation, does not recommend itself.

[2] A paper read at the Manchester meeting of the British Psychological Society, April 1937.

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Y N 121 universal scale of mental characteristics or abilities. The present investigation is in no way concerned with measuring or rating psychological reactions and characteristics. It is devoted to a qualitative analysis, more precisely: a qualitative comparative analysis, of the higher mental processes—perception, memory and thinking processes—of two primitive peoples. Its primary aim is to discover 'typical' psychological traits among groups of different culture, in other words, to study by means of a psychological experiment what Professor Bartlett calls the "preferred, persistent tendencies of groups" (3), p. 255).

Y N 114 During two anthropological expeditions to West Africa (Northern Nigeria) I had made some effort to combine anthropological work with experimental psychological studies. I had been working for some time among two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe. These, living side by side, in the same material environment, under the same general conditions and at the same stage of civilization, yet present a picture of two entirely different, almost antagonistic cultures. This seemed an ideal situation for an investigation on the lines of such 'racial' or culture-psychology. Thus I carried out the same series of experiments among both groups, and I shall describe in the following pages some of the results of this comparative study.

II. The experiments

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VII. SUMMARY

1. The aim of this investigation was to study, by means of the psychological field experiment, the correlation between diversity of culture and psychological differentiation.

2. Two primitive groups were studied, two tribes in Northern Nigeria which, living under similar conditions, yet show marked differences in their culture.

3. The experiments were carried out with school boys of the age of 15–18. The selection of the subjects, however, insured that the experimental groups were representative of the culture at large.

4. The experiments examined the repeated reproduction of a narrative, and the description and remembering of a number of pictures. Both the narrative and the pictures represented a material with which the experimental subjects were thoroughly familiar.

5. The results show a marked difference in the responses of the two groups. In the story experiment one tribe laid stress on logical and rational elements while the other showed distinct appreciation of situational facts and connexions of time and place. In the picture experiment the response of the first group was meaning-oriented, the response of the second enumerative and appreciative of spatial arrangement.

6. Between the cultural differentiation and the psychological differentiation there exists close correspondence. The dualism of culture and psychological responses is incidental; the investigation reveals in fact three different psychological 'types' distributed in different proportion among the two groups.

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FOREWORD

By LORD LUGARD

THIS exhaustive treatise on one of the most important communities in Nigeria owes its inception to the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York, which placed a large sum at the disposal of the International Institute for the Study of African Languages and Cultures. Fellowships were instituted to enable specially trained students to undertake scientific research into the social organization of a selected unit of African society, the factors of social cohesion which operate to prevent its disintegration by contact with European civilization, the openings for co-operation, and the tendencies towards new groupings. Others were specially concerned with linguistic studies.

Dr. Nadel, of the University of Vienna, was one of the original Fellows, and he selected the Nupe of the middle Niger for his field of research. He brought to his task not only a thorough mastery of the technique of scientific investigation, but an original mind, and a sympathy with and understanding of the African, which won the confidence and friendship without which scientific qualifications can effect little.

His exceptional talents as a linguist enabled him not only to converse, at first in the *lingua franca* (Hausa), but in less than six months to acquire, and speak with fluency the very difficult 'tone' language of the Nupe. Many an English reader of this book may even envy his command of idiomatic English. The Nupe seem to have regarded him as an unusual phenomenon and conferred upon him a high title of tribal rank.

As an 'Anthropologist' he is concerned at the outset to explain that the term—whether 'functional', 'practical', or 'applied'—is ill adapted to the research he had undertaken. But surely the study of 'a native society in all its complexity', and the factors which had affected its social evolution are better described as 'Sociology' than as 'Anthropology'—which is defined as 'the study of man as an animal'? A clear understanding on the other hand of the connotation of the term 'Culture' as used by a highly qualified sociologist is essential to the appreciation of his work.

> 'Culture (he says) varies with environment and . . . expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. . . . It is not a sum total of discrete traits (but) . . . a conscious unity created by and embodied in a common group life (by) . . . the people who form the group, . . . specific to it and only to it irrespective of variations within, or similarities with groups outside, the tribal boundaries.' (pp. 14–15.)

The distinctive individuality of the 'tribe' depends in turn on the presumption that it is a 'group possessing more or less the same culture' and language.

The 'social and economic complexity' of the Nupe State as it exists

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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nũsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nũsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nũsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nũsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nũsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

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567 had been placed in responsible positions proves what I have said about
554 the selection and rise of slave officials at the court of Bida.

Slave Ranks

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Present office*	*Biographical remarks*
Gabi Seidi	Kupa	'Officer of Liaison' between *Etsu* and District Officer	A rich slave who under *Etsu* Bello bought his title for £16.
Ndatwaki	Yagba	On the Bida Town Council	Father was *Ndatwaki* under *Etsu* Maliki; he himself received the same title under *Etsu* Bello.
Dzwodfu	"	" "	An hereditary slave title, first granted under *Etsu* Usman.
Ndamáraki	Bunu	" "	Father was *Ndamáraki* under *Etsu* Masaba.
Sántali	Benu-Nupe	..	Grandfather was a slave of Usman Zaki; they remained slaves of this house.
Masántali	Yagba	..	Grandfather was a slave of *Etsu* Umaru Majigi; they remained slaves of this house.
Swajiyá'tsu	"	..	Father held same slave rank.
Ndatódo	"	..	Father held the same title and also title of *Ndamáraki*.
Manfáda	"	..	Another slave title which has become hereditary in one house.
Sonmdźi	Kusopa-Nupe	..	Id.
Ndádari	Nupe	..	Id.
Shangbo	Nupe from Rabá	..	Father was a *saraki* (*Somasii*) of *Etsu* Majiya. He was made prisoner in the war and became a slave of *Etsu* Masaba.
(*Sarkin Dogari*	Hausa	Head of police force	To-day not regarded as slave title. Formerly bestowed on a personal slave of the ruling king.)

WAR

124 It will be understood that this description is based entirely on informa-
721 tion and the historical recollections of informants. However, the wars that were fought in Nupe and by the Nupe are not so far distant that there are no longer eyewitnesses left, or people who have themselves borne arms in these wars. Thus information could be checked and cross-checked. For certain details I could, moreover, count on most authoritative informants, who had played a leading part in the last wars of the kingdom; the description of the military organization, for example, is based on information obtained from the late commander of the *élite* troops of Nupe, the king's bodyguard.

721 War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state. No warfare or
669 organized fights occurred between the villages or tribal sections of the

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way to the (much smaller) tax-receipts made out for individuals. It is, in fact, the present official policy of the Administration to encourage the issue and acceptance of individual tax-receipts throughout the country. Taxation thus ignores and even denies in its own powerful province the existence of the family unit—with what results we shall see later. 651

LAW

Let me try first to give a picture of the judicial system of Nupe kingdom as it existed in pre-European times. This is, naturally, an historical reconstruction. But the history to which it refers is not the history of a mythical past. It is a history well documented, and obtained from information which seems reliable and significant and which, collected from different sources, shows remarkable agreement on all main points. My chief informants were village elders and chiefs and the Mohammedan judges of Bida Emirate who, in charge of modern jurisdiction to-day, have witnessed and partly practised themselves the old system. 671 124

The theoretical difficulties with which the student of law in primitive cultures is faced are absent in our investigation. The problem, especially, whether to define the province of law on the narrow basis of systematic social control exercised by a politically organized society (Radcliffe-Brown) or, more comprehensively, as embracing all social sanctions that make for uniformity of conduct (Malinowski), is decided for us by the nature of the society which we are studying in the sense of the former essentially modern interpretation. Law in Nupe kingdom is quite conspicuously a concern of the political organization and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. This does not mean that no sanctions or forms of redress exist which are applied outside the political framework and left to the more diffuse workings of public opinion and individual or group 'self-help'. But the scope of this non-political (or extra-political) law is extremely restricted. It comprises only two types of offences: religious offences—desecration of sacred objects or places, both Mohammedan and pagan—and kinship offences—litigation over inheritance, offences against traditional marriage rules (i.e. marriages in forbidden degrees), and also incest. I cannot describe here in detail the treatment which Nupe society meted out to individuals guilty of these offences. Suffice it to say that public ostracism which might force the culprit to self-exile or to confidence in his vindication by the deity was its main feature. The society thus exempted from its otherwise comprehensive scheme of formal political jurisdiction the two offences which were either of a nature transcending human justice (as in the case of religious offences, and also partly incest) or concerned only internal frictions in individual kinship groups. All offences that affected the relations between kinship groups or individuals from different kinship groups, and all crimes against human life, were regarded as a concern of the community at large. 671

But the comprehensiveness of political jurisdiction admitted of two degrees. Traditional Nupe law operated with a legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between 673

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But we must reckon also with another ideological rift in tastes and desires, which would affect all three stages of our investigation, namely a rift which might be involved in the complex and composite nature of Nupe culture. It would separate, not social strata, but different sections of the population, different cultural groups within Nupe society. A rift of this kind does, in fact, exist with respect to the different cultural standards valid in town and country, in the Mohammedanized capital and the pagan or semi-pagan districts. 121

STANDARDS OF LIVING: NECESSITIES OF LIFE

The extent to which the economy of an individual or a family group is able to incorporate into its 'balance' wants placed lower or higher on the scale of cultural values gives us what is generally called the 'standard of living'. We shall find that it is possible to arrange these varying standards in certain well-defined groups or grades, and to embody them in a comprehensive economic stratification of the society. 511

It will be best to begin with concrete illustrations of the economic balance achieved in Nupe households. Out of fifty household budgets which I have recorded I propose to select five representative examples, taken from different localities and differently organized household groups, in which we can study the main variations that occur. All these examples refer to peasant households. Unfortunately I found it impossible to work out budgets of this kind also for craftsmen and 'free professions' (with two exceptions to be quoted later). Their extremely fluid economy presented great difficulties; to reduce, in their case, income and expenditure to exact figures would have demanded much more time than I was able to devote to this task. However, just because these types of economy are more fluid and more easily adjustable to varying wants, they are of less interest to us than the more restricted and more rigid economy of the agriculturist.

Let me say a few words about the method by which I arrived at these records of Nupe household economy. I have examined households in Bida, Doko, Lemu, and Kutigi. The figures referring to the total farm-yield, and to the proportion of the produce kept for consumption or set aside for sale, were ascertained by inquiry. The nature of Nupe agriculture—the series of successive harvests, and the widely varying arrangements with regard to storage and sale of produce—precluded any more direct approach (e.g. by measuring the yield or the stores). However, there were important safeguards: first, as we have seen, the Nupe farmers are well acquainted with the use of standard measures, and indeed themselves use them to calculate their yield. Moreover, after a number of preliminary inquiries (in which I was helped by reliable informants) I could already form an opinion as to likely averages and individual deviations. Finally, whenever any dubious figures emerged I could verify them by independent inquiries of other household members. In this respect the tendency of the Nupe farmers to keep track of the contributions of the various family members to the common store proved of considerable assistance. 511 124

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Y N 121

universal scale of mental characteristics or abilities. The present investigation is in no way concerned with measuring or rating psychological reactions and characteristics. It is devoted to a qualitative analysis, more precisely: a qualitative comparative analysis, of the higher mental processes—perception, memory and thinking processes—of two primitive peoples. Its primary aim is to discover 'typical' psychological traits among groups of different culture, in other words, to study by means of a psychological experiment what Professor Bartlett calls the "preferred, persistent tendencies of groups" (3), p. 255).

Y N 114

During two anthropological expeditions to West Africa (Northern Nigeria) I had made some effort to combine anthropological work with experimental psychological studies. I had been working for some time among two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe. These, living side by side, in the same material environment, under the same general conditions and at the same stage of civilization, yet present a picture of two entirely different, almost antagonistic cultures. This seemed an ideal situation for an investigation on the lines of such 'racial' or culture-psychology. Thus I carried out the same series of experiments among both groups, and I shall describe in the following pages some of the results of this comparative study.

II. The experiments

Y N 125

I propose to describe two sets of experiments which correspond very closely to the type of experiment used by Bartlett, namely experiments on *Description* and *Repeated Reproduction* of pictures and stories (3), p. 45 *et seq.*). The pictures were photographs of objects or scenes with which the experimental subjects were all familiar. Some of them were enlargements of my own photographs taken in the country, and some were taken from the *Illustrated London News* and other illustrated papers. The story which was used I composed myself. It was modelled on a native folk-tale of a type fairly common both among Nupe and Yoruba, but with a view to bringing out certain psychological test facts. The experiments were, for practical reasons, carried out in schools, namely in the Government Middle Schools in which teaching is done by native teachers and to a large extent in the vernacular. The two series which I am describing here were done with 20 students from each community, of the age of 15–18. All experiments were done in the vernacular; among the Nupe I myself carried out the experiments, as I was speaking the language fluently; among the other group, the Yoruba, I trained two teachers to carry out the experiments for me.

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The present study can only claim to be a first attempt in field experiments of this kind, carried out under conditions which did not allow a more extensive investigation. Yet the question could be raised how far the evidence obtained in experiments which were carried out on so small a scale and in so special a setting can be considered significant and representative of the culture at large. In order to secure a representative group I selected for my experimental subjects students who came from a great many different places in Nupe and Yoruba respectively. The two experimental groups were matched as closely as possible with regard to age, school standard and the surroundings from which they came. In Nupe I was able to work with larger groups: with 60 boys of the age of 12–18 who were taken from every school form, i.e. who had been students of the Middle School for periods varying from 1 to 5 years. Now, as I shall show later, the experiments admit to a certain extent of statistical interpretation, i.e. the responses to certain essential features in the story or the pictures can be classified and treated quantitatively. This statistical evidence allows us to gauge the extent to which the 20 Yoruba subjects can be considered a significant and representative sample. I found that the means for the various responses calculated for the small group correspond very closely to the means arrived at for the large group; in other words, there exist no unequally distributed marked individual differences which would invalidate the results obtained among the small group. Since school standard and age do not correspond very closely in Nigerian schools, the statistical evidence can moreover be used to check independently the influence of age and educational standard. As regards the age factor, we find a slight rise in the appreciation of factors of reasoning and emotional facts corresponding to age; a fairly unchanged appreciation of situational facts; and a fall in the appreciation of moral ideas from the age of 13–15. More important for this investigation is the educational factor; here the statistical evidence proves conclusively that the difference in educational standard has no influence on the psychological responses and attitudes examined in these experiments.

Y N 124 Y N 128 Y N [871]

III. THE CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Before going into details I must say a few words about the two cultures and the nature of their diversity. The two groups speak different languages which, however, belong to the same linguistic group (of so-called *Sudanic* languages). Their economic system and their general social organization are similar. Yet other aspects of their culture, aspects which may be held to express more specifically psychological trends or tendencies,[1] reveal a fundamental difference. The religion of the Yoruba is characterized by an elaborate and rationalized hierarchical system of deities, each of which has its specific, specialized duty and function. The Nupe have no such system; their religious beliefs centre round a concept of magic of the 'mana' type, i.e. vague, abstract, impersonal power. In the rich, highly developed realistic art of the Yoruba the main *motif* of pictures, plastics and wooden images is the human figure; religious and mythical emblems of this kind play an important part in their life. Again,

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[1] See my article on "The Typological Approach to Culture" (4).

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the Nupe have nothing of the sort, their art is imageless, they have but crude wall paintings, and their strength lies in ornamental, decorative art. Also the Yoruba have a strong sense for pantomime and drama, for which again there is no parallel among the Nupe.

IV. The story experiment

The story was read to the students at 8 a.m., i.e. during their first class. At noon they were asked to relate the story for the first time (each boy by himself) and after one week for the second time. Each time the leader of the experiment wrote down the story as it was told. The story (in free translation) runs as follows:

> Long, long ago there were a man and his wife. They had two children, sons. When these sons had grown up, they saw a beautiful girl. They both made friends with her, and loved her very much. They loved her with one heart. But the girl did not love the elder brother, she only loved the younger. Thereupon the elder brother went to the younger and told him to give up the girl. He said: "I am the one to marry the girl for I am your elder brother." Thus he spoke. But the younger refused. They quarrelled a great deal till the elder brother became furious. When the night fell he went to the hut where the younger brother was sleeping and killed him with his sword, he killed him with one stroke. When the people heard the news they said: "He did an evil deed, God will revenge it." But the girl cried, she cried for twenty days and her heart was full of pain. When she had finished crying she left and went to another place. Nobody saw her again.

The responses which the contents and structure of the story evoke in the experimental subjects can be analysed under four or five different headings: There are points in the story which stress emotional reaction; points which bear on moral ideas; and points which appeal more specifically to reasoning, i.e. crucial points in the logical progress of the narrative. The text also contains certain set phrases and formulae; and, finally, a number of situational or circumstantial details. Obviously, these different categories in which the features of the narrative can be grouped must overlap to a certain extent. But it is just this overlapping, the application of different and even divergent aspects of interpretation to the same features, which will reveal to us most strikingly the different psychological attitudes with which the two groups approach the data presented in the narrative.

(1) *Set phrases and formulae*

The beginning and the end of the narrative, and one or two other phrases, represent more or less fixed formulae typical of all such stories. These phrases were in most cases repeated literally, both by Nupe and

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One day the elder said to the younger he should give the girl up, "because I am the elder". The younger brother said he would not give her up. Although the other was the elder he would not give her up. But the elder brother left the matter then, till night fell, then he went to the hut where the younger brother slept and killed him with a sword. When the girl saw this she cried for twenty days and her heart ached. The people who heard this said, what he had done was bad, God will revenge it. When the girl had finished crying she went to another place, nobody saw her again.

(Y 13) Long ago, there lived a man who had a wife. They had two children, sons. When they grew up they saw a girl who was very beautiful. They loved her, but the girl loved the younger more than the elder. When the elder brother realized this he said to the younger: "You must give up the girl, for I am your elder brother and I ought to marry her." When he said this the younger refused and they quarrelled so much that the elder brother took his sword, went to the younger, attacked him with his sword and killed him. When all the people heard this they said: "An evil deed has been done by the elder brother." They said: "Nobody should touch him, for God will judge." The girl cried for twenty days. Her sadness was so great that she left the town, and nobody saw her again.

V. The picture experiments

Y N 125

I showed six pictures of different topics which varied in complication and distinctness. Each picture was exposed for about 10–15 sec. The experimental subjects were asked first to write down (in vernacular) what they had seen, after every picture. After a week's time they were asked to relate what they remembered, and this was written down by the leader of the experiment. The photographs represented:

(1) Two leopards in the bush.

(2) A black horse with a native groom in European garb, in an open field.

(3) A native in Mohammedan dress (which is common everywhere in Northern Nigeria), sitting on a table on which stands a native clay lamp.

(4) An oasis in the desert, showing a camel in front of a date-palm and two Arabs. (This was a rather dark and indistinct picture.)

(5) A mosque with a huge crowd of people in front. (A clear but somewhat complicated picture.)

(6) A bush fire (dark, very indistinct, in some respects corresponding to the familiar 'ink-blot' picture).

(1) *The background of experience*

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A first difference in the reaction of the two groups is due to the fact that in the description or interpretation of certain features in the pictures the different background of knowledge and practical experience characteristic of each group comes into play. Although the general cultural background of the two groups is the same, there exist naturally certain specific details of culture which are different in the two groups, and which to a certain extent enter into the description of the pictures. Thus quite a number of Yoruba called the clay lamp in the third picture a 'pump'. This

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4. The experiments examined the repeated reproduction of a narrative, and the description and remembering of a number of pictures. Both the narrative and the pictures represented a material with which the experimental subjects were thoroughly familiar.

5. The results show a marked difference in the responses of the two groups. In the story experiment one tribe laid stress on logical and rational elements while the other showed distinct appreciation of situational facts and connexions of time and place. In the picture experiment the response of the first group was meaning-oriented, the response of the second enumerative and appreciative of spatial arrangement.

6. Between the cultural differentiation and the psychological differentiation there exists close correspondence. The dualism of culture and psychological responses is incidental; the investigation reveals in fact three different psychological 'types' distributed in different proportion among the two groups.

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121 in the study of these historical cultures is equally barred. Very few historical records exist, and they are hardly informative from the sociolo-
[212] gical point of view. The people of Nupe have not yet risen to the stage of education producing written records and accounts of important events or institutions. With the exception of a few educated Mohammedan
[126] scholars whose co-operation I was able to enlist in the recording of folklore and historical traditions, I have been unable to use a single literate informant, for example, to keep diaries of important events, or to handle questionnaires. Lastly, the most essential evidence in the study of complex societies, namely statistics, scarcely exists. The statistics in this book were, with few exceptions, compiled single-handed and on a scale of the inadequacy of which no one can be more aware than the author.

121 I have described elsewhere the technique of inquiry which I applied, and need say nothing on that point here.[1] But it is necessary to describe
114 the general plan of research I pursued, for it illustrates the methods by which I attempted to circumvent some of the difficulties just mentioned. I spent two years in the field, in the course of two expeditions in 1934 and 1935–6. From the outset I was confronted with the problem how to cover, in intensive study, the vast area inhabited by the Nupe people. The political configuration forbade the selection of one section to the disregard of others. The widespread political system had clearly to be studied at different points, in its centre as well as on its periphery. Moreover, a short preliminary survey already revealed the existence of considerable cultural differences within the tribe. The further my studies proceeded the more manifest became the significance of these differences as variations of a common pattern, the study of which was essential to the understanding of the forces that moulded the culture of the people. The investigation thus became perforce a comparative study within the framework of one tribe and one culture. At a certain stage of my investigation I even had to go outside this framework and devote some study to neighbouring groups—the Kakanda, Gbari, and Bassa—which, closely akin to the Nupe and partly their fellow citizens in the Nupe kingdom, might throw light on certain aspects of Nupe culture.

The main problem was to discover representative sections and centres for the study of this widely spread social system and its varying culture. I will not speak of the difficulties which I encountered in this task, helped as I was only by records and information which soon proved superficial and inexact. In the first six or seven months I was reduced almost to the method of trial and error: a very short stay in a new place would have been useless even merely to discover whether or not this place might prove a useful centre; and once I decided on a long stay the time was gone and could not be recovered even if the place turned out to be less profitable than I had expected. Let me admit that this did indeed happen in two villages (Mokwa and Sakpe) which I had made my centres upon the advice of various informants and which, as I discovered later, were not as significant or essential as certain other places would have been. However, certain general facts about the culture and the

[1] See 'The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, chapter xiii, 1939.

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people could be obtained there as well as anywhere, and on my second expedition I could to some extent correct the mistakes of the first. On the other hand, I was unable to study one or two villages (e.g. Yeti, in the oil-palm area, and Kutiwengi, where an interesting variety of a certain religious cult is reported to exist), partly because I had discovered their significance too late, and partly because my time did not allow the inclusion of further centres and communities. 121 114

The main centres on which I based my investigation were: Bida town, with its surrounding belt of hamlets and small villages; the large villages of Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, and Mokwa, in the west; and finally Jebba Island on the Niger, which commands an important stretch of the river area. Each of these centres I visited several times. The repeated periods of study enabled me to check my material and to remedy oversights; often they led to the discovery of new points of view which only emerged from the comparison of the cultural variations typical of different areas and local communities. In addition I stayed for shorter periods in certain other communities in order to study a specific question or to collect certain comparative evidence. Thus, for example, I paid several short visits to the village Lemu, twenty miles north of Bida, because a new commercial crop had been adopted that year by the people of Lemu; and once I spent two weeks in Patigi (a quite uninteresting visit, by the way), because there the last descendants of the old dynasty of Nupe kings hold court. 114

Bida, the large capital of the country, required the longest time. Here also I began my studies of the Nupe language with the help of the English- and Hausa-speaking teachers of Bida Middle School. During these first months I carried out my anthropological work through the medium of Hausa, which I had studied before going to the field, and which is widely understood among the people of Bida, but from the fifth or sixth month of my stay I used Nupe exclusively. During the first expedition I spent altogether six months in Bida and the Bida area, in the course of three visits; three months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits; and one month each in Mokwa, Agaie, and Jebba Island. During the second expedition I spent five months in Bida, in the course of two visits, two months in Kutigi, in the course of two visits, three months, in one visit, in Jebba and on the river, and two months on travels to the neighbouring area of Gbari country and to Ilorin, Ibadan, and Lokoja, where I made a special study of the large Nupe colonies in these towns.

The difficulty of discovering in this large and complex culture representative areas and group sections, and of distinguishing them from others whose cultural life must be regarded as a variation of the main pattern, arises in a different form with regard to documentation. The problem here is how to prove with scientific exactitude the typical or non-typical nature of cultural facts and events, and how to present them convincingly as representative or as in some degree deviating from the norm. The distinction between typical and non-typical facts is primarily a question of frequency, and the ideal method of documentation would be one in which all descriptions and analyses were backed by statistical evidence. For obvious reasons such a method of documentation is rarely 128

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128 applicable. So far as it was possible I have made efforts to supplement all descriptions with quantitative evidence to show the frequency and regularity of social facts and events. It must be understood that where I limited myself to a few descriptions or single instances these are presented (unless stated otherwise) as typical instances, and that there exists sufficient evidence of their representative nature. But I must admit that in certain cases no such evidence could be adduced: if I record the absence of a certain cultural fact or its occurrence in a certain degree of frequency, this may only mean that the fact did not occur at all, or did not occur in any higher degree of frequency, in the areas and groups with which I was mainly dealing, and during the time of my investigation. Unhappily, the orbit of the anthropologist is limited by time and space. The larger and more complex the group which he studies, the more strongly he feels his dependence upon that treacherous purveyor of facts, chance. It was chance that brought to my knowledge the fact that in one small and unimportant Nupe village succession to chieftainship is matrilineal—an isolated occurrence in that otherwise conspicuously patrilineal society. And it was chance that led me to the discovery, in a small riverain village, of a certain ritual which amounted to a symbolic 'king-killing'—again a usage for which there seems to be no parallel in other parts of Nupe. I could discover no evidence that would allow me to explain these anomalies, and I have put them down as such, well aware of the possibility (slight though it may be) of such evidence existing, undiscovered, in the villages and group sections of Nupe to which my studies did not extend. The general knowledge of the cultural constellation gained from the available material allows us to a certain extent to formulate theories, to predict, as it were, whether or not a certain cultural fact is likely to occur, or to occur in this or that frequency. But we can predict only a likelihood; we can delimit the possible sources of error: we can eliminate them as little as we can eliminate chance itself.

The presentation of the material involves also difficulties of a more technical nature. Its very quantity forbade treatment in the form of a comprehensive monograph. Nor did the material lend itself to a neat division into a number of separate treatises each dealing with a different aspect of the anthropological quadrivium—kinship, political organization, economics, religion. The solution could only be found in a compromise. My original intention was to build the book round the relation between the two paramount group configurations, political association and family—'Kingdom and Kinship'. But this would still have meant a very unwieldy book. The final result, then, is a 'rump' monograph, dealing with the culture of Nupe viewed from the two angles of political and economic organization—two aspects of culture which must be regarded as inseparable. Even so, I had to leave out, or to reduce to a short quasi-preliminary outline, the description of two domains of culture the bearing of which upon the problems of the book I will not minimize: religion and law.

I must anticipate two further criticisms. One may be provoked by the

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rather unusual dichotomous arrangement of certain chapters. It was necessitated by the nature of the material, by the contrasting configurations which dominate the cultural life of Nupe—urban and rural culture, Mohammedanism and paganism, the organization of the state and the organization of the village community. One dichotomous formulation I have made almost the *leitmotif* of this analysis, namely, the twofold classification of social systems, formulated most clearly by MacIver, into *Communities* and *Associations*. Let me quote his definition: Community is a 'circle of people who live together, who belong together, so that they share, not this or that particular interest, but a whole set of interests wide enough and comprehensive enough to include their lives'. And Association: 'a group specifically organized for the purpose of an interest or group of interests which its members have in common.'[1] These two categories are used in this book consistently in MacIver's sense, that is, as descriptive categories defining, not rigidly separated social entities, but rather two poles of a more fluid social reality of many shades and grades. 128

Again, it might be objected that the descriptive accounts in this book are frequently interspersed with theoretical discussions. I shall offer no apology. Description is meaningless and misleading unless supplemented by a clarification of the concepts and categories with which it operates, and by an assessment in terms of theoretical generalizations of the concrete data which it produces. This is doubly true of the complex and, from the viewpoint of traditional anthropology, unusual culture described in this book. Thus I was forced to devote comparatively long theoretical discussions to the examination of such concepts as 'tribe' (in Chapter II) and 'state' (in Chapter VI), to the analysis of social class in Nupe (Chapter VIII), and to an inquiry into the relation between economics and sociology (Chapter XX).

In the research programme of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, under whose auspices the present investigation was carried out, the study of culture change under the impact of modern Western civilization is assigned a prominent place. Culture contact in Nupe is not restricted to this most recent historical phase; nor does it affect only certain well-defined domains of social life—it pervades the whole history and the whole living culture of the people. Nor can it be said (with some anthropologists) that the study of modern culture contact entails specific methods of approach, applicable only to this one aspect of social development. It did not therefore seem feasible to concentrate its examination in special chapters. Every description and analysis contained in this book bears to lesser or greater extent also on the problems of culture contact and culture change, ancient or modern. Only in a few instances did the material lend itself to a separate treatment of modern culture contact. They will be found in Chapter X, under the heading 'Problems of Adaptation', in Chapter XVII, which is entitled 'Industrial Labour', and in Chapter XIX, in the section on 'Modern Business Methods'. 121 128

[1] R. M. MacIver, *Society, Its Structure and Changes*, 1931, pp. 9, 12, 13.

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PREFACE

THIS book is intended as a sequel to my first monograph on the Nupe people, *A Black Byzantium*, the material presented there—on economic and political organization, and on kinship and the regulations of adolescence—being largely presupposed in the present volume. Here and there, however, the run of the argument necessitated a somewhat fuller reference to the data contained in the earlier book, so that repetitions and some overlapping could not altogether be avoided. Much the same applies to various papers which I previously published on particular aspects of Nupe culture. 128

In one respect the present account might seem incomplete; for it omits the full discussion of a topic not previously treated and one well suited to the context of a book on religion, namely, myths and legends. The reason for this omission is partly a practical one, since an exhaustive treatment of Nupe legends, which would inevitably lead on to ordinary tales and folklore, would have overburdened the present volume. But partly, the omission can be justified on the grounds that these tales and legends are of relatively little relevance for the understanding of Nupe religion, which point will be dealt with in due course.

As readers of *A Black Byzantium* will know, the Nupe people are today in great measure Mohammedanized, the influence of Islam steadily encroaching upon the indigenous form of worship. If, therefore, in this description of Nupe religion I were to take my lead from the actually obtaining state of affairs, I should have to assign equal weight to Nupe-Islam and to the traditional creed, if not indeed to give prominence to the former. In fact, I have done the reverse; more precisely, I have treated Islam in Nupe as an intrusion, as an instance (to use the familiar phrase) of 'culture contact', and the indigenous religion as my true or main subject-matter. I do not think that this viewpoint needs to be specially defended. The fact that the traditional observances had already disappeared from many parts of the country during my stay in 1934–6 and have probably receded even further since, far from detracting from our interest in the indigenous creed, only renders 128 771

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the task of recording and analysing it more important as well as pressing.

A purely technical point in conclusion. It is always difficult to decide, in books of this kind, just how much scope should be given to vernacular words and quotations. Clearly, in a topic like religion certain crucial terms must be given, or must at least be introduced, in the vernacular. But too generous a use of the indigenous language is both clumsy and confusing to the reader. I have therefore tried to reduce it to a minimum. Nor do I think that this entails a serious loss of accuracy; for even the most intricate vernacular terms are translatable, even though the translation itself might have to be specially explained and perhaps justified: which is precisely the procedure I propose to adopt.

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I

THE NUPE CREED

I. PROLEGOMENA

THE title of this book, *Nupe Religion*, suggests a logical unity in our subject-matter which, at the very outset, might appear problematical. Two questions, in particular, might be raised. First, are we in fact dealing with *one* religion of *one* people, that is, with beliefs and practices which both form a coherent system and occur uniformly throughout the society? And second, how far are we dealing with 'religion' in the strict sense of the word, and with it alone, to the exclusion of 'magic', mere 'superstitions', and other, cruder forms of belief?

The answer to the first question cannot be given in the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no'; nor can all the issues involved properly be judged so early in the discussion. Let me, however, anticipate the relevant points. The religious beliefs and practices of the Nupe differ considerably in different parts of the country; we shall frequently meet with local cults and with forms of worship varying from region to region, even from village to village. Furthermore, the main acts of worship, their execution and promises, concern the single village community, and not that widest group, the Nupe people or tribe. Nor indeed is that widest group an unequivocal unit. The people who call themselves Nupe are internally divided in various ways—by ethnic descent, by tribal segmentation and, partly, political allegiance, by the cleavage between urban and peasant population, and by the barriers of social class. The bulk of the Nupe people is held together in the kingdom of that name, and in the following description we shall mainly be concerned with the politically united tribe or nation. Even so, certain of the internal divisions remain, and these, too, entail corresponding divergences in religious belief and practice.

It might seem, therefore, that in speaking of 'Nupe religion' we are merely employing a convenient descriptive phrase, a summary reference of the kind ethnographers find useful when they wish to state that such-and-such observances are found in a particular group or area. But the phrase is intended to mean more than this.

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The varieties of belief and practice found in Nupe are at least roughly akin, both in their content and in what might be called their style; though they exhibit no conspicuous uniformity or even consistency, they yet hang together in relevant respects and also reflect an identical psychological tenor. Most important of all, the people themselves think of their religion in terms of such an underlying unity; indeed, as we shall see, they tend to exaggerate it. Thus, though the local observances may differ and the congregations in acts of worship be no larger than single village communities, there is a clear understanding that the diverse and separate practices are instances of a common creed. When the people performing one kind of ceremonial comment on the different usage in another part of the country, they yet imply that the two belong together or, more precisely, belong to something wider than both. So that, over and above internal divisions, the people draw the (to them) much more important distinction between the sum total of beliefs and practices in their tribe, and the different totals of this kind in others.

It must be emphasized, however, that for the people this over-all unity is not constituted by the intrinsic coherence of the religious usages that happen to occur in their tribe; it is constituted, rather, by the fact that these usages do occur in their tribe and hence are typical of and valid for a given people or society. That collective entity—the people called Nupe—is the basic premiss; the diverse beliefs and practices are construed into a common creed on that basis.

The precise relationship between the total society and the 'total creed' will occupy us at a later stage. Here we might note that the Nupe have no special, collective name for their religion. They have names only for particular conceptions, single practices, local ceremonials. As for the total creed, the Nupe can describe it only circuitously and enumeratively, as being concerned with the God *Sokó*, and not with deities named differently; with such-and-such rituals or 'medicines', and not with others; with spirits, but not anthropomorphous ones, and so forth. Yet it is for them a 'total creed' none the less. If it be argued that this cannot be so, since in this case the people would have found a way of summarizing all these aspects in a name indicative of their over-all unity (as we do when we speak of Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism), the answer is that they do not think of their creed in that way. As they think of it, it has no identity apart from its validity-for-a-society; so that it would be meaningless to define it by a separate concept. Differently expressed, Nupe religion is a tribal or national religion, and *one* inasmuch as a tribe or nation claims it as its own.

To turn to our second question, which, let this be stressed, is of a purely preliminary order. It is here raised, not for the sake of

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discussing the meaning or essence of religious belief or of separating its relevant varieties, but merely in order to outline the kind of data that have been included in this book and to justify their inclusion. The word 'religion' will here be understood in the widest and loosest sense. I have not, for example, made the familiar distinction between religion and magic a criterion for the selection or arrangement of the material. Not that the Nupe are without observances and concepts which merit the name 'religious', however narrowly understood. But other beliefs and practices, though they might not satisfy the criteria of 'religion proper', will not for that reason be excluded or kept on one side.

It does not seem very difficult to define our position in general terms. Convenient phrases are at hand, such as: By 'religion' shall here be meant all beliefs and practices implying communication with and control of the supernatural, whether this is attempted through appeals and prayers to some transcendental intelligence (in the manner of religion) or quasi-mechanically, by the manipulation of 'magic' agencies. But this equation of religion with 'supernaturalism' (as Lowie would say), convenient though it may be, only poses further problems of definition; and the familiar category of the 'supernatural' proves on closer inspection to be itself ambiguous.

When speaking of attempts at communicating with or controlling the supernatural we are clearly viewing the situation through the eyes of the people we are studying, imputing to *them* the thought of transcending the given reality; we should probably impute to them also definite attitudes and feelings relating to the things transcendental, such as awe or fear, humility or ecstasy, or the emotional concentration we call worship. Yet when we try to define the supernatural itself we are driven to assume the opposite viewpoint and to judge the transcendentality of things by our own way of thinking. Nor, indeed, can we avoid veering round from one viewpoint to the other, since neither is by itself fully satisfactory.

Consider that any definition of the supernatural must introduce the contrast with the domain of empirical and scientific knowledge; more precisely, when judging any action or notion to be concerned with the supernatural we assert by implication that it is concerned with existences or influences (beings, 'powers', 'forces') the assumption of which conflicts with the principles of empirical enquiry and verification.[1] And since these principles and

[1] It must be emphasized that the relevant conflict is with the *principles* of empirical knowledge and with the *methods* of scientific enquiry, not merely with the body of information extant at any given moment. For in the latter case any scientific theory in advance of existing ideas or techniques of verification would be 'supernatural'.

INTRODUCTION

The confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers has for long been a focal area of migrations, commerce, and conquest, which have set up cultural cross currents of many kinds. The Igala, the Jukun, and the Fulani have at various times conquered large parts of the region and these wars have left deep impressions on the institutions of the peoples.

The area as a whole is fairly open savannah or "orchard bush," but it is fly-infested and cattle cannot be reared successfully. The agriculture, which dominates the economy, includes the cultivation of crops, such as guinea-corn and yams, characteristic of Northern and Southern Nigeria respectively, hence the term "Middle Belt" which is frequently applied to the Niger-Benue region. The Nupe country is one of the northernmost areas in which the oil-palm and kola nut are found; the Niger watershed in Igala and the southern fringe of districts in Idoma also lie within the "palm belt." Settlement is fairly continuous over the area as a whole and there is considerable intermixture of ethnic groups. Population is moderately dense—between 30 and 60 persons per square mile over wide areas—though it is considerably sparser north of the Benue and in some Nupe districts west of the Kaduna River.

Continuous European contact with the Niger-Benue region began with Lander's descent of the Niger in 1830. In 1832–33 the Laird and Oldfield expedition succeeded in getting some distance up the Benue and visited the whole river front of the Igbira and Igala countries. They found the country north of the Benue much disturbed by Fulani raids. The markets around the confluence were major centres of the slave trade[1] and in 1855 Crowther heard Igala, Igbira, Nupe, Kakanda, Hausa, Yoruba, Idoma, Jukun, and Ibo being spoken at the Igbede market at the confluence.[2]

The tribes of the Niger-Benue confluence speak Kwa languages, while to the east the region borders directly on a solid block of tribes speaking so-called "Semi-Bantu" languages.[3] But there has been great terminological confusion, with reference to both languages and ethnic groups, especially concerning the large body of Idoma-speaking peoples lying between Igala and Tiv country, where the name Akpoto or Okpoto was used in various 19th-century accounts to include all the region from the confluence to the Tiv border. Whatever the original situation may have been, however, the only group in the area which today calls itself and its language Akpoto is the peoples of the central and western Idoma-speaking districts. The situation is further confused by the fact that there is a district of Igala called Akpoto, south of Ankpa. This district borders on Idoma, and the people on both sides of the border are largely bilingual. As will be seen from the section on the Idoma, many of the "languages" of this region which have hitherto received separate treatment in the literature can now be shown to be closely related dialects of Idoma. Although north of the Benue the situation appears simpler, this may well be due to continuing ignorance of the ethnography and linguistics of the area.

Politically the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence exhibit widely differing systems, ranging from the highly organized state of the Nupe with a ruling dynasty of Fulani descent, and the Igbira and Igala chiefdoms with their "divine kings," to the fragmentary statelets of the Idoma-speaking peoples and the small autonomous "clans" of the Egede. The Nupe are the only people to have been Islamized to any considerable extent.

In describing these very diverse peoples, who have nevertheless been in contact over long periods, it has been found most convenient to deal first with the Nupe

[1] Clapperton and Lander, 1829, p. 297.
[2] Crowther, 1855, p. 167.
[3] See Crowther, 1855, p. 65, and below, pp. 78–9, 90–2.

INTRODUCTION

128 of Niger and Ilorin Provinces, on whom there is a considerable literature. An account is next given of the Igbira and the Igala of Kabba Province; this is necessarily uneven and provisional in view of the very limited sources. The account of the Idoma-speaking peoples of Benue Province is based mainly on Dr. Armstrong's field investigations and his study of unpublished local records. The peoples have been grouped by him as follows: first the Idoma " Proper " of Idoma Division, with their outliers the Iyala and Nkum and the so-called Arago of Doma and Keana, and secondly other groups speaking languages closely related to Idoma, namely, the Afu of Nassarawa, and the Egede, Akweya-Yachi and Utonkon-Effium of Idoma and Ogoja Divisions.

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The present study can only claim to be a first attempt in field experiments of this kind, carried out under conditions which did not allow a more extensive investigation. Yet the question could be raised how far the evidence obtained in experiments which were carried out on so small a scale and in so special a setting can be considered significant and representative of the culture at large. In order to secure a representative group I selected for my experimental subjects students who came from a great many different places in Nupe and Yoruba respectively. The two experimental groups were matched as closely as possible with regard to age, school standard and the surroundings from which they came. In Nupe I was able to work with larger groups: with 60 boys of the age of 12–18 who were taken from every school form, i.e. who had been students of the Middle School for periods varying from 1 to 5 years. Now, as I shall show later, the experiments admit to a certain extent of statistical interpretation, i.e. the responses to certain essential features in the story or the pictures can be classified and treated quantitatively. This statistical evidence allows us to gauge the extent to which the 20 Yoruba subjects can be considered a significant and representative sample. I found that the means for the various responses calculated for the small group correspond very closely to the means arrived at for the large group; in other words, there exist no unequally distributed marked individual differences which would invalidate the results obtained among the small group. Since school standard and age do not correspond very closely in Nigerian schools, the statistical evidence can moreover be used to check independently the influence of age and educational standard. As regards the age factor, we find a slight rise in the appreciation of factors of reasoning and emotional facts corresponding to age; a fairly unchanged appreciation of situational facts; and a fall in the appreciation of moral ideas from the age of 13–15. More important for this investigation is the educational factor; here the statistical evidence proves conclusively that the difference in educational standard has no influence on the psychological responses and attitudes examined in these experiments.

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III. THE CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Before going into details I must say a few words about the two cultures and the nature of their diversity. The two groups speak different languages which, however, belong to the same linguistic group (of so-called *Sudanic* languages). Their economic system and their general social organization are similar. Yet other aspects of their culture, aspects which may be held to express more specifically psychological trends or tendencies,[1] reveal a fundamental difference. The religion of the Yoruba is characterized by an elaborate and rationalized hierarchical system of deities, each of which has its specific, specialized duty and function. The Nupe have no such system; their religious beliefs centre round a concept of magic of the 'mana' type, i.e. vague, abstract, impersonal power. In the rich, highly developed realistic art of the Yoruba the main *motif* of pictures, plastics and wooden images is the human figure; religious and mythical emblems of this kind play an important part in their life. Again,

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[1] See my article on "The Typological Approach to Culture"(4).

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CHAPTER I

ENVIRONMENT

THE COUNTRY

131 THE people who call themselves Nupe live in the heart of Nigeria, in the low basin that is formed by the valleys of the two rivers Niger and Kaduna, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ N.L. A line drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupe land, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger south of Baro the southern boundary. The Niger, flowing almost straight north–south between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the west; the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.

133 It is a low-lying, softly undulating country, not more than 200 feet above sea-level in most parts. A few low ridges of broken, rocky hills stretch out, rib-like, from the river valleys, and curiously symmetrical flat-topped hillocks rise abruptly here and there from the plain. The highest points are no more than 800 feet above sea-level. At Jebba the Niger forces its way through a narrow passage formed by rocks, the ragged end of a short, broken chain of hills. Farther south, at Kpatagbã and Baro, and above Yankyedya in the north, hills and rocks close in upon the river. Rabá, the ancient river capital of Nupe kingdom, stands on high cliffs of red sandstone. Between cliffs and rocks the river bed is bordered by low banks on which stretches of thick rain-forest alternate with shrub and low bush. During the rains both forest-covered banks and open bush are flooded far inland and turned into vast swamps; the level of the Kaduna at Wuya rises by 30 feet; and in the Niger valley villages which lie on high ground in the dry season have the water of the river washing the threshold of their houses. Part of Jebba Island is flooded every year; and Nupeko, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, about two miles from the river in the dry season, can be reached only by canoe in the rains.

The big rivers Niger and Kaduna form the two axes of the country, an efficient, natural system of communication. It is no accident that the early Nupe kingdom grew in the area near the confluence of the two rivers, which were its first high-roads as well as its natural boundaries. A net of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, covers the country, providing an efficient system of natural irrigation. In most parts of Nupe
134 land the soil is rich and fertile, especially in the thinly inhabited districts west of the Kaduna, the only part of Nupe which still possesses large areas of virgin forest. East of the Kaduna, especially round Bida, a dense population and intensive cultivation have reduced the fertility of the land. It is the typical soil of Northern Nigeria, red earth mixed with laterite and rich in silicates—a fact which becomes important for the native glass industry in Bida. In a few districts, round Sakpe and near

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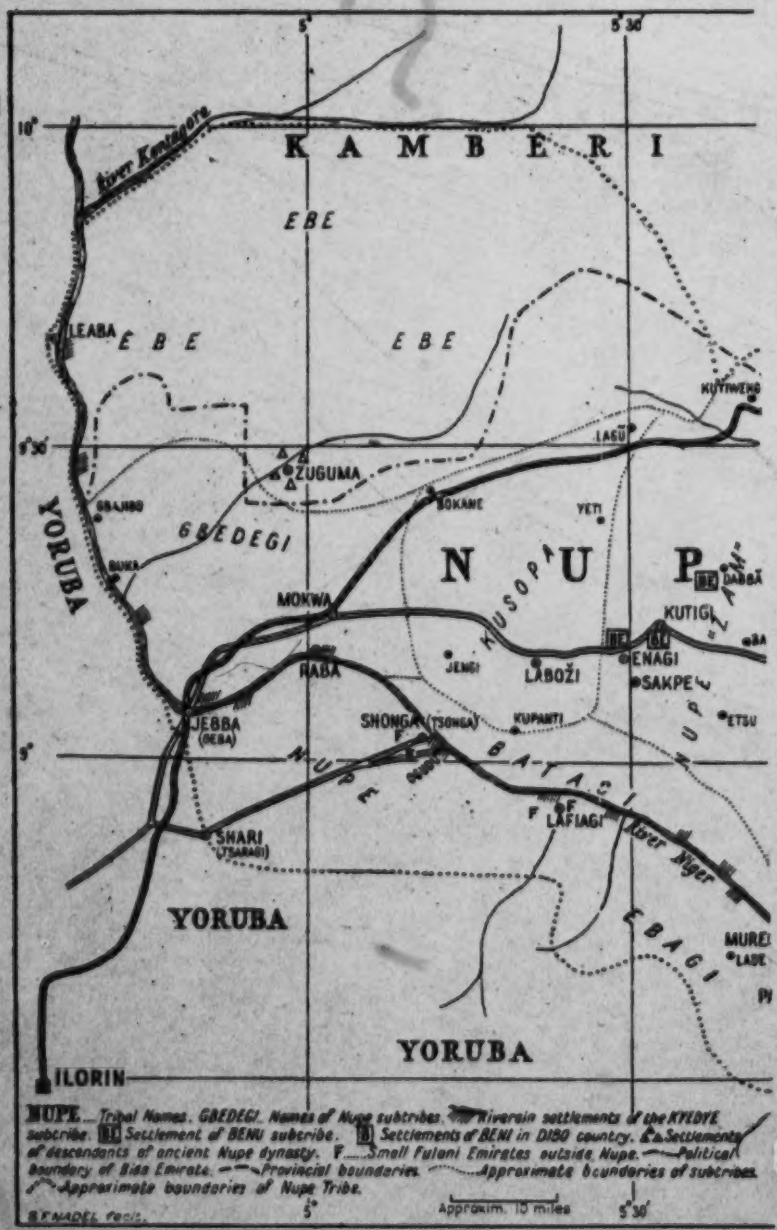

NUPE.—Tribal Names. GBEDEGI. Names of Nupe subtribes. Riverain settlements of the KYEDYE subtribe. BE Settlement of BENU subtribe. B Settlements of BENI in DIBO country. Settlements of descendants of ancient Nupe dynasty. F—Small Fulani Emirates outside Nupe.——Political boundary of Bida Emirate.—·—Provincial boundaries.——Approximate boundaries of subtribes. Approximate boundaries of Nupe Tribe.

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Approxim. 10 miles

[End Map I (A)]

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MAP OF NUPE

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[End Map I (B)]

THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

105 The Nupe, speaking a number of related dialects, number about 360,000, and consist of the inhabitants of Bida Emirate, Niger Province, together with several politically separate sections. They do not form a territorially united group and, although every Nupe should extend hospitality to his fellow-tribesmen, they are not characterised by close internal cohesion. There is considerable variety of custom among the various "sub-tribes." Outstanding common features are: the cycle of myths of the culture-hero Tsoede, the observation of the *gunnu* ritual, belief in the supreme sky-god Soko, and the general structure of political ranks, age-sets, kinship system, and marriage rules.[1]

NOMENCLATURE

101 The Nupe call themselves *Nupeciři* or *Nupenciři* (sing. *Nupeci* or *Nupenci*), their language *Nupe* or *Ezi Nupe*, and their country *Kin Nupe* ("the land of Nupe"). But Nupe in Zugurma and, generally speaking, north of the Kaduna River, also call themselves *Agabi*.[2] They are known by neighbouring tribes by the following names:[3]

By the Hausa: *Ba Nupe* or *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*).
" " Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
" " Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari: *Ampeyi* or *Nife*.
" " Akanda (Yoruba): *Anupecwayi*.
" " Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
" " Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
" " Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
" " Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie
167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafiagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 34. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organisation more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.

[2] Mathews, 1936.

[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 282 and index.

[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abewa by Hausa speakers.

[pp. 1-16 Non-existent]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

131 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba
167 Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[5]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

101 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own
634 dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common
[167] descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciři): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciři* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiři* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoři* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Bazumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endozigi, Ela, Difu, Gbaradosi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
171 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
179 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[101] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* ● 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 552] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

641 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

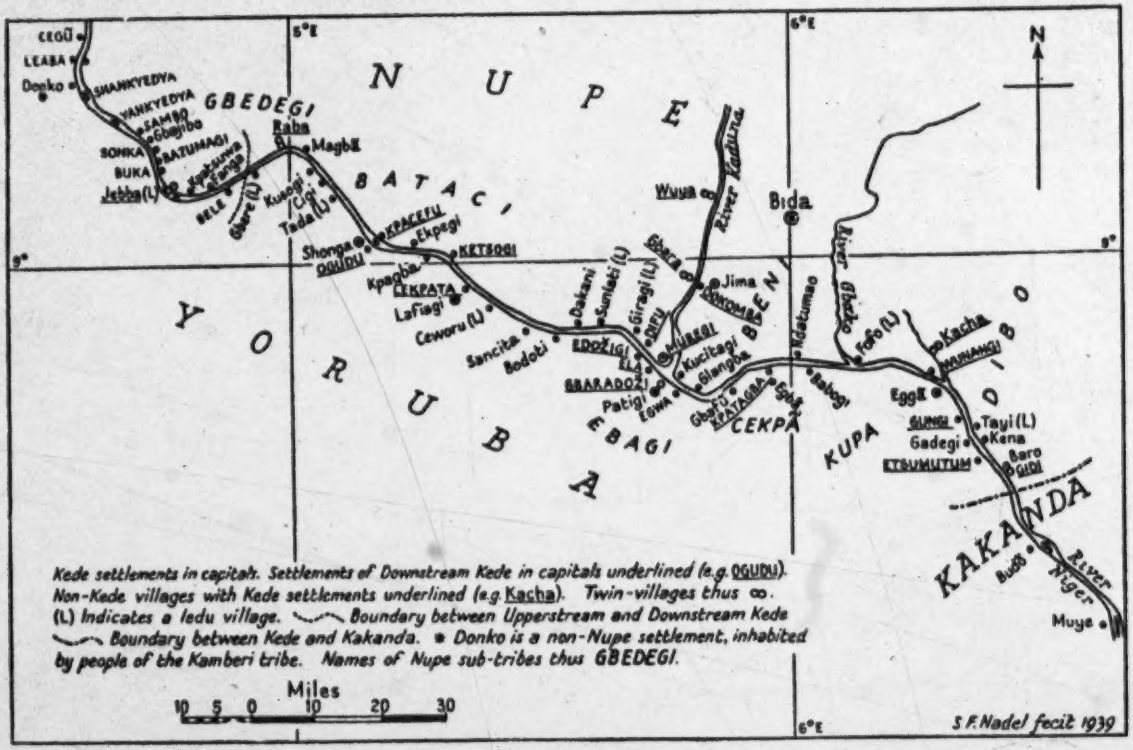
161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede



THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

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5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

THE KEDE: A RIVERAIN STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By S. F. NADEL

I. *Introduction*

THE Kyedye or Kede,[1] with whom this paper is concerned, are a section of the large Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria, whose general culture and social organization I have described elsewhere.[2] The Kede have many cultural traits in common with their mother tribe; their kinship system is the same; they speak the dialect which is spoken to-day by the majority of the Nupe sub-tribes and has become the acknowledged language of the Emirate, Nupe 'proper'; they have also adopted the religion of Nupe kingdom, Islam. Yet combined with this cultural affinity we find certain marked divergencies. The Kede are a riverain group—the only purely riverain group among the various Nupe sub-tribes. Their economic pursuits and general social life centre round the river on which they live and from which they derive their livelihood. This means already that their social and cultural life must present certain features which are absent in Greater Nupe. Their political organization, moreover, contains certain distinctive and unusual traits—unusual even for Africa at large. It is for this unusual nature rather than for its relation to practical problems of African administration that I have chosen the political organization of this small Nigerian sub-tribe for the subject of this contribution.

II. *Demography*

The main body of the Kede lives to-day on the Rivers Niger and Kaduna between 8° 30′ and 9° 40′ North Latitude, inhabiting a narrow strip of land on both banks. The Kede share their territory with a number of other tribal sections of the Nupe, which lead a semi-riverain life, pursuing—unlike the Kede—agriculture

[1] The proper Nupe name is Kyedye. But the Hausa, Yoruba, and other neighbouring groups (as well as, to-day, Government officials) prefer the more easily pronounced Kede. We shall adopt, for the sake of simplicity, this latter name.

[2] See *Africa*, viii, 1935, and also my forthcoming book, *A Black Byzantium*.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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131 **The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

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Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggā in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt
693 symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very
[562] reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the
[782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sālati,
[103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads
[532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ẹ́ṣhā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Edc*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Hausa, and partly from Bornu, in historical times.[1] Nor is the cultivation of yam an original cultural possession of the Nupe, which is proved by two facts: first, that the Nupe north and east of the Niger are unfamiliar with certain important ways of preparing yam common in all 'real' yam countries, e.g. the drying of yam; and second, that yam, though to-day an important staple food, has still no place in their sacrifices, ritual meals, and first-crop ceremonies; only corn and millet may be used for these ritual offerings.[2] Cassava, finally, has only been introduced in the last thirty years; thirty years ago, I was told by a missionary, it was almost unknown in Nupe. Thus communication and culture contact have helped to mould the physical environment of to-day. This manifold agricultural system, however, could not have been evolved if the natural conditions of the country had not been favourable. The meeting of south and north in the vegetation of Nupe, the coexistence of marsh-land and savannah country, the natural irrigation and the strips and patches of thick forest, all this was as essential to the development of the productive system of the country as was the inventiveness and stage of civilization of its people. We cannot attempt to decide which factor, environment or civilization, has had the larger share in this development. The rigid distinction between environment and culture has long been abandoned as misleading and futile. For our investigation it is irrelevant. We can well regard the environment as it appears at present, the natural resources as they are utilized by the people to-day, as a unitary complex of factors the effect of which, upon the life and well-being of the people, we have to examine.

CLIMATE

Nupe, lower lying than any of the neighbouring districts, with its two big rivers, their dry, blazing sand-banks in the dry season, and their vast swamps in the rains, is one of the hottest and at the same time most humid districts of Nigeria. The river valleys especially, and the hollow in which Bida is situated, are damp, airless, and unhealthy. The following figures give the average temperature, humidity, and rainfall in Bida for 1933:[3]

TABLE I

	Jan.	*Feb.*	*Mar.*	*Apr.*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug.*	*Sept.*	*Oct.*	*Nov.*	*Dec.*	*Annual total*
Minimum temp.	60	70	72	72	71	71	68	68	68	70	70	67	..
Maximum temp.	93	98	102	103	98	88	92	90	85	91	96	96	..
Humidity (per cent.)	60	50	66	71	78	92	92	92	85	76	75	62	..
Rainfall (in inches)	2·99	..	..	1·99	3·06	12·33	13·41	15·82	11·87	2·29	0·32	..	66·08

[1] It is still practised to-day by the Bornu settlers of Kutigi.

[2] There is one exception: Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, where yam is sacrificed at certain annual rites. But the exception proves the rule, for Mokwa is the gate for cultural influences from Yoruba.

[3] This table was copied from the readings taken regularly in Bida Middle School.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only
164 a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

231 The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

164 In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the
732 highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity,
158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER I

ENVIRONMENT

THE COUNTRY

131 THE people who call themselves Nupe live in the heart of Nigeria, in the low basin that is formed by the valleys of the two rivers Niger and Kaduna, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ N.L. A line drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupe land, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger south of Baro the southern boundary. The Niger, flowing almost straight north–south between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the west; the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.

● 133 It is a low-lying, softly undulating country, not more than 200 feet above sea-level in most parts. A few low ridges of broken, rocky hills stretch out, rib-like, from the river valleys, and curiously symmetrical flat-topped hillocks rise abruptly here and there from the plain. The highest points are no more than 800 feet above sea-level. At Jebba the Niger forces its way through a narrow passage formed by rocks, the ragged end of a short, broken chain of hills. Farther south, at Kpatagbā and Baro, and above Yankyedya in the north, hills and rocks close in upon the river. Rabá, the ancient river capital of Nupe kingdom, stands on high cliffs of red sandstone. Between cliffs and rocks the river bed is bordered by low banks on which stretches of thick rain-forest alternate with shrub and low bush. During the rains both forest-covered banks and open bush are flooded far inland and turned into vast swamps; the level of the Kaduna at Wuya rises by 30 feet; and in the Niger valley villages which lie on high ground in the dry season have the water of the river washing the threshold of their houses. Part of Jebba Island is flooded every year; and Nupeko, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, about two miles from the river in the dry season, can be reached only by canoe in the rains.

The big rivers Niger and Kaduna form the two axes of the country, an efficient, natural system of communication. It is no accident that the early Nupe kingdom grew in the area near the confluence of the two rivers, which were its first high-roads as well as its natural boundaries. A net of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, covers the country, providing an efficient system of natural irrigation. In most parts of Nupe
134 land the soil is rich and fertile, especially in the thinly inhabited districts west of the Kaduna, the only part of Nupe which still possesses large areas of virgin forest. East of the Kaduna, especially round Bida, a dense population and intensive cultivation have reduced the fertility of the land. It is the typical soil of Northern Nigeria, red earth mixed with laterite and rich in silicates—a fact which becomes important for the native glass industry in Bida. In a few districts, round Sakpe and near

[p. 1]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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SURROUNDINGS OF BIDA

THE KADUNA RIVER NEAR GBARA

[Facing p. 4]

LANGUAGE

197 Nupe belongs to the Larger Unit[3] of Kwa languages of West Africa, which also includes the languages or dialects spoken by the Igbira, Igala, Idoma, and other peoples dealt with in this volume of the Ethnographic Survey.[4]

The Nupe Dialect Cluster together with those of Igbira and Gbari[5] make up the Nupe Language Group. But the Nupe are not linguistically homogeneous or exclusive. The bi-lingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai also speak Nupe, while some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe have lost their native tongue. The Kakanda are said to speak a closely related language which may be a Nupe dialect. Although Gbari is a separate dialect cluster of the Nupe Language Group much of its vocabulary is identical with Nupe, which also has a close structural resemblance to both Gbari and Kakanda.

The Nupe cluster consists of five markedly different dialects: Nupe proper; Ebe, spoken by the Ebe sub-tribe; Žitako or Dibo, more closely related to Gbari; Kupa, spoken by the Kupa and Cekpaŋ sub-tribes; Basa-Nge, spoken by the Basa-Nge, a split-off section. The Gbedye sub-tribe are said to have spoken a separate dialect which is now lost. Nupe proper is spoken by the Kyedye sub-tribe and others and there are only insignificant dialectal differences between the areas where it is spoken. Bida Nupe ("higher Nupe") exhibits a fondness for Hausa words and phrases which have replaced many Nupe words. The other four dialects differ con-
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[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 1; 1940a, p. 194.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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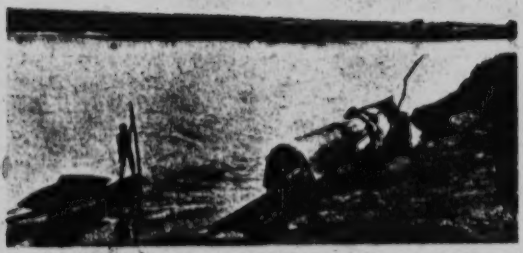

FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GBEBE, ONE OF THE LEDU VILLAGES.

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TOGIDE."

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FIG. 3. THE GAUNTED BODIES FOUND AT GBEBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH SOLI TOGIDE.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

[Facing page 129]

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa

Fulani MS11
Nupe FF52
Nigerin FF1

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Fig. 2—Degraded Guinea savanna in the Nupe country, Niger Province. Flat-topped hills are of Nupe sandstone.

Fig. 3—Rocky southwestern ramparts of the Jos Plateau, here rising some 3000 feet above the plain.

Fig. 4—Seasonal swamp, or *fadama*, in the Sokoto Valley near Birnin Kebbi. These swamps play an important role in the dry-season grazing economy of the Fulani.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER I
ENVIRONMENT

THE COUNTRY

131 THE people who call themselves Nupe live in the heart of Nigeria, in the low basin that is formed by the valleys of the two rivers Niger and Kaduna, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ N.L. A line drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupe land, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger south of Baro the southern boundary. The Niger, flowing almost straight north–south between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the west; the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.

133 It is a low-lying, softly undulating country, not more than 200 feet above sea-level in most parts. A few low ridges of broken, rocky hills stretch out, rib-like, from the river valleys, and curiously symmetrical flat-topped hillocks rise abruptly here and there from the plain. The highest points are no more than 800 feet above sea-level. At Jebba the Niger forces its way through a narrow passage formed by rocks, the ragged end of a short, broken chain of hills. Farther south, at Kpatagbā and Baro, and above Yankyedya in the north, hills and rocks close in upon the river. 'Rabá, the ancient river capital of Nupe kingdom, stands on high cliffs of red sandstone. Between cliffs and rocks the river bed is bordered by low banks on which stretches of thick rain-forest alternate with shrub and low bush. During the rains both forest-covered banks and open bush are flooded far inland and turned into vast swamps; the level of the Kaduna at Wuya rises by 30 feet; and in the Niger valley villages which lie on high ground in the dry season have the water of the river washing the threshold of their houses. Part of Jebba Island is flooded every year; and Nupeko, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, about two miles from the river in the dry season, can be reached only by canoe in the rains.

The big rivers Niger and Kaduna form the two axes of the country, an efficient, natural system of communication. It is no accident that the early Nupe kingdom grew in the area near the confluence of the two rivers, which were its first high-roads as well as its natural boundaries. A net of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, covers the country, providing an efficient system of natural irrigation. In most parts of Nupe 134 land the soil is rich and fertile, especially in the thinly inhabited districts west of the Kaduna, the only part of Nupe which still possesses large areas of virgin forest. East of the Kaduna, especially round Bida, a dense population and intensive cultivation have reduced the fertility of the land. It is the typical soil of Northern Nigeria, red earth mixed with laterite and rich in silicates—a fact which becomes important for the native glass industry in Bida. In a few districts, round Sakpe and near

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

134 Lemu, pure white sand is found, a much more fertile soil as far as I can judge, which makes the country in the eyes of the native 'more beautiful' —by which he really means 'more useful'. Lastly, the low broken hills of Nupe are ferruginous, and on their slopes iron ore is mined by the natives.

VEGETATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

137 The geographical position of Nupe country makes it a typical area of transition from the southern forest belt to the arid savannahs of the north. Narrow strips or patches of thick rain-forest-like vegetation accompany river valleys and watercourses; but then, inland, we find a country of thin forest, shrub, and 'orchard-bush', alternating with beautiful open park-land, such as round Bida and Agaie, where intensive cultivation has cleared bush and shrub. The plant-life, again, reflects the geographical position of Nupe midway between north and south. Nupe is one of the northernmost countries in which the oil-palm is found, and yam and the southern variety of maize are cultivated; it is, at the same time, the southernmost habitat of the date-palm, the shea-nut tree, and millet crops. The trees and plants which are important for Nupe production and diet are these, in the order of importance. In the drier inland areas we find the locust-bean tree (*Parkia filikoidea*), in Nupe *lonci*; the shea-nut tree (*Bassia Parkii*), *koci*; the indigo tree or vine (*Lonchocarpus cyanescens*), *eci*, and indigo grass (*Indigofera arrecta*), *isentse*; baobab (*Andansonia digitata*), *kuci* or *kuka*; silk-cotton tree (*Malvaceae*), *lembubu*; date-palm, *dobina*; and finally the mango, *mangoro*, a European importation. On irrigated land and in the thick groves near watercourses grow the oil-palm and other, less important, varieties of palm-trees, kola-nut tree (*Sterculia acuminata*), *ebi*, and banana, *yaba*. Only the kola-nut tree, the mango, and partly the banana are cultivated, all other trees growing wild. Nupe cultivation comprises the following 241 kinds of crops and edible plants and roots: three millet varieties, bulrush-millet (*Pennisetum*), *mayi*, 'late millet' (*Spicatum*), *kpayi*, and guinea-corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), *eyi*; yam, *eci*; cassava, *rogo*; maize, *kábà*; ground-nuts, *guźya*; rice, *jenkafa*; sugar-cane, *kpàsanako*; and onions, *lubasa*, in the river marshes; further sweet potatoes, *duku*; beans and ground-beans, *ezo* and *edzu*; red pepper, *yaká*, and various kinds of greens which are eaten as vegetable. Of plants utilized commercially and in native industry cotton, *lulu*; henna, *lali*; hemp, *rama* or *egba*, 'rope'; and gourds, *ero*, are the most important.

241 In this enumeration of crops and plants of Nupe we have left the field of physical environment in the narrow sense. This rich and varied 177 system of cultivation reflects already a standard of civilization, technical achievement, and inventiveness of a people which has learned to master its environment. Some of the plants and crops mentioned have been adopted comparatively recently and introduced into Nupe from the north and south. As the Nupe names for hemp, henna, or cassava are borrowed from Hausa the plants themselves represent 'borrowed' cultural goods. The cultivation of onions was introduced into Nupe from

LANGUAGE

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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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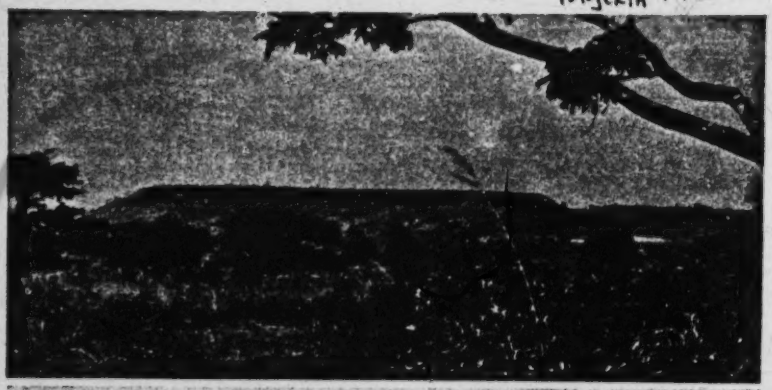
6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa

Fulani MS11
Nupe FF52
Nigeria FF1



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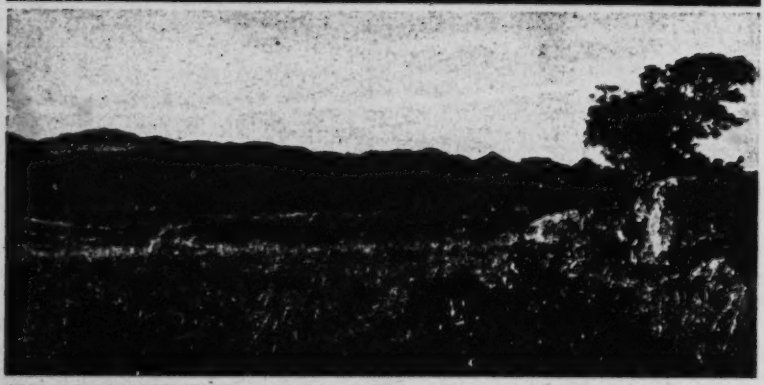

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FIG. 2—Degraded Guinea savanna in the Nupe country, Niger Province. Flat-topped hills are of Nupe sandstone.

FIG. 3—Rocky southwestern ramparts of the Jos Plateau, here rising some 3000 feet above the plain.

FIG. 4—Seasonal swamp, or *fadama*, in the Sokoto Valley near Birnin Kebbi. These swamps play an important role in the dry-season grazing economy of the Fulani.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

782
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7. *Nddumia* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]

6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

20. A noted medicine expert and 'wise man' from Jebba

21. The dance of the *ndakó gboyá*

[p. 134 (a)]
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534

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zuŋ'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–16.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa MS12

Tiv FFS7
Fulani MS11
Kanuri MS14
Nupe FFS2

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FIG. 11—Hausa villagers, Zaria Province. The Hausa are numerically the major tribal group in the Region; racially, they show a predominance of savanna Negro elements.

FIG. 12—A pagan hamer of the Jos Plateau. These primitive people appear to have some Negrito elements.

FIG. 13—Nupe villagers, Niger Province. This group from one small village reflects racial complexity of parts of the Region—all savanna Negro, stocky forest Negro, and persons of Arab descent.

FIG. 14—Tiv of Benue Province. The Tiv, predominant people of the Middle Belt, appear to have racial affinities with the peoples of the southeastern forest rather than with the peoples of the northern plains.

FIG. 15—A Kanuri of Borno Province. The Kanuri are a hybrid group, of mixed Negro-Caucasian origin.

FIG. 16—Fulani of the Bauchi region. Fulani ancestry is Caucasian, reflected in brown skin, wavy hair, and narrow nose. Today they show results of intermarriage with Negro neighbors.

144

144 RACIAL AFFINITIES--indicated affiliation with established races and sub-races; supporting evidence; extent of race mixture; etc. See also:

Distribution of ethnic groups 102
Ethnic stratification and status of racial hybrids 563
Ideas about race 929

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [184] pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- [182] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

041 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672] of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa MS12

Tiv FF57
Fulani MS11
Kanuri MS14
Nupe FF52

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FIG. 11—Hausa villagers, Zaria Province. The Hausa are numerically the major tribal group in the Region; racially, they show a predominance of savanna Negro elements.

FIG. 12—A pagan hunter of the Jos Plateau. These primitive people appear to have some Negrito elements.

FIG. 13—Nupe villagers, Niger Province. This group from one small village reflects racial complexity of parts of the Region—tall savanna Negro, stocky forest Negro, and persons of Arab descent.

FIG. 14—Tiv of Benue Province. The Tiv, predominant people of the Middle Belt, appear to have racial affinities with the peoples of the southeastern forest rather than with the peoples of the northern plains.

FIG. 15—A Kanuri of Borno Province. The Kanuri are a hybrid group, of mixed Negro-Caucasian origin.

FIG. 16—Fulani of the Bauchi region. Fulani ancestry is Caucasian, reflected in brown skin, wavy hair, and narrow nose. Today they show marks of intermarriage with Negro neighbors.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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164 Sleeping sickness is the great scourge of the country. A Sleeping Sickness Commission which visited Nupe in 1936 found 70 per cent. of the people infected—the highest figure in the whole of Nigeria. Bilharzia and other worm diseases are no less widespread. The prominence of venereal diseases is characteristic of Nupe as it is of the whole of Nigeria and indeed of the whole of semi-civilized Africa. Dysentery, malaria, and yaws complete the unhappy picture. It is worth noting, [146] however, that typical deficiency diseases, including boils and ulcers, are comparatively rare. A statistical table, compiled from the attendance figures of the N.A. Hospital and Dispensaries in Bida Division, may illustrate the distribution of the more important diseases occurring in Nupe.

TABLE II

The figures for Bida Hospital refer to in-patients treated during April, July, October 1935 and January 1936. The figures for the Dispensary of Lemu give the attendance in January 1936. For another dispensary (Kutigi) only the order of frequency of the various diseases could be ascertained; it is indicated in the third line by roman numerals.

	Venereal diseases	Malaria	Ulcers, sunbite, &c.	Dysentery, amœbic	Dysentery, amœbic	Eye-diseases	Rheumatic diseases	Leprosy	Bilharzia, worm diseases	Various
Bida Hospital	35	14	15	13	9	3	5	2	80 per cent. of all cases	128
Dispensary Lemu	91	18	3	34	2	2	68	4	?	106
Dispensary Kutigi	II	IV	III	VI	?	V	I	10 cases	?	?

The description of health conditions has a more special bearing on the anthropology of the Nupe people. First, it is of a certain significance in connexion with certain cultural elaborations of the theme of disease among the Nupe;[1] second, it involves relevant questions of mortality and population movement—a subject to which we shall turn presently. Finally, with respect to mental disorders: psychology and sociology have long realized that certain tensions and maladjustments in the social system tend to manifest themselves in the sphere of psycho-pathology. We shall see that this correlation is true also of Nupe society.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

121 It is unnecessary to stress the importance of population studies for the understanding of a society and the nature and working of its institutions. But it may be necessary to justify the inclusion of a discussion on population movement in a chapter on environment. A first justification lies in the fact that, in a study of social organization, environment and popula-

[1] Most instances of this kind, however, I must leave for future publications. To one typical instance, the part which leprosy plays in the mythology and ritual of the *gwasu* cult, I have referred in the description of this cult in '*Gwasu*, A Fertility Cult of the Nupe in Northern Nigeria', in *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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In the course of our investigation my wife and I attempted to ascertain further statistical data which could throw light on these points. They were obtained by the method of house-to-house investigation in three selected localities, in the villages Kutigi and Jebba Island, and in one town ward of Bida. The scale of this statistical research, carried out single-handed, was of necessity very limited. Nevertheless, certain significant facts could be ascertained (Tables IV and V). 163 842

TABLE IV

	Mothers (age group 30–40)	*Total children born*	*Children alive*	*Children dead*	*Births per mother*	*Live children per mother*
Villages	101	206	108	98	2	1·06
Town	144	230	126	104	1·5	0·8

TABLE V

	Mothers	*Children died at age of*					*Total*
		Birth	*1–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–15*	
Villages	101	29	25	27	8	9	98
Town	41	21	15	27	7	4	74

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Table V shows, first, the distribution of infant mortality over different age groups. Infant mortality in the villages seems, on the whole, considerably lower than in the town, remarkably so at, or shortly after, birth and in the first five years of the infant's life. This seems in the main due to the spread of venereal infection in the town, and also to the effects of abortion and artificial birth restriction which, as we shall see presently, is practised in Bida. The highest mortality, both in urban and rural districts, occurs at the age of 3–5. This peak of mortality seems due primarily to malaria, which is especially fatal at this age.[1]

Table IV (examining a larger group from the urban area) attempts to establish a comparative birth-rate for urban and rural areas. For the low fertility-rate of the Nupe women in general two physiological explanations suggest themselves: first, reduced fertility may be the result of certain endemic or widespread diseases, such as sleeping sickness and gonorrhoea; or second, it may be the result of prenatal deficiency of vitamin E (a vitamin contained, for example, in palm-oil). The effectiveness of these two physiological factors cannot be denied.[2] However, the striking difference in the birth-rate of town and villages demands a different interpretation. The distribution of venereal diseases, definitely higher in the town than in the rural area, would fit into the picture. But of sleeping sickness rather the opposite is true; and the vitamin deficiency 163 842 164 [146] 163 842

[1] For this information, as for the other medical information in this chapter, I am indebted to Dr. M. Ellis, of the Nigerian Medical Service, who at the time was in charge of Bida N.A. Hospital.

[2] A study of diet among the Nupe has shown that the women's share of the daily meals (i.e. the meals cooked with palm-oil) is only about one-fourth of the men's share.

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One day the elder said to the younger he should give the girl up, "because I am the elder". The younger brother said he would not give her up. Although the other was the elder he would not give her up. But the elder brother left the matter then, till night fell, then he went to the hut where the younger brother slept and killed him with a sword. When the girl saw this she cried for twenty days and her heart ached. The people who heard this said, what he had done was bad, God will revenge it. When the girl had finished crying she went to another place, nobody saw her again.

(Y 13) Long ago, there lived a man who had a wife. They had two children, sons. When they grew up they saw a girl who was very beautiful. They loved her, but the girl loved the younger more than the elder. When the elder brother realized this he said to the younger: "You must give up the girl, for I am your elder brother and I ought to marry her." When he said this the younger refused and they quarrelled so much that the elder brother took his sword, went to the younger, attacked him with his sword and killed him. When all the people heard this they said: "An evil deed has been done by the elder brother." They said: "Nobody should touch him, for God will judge." The girl cried for twenty days. Her sadness was so great that she left the town, and nobody saw her again.

V. The picture experiments

Y N 125

I showed six pictures of different topics which varied in complication and distinctness. Each picture was exposed for about 10–15 sec. The experimental subjects were asked first to write down (in vernacular) what they had seen, after every picture. After a week's time they were asked to relate what they remembered, and this was written down by the leader of the experiment. The photographs represented:

(1) Two leopards in the bush.

(2) A black horse with a native groom in European garb, in an open field.

(3) A native in Mohammedan dress (which is common everywhere in Northern Nigeria), sitting on a table on which stands a native clay lamp.

(4) An oasis in the desert, showing a camel in front of a date-palm and two Arabs. (This was a rather dark and indistinct picture.)

(5) A mosque with a huge crowd of people in front. (A clear but somewhat complicated picture.)

(6) A bush fire (dark, very indistinct, in some respects corresponding to the familiar 'ink-blot' picture).

(1) *The background of experience*

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A first difference in the reaction of the two groups is due to the fact that in the description or interpretation of certain features in the pictures the different background of knowledge and practical experience characteristic of each group comes into play. Although the general cultural background of the two groups is the same, there exist naturally certain specific details of culture which are different in the two groups, and which to a certain extent enter into the description of the pictures. Thus quite a number of Yoruba called the clay lamp in the third picture a 'pump'. This

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rather surprising interpretation became clear in the explanation which one Yoruba gave; he described the object as a "clay lamp with a handle like the pump at the railway station". Ilorin, where the Yoruba experiments were made, is on the railway; the place where the Nupe experiments were made is not, and this explains why this particular interpretation occurred only among one group. Among the Nupe we have, instead of the 'pump', a 'bicycle wheel', or the 'handle of a motor-car'. Both Nupe and Yoruba seem to derive satisfaction from bringing in these very special, and up-to-date *motifs* of interpretation. The *motifs* contributed by this specialized knowledge tend, however, to disappear in the second recall and to be replaced by an interpretation of a more general character. For instance, there were 6 'pumps' in the first description but only 3 in the recall: one 'pump' was replaced by the ordinary 'clay lamp', one was left out altogether, and one reappeared in the following disguise: "a man kneels down (obviously for prayer) under a tree which bends down like the arm of a water-pump."

But the real, psychologically relevant, difference between the two groups does not lie in the different material or content of experience which is utilized in the description, but in the different psychological organization of this material. Among the Yoruba, to start with, the details contributed by special knowledge serve as centres for an interpretation which endeavours to lend a unitary and consistent *meaning* to the whole picture. A few examples will explain what I mean.

(Y 3) An old man wearing turban and white gown, kneeling near something that looks like a pump which has a hole and is bent. The man is repairing the bottom of the pump.

(Y 6) A blind man, wearing a turban and big white gown, pumps water from a fountain in order to drink it.

In the recall we may find a more or less complete reinterpretation: the first example brings the tree which looks like a pump, and the second gains completely new shape:

(Y 6) A Mohammedan teacher, wearing white turban, sits and lights a lamp in front of him, he places it on his right-hand side (obviously in order to read).

We see that, although there are changes from description to recall, the factor of consistent meaning still determines the interpretation. Now among the Nupe there is surprisingly little of such attempts to read a meaning into the picture.

(N 2) A man is kneeling, he wears a beautiful white turban, his eyes are closed. There is something in front of him which looks like the handle of a motor-car.

(N 12) There is an old man who has only one eye. He is sitting and doing something with a bicycle wheel.

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Certain attempts at a consistent, unitary meaning, do exist also among the Nupe. For instance:

(N 3) A man with a waterjug, he is holding it and making his ablutions in a hut.
(N 10) A man with a white turban is sitting, his forehead bent, worshipping an idol.

But these meaning-oriented interpretations are (1) in the minority; (2) the consistency is not established really fully and satisfactorily: e.g. the 'man in turban' would be a Mohammedan; still he is said to worship an idol; (3) the meaning evaporates in the recall. Here are the reproductions of the two meaning-oriented Nupe descriptions which I have just quoted:

(N 3) A man sitting in a beautiful room, with a big water-jug, he is crouching.
(N 10) A man with white turban is sitting, he is crouching, he is watching something in front of him which looks like a motor-part.

(2) *Imagination*

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From the examples quoted above it will be seen that the positive or negative part which the meaning factor plays is not correlated with predominance or lack of imaginary addition. Quantitatively, the contribution of imagination is the same in either group. The difference lies again in the part which imaginary details or additions play in the organization of the material. Among the Nupe they just constitute additional items and there is no tendency to weld all the details into a unitary interpretation. Thus, in the picture of the horse and the groom:

(N 13) There is a European horse standing together with a European near a small hill (!)[1] A few men stand behind the European (!), they look like soldiers and are coming towards him.

Among the Yoruba such mere addition is the exception. The rule is represented in the following example:

(Y 13) A horse near a river (!). It looks as if it is going to be washed. It has a bridle in its mouth, and the man who brings it to the river stands with the horse, he does not hold it but only looks at the horse.

In the recall the orientation towards meaning is intensified by introducing still another imaginary detail:

(Y 13) A man taking a horse to the stream. He stands there trying to pull the horse by the rope (!), but the horse does not move away from the stream. The man is watching the horse.

(3) *Meaning-oriented response*

The essential difference in the psychological responses of the two

[1] Exclamation marks indicate imaginary additions.

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groups lies then in this: the Yoruba are meaning-oriented; they weave into most of their descriptions and recalls a unitary meaning; the Nupe tend to present the facts which they notice or remember in a purely enumerative manner. Now, *meaning* is, generally speaking, a recognition of relation, more particularly of a relation bearing on purpose and causality. In the picture of the horse, for example, only 6 Nupe descriptions and 3 recalls (against 15 Yoruba) attempt to establish the simplest relation on which a unitary meaning could be based, namely a relation which accounts for the presence of the two figures in the picture, the horse and the man; i.e. describes them as a horse and its master, or a horse and its groom, etc. Or, in the picture of the two leopards: 10 Yoruba read a meaning into the picture, i.e., place the data in an explanatory relational context, and describe the two animals as waiting for their prey, as playing together, or as cohabiting. Only 2 Nupe descriptions (1 recall) try a similar solution.

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Cognition of meaning and relation in this sense may, however, refer not only to figures and events presented in the picture, but to the picture itself *qua* picture. Some of the Yoruba approach their task in this fashion, and attempt to relate the picture as an item in itself to other facts of knowledge and experience. They try, for example, to explain the fact that such and such a picture had been shown; they understand the picture in the sense of their school-book illustrations, i.e. as an invitation to relate, in the manner of a school examination, everything they know about one or the other item illustrated in the picture. Thus in the picture of the horse and groom:

(Y 9) The horse is an animal that lives with us people. We supply it with grass for food, and we ride it for pleasure or something else. We use it as a pack animal, and also for farming. We harness it.

In other cases, the Yoruba seem to be struck by certain peculiar features in the composition of the picture, and try to explain them, by quite an elaborate process of reasoning, as a result of the formal arrangement:

(Y 20) There is a camel with big loads on his back. He stands near a palm-tree. If one does not look carefully one may think he has no head. But he has one. He lifts his head up to the palm, so that the head is level with the palm-tree. That is the reason why we see only the palm-tree. There is a man close to his hind-leg, he is squatting, and there is a man standing in front. These men are men from the East, because you can see they cover their heads with a cloth.

This attitude of explaining and reasoning which deals with the picture as an object in its own right is completely absent among the Nupe.

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(4) *Exactness*

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The examples will have revealed already that the cognition of meaning does not correspond in any way to exactness of perception or memory in the sense of fidelity to the original. Among the Yoruba the proportion of meaning-oriented interpretations increases from description to recall, among the Nupe it decreases. That means the recall emphasizes still further the type of interpretation manifest in the description. But the main point here is that imaginary additions also increase and decrease in the same proportion. The recall of the Yoruba is therefore, from this point of view, less exact than the recall of the Nupe. The enumerative type of perception and memory on the other hand is less exact in other ways. The Nupe frequently confuse the pictures in their memory and reproduce in the recall descriptions in which the features of two pictures appear combined. This combination is never an improvement from the point of view of consistency of meaning. There is no evidence for this fusion of memory pictures among the Yoruba. The Nupe also forget pictures completely much more frequently than the Yoruba. The first picture was left out by 1 Yoruba and 4 Nupe, the second by 1 Nupe only, the third by 2 Nupe only, the fourth by 1 Yoruba and 7 Nupe, the fifth by none in either group, the sixth by 1 Yoruba and 2 Nupe. The most interesting figure is the one referring to the fourth picture (the oasis) in which Nupe 'forgetfulness' reaches its maximum. For both groups, however, this picture represents a maximum also of meaning-oriented interpretation. This, I think, stresses an important point with respect to the evaluation of these results. It shows that we cannot simply say that meaning-oriented interpretation assists, or lessens, memory. For the meaning-oriented type of memory, meaning-oriented organization of the psychological material assists memory; for the enumerative type, into which it does not fit, meaning-oriented organization of the psychological material constitutes an obstacle to remembering. In short, the situation proves the impossibility of any simple comparative evaluation of the two types of psychological response in accordance with a common scale of exactness and, accordingly, of intellectual efficiency.

(5) *Enumerative response*

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What I called the 'enumerative' response type does not, however, represent a reaction devoid of all unitary organization or integration. It is enumerative only with respect to the meaning read into, or found in, the contents of the pictures. But there exist other aspects of organization

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VII. SUMMARY

1. The aim of this investigation was to study, by means of the psychological field experiment, the correlation between diversity of culture and psychological differentiation.

2. Two primitive groups were studied, two tribes in Northern Nigeria which, living under similar conditions, yet show marked differences in their culture.

3. The experiments were carried out with school boys of the age of 15–18. The selection of the subjects, however, insured that the experimental groups were representative of the culture at large.

4. The experiments examined the repeated reproduction of a narrative, and the description and remembering of a number of pictures. Both the narrative and the pictures represented a material with which the experimental subjects were thoroughly familiar.

5. The results show a marked difference in the responses of the two groups. In the story experiment one tribe laid stress on logical and rational elements while the other showed distinct appreciation of situational facts and connexions of time and place. In the picture experiment the response of the first group was meaning-oriented, the response of the second enumerative and appreciative of spatial arrangement.

6. Between the cultural differentiation and the psychological differentiation there exists close correspondence. The dualism of culture and psychological responses is incidental; the investigation reveals in fact three different psychological 'types' distributed in different proportion among the two groups.

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younger brother to the scene of the murder, by simply stating: "one day, at night, the elder went to the sleeping hut of the younger...." N 153

In other cases, however, the situational and temporal details tend to build up a vivid, concrete picture of the happenings in the story. Thus, for example, 4 Nupe (6 in the second recall) mention that the brothers were 'travelling about' when they saw the girl; 3 (5) let the brothers meet the girl 'in town'; (N 25) adds the information that the brothers 'afterwards returned home'. And after describing the murder 3 (6) Nupe continue the story as follows: "On the morrow", or "when it became day, the people heard of the crime." Yet these connexions never strengthen the cohesion of the narrative as such. On the contrary, one gains the impression that the story dissolves itself into a number of different scenes and situations. 195

This difference between the tense, logically convincing way in which the Yoruba reproduce the story, and the loosely knit Nupe way of retelling which is concerned more with details of situation and temporal sequence, becomes most evident in connexion with the 'situational' item in the story, that the murder was done 'at night'. Among the Nupe this is in itself an important feature which is given a prominent place in the reproduction. Thus: Y N 171 153 195

(N 54) The younger brother refused to leave the girl. The elder left the matter then. Till one day, at night,....

(N 60) The younger brother said: "No." Then it became night. The younger brother slept in his hut. The elder took his sword, and killed him on that night.

But among the Yoruba the reference to the night is clearly a minor detail which is pushed into a relative sentence and is quite overshadowed by the really relevant fact, which is the connexion between the anger of the elder brother and the murder.

(Y 6) The two brothers quarrelled terribly. The elder pulled out his sword and went to kill the younger brother where he slept.

(Y 9) The brothers quarrelled, and when night came the elder took his sword. He went and cut off the head of the younger brother because he had spoiled his heart.

(Y 15) They quarrelled about the girl. So much that at night the elder took his sword, went to the place where the younger slept and attacked him with his sword till he killed him.

(4) *Emotional and moral aspects*

In this experiment, rather surprisingly, the emotional factor seems to go hand in hand with the reasoning factor. Emotional and rational aspects do not seem to represent divergent or even independent principles; the more 'rational' Yoruba stress at the same time emotional reaction; and Y N 152 171

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Y N 152 171 the Nupe, neglecting rational connexions, seem to neglect the emotional aspect as well. The explanation is that the facts and events which bear on emotional reactions may be interpreted as rational motivations of the acts related in the story. This is in fact how the Yoruba approach, and utilize, the emotional aspects of the narrative.

N 152 Yet the comparative weakness of the emotional factor in the Nupe reproduction is not due to the Nupe lack of appreciation for rational connexions. The emphasis on emotional factors as far as it is evident in the Nupe version is not correlated with factors of reasoning; the appreciation of such elements as the beauty of the girl, her sadness after the murder, or the strength of the brothers' love, is not turned at once (as is the tendency among the Yoruba) into an interpretation of motives and reasons, but seems to represent a specific, self-sufficient trait. To a certain extent the emotional response among the Nupe appears linked with the tendency to dissolve the narrative into a series of concrete situations. (N 25) is a good example: he mentions that the brothers 'returned home' after they met the girl; he reproduces the girl's avowal of her love for the younger brother in the wrong place, but again in a typical 'situational' context: "when the girl learned of the murder, she said that she had only loved the younger brother"; he lets the people speak as follows: "This is what he did, God will revenge it." But he repeats twice how strongly the brothers loved the girl, and although he does not connect the girl's sadness with her disappearance, he does not omit, as many other Nupe did, the girl's 'aching heart'. But the cases in which I could find a similar correlation are few, and it seems possible that the emotional bias among the Nupe constitutes an independent, secondary psychological characteristic which may only run parallel to what we discovered to be the dominant trait in Nupe reproduction: stress on situational and temporal connexions.

Y N 152 577 171 The response to the moral ideas which are referred to in the narrative is again bound up with rational factors. The reinterpretation and rationalization of the statement "God will revenge it" which we discussed above is a point in question. But the attitude to the moral statements adds a new characteristic to the psychological differentiation of the two groups. All the Nupe reproductions keep closely to the meaning of the sentence "he has done an evil deed". The Yoruba reproductions on the other hand are much more varied and depart much more freely from the original. Here are a few Yoruba versions:

First recall:

(Y 6) The people said: "he abused his power over the younger brother."

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(Y 12) It surprised the people (to hear) what the elder brother had done. They said, "one should leave him alone, God will punish him."

(Y 18) When the people learned of the deed, it pained them very much. They said: "God will revenge it."

Second recall:

(Y 1) The people judged the elder guilty and evil; but God would punish him.

(Y 2) and (Y 5) The people were very sorry for the boy, but (they said): "Our Lord God will punish him."

(Y 12) The people said: "The elder should have left the younger alone. God will punish him."

To the Nupe then, the unspecific and abstract reference to the wickedness of the deed seems natural and satisfactory. The vague, schematic connexion which the story establishes between the wrong deed and the supernatural punishment, seems to satisfy their attitude towards moral value. The Yoruba, on the other hand, feel the urge to define the nature of the evil deed more closely and more explicitly. They weigh specific deed against specific punishment. Their attitude to the moral judgment is the same as to all the other features of the story: rational, and intent on clear logical connexions.

(5) *Arrangement and order*

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It is interesting to study the question of the order in which the events of the story are related and remembered. In the first recall the Nupe frequently (in 11 cases) rearrange this order, but only 2 Yoruba do the same. The explanation, however, cannot be that the precise, logically coherent narrative keeps more closely to the original story, for in the second recall the figures for the rearrangement of order are equal in both groups: i.e. the Nupe figures rise by 5, to 16, and the Yoruba figures by 14, from 2 to 16. Evidently, Yoruba recall, relying more on logical connexion, is apt to abandon the external form, whereas the loose, devious way of Nupe retelling which in the second recall is not much more free than in the first, may be more tied to the external order of events as to the only framework establishing coherence.

Before I pass to the picture experiments I will quote two full stories, one from the Nupe and one from the Yoruba, to illustrate the fundamentally different attitudes with which the two groups approach their task:[1]

(N 11) Long ago, there lived a young man. He had a brother. They were elder and younger brother. They lived, they lived, till they saw a young girl. The girl was very beautiful, they loved her with one heart, both the elder and younger brother loved her.

[1] Other full quotations of the story will be found in *Africa*(8).

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the Nupe have nothing of the sort, their art is imageless, they have but crude wall paintings, and their strength lies in ornamental, decorative art. Also the Yoruba have a strong sense for pantomime and drama, for which again there is no parallel among the Nupe.

IV. The story experiment

Y N 125

The story was read to the students at 8 a.m., i.e. during their first class. At noon they were asked to relate the story for the first time (each boy by himself) and after one week for the second time. Each time the leader of the experiment wrote down the story as it was told. The story (in free translation) runs as follows:

> Long, long ago there were a man and his wife. They had two children, sons. When these sons had grown up, they saw a beautiful girl. They both made friends with her, and loved her very much. They loved her with one heart. But the girl did not love the elder brother, she only loved the younger. Thereupon the elder brother went to the younger and told him to give up the girl. He said: "I am the one to marry the girl for I am your elder brother." Thus he spoke. But the younger refused. They quarrelled a great deal till the elder brother became furious. When the night fell he went to the hut where the younger brother was sleeping and killed him with his sword, he killed him with one stroke. When the people heard the news they said: "He did an evil deed, God will revenge it." But the girl cried, she cried for twenty days and her heart was full of pain. When she had finished crying she left and went to another place. Nobody saw her again.

The responses which the contents and structure of the story evoke in the experimental subjects can be analysed under four or five different headings: There are points in the story which stress emotional reaction; points which bear on moral ideas; and points which appeal more specifically to reasoning, i.e. crucial points in the logical progress of the narrative. The text also contains certain set phrases and formulae; and, finally, a number of situational or circumstantial details. Obviously, these different categories in which the features of the narrative can be grouped must overlap to a certain extent. But it is just this overlapping, the application of different and even divergent aspects of interpretation to the same features, which will reveal to us most strikingly the different psychological attitudes with which the two groups approach the data presented in the narrative.

(1) *Set phrases and formulae*

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The beginning and the end of the narrative, and one or two other phrases, represent more or less fixed formulae typical of all such stories. These phrases were in most cases repeated literally, both by Nupe and

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Yoruba. In the reproduction of one formula-like phrase, however, we grasp a first striking difference between the two groups. The phrase in question is the sentence '"God will revenge it"', spoken in the story by the people when they learn of the crime. This set phrase, which is commonly used in a context of this kind, is repeated verbally by 10 Nupe (13 in the second recall); 6 (3) Nupe leave it out altogether; and 4 (4) substitute another sentence of the same meaning. Among the Yoruba 5 (5) quote literally; 3 (1) leave it out; and 12 (14) substitute another sentence. Yet the new sentence which the Yoruba substitute does not merely reproduce, with different words, the same meaning. In 5 (10) Yoruba reproductions the changed phrase introduces an altogether new element, namely a rational explanation of the expression '"God will revenge it"', uttered under these particular circumstances. Thus (Y 8), in the first recall, lets the people speak as follows: "The elder brother has done wrong; we cannot revenge it, God will revenge it." In the second recall this reasoning is more cogent still: "The people said: 'They should not do anything about it; God will punish him.'" Or (Y 12): "They said, 'One should leave the elder brother alone. God will judge him.'" Or (Y 15): "His sin is very grave; no one but God can judge him." Only two Nupe in the second recall (none in the first) felt it necessary to supply this additional rational link which turns a stereotyped phrase, quoted almost automatically, into a logically sound judgment.

(2) *Rational aspects*

In the stress which is laid upon such rational links and logical elements lies in fact the most fundamental difference between the Nupe and Yoruba version of the narrative. A characteristic example is the reproduction of the third sentence of the story ("when these sons had grown up"), a 'crucial' sentence in so far as it supplies an essential rational link in the narrative; obviously the brothers must have grown into men before they could have had their love affair. Now among the Nupe only 3 mentioned this fact in the first, and 4 in the second recall. The corresponding figures among the Yoruba are 17 and 18. But even the most salient and most essential points in the story, the preference of the girl for the younger brother and his refusal to renounce his claims, points which are missing in none of the Yoruba reproductions, are neglected by the Nupe: 9 Nupe in the first and 5 in the second recall leave out one or the other of these facts on which the whole development of the story depends. Similarly, the quarrel between the two brothers which supplies the motive for the murder is mentioned by (3) Nupe only as against 12 (14) Yoruba.

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But, as we have seen already, the Yoruba do more than merely observe the existing rational connexions in the story. They introduce new ones, or try to render existing connexions more striking. For instance, towards the end of the story there is the sentence "when the girl had finished crying, she left the town". Among the Nupe 19 (16) reproductions include a sentence the meaning of which closely corresponds to the original; among the Yoruba 2 only kept to this rather weak connecting link; 7 (8) placed the two sentences simply side by side: "she wept for twenty days, and then she ran away"; and 10 (9) turned the connexion into a sentence such as this: "when she thought of all this sadness that existed in this matter, she left the town." Now the most interesting fact is that this sentence is a typical expression of Nupe 'mentality'. When I first composed the story I had placed the two sentences side by side: "the girl cried for twenty days. Then she left the town." But my two Nupe informants, with whom I worked out the text, objected to this expression, and insisted on bringing in the sentence "when she had finished crying". This sentence was then simply taken over into the Yoruba text. But in the experiments most of the Yoruba rejected it as we saw, left it out or, more characteristically, reformulated it, thus strengthening the logical cohesion of the story.

One could try to establish statistically this difference with respect to the stress laid on elements of reasoning. Contained in the story are four sentences which represent specifically rational or logical links. Every rational link which appears in the reproductions, both an original rational link which was already contained in the story and any new, additional 'rationalization', is scored as [illegible]. The means for the 20 experimental subjects then amount, among the Nupe, to 2·3 (2·4), and among the Yoruba to 5·5 (6.0), i.e. the Yoruba figure is more than twice the Nupe figure, and considerably above the theoretical value of 4.

(3) *Situational aspects*

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The retelling of the Nupe, although neglectful of the rational connexions embodied in the text, does itself introduce certain new, additional links and connexions. These links stress situational, circumstantial facts, details of place and time, which are of little importance for the logical progress of the story. They may amount only to irrelevant remarks, filled in between sentences, such as "this went on for some time", or "thus they lived", etc. Or they may completely replace the logical connexion, as in the version of (N 7) who, leaving out the quarrel of the two brothers, jumps from the statement about the girl's preference for the

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younger brother to the scene of the murder, by simply stating: "one day, at night, the elder went to the sleeping hut of the younger...." N 153 195

In other cases, however, the situational and temporal details tend to build up a vivid, concrete picture of the happenings in the story. Thus, for example, 4 Nupe (6 in the second recall) mention that the brothers were 'travelling about' when they saw the girl; 3 (5) let the brothers meet the girl 'in town'; (N 25) adds the information that the brothers 'afterwards returned home'. And after describing the murder 3 (6) Nupe continue the story as follows: "On the morrow", or "when it became day, the people heard of the crime." Yet these connexions never strengthen the cohesion of the narrative as such. On the contrary, one gains the impression that the story dissolves itself into a number of different scenes and situations.

This difference between the tense, logically convincing way in which the Yoruba reproduce the story, and the loosely knit Nupe way of retelling which is concerned more with details of situation and temporal sequence, becomes most evident in connexion with the 'situational' item in the story, that the murder was done 'at night'. Among the Nupe this is in itself an important feature which is given a prominent place in the reproduction. Thus: Y N 171 153 195

(N 54) The younger brother refused to leave the girl. The elder left the matter then. Till one day, at night,....

(N 60) The younger brother said: "No." Then it became night. The younger brother slept in his hut. The elder took his sword, and killed him on that night.

But among the Yoruba the reference to the night is clearly a minor detail which is pushed into a relative sentence and is quite overshadowed by the really relevant fact, which is the connexion between the anger of the elder brother and the murder.

(Y 6) The two brothers quarrelled terribly. The elder pulled out his sword and went to kill the younger brother where he slept.

(Y 9) The brothers quarrelled, and when night came the elder took his sword. He went and cut off the head of the younger brother because he had spoiled his heart.

(Y 15) They quarrelled about the girl. So much that at night the elder took his sword, went to the place where the younger slept and attacked him with his sword till he killed him.

(4) *Emotional and moral aspects* Y

In this experiment, rather surprisingly, the emotional factor seems to go hand in hand with the reasoning factor. Emotional and rational aspects do not seem to represent divergent or even independent principles; the more 'rational' Yoruba stress at the same time emotional reaction; and N 152 171

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(Y 12) It surprised the people (to hear) what the elder brother had done. They said, "one should leave him alone, God will punish him."

(Y 18) When the people learned of the deed, it pained them very much. They said: "God will revenge it."

Second recall:

(Y 1) The people judged the elder guilty and evil; but God would punish him.

(Y 2) and (Y 5) The people were very sorry for the boy, but (they said): "Our Lord God will punish him."

(Y 12) The people said: "The elder should have left the younger alone. God will punish him."

To the Nupe then, the unspecific and abstract reference to the wickedness of the deed seems natural and satisfactory. The vague, schematic connexion which the story establishes between the wrong deed and the supernatural punishment, seems to satisfy their attitude towards moral value. The Yoruba, on the other hand, feel the urge to define the nature of the evil deed more closely and more explicitly. They weigh specific deed against specific punishment. Their attitude to the moral judgment is the same as to all the other features of the story: rational, and intent on clear logical connexions.

(5) *Arrangement and order*

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It is interesting to study the question of the order in which the events of the story are related and remembered. In the first recall the Nupe frequently (in 11 cases) rearrange this order, but only 2 Yoruba do the same. The explanation, however, cannot be that the precise, logically coherent narrative keeps more closely to the original story, for in the second recall the figures for the rearrangement of order are equal in both groups: i.e. the Nupe figures rise by 5, to 16, and the Yoruba figures by 14, from 2 to 16. Evidently, Yoruba recall, relying more on logical connexion, is apt to abandon the external form, whereas the loose, devious way of Nupe retelling which in the second recall is not much more free than in the first, may be more tied to the external order of events as to the only framework establishing coherence.

Before I pass to the picture experiments I will quote two full stories, one from the Nupe and one from the Yoruba, to illustrate the fundamentally different attitudes with which the two groups approach their task:[1]

(N 11) Long ago, there lived a young man. He had a brother. They were elder and younger brother. They lived, they lived, till they saw a young girl. The girl was very beautiful, they loved her with one heart, both the elder and younger brother loved her.

[1] Other full quotations of the story will be found in *Africa*(B).

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One day the elder said to the younger he should give the girl up, "because I am the elder". The younger brother said he would not give her up. Although the other was the elder he would not give her up. But the elder brother left the matter then, till night fell, then he went to the hut where the younger brother slept and killed him with a sword. When the girl saw this she cried for twenty days and her heart ached. The people who heard this said, what he had done was bad, God will revenge it. When the girl had finished crying she went to another place, nobody saw her again.

(Y 13) Long ago, there lived a man who had a wife. They had two children, sons. When they grew up they saw a girl who was very beautiful. They loved her, but the girl loved the younger more than the elder. When the elder brother realized this he said to the younger: "You must give up the girl, for I am your elder brother and I ought to marry her." When he said this the younger refused and they quarrelled so much that the elder brother took his sword, went to the younger, attacked him with his sword and killed him. When all the people heard this they said: "An evil deed has been done by the elder brother." They said: "Nobody should touch him, for God will judge." The girl cried for twenty days. Her sadness was so great that she left the town, and nobody saw her again.

V. The picture experiments

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I showed six pictures of different topics which varied in complication and distinctness. Each picture was exposed for about 10–15 sec. The experimental subjects were asked first to write down (in vernacular) what they had seen, after every picture. After a week's time they were asked to relate what they remembered, and this was written down by the leader of the experiment. The photographs represented:

(1) Two leopards in the bush.

(2) A black horse with a native groom in European garb, in an open field.

(3) A native in Mohammedan dress (which is common everywhere in Northern Nigeria), sitting on a table on which stands a native clay lamp.

(4) An oasis in the desert, showing a camel in front of a date-palm and two Arabs. (This was a rather dark and indistinct picture.)

(5) A mosque with a huge crowd of people in front. (A clear but somewhat complicated picture.)

(6) A bush fire (dark, very indistinct, in some respects corresponding to the familiar 'ink-blot' picture).

(1) *The background of experience*

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A first difference in the reaction of the two groups is due to the fact that in the description or interpretation of certain features in the pictures the different background of knowledge and practical experience characteristic of each group comes into play. Although the general cultural background of the two groups is the same, there exist naturally certain specific details of culture which are different in the two groups, and which to a certain extent enter into the description of the pictures. Thus quite a number of Yoruba called the clay lamp in the third picture a 'pump'. This

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rather surprising interpretation became clear in the explanation which one Yoruba gave; he described the object as a "clay lamp with a handle like the pump at the railway station". Ilorin, where the Yoruba experiments were made, is on the railway; the place where the Nupe experiments were made is not, and this explains why this particular interpretation occurred only among one group. Among the Nupe we have, instead of the 'pump', a 'bicycle wheel', or the 'handle of a motor-car'. Both Nupe and Yoruba seem to derive satisfaction from bringing in these very special, and up-to-date *motifs* of interpretation. The *motifs* contributed by this specialized knowledge tend, however, to disappear in the second recall and to be replaced by an interpretation of a more general character. For instance, there were 6 'pumps' in the first description but only 3 in the recall: one 'pump' was replaced by the ordinary 'clay lamp', one was left out altogether, and one reappeared in the following disguise: "a man kneels down (obviously for prayer) under a tree which bends down like the arm of a water-pump."

But the real, psychologically relevant, difference between the two groups does not lie in the different material or content of experience which is utilized in the description, but in the different psychological organization of this material. Among the Yoruba, to start with, the details contributed by special knowledge serve as centres for an interpretation which endeavours to lend a unitary and consistent *meaning* to the whole picture. A few examples will explain what I mean.

(Y 3) An old man wearing turban and white gown, kneeling near something that looks like a pump which has a hole and is bent. The man is repairing the bottom of the pump.

(Y 6) A blind man, wearing a turban and big white gown, pumps water from a fountain in order to drink it.

In the recall we may find a more or less complete reinterpretation: the first example brings the tree which looks like a pump, and the second gains completely new shape:

(Y 6) A Mohammedan teacher, wearing white turban, sits and lights a lamp in front of him, he places it on his right-hand side (obviously in order to read).

We see that, although there are changes from description to recall, the factor of consistent meaning still determines the interpretation. Now among the Nupe there is surprisingly little of such attempts to read a meaning into the picture.

(N 2) A man is kneeling, he wears a beautiful white turban, his eyes are closed. There is something in front of him which looks like the handle of a motor-car.

(N 12) There is an old man who has only one eye. He is sitting and doing something with a bicycle wheel.

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N 151 153 Certain attempts at a consistent, unitary meaning, do exist also among the Nupe. For instance:

(N 3) A man with a waterjug, he is holding it and making his ablutions in a hut.
(N 10) A man with a white turban is sitting, his forehead bent, worshipping an idol.

But these meaning-oriented interpretations are (1) in the minority; (2) the consistency is not established really fully and satisfactorily: e.g. the 'man in turban' would be a Mohammedan; still he is said to worship an idol; (3) the meaning evaporates in the recall. Here are the reproductions of the two meaning-oriented Nupe descriptions which I have just quoted:

(N 3) A man sitting in a beautiful room, with a big water-jug, he is crouching.
(N 10) A man with white turban is sitting, he is crouching, he is watching something in front of him which looks like a motor-part.

(2) *Imagination*

N Y 151 153 171 From the examples quoted above it will be seen that the positive or negative part which the meaning factor plays is not correlated with predominance or lack of imaginary addition. Quantitatively, the contribution of imagination is the same in either group. The difference lies again in the part which imaginary details or additions play in the organization of the material. Among the Nupe they just constitute additional items and there is no tendency to weld all the details into a unitary interpretation. Thus, in the picture of the horse and the groom:

(N 13) There is a European horse standing together with a European near a small hill (!)[1] A few men stand behind the European (!), they look like soldiers and are coming towards him.

Among the Yoruba such mere addition is the exception. The rule is represented in the following example:

(Y 13) A horse near a river (!). It looks as if it is going to be washed. It has a bridle in its mouth, and the man who brings it to the river stands with the horse, he does not hold it but only looks at the horse.

In the recall the orientation towards meaning is intensified by introducing still another imaginary detail:

(Y 13) A man taking a horse to the stream. He stands there trying to pull the horse by the rope (!), but the horse does not move away from the stream. The man is watching the horse.

(3) *Meaning-oriented response*

The essential difference in the psychological responses of the two

[1] Exclamation marks indicate imaginary additions.

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groups lies then in this: the Yoruba are meaning-oriented; they weave into most of their descriptions and recalls a unitary meaning; the Nupe tend to present the facts which they notice or remember in a purely enumerative manner. Now, *meaning* is, generally speaking, a recognition of relation, more particularly of a relation bearing on purpose and causality. In the picture of the horse, for example, only 6 Nupe descriptions and 3 recalls (against 15 Yoruba) attempt to establish the simplest relation on which a unitary meaning could be based, namely a relation which accounts for the presence of the two figures in the picture, the horse and the man; i.e. describes them as a horse and its master, or a horse and its groom, etc. Or, in the picture of the two leopards: 10 Yoruba read a meaning into the picture, i.e., place the data in an explanatory relational context, and describe the two animals as waiting for their prey, as playing together, or as cohabiting. Only 2 Nupe descriptions (1 recall) try a similar solution.

Cognition of meaning and relation in this sense may, however, refer not only to figures and events presented in the picture, but to the picture itself *qua* picture. Some of the Yoruba approach their task in this fashion, and attempt to relate the picture as an item in itself to other facts of knowledge and experience. They try, for example, to explain the fact that such and such a picture had been shown; they understand the picture in the sense of their school-book illustrations, i.e. as an invitation to relate, in the manner of a school examination, everything they know about one or the other item illustrated in the picture. Thus in the picture of the horse and groom:

(Y 9) The horse is an animal that lives with us people. We supply it with grass for food, and we ride it for pleasure or something else. We use it as a pack animal, and also for farming. We harness it.

In other cases, the Yoruba seem to be struck by certain peculiar features in the composition of the picture, and try to explain them, by quite an elaborate process of reasoning, as a result of the formal arrangement:

(Y 20) There is a camel with big loads on his back. He stands near a palm-tree. If one does not look carefully one may think he has no head. But he has one. He lifts his head up to the palm, so that the head is level with the palm-tree. That is the reason why we see only the palm-tree. There is a man close to his hind-leg, he is squatting, and there is a man standing in front. These men are men from the East, because you can see they cover their heads with a cloth.

This attitude of explaining and reasoning which deals with the picture as an object in its own right is completely absent among the Nupe.

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(4) *Exactness*

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The examples will have revealed already that the cognition of meaning does not correspond in any way to exactness of perception or memory in the sense of fidelity to the original. Among the Yoruba the proportion of meaning-oriented interpretations increases from description to recall, among the Nupe it decreases. That means the recall emphasizes still further the type of interpretation manifest in the description. But the main point here is that imaginary additions also increase and decrease in the same proportion. The recall of the Yoruba is therefore, from this point of view, less exact than the recall of the Nupe. The enumerative type of perception and memory on the other hand is less exact in other ways. The Nupe frequently confuse the pictures in their memory and reproduce in the recall descriptions in which the features of two pictures appear combined. This combination is never an improvement from the point of view of consistency of meaning. There is no evidence for this fusion of memory pictures among the Yoruba. The Nupe also forget pictures completely much more frequently than the Yoruba. The first picture was left out by 1 Yoruba and 4 Nupe, the second by 1 Nupe only, the third by 2 Nupe only, the fourth by 1 Yoruba and 7 Nupe, the fifth by none in either group, the sixth by 1 Yoruba and 2 Nupe. The most interesting figure is the one referring to the fourth picture (the oasis) in which Nupe 'forgetfulness' reaches its maximum. For both groups, however, this picture represents a maximum also of meaning-oriented interpretation. This, I think, stresses an important point with respect to the evaluation of these results. It shows that we cannot simply say that meaning-oriented interpretation assists, or lessens, memory. For the meaning-oriented type of memory, meaning-oriented organization of the psychological material assists memory; for the enumerative type, into which it does not fit, meaning-oriented organization of the psychological material constitutes an obstacle to remembering. In short, the situation proves the impossibility of any simple comparative evaluation of the two types of psychological response in accordance with a common scale of exactness and, accordingly, of intellectual efficiency.

(5) *Enumerative response*

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What I called the 'enumerative' response type does not, however, represent a reaction devoid of all unitary organization or integration. It is enumerative only with respect to the meaning read into, or found in, the contents of the pictures. But there exist other aspects of organization

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in Nupe description and recall, which are absent, or nearly absent, among the Yoruba. I have found 3 such principles of organization: (1) The Nupe arrange their material very frequently in a spatial order, working with such descriptive categories as top and bottom, left and right, front and back. This emphasis on the spatial arrangement of the perceptual material seems to correspond to the stress on situational and temporal arrangement which we found prominent in the Nupe reproductions of the narrative. (2) There is the tendency to an integration or consistency in the material of a structural, formal character, such as consistency embodied in symmetric proportion. Imagination is engaged in the service of this specific form of integration, and we find, for example, in the picture of the two leopards that two trees are invented to match the two animals; or we find descriptions such as these:

(N 23) Two cats, white and red, one big, one small, close to two trees.

(N 7) A very beautiful horse, with two men, one standing in front and one standing at the back.

(3) Finally, there is an organizing principle, again working for some form of unification, which can be best described as unity of impression or of emotional tone. The following examples, which illustrate this attitude, refer to the third and fifth picture:

(N 6) A man, he is huge, he wears a big gown, he is an important man.

(N 7) An ugly man, wearing clothes which are not nice looking, holding something in his hand that looks like a snake.

(N 4) This (picture) looks as if one were sowing in all directions, like the sowing of European flowers of reddish colour; that is to say they are not quite red, they are between red and white, there are small ones and thick ones, some are not big, some are on the top and some stand out, enormously big.

This 'impressionistic', emotional attitude is not very pronounced in the Nupe reproductions. It is scattered irregularly, and seems to correspond essentially to the specific emotional response in the story experiment, which we interpreted as the expression of an independent, secondary psychological trait among the Nupe.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The experiments have shown us a people possessing a highly developed realistic image-art, drama, and a rich, complicated, rationalized religious system, which, in the field of psychological reaction, appears characterized by stress on rational elements and logical cohesion, and by a strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach to observational data. On the other hand, a people whose culture possesses no such art or drama, whose

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beliefs revolve round abstract, impersonal magical principles, proves psychologically of a very different type. It is more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, and stresses unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts of meaning and rational consistency. The nature of this psychological differentiation clearly indicates that the experiments have done more than merely shown that a diversity in culture is accompanied by psychological differentiation; they prove the existence of an essential *correspondence* between the specific organization of the culture and the traits and dispositions which characterize the psychological make-up or 'type' of the group. Some aspects of this correspondence are quite evident and easily explained in terms of mutual interaction of culture data and psychological traits: for instance, the correspondence between the rationalized religious system of the Yoruba and their intentness on rational connexions and interpretations; or the correspondence between the ornamental, decorative art of the Nupe and their emphasis of spatial and symmetrical order. The nature of other aspects of this correspondence is less obvious, and can be interpreted only in the context of a detailed analysis of the whole culture: for instance, the correspondence between the impersonal, abstract religious system of the Nupe and their schematic, unspecific attitude to moral judgements.

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The fact that we are dealing here with two groups which we had to contrast in various ways, may give the impression that I am attempting a dualistic theory of memory or perception, or for that matter, of culture. This is not my intention. Rather, the psychological traits and characteristics which the foregoing analysis has disclosed, seem to integrate themselves into *three* different 'types'—types which are distributed in different proportion among the two groups: first, the dominant type of the Yoruba, rational, logical and intent on meaning-oriented interpretation; second, the dominant type among the Nupe, combining an enumerative approach to observational data with stress on spatial and temporal arrangement; third, a less prominent, secondary, type among the Nupe, characterized by an emotional and 'impressionistic' disposition. Evidently, for a fuller understanding of these psychological types, the investigation must be placed on a broader basis, and our correlations of psychological traits extended over other fields of psychological reaction. But such an extension would go beyond the scope of this paper, in which I could only attempt to outline the general trend of this correspondence between psychological and cultural differentiation.

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VII. SUMMARY

1. The aim of this investigation was to study, by means of the psychological field experiment, the correlation between diversity of culture and psychological differentiation.

2. Two primitive groups were studied, two tribes in Northern Nigeria which, living under similar conditions, yet show marked differences in their culture.

3. The experiments were carried out with school boys of the age of 15–18. The selection of the subjects, however, insured that the experimental groups were representative of the culture at large.

4. The experiments examined the repeated reproduction of a narrative, and the description and remembering of a number of pictures. Both the narrative and the pictures represented a material with which the experimental subjects were thoroughly familiar.

5. The results show a marked difference in the responses of the two groups. In the story experiment one tribe laid stress on logical and rational elements while the other showed distinct appreciation of situational facts and connexions of time and place. In the picture experiment the response of the first group was meaning-oriented, the response of the second enumerative and appreciative of spatial arrangement.

6. Between the cultural differentiation and the psychological differentiation there exists close correspondence. The dualism of culture and psychological responses is incidental; the investigation reveals in fact three different psychological 'types' distributed in different proportion among the two groups.

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in 561
the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), 554
Likita (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the
name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank 177
Borti (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the [576]
normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, 554
the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted,
forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. 561
Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and 177
achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and 154
forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tálaka* and *saraki* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world 369
of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real',
that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison 561
of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in 554
the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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impact of alien influences and the vast increase in trade and traffic in the last few decades may well have aggravated the situation, all the available evidence (of genealogies and life histories) proves that the morals of women and the fate of marriages were, for the last four or five generations at least, much what they are today. Nor is this harking-back more than half-hearted; no one would claim that there was a time when all women were chaste and submissive, when they did not trade and earn money, and when contraceptive practices were unknown. Indeed such a claim, were it ever made, would be belied by the character of the *gunnu* ritual and by various legends and stories. Briefly, for the people the ideal was always out of step with the reality; so that we must judge this conflict to be inherent in the make-up of the society, whose economic system (which has certain moral consequences) is as unquestioned as are its ethical conceptions (which condemn these consequences).

This is important: for it is the inescapable nature of the conflict which finds expression in the belief in women witches. Nupe society, forced into an ambivalent attitude towards the role of women, which it cannot but accept and cannot but hate and call evil, also ascribes to them the powers of witchcraft. The coincidence as such is a matter of observed fact. But we can go further, and interpolate the psychological mechanism which turns the coincidence into a causal nexus, and hence enables us to call one thing the 'cause' and the other the 'symptom'. The mechanism is familiar: it lies in the projection of internal conflicts and of the frustrations so caused upon an external agent, real or imaginary. In our case, the awareness of an ideal state disturbed fastens upon the successful disturber; the helplessness in the face of a threatening situation turns into the positive fear of persons; and while one is incapable of dealing with the situation, one can at least deal with concrete individuals, whom one can accuse, persecute, and punish. So that in being made the witches of the society, the women are made to carry its fault or failure.

It is clear that this explanation holds good only on the assumption that the beliefs in witchcraft have been fashioned by men; for on almost every point we argued from a male standpoint. The legitimacy of this assumption need hardly be defended. The assertion of mundane morality, through legal institutions, falls to the men exclusively; above all, Nupe religion, its practices and doctrine, are fundamentally a male concern; and as it is the men who know and speculate about religion and have charge of the transmission of religious knowledge, so the notions of witchcraft must have been their creation. Situations of this kind are of course common; a great many societies are in this sense men-made and men-run; and if, like Nupe, they also afford considerable initiative and import-

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ance to women, they often, once more like Nupe, take back with one hand what they give with the other, that is, punish the permitted presumption by producing some belief in female witchery (whether taken literally or not). 754x 154 562

But the male standpoint does not hold throughout; for the Nupe condemnation of voluntary sterility represents the women's judgment as much as the men's. From earliest youth the women accept child-bearing as the mission of their sex. If later in life they deny it, they deny what they know to be 'human nature': hence their furtive dealings with the medicine-man abortionist and the admitted shamefulness of this traffic. Let me stress that this means more than an attempt to evade the moral judgments of others. The Nupe woman has her lovers openly, and as openly flaunts her wealth and independence, the adverse moral judgments of the men notwithstanding. So that, in hiding the shame of not wanting children she hides a shame of which she is aware and a guilt which she accepts. This guilt is probably shared much more widely; for every woman who takes concrete steps to avoid child-bearing there must be another who at least harbours the secret desire. However this may be, like the frustration of the men, the guilt of the women, open or secret, is projected into the picture of the female witch. For the women equally accept this picture. Though they may not have created the witchcraft beliefs, they yet have a hand in transmitting them and keeping them alive; at least, they share in gossip of this kind, if less openly than the men, and fabricate such stories. Whenever they do, they speak as accusers, vehemently denying that the role of the witch could apply to them. Even so, they accuse their own sex and, circuitously, themselves.[1] [837]

The men, then, in the witchcraft fantasies, condemn an antagonist; the women, in the same vicarious fashion, condemn their own guilt. In the concrete punishment, however, which witches are expected to suffer the male standpoint once more emerges paramount. It is the men alone who battle with witches, defeat and chastise them, through the male society of *ndakó gboyá*, as it is also the men who, in the legends about witchcraft, are credited with the discovery of this weapon; and this, as we shall see, is employed, not only to trace and punish the culprits, but also to threaten and to subdue the womenfolk at large.

There is a certain twist to this picture of male vengeance. In the legends the men, in the person of the diviner and the 'old man', are straightforward destroyers of witches. But general

[1] Margaret Mead has drawn attention to the nexus between witchcraft beliefs and willed female sterility (see *Male and Female*, 1949, pp. 232–3). Her views, stated in a broader context, bear out much of what I have tried to say.

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belief assigns to them a more ambiguous role, holding that some —the diviners, medicine-men, and 'male witches'—also assist the female witch and hence become her partners in crime. This may still seem to be only a fantasy paraphrase or 'projection' of real life, where the man's role is similarly ambiguous; for he will both claim domestic authority and surrender it, thus so-to-speak aiding and abetting the female ambitions. In a more subtle sense, however, the witchcraft fantasies stand for the triumph of the male. Consider that the woman witch, to be successful, must make a compact with men—diviners, *cigbeciži* or male witches. Her fullest, that is, deadly powers depend on male aid, so that the men can curb her activities and frustrate her designs. Indeed one firmly clings to the belief that this is nearly always so, and that the male witch is 'good' and the female alone 'evil'. If a few men, whom no one can name, are willing to 'aid and abet' women witches, they have as it were betrayed their own sex; even so, their help has to be begged by the female witch. In brief, the men, victims of female ascendancy in real life and victims of female witchcraft in fantasy, are on the same fantasy plane also the masters of the women; and if in one sense female evilness may prevail, in another it exists on sufferance, subject to male permission and, ultimately, revenge.

So understood, the fantasy picture of witchcraft conjures up a relationship between the sexes which reverses reality, putting power for helplessness and dominance for submission. The projection of the conflict between reality and ideal thus merges with its resolution in terms of a wish-fulfilment. We conclude that Nupe witchcraft beliefs afford a double relief: the frustrations caused by a hated 'normality' are not only externalized so that they can be vented on concrete victims, but also spirited away and compensated in fantasy.

Both the projective mechanism and this other mechanism of 'compensation', which we interpolated between 'cause' and 'symptom', between certain conflicts and frustrations and the belief in female witchcraft, operate unconsciously, though the conflicts and frustrations themselves are fully conscious. But it might be asked if the 'causes', too, are not likely to reach down into the unconscious and to a level deeper than that represented by conflicts over authority, kinship position, or morality. These are all motives entailed in a particular social organization. And since the belief in female witchcraft is widespread throughout human society it would seem legitimate to search also for a cause of a more fundamental order, over and above those peculiar to this one type of society. The Nupe witchcraft beliefs, with their dichotomy of 'good' male and 'evil' female witches, indeed seem to point in that direction, towards some basic antagonism of the sexes.

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To substantiate this hypothesis I may be allowed to digress a little. It is, I think, true to say that man surrenders to woman his virility in the sex-act and his independence and self-containedness in the love relationship; the fulfilment of his desires is thus bought with the sacrifice of Ego-completeness. If we take this sacrifice to be unconsciously hateful, as I think we must, and accept this ambivalence of love-hatred as the source of an inescapable antagonism having no normal or legitimate outlet, then the belief in female witches (of the Nupe or any other people) represents a 'displacement' and licensed expression of the repressed hatred. The phrase 'having no normal outlet' requires some comment. Different cultures fashion the normal social relationship between the sexes in widely diverse ways, as has been amply demonstrated in the work of Margaret Mead. But few societies can by this means fully resolve the conflict of sex antagonism. If the society makes the men the socially dominant sex, it is able to compensate for the surrender of virility but fails to express the importance of the woman as sexual partner and procreatrix, and hence invites male fears of female revenge; and if the social dominance of men is reduced, either by design (as in some societies) or in consequence of uncontrollable social processes (as in Nupe), this produces the kind of situation we have been discussing. There is some evidence that a carefully balanced relationship between the sexes can avoid this impasse.[1] But where it does not, the psychological mechanism of projection, with its offer of vicarious or fantasy hatreds, comes into play.

Now this is only a bare formula, couched in terms of universal validity. Let me fill it in with details from Nupe society. To begin with, the 'surrender' and loss of 'completeness' on the part of the men may be felt more strongly in some societies than in others, that is, reach consciousness to a different degree. The Nupe men, certainly, make much of the physically weakening effects of sexual intercourse, and teach the younger generation to husband their strength; they also, as we know, readily employ aphrodisiacs and so betray their fear of the loss of potency. At the same time, they will comment on the sexual voraciousness of the women, who never seem to have enough lovers. The Nupe, incidentally, do not conceive of erotic relationships that could avoid this threat to their virility: homosexuality among the men does not seem to occur and is thought absurd as well as repulsive. Yet again, homosexuality does occur among the women, which fact is well known to the men.[2] For the Nupe, then, the woman is more 'complete'

[1] See my chapter on 'Dual Descent in the Nuba Hills', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, pp. 354 ff.
[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 152.

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in herself than the man and her sex less vulnerable; above all, her satisfaction, more insatiable than the man's, threatens his virility. So that everything we said before, in general terms, about male 'surrender' and 'incompleteness' is sharply accentuated in Nupe culture.

Everything, too, reappears, appropriately rephrased, in the witchcraft fantasies: witches feed on the life and strength of a man as women do on his virility; and his anxieties are allayed or compensated in a wish-fulfilment which sees the female witch incomplete, possessed only of half her power without a help she must beg of men.[1]

Admittedly, the witchcraft legends fail to corroborate this view, containing nothing that could be construed into a reference to the sexual dominance of women. Rather on the contrary: in the first legend the witch is a 'mother' dominating her son; and though the second legend enlarges upon the licentiousness and sexual greed of the young women, the really dangerous 'witch' is pictured as an old hag against whom younger men are helpless. But the aspect of female dominance is there; and if it is removed from the sphere of sex it is brought closer to the overt anxieties and frustrations of the Nupe men. They face precisely this threat, from 'mothers' who assume an illegitimate power in the family, and from overbearing women who abandon their role of partners in marriage. Perhaps the 'old woman' too fits into the picture; for being 'old' means being beyond child-bearing; so that the figure of a woman who has left child-bearing behind would seem to stand for all the women who reject it. If then, the legends fail to express the antagonism between the sexes in its basic and universal form, they express instead the immediate, concrete conflicts of the society. In other words, of two possible motivations the legends embody one.

This leads me to my final point. This new explanation, in terms of a basic sex antagonism, neither overrules nor clashes with those previously suggested, in terms of other motivations. Rather, they are all valid, relating to different aspects or elements of that total phenomenon, the Nupe witchcraft beliefs. It is indeed a fundamental feature of social phenomena, if they are of any complexity, that they tend to embody a plurality of motives, belonging to varying levels of human concern, impulse, and consciousness. Our several explanations reflect this plurality of motives; more pre-

[1] I am aware that psycho-analysts may read the facts differently and relate the fantasy picture of female witches to a love-hatred of women which has its roots in the man's mother-imago, or in the conflict between 'tenderness' and 'sexuality' in love, or perhaps in the sadistic components of the sex act. I will only say, briefly, that my analysis of Nupe society does not bear out these alternative explanations.

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cisely, there had to be three explanations, corresponding to different levels of motivation, which are levels of generality as well. The first was concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to concrete individuals: this we related to the overt value judgments of the people, that is, to the conscious assessment of socially desirable conduct and character traits. The second explanation was concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to the female sex: here the processes creative of the belief were unconscious though set in motion by judgments on socially desirable behaviour and by the conscious conflict between ideal and reality. The third explanation, once more concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to women, was in terms of unconscious impulses springing from an unconscious conflict: and this we took to be determined, no longer by particular social circumstances, but by events on that 'deeper level' on which sex antagonism, in man everywhere, has its play. There is perhaps a further, most general level of enquiry; for we may clearly ask why there should be witchcraft at all? why people should believe in such a deadly evil inexorably vested in some of their kind? This question must for the moment be postponed.

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4. SYMPTOMATOLOGY: CASE HISTORIES

As has been said, only a witch, or a person possessing the appropriate *cigbe*, is able to tell a witch; others can only suspect the presence of witchcraft, however reliable the indications. The clues employed in this work of detection are similarly divided, into esoteric signs visible only to the fellow witch or sorcerer, and the crude indications which everyone can read. The former are, needless to say, entirely intangible and mystical. Thus at night you may see witches breathe fire (if you are yourself a witch); if a lesser witch meets a more powerful one, tears will spring to the eyes of the former; witches, finally, see one another in their dreams. Persons possessing a *cigbe* which makes them like witches should also be able to see or recognize them, and such medicines, as I have said, are in fact produced; but a few sceptics dismiss these claims as so much idle talk. It is a highly qualified scepticism, casting no doubts on the witchcraft beliefs as such. The Master of the *cigbeciki* summed it up most clearly, in this analogy: 'We see the lightning; we say *Sokó* causes it: but has anyone seen him do it? So we see what witches do, but who says he has seen a witch is lying.' The mystery which surrounds the manner of beholding witches extends also to their appearance; for the Nupe have no clear picture of what a witch looks like save that she looks horrid and fearful.

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Though ordinary persons cannot see witches, dogs and cats can,

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more severe and the advantageous positions secured by the enterprising first-comers are threatened by later recruits of the 'seeking-out-the-customer' movement. 443 366

Wayside shops also line the road leading from the north gate to the two large European stores—'canteens' in the popular idiom. Here the inventiveness of Bida traders has seized upon a new device to attract and 'seek out' the customer. Many peasants from backward villages who come to Bida to buy certain essential European articles, such as salt or sugar, either want to buy them in very small quantities—smaller quantities than they could obtain at the store—or are too shy and frightened to enter the stores themselves. These are the customers of the little stands outside the 'canteens': for here the peasants can buy the same articles in the smallest quantities and without having to undergo the ordeal of a purchase in the unfamiliar, forbidding, store.[1]

MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

The last example brings us to another essential difference between the marketing system in Bida and in the village. The large volume of native trade in European goods and the close business connexion between native traders in Bida and the stores of the trading-companies have introduced certain completely new factors into Nupe marketing. They are visible in local trade on the smallest scale as well as in the large-scale enterprises of wealthy Bida merchants. Trade in certain European goods allows a more rapid turnover and more certain profits than any branch of native economy. The native trader or middleman can, as we have just seen, turn to his profit the fact that he can make certain essential and highly valued goods accessible to the consumer by retailing them in such small quantities that their price (though relatively high) is low enough to be within the means of peasants and small craftsmen. It is, for example, a regular practice of Bida women traders to buy tins of 50 cigarettes at the 'canteen', and to sell them singly (or even cut in half); to buy boxes of matches, and sell them in little bundles of five; packets of sugar, and sell the sugar a piece or two at the time; or to buy 4-gallon tins of paraffin, and sell it in pint bottles. It is hardly surprising that the profits, though absolutely small, are relatively high, up to 100 per cent.[2] 443

[1] This fear is really a compound of shyness and suspicion—one is suspicious just because one is shy and unfamiliar with the ways of these modern institutions. A most characteristic instance, concerning a Bida man who, one would think, would hardly need to be shy or afraid, is the following: a Bida Mallam with whom I was very friendly came to see me one day and asked me if I would do him a favour and order spare tyres from the 'canteen' for a lorry belonging to a friend of his. His friend, he explained, disliked ordering them himself, for he knew he would be cheated and given the wrong kind of tyres. What had happened was that his friend had some time previously ordered tyres without, however, knowing that it was necessary to quote the exact size. He had been given tyres of the size most frequently found on the lorries running in the country, but unfortunately they did not fit his lorry. 157

[2] One tin of 50 cigarettes costs 1*s.*; one cigarette is sold for 0·3*d.*, allowing a profit of 3*d.* in 1*s.* One box of matches, containing approximately 50 matches, costs 1*d.*; five matches sold for 0·2*d.* give a profit of 0·8*d.* in the penny. One 435

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87/ Nupe education. No aspect of culture affords closer access to the para-
mount cultural motives and values. For education not only teaches
181 openly the specific aims and conceptions of life accepted by the society,
but reveals them also indirectly, in the motives and conceptions which it
utilizes to call forth the desired response.

Is, then, the reverse equally true? is behaviour that does not conform
181 to this conception of life met with public disapproval? One might in-
deed ask if Nupe culture did not reserve some legitimate place within its
157 framework for individuals to whom its dominant trend was uncongenial,
and who represent what some anthropologists have called 'deviants'
from the type of personality which the society regards as so highly desir-
able.[1] I must admit that I have found no conspicuous instances of such
'deviant' types. But we can guess the public response towards such
social or cultural 'failures' from certain occasional incidents: for an
attitude that belies the upward trend, and this dynamic aspect of self-
advancement, is indeed regarded as a 'failure'; such individuals would be
dismissed by the people with a mental shrug—'*u de kokari à*', 'he makes
no effort'. As the Nupe state undertakes to govern the moral life of the
people and to co-ordinate rigidly their conceptions of right and wrong,
so its education attempts a complete unification of types of personality.

Yet successful suppression in normal life may only mean that the
181 'deviant' type is forced into abnormality and will reveal itself in psycho-
158 pathological cases. I have admitted in the first chapter the scantiness of
data concerning mental disorders among the Nupe. But so far as they
exist they seem to bear out the view that mental disorders in Nupe are
largely symptoms of the failure of individuals to adjust themselves to the
demands of the social environment. I have mentioned that the large
majority of psycho-pathological cases that came to my notice presented
the clinical picture of paranoid schizophrenia, with marked delusions
and persecution-mania. Now modern psychiatry has shown that schizo-
phrenia is essentially the result of inadequacy to a social environment.
Indeed, in the few cases which I could examine more closely features of
the social environment conspicuously entered the clinical picture. One
man was under the delusion that he had been persecuted by a person of
very high rank and robbed, through his intrigues, of his home and
family; another maintained that intrigues against him at the court had
cost him his land; a third case was that of an old man who was under the
delusion that his younger brother (whom he admitted to be the more
clever and successful of the two) was out to kill him. In creating these
very specific delusions the psycho-pathological individual escapes from
the consciousness of his own inadequacy. Though distorted and purely
negative, the fears and anxieties which make up the delusion are the same
fears and anxieties that accompany the successful mental adjustment to
the *ethos* of Nupe life—the anxiety to 'get on' in the world, not to be left
behind in the race for rank and position or the fear to lose the support of
the 'powers that be', on whose influence one's career and safety depend.
The border-line between normality and abnormality is that between

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, and Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament*.

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woman'. Certain of these clues will be borne out by the biographical sketches which I shall later quote. But let me emphasize that they represent merely a 'theory', firmly held though it may be. When I visited a noted witch with one of my informants (who had strongly stressed the morose and stern aspect of witches) I found her to be a pleasant-spoken young woman, whom I could easily make laugh by some small joke. When, later, I pointed out this apparent anomaly, my informant retorted that the woman had merely put on an act to throw off my suspicions; towards her own people she would still be morose and unfriendly.

But even if these clues are mere theory, they help us to understand the ascription of witchcraft to particular persons. If I tried to sum up briefly the Nupe character as it appears to the observer, I should say that the average person is always friendly, pleasant-spoken and polite, very fond of jokes, chatty, and given to ready laughter. To some extent such behaviour is consciously cultivated. To be unfriendly or unpleasant in intercourse is definitely 'bad form'; polite etiquette has been developed to a fine art; and in the routine of social life joking and playing have their appointed place. Whether the rules of etiquette do not sometimes serve to repress fiercer and less placid leanings, we may for the moment disregard: the point is that politeness and pleasantness constitute the accepted ideals of behaviour, the sort of morale the Nupe believe in. And this morale is valid more fully for the women than for the men, since the women stand outside the two provinces of social life where placidity and friendliness are, on occasion, out of place, namely, esoteric ritual and political struggle.

It is, then, the absence of the accepted morale which makes the Nupe suspect witchcraft. The woman who behaves as the Nupe think witches do is one whose character belies the common precepts and ideals of conduct; she is ill-conditioned, eccentric, 'atypical'—what Margaret Mead would call a 'deviant personality'. In other words, the suspicion of witchcraft fastens upon 'abnormality'; not the physical abnormality, say, of cripples, hunchbacks, or strikingly ugly people, which is merely a matter of ill-luck, nor the mental abnormality of lunatics, which is the handiwork of spirits: but the abnormality of social and moral deviants.

Yet ill-conditioned and eccentric individuals, morose and quarrelsome characters, are as frequent among the men and as openly disapproved. The question therefore remains, why this argument should apply to women only. And unless we are prepared to consider this concentration upon female witchcraft to be sheer accident, we must assume that it is in some fashion symptomatic of the life of the society which created the belief. I

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132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only
164 a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

231 The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

164 In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the
732 highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity,
158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

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Nupe education. No aspect of culture affords closer access to the paramount cultural motives and values. For education not only teaches openly the specific aims and conceptions of life accepted by the society, but reveals them also indirectly, in the motives and conceptions which it utilizes to call forth the desired response.

Is, then, the reverse equally true? is behaviour that does not conform to this conception of life met with public disapproval? One might indeed ask if Nupe culture did not reserve some legitimate place within its framework for individuals to whom its dominant trend was uncongenial, and who represent what some anthropologists have called 'deviants' from the type of personality which the society regards as so highly desirable.[1] I must admit that I have found no conspicuous instances of such 'deviant' types. But we can guess the public response towards such social or cultural 'failures' from certain occasional incidents: for an attitude that belies the upward trend, and this dynamic aspect of self-advancement, is indeed regarded as a 'failure'; such individuals would be dismissed by the people with a mental shrug—'*u de kokari à*', 'he makes no effort'. As the Nupe state undertakes to govern the moral life of the people and to co-ordinate rigidly their conceptions of right and wrong, so its education attempts a complete unification of types of personality.

Yet successful suppression in normal life may only mean that the 'deviant' type is forced into abnormality and will reveal itself in psycho-pathological cases. I have admitted in the first chapter the scantiness of data concerning mental disorders among the Nupe. But so far as they exist they seem to bear out the view that mental disorders in Nupe are largely symptoms of the failure of individuals to adjust themselves to the demands of the social environment. I have mentioned that the large majority of psycho-pathological cases that came to my notice presented the clinical picture of paranoid schizophrenia, with marked delusions and persecution-mania. Now modern psychiatry has shown that schizophrenia is essentially the result of inadequacy to a social environment. Indeed, in the few cases which I could examine more closely features of the social environment conspicuously entered the clinical picture. One man was under the delusion that he had been persecuted by a person of very high rank and robbed, through his intrigues, of his home and family; another maintained that intrigues against him at the court had cost him his land; a third case was that of an old man who was under the delusion that his younger brother (whom he admitted to be the more clever and successful of the two) was out to kill him. In creating these very specific delusions the psycho-pathological individual escapes from the consciousness of his own inadequacy. Though distorted and purely negative, the fears and anxieties which make up the delusion are the same fears and anxieties that accompany the successful mental adjustment to the *ethos* of Nupe life—the anxiety to 'get on' in the world, not to be left behind in the race for rank and position or the fear to lose the support of the 'powers that be', on whose influence one's career and safety depend. The border-line between normality and abnormality is that between

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, and Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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anxiety and unceasing efforts to master reality or, conversely, the open admission of inability to live up to the exigent standards of the social *ethos*, and that complete withdrawal from reality and surrender to subjective emotional and thought-life which we classify as pathological.

Have we, as sociologists, to leave off here, and to regard the *leitmotif* of Nupe culture as an ultimate, irreducible, fact—as would be the view of certain modern schools of anthropology—or can we hope to trace it farther, and to correlate it, as we could most cultural traits, with other, more fundamental, social facts?

Not having examined in this book the whole field of culture, we can only venture on a tentative answer. But I believe that such a correlation is possible. The upward trend in social life is entailed in the class structure of the Nupe state; in the existence of a social *élite* which must both renew and widen its ranks by admission of selected groups from outside its sphere, and build its strength on a population whose motives and ways of thought are in conformity with its own aims. The particular form which the upward trend takes, that complex social ladder of many steps and grades, is part of the 'admission of selected groups'; it is explained by the necessity of controlling and canalizing the upward trend, lest it should endanger the position of the ruling group itself. The *ethos* of Nupe society does thus not represent a unique, irrational, and, as it were, autonomous cultural trend, but the product of an interdependence of phenomena which is open to rational interpretation. Behind it we perceive the public approval of forms of behaviour which are essential to the integrity of the class-organized state.

In reducing the *ethos* of Nupe culture to necessities involved in the social structure we have not merely reduced one unknown quantity to another. The class-state built upon, and expanding by, conquest is not a unique phenomenon, but a typical and regular occurrence in the history of society which we have learned to correlate with specific environmental and historical happenings. These themselves fall outside our range of vision: the environmental factors which made the river Niger the hotbed of powerful military states; environmental changes which have most probably started the tribal movements resulting eventually in conquests and the formation of states with an alien ruling class; political developments in the north of Nigeria which resulted in the Fulani conquests of the central kingdoms; or the historical changes in civilization which gradually led up to greater political concentration and the evolution of centralized states. I do not mean to defend an absolute determinism of this kind. I will not deny that Nupe culture may have added specific features of its own to this general development; it may well be that certain autonomous psychological determinants, not entailed in these external conditions, have played an important part in moulding the structure of the Nupe state and the psychological traits and motives which it has made its own. I have worked out elsewhere the principle of 'alternative solutions' of which a cultural adjustment to environmental and historical demands may admit.[1] In these alternative solutions we

[1] 'The Typological Approach to Culture', *Character and Personality*, v, No. 4, The Duke University Press, 1937.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

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Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

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The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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161 for example, the Gana-Gana (Dibo) sub-tribe of the Nupe is classed sometimes under 'Nupe' and sometimes as a separate group. In the 167 Census of 1921 their number is given as 19,700, in the Census of 1931 as 2,897;[1] into which tribal category the rest of them disappeared I have been unable to discover. A last example: only in 1936 did the Administration of Ibadan Division discover that the people who were listed in their statistics under the heading 'Tapa' (Takpa) were identical with the 'Nupe' of the Northern Provinces, Takpa being the Yoruba name for Nupe.

The difficulties and sources of error which render tribal statistics so uncertain do not affect in the same degree population statistics compiled for certain single Provinces, political Divisions, and especially townships. Here the improvement in registration has had its full effect; and I may add that in the preceding discussion I have used only these more reliable statistics. Here are certain figures illustrating population movement in Niger and Ilorin Provinces—the two Provinces in which the bulk of the Nupe people are living.

TABLE VII

	General Census 1921	*General Census 1931*	*Local Census 1934*
Bida Emirate . . .	171,958	171,458	168,247
Bida town . . .	29,848	25,231	23,286
Nupe in Ilorin Province .	64,652	65,040	53,600
Nupe in Niger Province .	233,840	226,132	..

Again we find a marked decrease in population and a decrease which cannot be dismissed as due to miscalculation. Evidently, a decrease in population even considerably smaller than that shown in these figures cannot be due merely to unfavourable birth- and death-rate. Emigration seems the only alternative, and I have indeed found evidence of this. A continuous emigration on a small scale and the existence of a floating population of traders and craftsmen drifting to the prosperous centres in the south could be established beyond doubt.[2] The study of life-histories and genealogies among the Nupe shows further that emigration of considerable importance occurred, roughly, in the last six to ten years. The drift of the emigration was again mostly south, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, that is, to the wealthier and, above all, less heavily taxed districts of Southern Nigeria.[3] In-

direction of an anthropologist, Dr. C. K. Meek, is in many respects more correct than the more comprehensive and elaborate recent Census.

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, p. 70; on p. 30, however, there are, again, 18,220 Gana-Gana.

[2] A census of Nupe people living at present in Lokoja, for example, showed the following distribution of professions among 60 family heads: 2 farmers, 4 mechanics, 5 barbers, 15 tailors and embroiderers, 4 black- and brass-smiths, 9 Koran teachers, 3 mat-makers, 2 carpenters, 5 canoemen, 5 N.A. messengers, interpreters, and other small officials.

[3] These are the comparative tax figures for 1934–5 per adult for Bida Emirate and Ilorin and Ibadan respectively: Bida town, 9*s.*–10*s.* 6*d.*; Bida Emirate,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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vestigations among the Nupe community of Ilorin and Ibadan have elicited the information that in 1934–5 a big wave of Nupe emigration had reached these towns.[1] These two years, my informants explained, had been bad years, with a severe food scarcity in the north, high prices, and shortage of money. The reason is indeed convincing: 1933–4 marked the nadir of the economic depression in Northern Nigeria, which almost paralysed trade and native industry. To the mobile professions of trader and craftsman emigration appeared in many cases as the natural solution.

Density of Population

The following table illustrates the density of population in different parts of Nupe country. The first three figures are taken from the Census of 1931, the other figures, referring to districts of Bida Division, are compiled from the local Census of 1934.

TABLE VIII

Locality	*Density per sq. mile*	*Locality*	*Density per sq. mile*
Bida Division	35·22	Mokwa district	12
Agaie-Lapai Division	21·70	Kutigi ,,	13
Lafiagi-Patigi Division	30·00	Districts west of Kaduna river ('Trans-Kaduna')	17·6
Badeggi district	22	Districts east of Kaduna river ('Cis-Kaduna')	55
Gbangba ,,	50		
Jima-Doko ,,	53		
Kacha ,,	60		

The striking difference in density of population east and west of the Kaduna river needs explanation. It lies in the historical fact of the Fulani conquest of Nupe and the immigration of the Fulani rulers and their huge army of warriors, slaves, courtiers, and other dependants into the area east of the Kaduna, where they settled, occupied the land, and built their capital and numerous villages. The history of the conquest and the political reorganization of the country which it entailed will be described later in more detail. But here already we realize the far-reaching influence which this difference in population density must have upon the social organization of the country, and upon the distribution of natural resources on which its economic life depends.

districts, 9*s.* 6*d.*–15*s.*; Ilorin town, 9*s.*; Ilorin Emirate, districts, 10*s.*–11*s.*; Ibadan town, 7*s.*

[1] During 1935 200 people from Bida Emirate migrated south. (Personal information received from the District Officer, Bida Division.)

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak, potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

619 on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved
634 over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

[567] *Konú* (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Bafa* in the
[114] 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

●161 Demographic Data

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

162 1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda ..	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge ..	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op. cit., p. 20.
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province, who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

in part from erroneous naming of some tribes and sub-tribes as Nupe and the omission of others.[27] Marked decreases in the population are probably due to continuous small scale emigration, especially since 1930. This has been mostly in a southerly direction, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, i.e., to the wealthy and less heavily taxed districts of the south. In one or two cases, people of one sub-tribe have migrated into the district of another. Other significant reasons for the decrease in population may be venereal disease, abortion, and contraception, and the high infant mortality rate, though abortion is said to be practised only in the larger towns and before marriage. Infant mortality is probably the greatest single cause of the decline; many infants die of malaria.[28]

No detailed analysis has yet been made of the 1952 Census figures which, for the Northern Provinces, show an increase of about 23,000 on those of 1931.

Density of Population

The following estimates are available:

Division or District	*Persons per square mile*	*Date*
Bida	35·22	1931 Census
Agaie-Lapai	21·7	" "
Lafiagi-Pategi	30	" "
Badeggi	22	1934 (local census)
Gbangba	50	" " "
Jima-Doko	53	" " "
Kacha	60	" " "
Mokwa	12	" " "
Kutigi	13	" " "
"Trans-Kaduna" (districts west of Kaduna river)	17·6	" " "
"Cis-Kaduna" (districts east of Kaduna river)	55	" " "

The difference in density east and west of the Kaduna River may be explained by the Fulani conquest of the Nupe and the consequent emigration of the Fulani rulers and their dependents into the area east of the Kaduna.[29]

[27] Nadel (1942, pp. 9–10) gives as examples the Ganagana (Dibo) who were sometimes classed as a separate group, and the "Tapa" (Takpa) who were listed separately in the Southern Provinces until it was discovered in 1936 that Takpa was the Yoruba name for Nupe.

[28] See Brooke, *Census of Nigeria* (1931) Vol. II, p. 29; Nadel, 1942, pp. 6–8; Weatherhead, M.S.

[29] Nadel, op. cit., p. 11.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 592] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. ●[161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

411 304 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

131 beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are
184 scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage:
101 184 for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as
[173] *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

161 We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called
637 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group,
184 and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

163 should be less marked in the town, where rich food is the rule. Physio-
logical factors are thus not sufficient to explain the low fertility-rate in
842 Nupe. This is confirmed by the data of Table IV. For in the context of this table, which refers only to women who have had children and excludes sterile women, the difference in birth-rate precludes to some extent the explanation on the ground of constitutional sterility and suggests instead the influence of another factor: the existence of birth restriction in the town, in other words, the effects of *social* motives.

842 Nupe religion and morality, as we shall see later, emphasize very strongly the idea of progeny. Nevertheless, in the higher social strata, especially in Bida town, the women often prefer childlessness, or at least do not want more than one child. Childlessness opens to them certain economic opportunities of which women with children, or many children, cannot avail themselves as easily. The Bida women know how to bring about abortion, and even know the use of contraceptives—or rather of certain practices and drugs which are believed to work as contraceptives. Many of them are clearly mere superstitions and the expression of magical beliefs; whether certain drugs which one can buy (in the greatest secrecy) from medicine-men and barber-doctors are more effective, I am unable to say.[1] However this may be, sterility of the Bida women is, to speak with Durkheim, a typical 'social fact'. In our own terminology, it represents a typical case of that 'indirect' influence of environment which determines population movement, working through considerations of economic benefit and standard of living. And this influence becomes evident in our case not only as an abstract social trend, derived from statistical correlations, but still more in the form of conscious and tangible behaviour.

Sex Ratio

162 Statistical figures show a surprising fact: a marked preponderance of females among the adult population, but hardly any preponderance of females—indeed, in Bida town, the reverse relation—in the sex ratio of non-adults.

TABLE VI[2]

	Adults		*Non-adults*		*Females per head of male population*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Adult*	*Non-adult*
Bida Emirate .	57,759	66,546	22,949	24,204	1·15	1·1
Agaie-Lapai Emirate . .	20,148	23,915	6,139	5,938	1·1	0·9
Bida town . .	7,714	11,602	3,240	2,675	1·5	0·8
Bida Emirate excl. of Bida town .	50,045	54,944	19,709	21,529	1·1	1·1

[1] The Nupe 'doctors' know two kinds of contraceptives: temporary contraceptives of a magical nature (e.g. a magical belt), and permanent contraceptives—powders which are taken internally. These drugs are considered 'evil', immoral medicines, but are made and sold all the same.

[2] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, pp. 176 et seq.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

621 and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its
186 centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded
361 by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of
162 Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its
361 northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross,
361 from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river
363 enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

Konu (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Baja* in the 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

Demographic Data

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op. cit., p. 20.
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

162 in part from erroneous naming of some tribes and sub-tribes as Nupe and the omission of others.[27] Marked decreases in the population are probably due to continuous small scale emigration, especially since 1930. This has been mostly in a southerly 161 direction, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, i.e., to the wealthy and less heavily taxed districts of the south. In one or two cases, people of one sub-tribe have migrated into the district of another. Other significant reasons for the decrease in population may be venereal disease, abortion, and contraception, and the high infant mortality rate, though abortion is said to be practised only in the larger towns and before marriage. Infant mortality is probably the greatest single cause of the decline; many infants die of malaria.[28]

No detailed analysis has yet been made of the 1952 Census figures which, for the Northern Provinces, show an increase of about 23,000 on those of 1931.

Density of Population

The following estimates are available:

Division or District	*Persons per square mile*	*Date*
Bida	35·22	1931 Census
Agaie-Lapai	21·7	" "
Lafiagi-Pategi	30	" "
Badeggi	22	1934 (local census)
Gbangba	50	" " "
Jima-Doko	53	" " "
Kacha	60	" " "
Mokwa	12	" " "
Kutigi	13	" " "
"Trans-Kaduna" (districts west of Kaduna river)	17·6	" " "
"Cis-Kaduna" (districts east of Kaduna river)	55	" " "

The difference in density east and west of the Kaduna River may be explained by the Fulani conquest of the Nupe and the consequent emigration of the Fulani rulers and their dependents into the area east of the Kaduna.[29]

[27] Nadel (1942, pp. 9–10) gives as examples the Ganagana (Dibo) who were sometimes classed as a separate group, and the "Tapa" (Takpa) who were listed separately in the Southern Provinces until it was discovered in 1936 that Takpa was the Yoruba name for Nupe.

[28] See Brooke, *Census of Nigeria* (1931) Vol. II, p. 29; Nadel, 1942, pp. 6–8; Weatherhead, M.S.

[29] Nadel, op. cit., p. 11.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

General

771 The majority of the Nupe are now Moslems and there is at least one small [162] mosque in every village. The 1931 Census gave 235,990 Moslems out of a total of 324,375 for all religions.[1] But in many communities pagan ritual exists side by side with some Moslem observances, the latter being increasingly adopted for reasons of prestige.

Among the pagans there is common belief in a sky god *Sokó*, who is believed to have created the world and then withdrawn himself from communion with man. The Nupe concept of the cosmos is, according to Nadel, fundamentally amoral. God, having created the world, gave men access to certain mystical forces, making them at the same time subject to these and leaving them to make such use of these "powers" and of the material world as they would and could. First among these mystical forces is *kuti*, the compelling power of ritual, believed to be harnessed in varying degrees in a multiplicity of rites belonging to persons, communities, and associations, and conferring both special benefits or protection and increasing general well-being. At the same time, invocation of the ancestors of kinsfolk, of the people at large, and of the ancient rulers, can afford some measure of benefit or protection. This can also be gained through a separate use of "medicines" which are believed variously to combine pseudo-therapeutic and magical properties. Finally, the evil power of witchcraft, which God also put into the world, has to be discovered, punished, and driven out by special rites. Since, moreover, there are these alternatives with reference to both good fortune and bad, divination has a great part to play in determining the rites to be performed in particular situations.

Spirits

776 The Nupe believe that immaterial beings, existing in their own right and with some human attributes, live in the bush or in hills, trees, watercourses, and other natural features. Their Hausa-Arabic name (*aljenúši*, sing. *aljénu*) suggests that some aspects of this belief may be borrowed from Islam. The spirits may be male or female, friendly or hostile, though only two—*Ndáduma* (Father Niger) and *Ketsá* (associated with a rock in midstream near Jebba Island)—are thought to possess any considerable powers.[3] Another group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. The least clearly conceived are personal spirits or spirit doubles, which belong to every individual from birth to death and cannot be changed. These may be good or bad.[4]

769 Spirits of the dead (*kuci*) may be reincarnated in their own descendants.
776 Approach to the Supreme Being can be made through ancestral spirits. Special sacrifices are performed either in the house or on the grave of a particular ancestor and the *kuci* are invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death. Otherwise it seems that ancestral sacrifices are performed only sporadically and for a specific reason, such as illness in the family.[5]

776 Tsoede, who is regarded by all Nupe as their common ancestor, is venerated in an elaborate cycle of myths and rituals surrounding sacred objects—chains and bronze figures—connected with him.[6] He is, however, outside the general framework of Nupe religious beliefs.

[1] Census of Nigeria, vol. II, p. 63. Unfortunately there are no later figures available for comparison.
[2] See below, pp. 47–8.
[3] See below.
[4] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 26–31.
[5] Ibid., pp. 29–5.
[6] Ibid., pp. 31–2.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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121 tion movement are to some extent methodologically of the same order. Both represent in certain respects 'data', given facts—factors external to the field of social phenomena which we investigate. Moreover, population movement and environmental conditions are inseparable from one another. Population movement reflects the effects of a complex of heterogeneous factors of which physical environment is one of the most important. It bears on possibilities and means of production, on nutrition, health, and livelihood in general.

But we shall also encounter the effects of other factors upon population movement, namely, specific 'cultural' factors—social and economic conditions, 'standards of living', moral concepts—and certain historical events which have influenced the distribution of population in Nupe country.

Birth-rate and Fertility

●163 842 The Nigerian Census places Nupe birth- and fertility-rate at the bottom of the scale.[1] The proportion of live children per mother among the Nupe is 1·8 (the Yoruba are the only other tribe with an equally low rate), as against an average for all tribes of 2·6, and a fertility-rate of 2·4 in the tribe with the next lowest figure. Fifty-eight per cent. of Nupe women in the age group 30–39 are sterile, as against the total average for Nigeria of 22·7, and the next highest sterility rate of 27·1 among the Yoruba. These figures contain certain inconsistencies, and leave certain relevant questions unanswered. Thus the rate of live children per mother is equal among Nupe and Yoruba, while the proportion of sterile women among the Nupe is exactly twice the corresponding figure among the Yoruba. This would imply that infant mortality among the Yoruba is twice as large as among the Nupe—which seems hardly probable. Moreover, the proportion of live children per mother does not indicate to what extent the low figure is due to still-birth, infant mortality, constitutional sterility or, possibly, birth restriction. Finally, the statistics ignore the sociologically most important distinction between rural and urban areas.

The last point can to some extent be answered indirectly. The following figures give the birth-rate of three Nupe towns and one district (Kontagora) which has a very large proportion of Nupe among its inhabitants. Though only approximate these figures are well worth quoting in this connexion as they refer to localities representing different degrees of urbanization: the purely urban area of Bida town side by side with the much less urbanized village-capitals of Agaie and Lapai Emirates.

TABLE III

	Birth-rate per 1,000
Bida town	12
Agaie town	36
Lapai town	27
Kontagora Division	26

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, i, p. 55.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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In the course of our investigation my wife and I attempted to ascertain further statistical data which could throw light on these points. They were obtained by the method of house-to-house investigation in three selected localities, in the villages Kutigi and Jebba Island, and in one town ward of Bida. The scale of this statistical research, carried out single-handed, was of necessity very limited. Nevertheless, certain significant facts could be ascertained (Tables IV and V). 163 842

TABLE IV

	Mothers (age group 30–40)	*Total children born*	*Children alive*	*Children dead*	*Births per mother*	*Live children per mother*
Villages	101	206	108	98	2	1·06
Town	144	230	126	104	1·5	0·8

TABLE V

	Mothers	*Children died at age of*					*Total*
		Birth	*1–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–15*	
Villages	101	29	25	27	8	9	98
Town	41	21	15	27	7	4	74

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Table V shows, first, the distribution of infant mortality over different age groups. Infant mortality in the villages seems, on the whole, considerably lower than in the town, remarkably so at, or shortly after, birth and in the first five years of the infant's life. This seems in the main due to the spread of venereal infection in the town, and also to the effects of abortion and artificial birth restriction which, as we shall see presently, is practised in Bida. The highest mortality, both in urban and rural districts, occurs at the age of 3–5. This peak of mortality seems due primarily to malaria, which is especially fatal at this age.[1]

Table IV (examining a larger group from the urban area) attempts to establish a comparative birth-rate for urban and rural areas. For the low fertility-rate of the Nupe women in general two physiological explanations suggest themselves: first, reduced fertility may be the result of certain endemic or widespread diseases, such as sleeping sickness and gonorrhoea; or second, it may be the result of prenatal deficiency of vitamin E (a vitamin contained, for example, in palm-oil). The effectiveness of these two physiological factors cannot be denied.[2] However, the striking difference in the birth-rate of town and villages demands a different interpretation. The distribution of venereal diseases, definitely higher in the town than in the rural area, would fit into the picture. But of sleeping sickness rather the opposite is true; and the vitamin deficiency 163 842 164 [146] 163 842

[1] For this information, as for the other medical information in this chapter, I am indebted to Dr. M. Ellis, of the Nigerian Medical Service, who at the time was in charge of Bida N.A. Hospital.

[2] A study of diet among the Nupe has shown that the women's share of the daily meals (i.e. the meals cooked with palm-oil) is only about one-fourth of the men's share.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

163 should be less marked in the town, where rich food is the rule. Physiological factors are thus not sufficient to explain the low fertility-rate in
842 Nupe. This is confirmed by the data of Table IV. For in the context of this table, which refers only to women who have had children and excludes sterile women, the difference in birth-rate precludes to some extent the explanation on the ground of constitutional sterility and suggests instead the influence of another factor: the existence of birth restriction in the town, in other words, the effects of *social* motives.

842 Nupe religion and morality, as we shall see later, emphasize very strongly the idea of progeny. Nevertheless, in the higher social strata, especially in Bida town, the women often prefer childlessness, or at least do not want more than one child. Childlessness opens to them certain economic opportunities of which women with children, or many children, cannot avail themselves as easily. The Bida women know how to bring about abortion, and even know the use of contraceptives—or rather of certain practices and drugs which are believed to work as contraceptives. Many of them are clearly mere superstitions and the expression of magical beliefs; whether certain drugs which one can buy (in the greatest secrecy) from medicine-men and barber-doctors are more effective, I am unable to say.[1] However this may be, sterility of the Bida women is, to speak with Durkheim, a typical 'social fact'. In our own terminology, it represents a typical case of that 'indirect' influence of environment which determines population movement, working through considerations of economic benefit and standard of living. And this influence becomes evident in our case not only as an abstract social trend, derived from statistical correlations, but still more in the form of conscious and tangible behaviour.

Sex Ratio

162 Statistical figures show a surprising fact: a marked preponderance of females among the adult population, but hardly any preponderance of females—indeed, in Bida town, the reverse relation—in the sex ratio of non-adults.

TABLE VI[2]

	Adults		*Non-adults*		*Females per head of male population*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Adult*	*Non-adult*
Bida Emirate .	57,759	66,546	22,949	24,204	1·15	1·1
Agaie-Lapai Emirate . .	20,148	23,915	6,139	5,938	1·1	0·9
Bida town . .	7,714	11,602	3,240	2,675	1·5	0·8
Bida Emirate excl. of Bida town .	50,045	54,944	19,709	21,529	1·1	1·1

[1] The Nupe 'doctors' know two kinds of contraceptives: temporary contraceptives of a magical nature (e.g. a magical belt), and permanent contraceptives—powders which are taken internally. These drugs are considered 'evil', immoral medicines, but are made and sold all the same.

[2] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, pp. 176 et seq.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, 164 Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

231 The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

164 In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of 732 leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity, 158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

164 Sleeping sickness is the great scourge of the country. A Sleeping Sickness Commission which visited Nupe in 1936 found 70 per cent. of the people infected—the highest figure in the whole of Nigeria. Bilharzia and other worm diseases are no less widespread. The prominence of venereal diseases is characteristic of Nupe as it is of the whole of Nigeria and indeed of the whole of semi-civilized Africa. Dysentery, malaria, and yaws complete the unhappy picture. It is worth noting, [146] however, that typical deficiency diseases, including boils and ulcers, are comparatively rare. A statistical table, compiled from the attendance figures of the N.A. Hospital and Dispensaries in Bida Division, may illustrate the distribution of the more important diseases occurring in Nupe.

TABLE II

The figures for Bida Hospital refer to in-patients treated during April, July, October 1935 and January 1936. The figures for the Dispensary of Lemu give the attendance in January 1936. For another dispensary (Kutigi) only the order of frequency of the various diseases could be ascertained; it is indicated in the third line by roman numerals.

	Venereal diseases	*Malaria*	*Ulcer, scabies, &c.*	*Bronchitis, pneumonia*	*Dysentery, enterics*	*Eye-diseases*	*Rheumatic diseases*	*Leprosy*	*Bilharzia, worm diseases*	*Various*
Bida Hospital	35	14	15	13	9	3	5	2	80 per cent. of all cases	128
Dispensary Lemu	21	18	3	54	2	2	68	4	?	106
Dispensary Kutigi	II	IV	III	VI	?	V	I	10 cases	?	?

The description of health conditions has a more special bearing on the anthropology of the Nupe people. First, it is of a certain significance in connexion with certain cultural elaborations of the theme of disease among the Nupe;[1] second, it involves relevant questions of mortality and population movement—a subject to which we shall turn presently. Finally, with respect to mental disorders: psychology and sociology have long realized that certain tensions and maladjustments in the social system tend to manifest themselves in the sphere of psycho-pathology. We shall see that this correlation is true also of Nupe society.

POPULATION MOVEMENT

121 It is unnecessary to stress the importance of population studies for the understanding of a society and the nature and working of its institutions. But it may be necessary to justify the inclusion of a discussion on population movement in a chapter on environment. A first justification lies in the fact that, in a study of social organization, environment and popula-

[1] Most instances of this kind, however, I must leave for future publications. To one typical instance, the part which leprosy plays in the mythology and ritual of the *gunnu* cult, I have referred in the description of this cult in '*Gunnu*, A Fertility Cult of the Nupe in Northern Nigeria', in *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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Villages	101	29	25	27	8	9	98
Town	41	21	15	27	7	4	74

Table V shows, first, the distribution of infant mortality over different age groups. Infant mortality in the villages seems, on the whole, considerably lower than in the town, remarkably so at, or shortly after, birth and in the first five years of the infant's life. This seems in the main due to the spread of venereal infection in the town, and also to the effects of abortion and artificial birth restriction which, as we shall see presently, is practised in Bida. The highest mortality, both in urban and rural districts, occurs at the age of 3–5. This peak of mortality seems due primarily to malaria, which is especially fatal at this age.[1]

Table IV (examining a larger group from the urban area) attempts to establish a comparative birth-rate for urban and rural areas. For the low fertility-rate of the Nupe women in general two physiological explanations suggest themselves: first, reduced fertility may be the result of certain endemic or widespread diseases, such as sleeping sickness and gonorrhoea; or second, it may be the result of prenatal deficiency of vitamin E (a vitamin contained, for example, in palm-oil). The effectiveness of these two physiological factors cannot be denied.[2] However, the striking difference in the birth-rate of town and villages demands a different interpretation. The distribution of venereal diseases, definitely higher in the town than in the rural area, would fit into the picture. But of sleeping sickness rather the opposite is true; and the vitamin deficiency 163 842 164 [146] 163 842

[1] For this information, as for the other medical information in this chapter, I am indebted to Dr. M. Ellis, of the Nigerian Medical Service, who at the time was in charge of Bida N.A. Hospital.

[2] A study of diet among the Nupe has shown that the women's share of the daily meals (i.e. the meals cooked with palm-oil) is only about one-fourth of the men's share.

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In the course of our investigation my wife and I attempted to ascertain further statistical data which could throw light on these points. They were obtained by the method of house-to-house investigation in three selected localities, in the villages Kutigi and Jebba Island, and in one town ward of Bida. The scale of this statistical research, carried out single-handed, was of necessity very limited. Nevertheless, certain significant facts could be ascertained (Tables IV and V). 163 842

TABLE IV

	Mothers (age group 30–40)	*Total children born*	*Children alive*	*Children dead*	*Births per mother*	*Live children per mother*
Villages	101	206	108	98	2	1·06
Town	144	230	126	104	1·5	0·8

TABLE V

	Mothers	*Children died at age of*					*Total*
		Birth	*1–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–15*	
Villages	101	29	25	27	8	9	98
Town	41	21	15	27	7	4	74

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their work is in no way connected with a traditional trade or craft, which means, that they all had to abandon another, original, occupation (either of themselves or their families) and that their present work constitutes an alternative profession in the sense just explained. 464

TABLE I

Temporary Labour

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Home	No alternative occupation	Alternative occupation	Seasonal labour	Length of employment as labourers: Under 2 years	2–5 years	5–10 years	Over 10 years	Totals
Bida	6 (3)	30	2	5	16	10	7	38
Country	1	3	15	10	5	3	1	19
Totals	7	33	17	15	21	13	8	57

Under 'No alternative occupation' I have listed in brackets the labourers who are studying the Koran in their spare time, but without intention of practising the profession of Koran teachers. The heading 'seasonal labour' refers to farmers who, for various reasons, seek work as labourers only in the dry season and return to their farm-work in the rains. It is natural that their number should be much larger among people from the country than among Bida men. All peasants, incidentally, who have become labourers during the last two years belong to this class of seasonal labour. Our figures further show that their number is greatly on the increase. Labourers pure and simple, as might be expected, come almost exclusively from Bida. The only exception is a man from Badeggi, the village on the urbanized railway, twelve miles from Bida; he is also the only country man who has been a labourer for over ten years. Under 'alternative occupations' I had to list a great many different occupations; Table III will show the various original, or 'alternative', occupations of temporary labourers. In Table II we shall examine the professional groups from which skilled permanent labour is recruited. 464

TABLE II

Permanent Labour

Occupation of the labourer	Occupation of the labourer's family: Guild crafts: Same	Guild crafts: Different	Individual crafts	Farmers	Mallams	Traders	Nobility	Total
Carpenters	6	..	..	1	1	..	1	9
Blacksmiths	5	1	..	..	2	..	2	10
Total	11	1	..	1	3	..	3	19

The large majority of skilled workmen come, as we see, from families which have practised the same crafts on indigenous lines both in Bida and in the villages. The few 'outsiders' appearing in this group come mostly from families with no specific occupation, such as Mallams, and nobility.

The largest contingent of country people among the labourers is, naturally, composed of farmers and farmers' sons. Comparing Table III

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361 political centre. The Kede settlement at Raba is a typical instance
18 of the more solidly built settlement. It was founded about 1840, when Raba was the capital of Nupe Emirate. The first settlers were five men with their families from Muregi, who belonged to one 'house'; to-day the Kede colony at Raba (which now also possesses a Niger Company storehouse) numbers seven 'houses'.

The Kede settlement at Katcha is an example of the other, poorly built, type, which gives the impression as if the settlers had not yet found time, or had not yet quite decided, to build themselves permanent quarters. The present Kede settlement dates back to 1905–10, at which time a group of Kede who had settled previously at Eggan, on the main river, abandoned this colony for Katcha, attracted by the opportunities of the place. Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, owed its rise to importance to the introduction of steamer traffic on the Niger and the building of the first Nigerian railway from Baro, through Katcha, to Minna. Its five or six 'houses' of original Kede settlers have now increased to seventeen.

Our list of Kede settlements would not be complete without the mention of the purely temporary riverside camps, meant to last for one season or a few weeks only, which the Kede put-up in the larger villages where they are wont to stop on their journeys up and down the river. During the main trading season, Jebba, Patigi, Wuya, or Katcha are crowded with these lightly built shelters, grass-huts, tent-like structures of grass-matting or —crudest of all—the wattle-and-matting awnings of the canoes simply pulled ashore. Kede settlement has not yet come to a standstill. Places which are gaining in importance still attract new groups of immigrants; and the seasonal shelters in a busy trading centre may at any time be turned into permanent quarters, as, indeed, it has happened repeatedly in the course of time.

361 Reviewing the history of Kede settlement, we find its depen-
166 dence on economic factors fully confirmed. We may conceive of it as of a progressive realization of the dictates of the productive system of the country. The Kede, as we have seen, did not occupy new, uninhabited country, but settled in places where an existing population had already established a certain level of social and economic life. In the choice of places for settlement and in their subsequent development, the Kede were invariably guided by commercial considerations. They were, moreover, not satisfied

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with the position of immigrants who are dependent on the good-will of their hosts, but claimed with the territory in which to settle also the political rule over it. If they are thus not 'colonists' in the strict sense of the word, not caring for settlement in new, virgin country, they are 'colonizers' in a more special, political sense, being settlers, immigrants, and representatives of a ruling race in one.

Here a final point remains to be cleared up: the exact relation between the elastic territorial expansion of the tribe and the necessarily more inert and rigid expansion of political domination. From the history of modern Kede settlement we learn that there is a certain time lag between the first occupation of a new place by Kede immigrants (the nucleus stage of the seasonal camp) and its eventual rise to the status of a political outpost. The Kede, as a rule, attribute the founding of their various colonies to particular chiefs. The initiative taken by the Kede chief in the colonial enterprise refers both to the early growth and the final political incorporation of the new colony. He might himself send out settlers from Muregi to a new place which looked a likely centre for Kede activities (Raba is an instance of this), or he might direct settlers from other places to a promising new settlement (as was the case in Katcha). But not until a settlement was firmly established and numbered several families would he delegate an official representative of his to take charge of it, thus proclaiming the political incorporation of the new Kede dominion.

We learn, further, that Kede territorial expansion did not proceed step by step, in continuous stages, but rather in a series of leaps, which may leave gaps between outpost and outpost, or mother-country and new settlement. Thus there are 'uncolonized' spaces on the Kaduna River between Gbara and Wuya or Gbara and Muregi—that is, stretches of country with native villages which (unlike the interspersed *kintsozi* villages in the 'old' Kede country) have not been absorbed politically by the Kede. We may assume that the early growth of the Kede community followed the same line of development. If this was so, the compact political unit in the 'old' Kede country proves that political rule was later brought up to the new outpost, and the territorial gaps eventually absorbed in the extending political unit. To-day the firmly fixed boundaries of provinces and districts forbid, of course, a similar sequel to the founding of new settlements. The new economic

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361 development of the country, moreover, has attracted Kede
166 emigration to places far outside the orbit of their political organiza-
634 tion: thus at the busy trading-place on the confluence of Niger and Benue, Lokoja, a large and prosperous Kede colony has grown, which combines all the 'stages' of Kede settlement, permanent and semi-permanent houses in which Kede families have made their home as well as a large encampment on the river bank for the Kede canoemen from the north. But it seems that even in pre-British times the territorial expansion of the Kede had to leave certain 'gaps' in its network of settlements and political outposts. Thus the large Nupe town of Eggan on the right bank of the Niger, flanked to the north and south by (presumably old) Kede settlements, remained a powerful, independent political unit, placed directly under the King of Nupe. It is this characteristic scheme of Kede expansion which allows for territorial gaps and the founding of (at least temporarily) isolated outposts that justifies our speaking of Kede 'colonies' and 'colonization'.

V. Political Organization

634 The political system of the Kede corresponds in all important points to the concept of the State. On its small scale, it fulfils the essential conditions of State organization: its dominion is territorial and non-tribal (or inter-tribal); its administration is centralized; its machinery of government is monopolized by a special *ad hoc* appointed or selected body, which is separated from the rest of the population by certain social and economic privileges.[1] The first of these three features we have discussed already; as regards the second, we have learned that Muregi, the traditional home of the tribe, is at the same time the political centre of the country; and as regards the last point, we have seen that in a broad sense the Kede themselves represent, corporatively, the ruling group of the country. But among the Kede we find another, more precisely defined 'privileged group', in whose hands the government of the country is concentrated. This ruling group, in a narrow sense, consists of the Kede chief and his titled councillors and emissaries.

[1] With regard to this definition of the State, see *Africa*, vol. cit., and my forthcoming Nupe book. R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (1927) (chaps. iii and iv), recognizes territorial sovereignty and centralized authority as essential to the structure of the State; the factor of the special 'ruling group' has been elaborated by F. Oppenheimer, *The State* (1926).

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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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for example, the Gana-Gana (Dibo) sub-tribe of the Nupe is classed sometimes under 'Nupe' and sometimes as a separate group. In the Census of 1921 their number is given as 19,700, in the Census of 1931 as 2,897;[1] into which tribal category the rest of them disappeared I have been unable to discover. A last example: only in 1936 did the Administration of Ibadan Division discover that the people who were listed in their statistics under the heading 'Tapa' (Takpa) were identical with the 'Nupe' of the Northern Provinces, Takpa being the Yoruba name for Nupe.

The difficulties and sources of error which render tribal statistics so uncertain do not affect in the same degree population statistics compiled for certain single Provinces, political Divisions, and especially townships. Here the improvement in registration has had its full effect; and I may add that in the preceding discussion I have used only these more reliable statistics. Here are certain figures illustrating population movement in Niger and Ilorin Provinces—the two Provinces in which the bulk of the Nupe people are living.

TABLE VII

	General Census 1921	*General Census 1931*	*Local Census 1934*
Bida Emirate . . .	171,958	171,458	168,247
Bida town . . .	29,848	25,231	23,286
Nupe in Ilorin Province .	64,652	65,040	53,600
Nupe in Niger Province .	233,840	226,132	..

Again we find a marked decrease in population and a decrease which cannot be dismissed as due to miscalculation. Evidently, a decrease in population even considerably smaller than that shown in these figures cannot be due merely to unfavourable birth- and death-rate. Emigration seems the only alternative, and I have indeed found evidence of this. A continuous emigration on a small scale and the existence of a floating population of traders and craftsmen drifting to the prosperous centres in the south could be established beyond doubt.[2] The study of life-histories and genealogies among the Nupe shows further that emigration of considerable importance occurred, roughly, in the last six to ten years. The drift of the emigration was again mostly south, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, that is, to the wealthier and, above all, less heavily taxed districts of Southern Nigeria.[3] In-

direction of an anthropologist, Dr. C. K. Meek, is in many respects more correct than the more comprehensive and elaborate recent Census.

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, p. 70; on p. 30, however, there are, again, 18,220 Gana-Gana.

[2] A census of Nupe people living at present in Lokoja, for example, showed the following distribution of professions among 60 family heads: 2 farmers, 4 mechanics, 5 barbers, 15 tailors and embroiderers, 4 black- and brass-smiths, 9 Koran teachers, 3 mat-makers, 2 carpenters, 5 canoemen, 5 N.A. messengers, interpreters, and other small officials.

[3] These are the comparative tax figures for 1934–5 per adult for Bida Emirate and Ilorin and Ibadan respectively: Bida town, 9*s.*–10*s.* 6*d.*; Bida Emirate,

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vestigations among the Nupe community of Ilorin and Ibadan have elicited the information that in 1934–5 a big wave of Nupe emigration had reached these towns.[1] These two years, my informants explained, had been bad years, with a severe food scarcity in the north, high prices, and shortage of money. The reason is indeed convincing: 1933–4 marked the nadir of the economic depression in Northern Nigeria, which almost paralysed trade and native industry. To the mobile professions of trader and craftsman emigration appeared in many cases as the natural solution.

Density of Population

The following table illustrates the density of population in different parts of Nupe country. The first three figures are taken from the Census of 1931, the other figures, referring to districts of Bida Division, are compiled from the local Census of 1934.

TABLE VIII

Locality	*Density per sq. mile*	*Locality*	*Density per sq. mile*
Bida Division	35·22	Mokwa district	12
Agaie-Lapai Division	21·70	Kutigi ,,	13
Lafiagi-Patigi Division	30·00	Districts west of Kaduna river ('Trans-Kaduna')	17·6
Badeggi district	22	Districts east of Kaduna river ('Cis-Kaduna')	55
Gbangba ,,	50		
Jima-Doko ,,	53		
Kacha ,,	60		

The striking difference in density of population east and west of the Kaduna river needs explanation. It lies in the historical fact of the Fulani conquest of Nupe and the immigration of the Fulani rulers and their huge army of warriors, slaves, courtiers, and other dependants into the area east of the Kaduna, where they settled, occupied the land, and built their capital and numerous villages. The history of the conquest and the political reorganization of the country which it entailed will be described later in more detail. But here already we realize the far-reaching influence which this difference in population density must have upon the social organization of the country, and upon the distribution of natural resources on which its economic life depends.

districts, 9*s.* 6*d.*–15*s.*; Ilorin town, 9*s.*; Ilorin Emirate, districts, 10*s.*–11*s.*; Ibadan town, 7*s.*

[1] During 1935 200 people from Bida Emirate migrated south. (Personal information received from the District Officer, Bida Division.)

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CHAPTER XVII

INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

464 177 THE influences of modern culture contact which we have seen at work in almost every field of Nupe production gain their fullest expression in this most recent native occupation. The employer is the Bida Native Administration; the employees are recruited from certain specific sections of the Nupe people, and the nature of this selection is deeply significant of the structure of the society.

We must distinguish two different categories of paid industrial labour: skilled permanent, and unskilled temporary, labour.[1] Skilled labour is employed in the workshops of the Native Administration Public Works Department, and comprises blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers, i.e. occupations which (with the exception of the bricklayers) are closely associated with the traditional native crafts of the country. Temporary unskilled labour is employed partly in addition to permanent labour in the N.A. Workshops, but mostly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labourers such as construction work of various kinds. The term 'temporary' must be understood in a very loose sense; men who have been working as 'temporary' labourers, off and on, for ten or fifteen years figure prominently on my lists. Some move from place to place, wherever there is a chance of finding employment. As there are large numbers of alien, non-Nupe, labourers among those engaged in temporary work in Nupe country, so we also find Nupe workmen in other districts and provinces of Nigeria. A few of these labourers have never even had another, more or less permanent, profession, but have adopted their present occupation in earliest youth. None of them, however, are skilled and specially trained labourers. By far the largest proportion of temporary labourers go home and return to whatever their original profession was when their temporary employment comes to an end. In the sense, then, that their work as labourers constitutes an alternative to some other original occupation, they can all be classed under the heading of 'temporary labourers'.

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464 The data on which are based the statistical tables which follow were compiled in and near Bida in 1936. It was a fortunate coincidence that at the time a large building programme was being carried out—the construction of new office buildings in Bida, and the rebuilding of a big bridge on the Badeggi road—in which a large body of labourers was employed. My census of temporary labour was taken among the workmen who were employed in this work. I have placed bricklayers in the same category with temporary labourers, although, technically, they represent a group of skilled, permanent, workmen; but the technique of

[1] To be quite precise we should distinguish four different classes of labour: permanent and non-permanent, and skilled and unskilled. As, however, all skilled labour is permanent, and all non-permanent labour unskilled, and as unskilled permanent labour represents only a small minority (8 individuals) it is simpler to deal with the two sub-divisions as one.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips. 441 574 484

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course 441 167 484 571 [191]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

change in this array does not alter the continued consciousness of identity, but is subsumed in it.

This is, of course, a familiar situation, which ultimately accounts for the continuity (or continued self-awareness) of societies even when their cultural possessions, or for that matter their populations, change. Much will depend on the gradualness and restricted scope of the change; a sudden change in which new modes of behaviour greatly outweigh the 'array' of pre-existing ones may disrupt the continued identity. But it need not always do so. For the process just outlined may also be reversed: the society facing such far-reaching changes may yet fasten on to some particular cultural possession which remained unchanged, and consider it sufficiently relevant to furnish a criterion or symbol of the continued identity. Often, as we know, a creed or some religious observance preserved amidst the changes will prove to have this relevance.

This process, too, can be observed among the Nupe, among the colony of emigrants in Lagos, who have lost nearly every feature of culture, including language, which would normally sustain that awareness of 'being Nupe' or 'still being Nupe'. But they have preserved one traditional cult, the *gunnu*; and they still regard themselves as Nupe (calling themselves either Nupe or, more often, Takpa or Tapa, by the Yoruba name). The two things go together; in discussions, when the people wish to emphasize their tribal identity, they at once mention the possession of this cult which, to them, seems decisive.

Let me say a few words about the Nupe colony in Lagos. It numbers perhaps 5,000 people, both scattered over the outlying hamlets and villages and occupying a special quarter in the city of Lagos.[1] The Nupe settlement is claimed to be of considerable antiquity, going back to the Portuguese era, and to have attained its present important and honoured position towards the end of the last century, when the self-made head of the Lagos Nupe, a certain Gana and a 'noted warrior', was elevated to high rank by the Yoruba town king. This Gana, who incidentally was taken to England to be presented to Queen Victoria, was the grandfather of the present chief of the Lagos Nupe, a man of about seventy. Gana's rank, *Osode*, is still held by his descendants, and with the rank goes the priestship of the *gunnu*, which Gana had somehow assumed. The Lagos *gunnu* is a combination of three rites all subsumed under the same name, the *gunnu* itself, the *ndakó gboyá*, and the ritual of the Chain of Tsoede, the paraphernalia of the three

[1] The Nupe quarter in Lagos is known to everyone; its main thoroughfares are called *Tapa Street* and *Osode Street*, the latter deriving its name from the title held by the head of the Nupe colony (see below).

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *kuso*, 'bush'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu* and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults. The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos ceremonials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Paradoxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their traditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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30. The Nupe quarter in Lagos

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31. The oldest mosque in Bida

[p. 230(B)]

THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

105 The Nupe, speaking a number of related dialects, number about 360,000, and consist of the inhabitants of Bida Emirate, Niger Province, together with several politically separate sections. They do not form a territorially united group and, although every Nupe should extend hospitality to his fellow-tribesmen, they are not characterized by close internal cohesion. There is considerable variety of custom among the various "sub-tribes." Outstanding common features are: the cycle of myths of the culture-hero Tsoede, the observation of the *gunnu* ritual, belief in the supreme sky-god Soko, and the general structure of political ranks, age-sets, kinship system, and marriage rules.[1]

NOMENCLATURE

101 The Nupe call themselves *Nupeciši* or *Nupenciši* (sing. *Nupeci* or *Nupenci*), their language *Nupe* or *Eni Nupe*, and their country *Kin Nupe* ("the land of Nupe"). But Nupe in Zugurma and, generally speaking, north of the Kaduna River, also call themselves *Agabi*.[2] They are known by neighbouring tribes by the following names:[3]

By the Hausa: *Ba Nupe* or *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*).
" " Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
" " Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari: *Ampeyi* or *Nife*.
" " Akanda (Yoruba): *Anupecwayi*.
" " Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
" " Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
" " Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
" " Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie
● 167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 24. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organization more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.
[2] Mathews, 1926.
[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 282 and index.
[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abawa by Hausa speakers.

[pp. 1-16 Non-existent]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

131 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba
167 Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[6]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

101 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[8]

619 Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own
634 dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common
[167] descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciži): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciži* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiži* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoži* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Barumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endorigi, Ela, Difu, Gbaradori, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans ● 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [144 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 302] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

64 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, 634
who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held 771
and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but 776
is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, 634
having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was 776
founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants 634
from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they 304
have adopted the Nupe language. 197
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[1] [i.e. The Kasopa subtribe.--Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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bells—among them the square-shaped bells typical of Benin work—on the state drums found all along the Niger. The heavy iron chains and fetters, on the other hand, are most probably of Portuguese origin; they may have been brought in by slave-traders from the coast and have found their way up the river into the hinterland—the home of these precious trading goods.[1] Even the approximate date of the immigration of Tsoede and his band can be fixed with some accuracy. For on this point all the various genealogies of Nupe kings, obtained from quite different sources, tally. Giving the years of reign of every Nupe king, back to Tsoede, they all place the life of Tsoede in the same period, the early fifteenth century. It is interesting to note that the royal genealogies in two great neighbouring kingdoms, Yoruba and Ewe (in Togoland), also trace back the history of their royal ancestors to the same period, about 1400.[2] We may not be mistaken therefore in assuming that the beginning of the fifteenth century marks the end of a big wave of immigration which eventually led to the firm establishment of a number of new West African societies—kingdoms, in our three instances. For Nupe we can go farther than this. The same period saw the first contact of the Guinea Coast with Europe. In 1498 the Portuguese established themselves in Benin. But at that time they found a Benin already on the verge of collapse, the once powerful kingdom weakened and in obvious disintegration. Idah, once tributary to Benin, and master over Nupe as of many other dependencies, must have weakened with it. The myth of Tsoede's delivery of Nupe from the yoke of Idah may well contain a kernel of historical truth (whatever form the events may have taken in reality); the foundation of an independent Nupe kingdom may have been one of the historical results of the disintegration of Benin and its vassal states. The ancient contact of Idah and Nupe as well as the former sovereignty of Idah, are undoubtedly historical. The tradition of Tsoede is as well known in Idah as in Nupe. And when some years ago the *Atta* of Idah came to Bida—he was keen to visit that country of which the tradition of his tribe had so much to tell—a significant political imbroglio threatened the meeting of the Nigerian potentates. It arose from a question of precedence; the Idah man insisted on being given a higher seat than the *Etsu* Nupe, basing his claim on the unforgotten historical fact of Nupe's ancient vassalship to Idah.

This bare framework of facts—if facts they are—has absorbed many other features, legends, traditions, embellishments; which of them contain any historical truth it is impossible to say. But we are not concerned here to determine what is and what is not historical truth in the rich cycle of traditions round the figure of Tsoede. The myth as it stands, and as it is treasured by the people of Nupe, is to us a sufficiently significant social reality. It represents the typical 'mythical charter' of

[1] Exactly the same chains and irons have been found on the Gold Coast; small models of these fetters, of brass, iron, or gold, are sold as charms all down the river and the creeks of Southern Nigeria. A common origin suggests itself forcibly. [71]

[2] See Bishop Johnson, *History of the Yoruba*, and D. Westermann (personal information).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the
323 river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

[071]

41:Nadel P,E-5 (1934-1936) 1937
FF62 Yoruba FF62
Nupe FF52

The present study can only claim to be a first attempt in field experiments of this kind, carried out under conditions which did not allow a more extensive investigation. Yet the question could be raised how far the evidence obtained in experiments which were carried out on so small a scale and in so special a setting can be considered significant and representative of the culture at large. In order to secure a representative group I selected for my experimental subjects students who came from a great many different places in Nupe and Yoruba respectively. The two experimental groups were matched as closely as possible with regard to age, school standard and the surroundings from which they came. In Nupe I was able to work with larger groups: with 60 boys of the age of 12–18 who were taken from every school form, i.e. who had been students of the Middle School for periods varying from 1 to 5 years. Now, as I shall show later, the experiments admit to a certain extent of statistical interpretation, i.e. the responses to certain essential features in the story or the pictures can be classified and treated quantitatively. This statistical evidence allows us to gauge the extent to which the 20 Yoruba subjects can be considered a significant and representative sample. I found that the means for the various responses calculated for the small group correspond very closely to the means arrived at for the large group; in other words, there exist no unequally distributed marked individual differences which would invalidate the results obtained among the small group. Since school standard and age do not correspond very closely in Nigerian schools, the statistical evidence can moreover be used to check independently the influence of age and educational standard. As regards the age factor, we find a slight rise in the appreciation of factors of reasoning and emotional facts corresponding to age; a fairly unchanged appreciation of situational facts; and a fall in the appreciation of moral ideas from the age of 13–15. More important for this investigation is the educational factor; here the statistical evidence proves conclusively that the difference in educational standard has no influence on the psychological responses and attitudes examined in these experiments.

Y N 124 Y N 128 Y N [871]

III. THE CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Before going into details I must say a few words about the two cultures and the nature of their diversity. The two groups speak different languages which, however, belong to the same linguistic group (of so-called *Sudanic* languages). Their economic system and their general social organization are similar. Yet other aspects of their culture, aspects which may be held to express more specifically psychological trends or tendencies,[1] reveal a fundamental difference. The religion of the Yoruba is characterized by an elaborate and rationalized hierarchical system of deities, each of which has its specific, specialized duty and function. The Nupe have no such system; their religious beliefs centre round a concept of magic of the 'mana' type, i.e. vague, abstract, impersonal power. In the rich, highly developed realistic art of the Yoruba the main *motif* of pictures, plastics and wooden images is the human figure; religious and mythical emblems of this kind play an important part in their life. Again,

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[1] See my article on "The Typological Approach to Culture" (4).

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the Nupe have nothing of the sort, their art is imageless, they have but crude wall paintings, and their strength lies in ornamental, decorative art. Also the Yoruba have a strong sense for pantomime and drama, for which again there is no parallel among the Nupe.

IV. The story experiment

Y N 125

The story was read to the students at 8 a.m., i.e. during their first class. At noon they were asked to relate the story for the first time (each boy by himself) and after one week for the second time. Each time the leader of the experiment wrote down the story as it was told. The story (in free translation) runs as follows:

> Long, long ago there were a man and his wife. They had two children, sons. When these sons had grown up, they saw a beautiful girl. They both made friends with her, and loved her very much. They loved her with one heart. But the girl did not love the elder brother, she only loved the younger. Thereupon the elder brother went to the younger and told him to give up the girl. He said: "I am the one to marry the girl for I am your elder brother." Thus he spoke. But the younger refused. They quarrelled a great deal till the elder brother became furious. When the night fell he went to the hut where the younger brother was sleeping and killed him with his sword, he killed him with one stroke. When the people heard the news they said: "He did an evil deed, God will revenge it." But the girl cried, she cried for twenty days and her heart was full of pain. When she had finished crying she left and went to another place. Nobody saw her again.

The responses which the contents and structure of the story evoke in the experimental subjects can be analysed under four or five different headings: There are points in the story which stress emotional reaction; points which bear on moral ideas; and points which appeal more specifically to reasoning, i.e. crucial points in the logical progress of the narrative. The text also contains certain set phrases and formulae; and, finally, a number of situational or circumstantial details. Obviously, these different categories in which the features of the narrative can be grouped must overlap to a certain extent. But it is just this overlapping, the application of different and even divergent aspects of interpretation to the same features, which will reveal to us most strikingly the different psychological attitudes with which the two groups approach the data presented in the narrative.

(1) *Set phrases and formulae*

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The beginning and the end of the narrative, and one or two other phrases, represent more or less fixed formulae typical of all such stories. These phrases were in most cases repeated literally, both by Nupe and

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Yoruba. In the reproduction of one formula-like phrase, however, we grasp a first striking difference between the two groups. The phrase in question is the sentence '"God will revenge it"', spoken in the story by the people when they learn of the crime. This set phrase, which is commonly used in a context of this kind, is repeated verbally by 10 Nupe (13 in the second recall); 6 (3) Nupe leave it out altogether; and 4 (4) substitute another sentence of the same meaning. Among the Yoruba 5 (5) quote literally; 3 (1) leave it out; and 12 (14) substitute another sentence. Yet the new sentence which the Yoruba substitute does not merely reproduce, with different words, the same meaning. In 5 (10) Yoruba reproductions the changed phrase introduces an altogether new element, namely a rational explanation of the expression '"God will revenge it"', uttered under these particular circumstances. Thus (Y 8), in the first recall, lets the people speak as follows: "The elder brother has done wrong; we cannot revenge it, God will revenge it." In the second recall this reasoning is more cogent still: "The people said: 'They should not do anything about it; God will punish him.'" Or (Y 12): "They said, 'One should leave the elder brother alone. God will judge him.'" Or (Y 15): "His sin is very grave; no one but God can judge him." Only two Nupe in the second recall (none in the first) felt it necessary to supply this additional rational link which turns a stereotyped phrase, quoted almost automatically, into a logically sound judgment.

(2) *Rational aspects*

In the stress which is laid upon such rational links and logical elements lies in fact the most fundamental difference between the Nupe and Yoruba version of the narrative. A characteristic example is the reproduction of the third sentence of the story ("when these sons had grown up"), a 'crucial' sentence in so far as it supplies an essential rational link in the narrative; obviously the brothers must have grown into men before they could have had their love affair. Now among the Nupe only 3 mentioned this fact in the first, and 4 in the second recall. The corresponding figures among the Yoruba are 17 and 18. But even the most salient and most essential points in the story, the preference of the girl for the younger brother and his refusal to renounce his claims, points which are missing in none of the Yoruba reproductions, are neglected by the Nupe: 9 Nupe in the first and 5 in the second recall leave out one or the other of these facts on which the whole development of the story depends. Similarly, the quarrel between the two brothers which supplies the motive for the murder is mentioned by 3 (3) Nupe only as against 12 (14) Yoruba.

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But, as we have seen already, the Yoruba do more than merely observe the existing rational connexions in the story. They introduce new ones, or try to render existing connexions more striking. For instance, towards the end of the story there is the sentence "when the girl had finished crying, she left the town". Among the Nupe 19 (16) reproductions include a sentence the meaning of which closely corresponds to the original; among the Yoruba 2 only kept to this rather weak connecting link; 7 (8) placed the two sentences simply side by side: "she wept for twenty days, and then she ran away"; and 10 (9) turned the connexion into a sentence such as this: "when she thought of all this sadness that existed in this matter, she left the town." Now the most interesting fact is that this sentence is a typical expression of Nupe 'mentality'. When I first composed the story I had placed the two sentences side by side: "the girl cried for twenty days. Then she left the town." But my two Nupe informants, with whom I worked out the text, objected to this expression, and insisted on bringing in the sentence "when she had finished crying". This sentence was then simply taken over into the Yoruba text. But in the experiments most of the Yoruba rejected it as we saw, left it out or, more characteristically, reformulated it, thus strengthening the logical cohesion of the story.

One could try to establish statistically this difference with respect to the stress laid on elements of reasoning. Contained in the story are four sentences which represent specifically rational or logical links. Every rational link which appears in the reproductions, both an original rational link which was already contained in the story and any new, additional 'rationalization', is scored as 1. The means for the 20 experimental subjects then amount, among the Nupe, to 2·3 (2·4), and among the Yoruba to 5·5 (6.0), i.e. the Yoruba figure is more than twice the Nupe figure, and considerably above the theoretical value of 4.

(3) *Situational aspects*

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The retelling of the Nupe, although neglectful of the rational connexions embodied in the text, does itself introduce certain new, additional links and connexions. These links stress situational, circumstantial facts, details of place and time, which are of little importance for the logical progress of the story. They may amount only to irrelevant remarks, filled in between sentences, such as "this went on for some time", or "thus they lived", etc. Or they may completely replace the logical connexion, as in the version of (N 7) who, leaving out the quarrel of the two brothers, jumps from the statement about the girl's preference for the

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younger brother to the scene of the murder, by simply stating: "one day, at night, the elder went to the sleeping hut of the younger...." N 153

In other cases, however, the situational and temporal details tend to build up a vivid, concrete picture of the happenings in the story. Thus, for example, 4 Nupe (6 in the second recall) mention that the brothers were 'travelling about' when they saw the girl; 3 (5) let the brothers meet the girl 'in town'; (N 25) adds the information that the brothers 'afterwards returned home'. And after describing the murder 3 (6) Nupe continue the story as follows: "On the morrow", or "when it became day, the people heard of the crime." Yet these connexions never strengthen the cohesion of the narrative as such. On the contrary, one gains the impression that the story dissolves itself into a number of different scenes and situations. 195

This difference between the tense, logically convincing way in which the Yoruba reproduce the story, and the loosely knit Nupe way of retelling which is concerned more with details of situation and temporal sequence, becomes most evident in connexion with the 'situational' item in the story, that the murder was done 'at night'. Among the Nupe this is in itself an important feature which is given a prominent place in the reproduction. Thus: Y N ● 171 ● 153 195

(N 54) The younger brother refused to leave the girl. The elder left the matter then. Till one day, at night,....

(N 60) The younger brother said: "No." Then it became night. The younger brother slept in his hut. The elder took his sword, and killed him on that night.

But among the Yoruba the reference to the night is clearly a minor detail which is pushed into a relative sentence and is quite overshadowed by the really relevant fact, which is the connexion between the anger of the elder brother and the murder.

(Y 6) The two brothers quarrelled terribly. The elder pulled out his sword and went to kill the younger brother where he slept.

(Y 9) The brothers quarrelled, and when night came the elder took his sword. He went and cut off the head of the younger brother because he had spoiled his heart.

(Y 15) They quarrelled about the girl. So much that at night the elder took his sword, went to the place where the younger slept and attacked him with his sword till he killed him.

(4) *Emotional and moral aspects*

In this experiment, rather surprisingly, the emotional factor seems to go hand in hand with the reasoning factor. Emotional and rational aspects do not seem to represent divergent or even independent principles; the more 'rational' Yoruba stress at the same time emotional reaction; and Y N 152 171

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Y ●N 152 ●171 the Nupe, neglecting rational connexions, seem to neglect the emotional aspect as well. The explanation is that the facts and events which bear on emotional reactions may be interpreted as rational motivations of the acts related in the story. This is in fact how the Yoruba approach, and utilize, the emotional aspects of the narrative.

N 152 Yet the comparative weakness of the emotional factor in the Nupe reproduction is not due to the Nupe lack of appreciation for rational connexions. The emphasis on emotional factors as far as it is evident in the Nupe version is not correlated with factors of reasoning; the appreciation of such elements as the beauty of the girl, her sadness after the murder, or the strength of the brothers' love, is not turned at once (as is the tendency among the Yoruba) into an interpretation of motives and reasons, but seems to represent a specific, self-sufficient trait. To a certain extent the emotional response among the Nupe appears linked with the tendency to dissolve the narrative into a series of concrete situations. (N 25) is a good example: he mentions that the brothers 'returned home' after they met the girl; he reproduces the girl's avowal of her love for the younger brother in the wrong place, but again in a typical 'situational' context: "when the girl learned of the murder, she said that she had only loved the younger brother"; he lets the people speak as follows: "This is what he did, God will revenge it." But he repeats twice how strongly the brothers loved the girl, and although he does not connect the girl's sadness with her disappearance, he does not omit, as many other Nupe did, the girl's 'aching heart'. But the cases in which I could find a similar correlation are few, and it seems possible that the emotional bias among the Nupe constitutes an independent, secondary psychological characteristic which may only run parallel to what we discovered to be the dominant trait in Nupe reproduction: stress on situational and temporal connexions.

Y N 152 577 171 The response to the moral ideas which are referred to in the narrative is again bound up with rational factors. The reinterpretation and rationalization of the statement "God will revenge it" which we discussed above is a point in question. But the attitude to the moral statements adds a new characteristic to the psychological differentiation of the two groups. All the Nupe reproductions keep closely to the meaning of the sentence "he has done an evil deed", The Yoruba reproductions on the other hand are much more varied and depart much more freely from the original. Here are a few Yoruba versions:

First recall:

(Y 6) The people said: "he abused his power over the younger brother."

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(Y 12) It surprised the people (to hear) what the elder brother had done. They said, "one should leave him alone, God will punish him."

(Y 18) When the people learned of the deed, it pained them very much. They said: "God will revenge it."

Second recall:

(Y 1) The people judged the elder guilty and evil; but God would punish him.

(Y 2) and (Y 5) The people were very sorry for the boy, but (they said): "Our Lord God will punish him."

(Y 12) The people said: "The elder should have left the younger alone. God will punish him."

To the Nupe then, the unspecific and abstract reference to the wickedness of the deed seems natural and satisfactory. The vague, schematic connexion which the story establishes between the wrong deed and the supernatural punishment, seems to satisfy their attitude towards moral value. The Yoruba, on the other hand, feel the urge to define the nature of the evil deed more closely and more explicitly. They weigh specific deed against specific punishment. Their attitude to the moral judgment is the same as to all the other features of the story: rational, and intent on clear logical connexions.

(5) *Arrangement and order*

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It is interesting to study the question of the order in which the events of the story are related and remembered. In the first recall the Nupe frequently (in 11 cases) rearrange this order, but only 2 Yoruba do the same. The explanation, however, cannot be that the precise, logically coherent narrative keeps more closely to the original story, for in the second recall the figures for the rearrangement of order are equal in both groups: i.e. the Nupe figures rise by 5, to 16, and the Yoruba figures by 14, from 2 to 16. Evidently, Yoruba recall, relying more on logical connexion, is apt to abandon the external form, whereas the loose, devious way of Nupe retelling which in the second recall is not much more free than in the first, may be more tied to the external order of events as to the only framework establishing coherence.

Before I pass to the picture experiments I will quote two full stories, one from the Nupe and one from the Yoruba, to illustrate the fundamentally different attitudes with which the two groups approach their task:[1]

(N 11) Long ago, there lived a young man. He had a brother. They were elder and younger brother. They lived, they lived, till they saw a young girl. The girl was very beautiful, they loved her with one heart, both the elder and younger brother loved her.

[1] Other full quotations of the story will be found in *Africa*(5).

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One day the elder said to the younger he should give the girl up, "because I am the elder". The younger brother said he would not give her up. Although the other was the elder he would not give her up. But the elder brother left the matter then, till night fell, then he went to the hut where the younger brother slept and killed him with a sword. When the girl saw this she cried for twenty days and her heart ached. The people who heard this said, what he had done was bad, God will revenge it. When the girl had finished crying she went to another place, nobody saw her again.

(Y 13) Long ago, there lived a man who had a wife. They had two children, sons. When they grew up they saw a girl who was very beautiful. They loved her, but the girl loved the younger more than the elder. When the elder brother realized this he said to the younger: "You must give up the girl, for I am your elder brother and I ought to marry her." When he said this the younger refused and they quarrelled so much that the elder brother took his sword, went to the younger, attacked him with his sword and killed him. When all the people heard this they said: "An evil deed has been done by the elder brother." They said: "Nobody should touch him, for God will judge." The girl cried for twenty days. Her sadness was so great that she left the town, and nobody saw her again.

V. The picture experiments

Y N 125

I showed six pictures of different topics which varied in complication and distinctness. Each picture was exposed for about 10–15 sec. The experimental subjects were asked first to write down (in vernacular) what they had seen, after every picture. After a week's time they were asked to relate what they remembered, and this was written down by the leader of the experiment. The photographs represented:

(1) Two leopards in the bush.

(2) A black horse with a native groom in European garb, in an open field.

(3) A native in Mohammedan dress (which is common everywhere in Northern Nigeria), sitting on a table on which stands a native clay lamp.

(4) An oasis in the desert, showing a camel in front of a date-palm and two Arabs. (This was a rather dark and indistinct picture.)

(5) A mosque with a huge crowd of people in front. (A clear but somewhat complicated picture.)

(6) A bush fire (dark, very indistinct, in some respects corresponding to the familiar 'ink-blot' picture).

(1) *The background of experience*

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A first difference in the reaction of the two groups is due to the fact that in the description or interpretation of certain features in the pictures the different background of knowledge and practical experience characteristic of each group comes into play. Although the general cultural background of the two groups is the same, there exist naturally certain specific details of culture which are different in the two groups, and which to a certain extent enter into the description of the pictures. Thus quite a number of Yoruba called the clay lamp in the third picture a 'pump'. This

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rather surprising interpretation became clear in the explanation which one Yoruba gave; he described the object as a "clay lamp with a handle like the pump at the railway station". Ilorin, where the Yoruba experiments were made, is on the railway; the place where the Nupe experiments were made is not, and this explains why this particular interpretation occurred only among one group. Among the Nupe we have, instead of the 'pump', a 'bicycle wheel', or the 'handle of a motor-car'. Both Nupe and Yoruba seem to derive satisfaction from bringing in these very special, and up-to-date *motifs* of interpretation. The *motifs* contributed by this specialized knowledge tend, however, to disappear in the second recall and to be replaced by an interpretation of a more general character. For instance, there were 6 'pumps' in the first description but only 3 in the recall: one 'pump' was replaced by the ordinary 'clay lamp', one was left out altogether, and one reappeared in the following disguise: "a man kneels down (obviously for prayer) under a tree which bends down like the arm of a water-pump."

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But the real, psychologically relevant, difference between the two groups does not lie in the different material or content of experience which is utilized in the description, but in the different psychological organization of this material. Among the Yoruba, to start with, the details contributed by special knowledge serve as centres for an interpretation which endeavours to lend a unitary and consistent *meaning* to the whole picture. A few examples will explain what I mean.

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(Y 3) An old man wearing turban and white gown, kneeling near something that looks like a pump which has a hole and is bent. The man is repairing the bottom of the pump.

(Y 6) A blind man, wearing a turban and big white gown, pumps water from a fountain in order to drink it.

In the recall we may find a more or less complete reinterpretation: the first example brings the tree which looks like a pump, and the second gains completely new shape:

(Y 6) A Mohammedan teacher, wearing white turban, sits and lights a lamp in front of him, he places it on his right-hand side (obviously in order to read).

We see that, although there are changes from description to recall, the factor of consistent meaning still determines the interpretation. Now among the Nupe there is surprisingly little of such attempts to read a meaning into the picture.

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(N 2) A man is kneeling, he wears a beautiful white turban, his eyes are closed. There is something in front of him which looks like the handle of a motor-car.

(N 12) There is an old man who has only one eye. He is sitting and doing something with a bicycle wheel.

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Certain attempts at a consistent, unitary meaning, do exist also among the Nupe. For instance:

(N 3) A man with a waterjug, he is holding it and making his ablutions in a hut.
(N 10) A man with a white turban is sitting, his forehead bent, worshipping an idol.

But these meaning-oriented interpretations are (1) in the minority; (2) the consistency is not established really fully and satisfactorily: e.g. the 'man in turban' would be a Mohammedan; still he is said to worship an idol; (3) the meaning evaporates in the recall. Here are the reproductions of the two meaning-oriented Nupe descriptions which I have just quoted:

(N 3) A man sitting in a beautiful room, with a big water-jug, he is crouching.
(N 10) A man with white turban is sitting, he is crouching, he is watching something in front of him which looks like a motor-part.

(2) *Imagination*

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From the examples quoted above it will be seen that the positive or negative part which the meaning factor plays is not correlated with predominance or lack of imaginary addition. Quantitatively, the contribution of imagination is the same in either group. The difference lies again in the part which imaginary details or additions play in the organization of the material. Among the Nupe they just constitute additional items and there is no tendency to weld all the details into a unitary interpretation. Thus, in the picture of the horse and the groom:

(N 13) There is a European horse standing together with a European near a small hill (!)[1] A few men stand behind the European (!), they look like soldiers and are coming towards him.

Among the Yoruba such mere addition is the exception. The rule is represented in the following example:

(Y 13) A horse near a river (!). It looks as if it is going to be washed. It has a bridle in its mouth, and the man who brings it to the river stands with the horse, he does not hold it but only looks at the horse.

In the recall the orientation towards meaning is intensified by introducing still another imaginary detail:

(Y 13) A man taking a horse to the stream. He stands there trying to pull the horse by the rope (!), but the horse does not move away from the stream. The man is watching the horse.

(3) *Meaning-oriented response*

The essential difference in the psychological responses of the two

[1] Exclamation marks indicate imaginary additions.

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groups lies then in this: the Yoruba are meaning-oriented; they weave into most of their descriptions and recalls a unitary meaning; the Nupe tend to present the facts which they notice or remember in a purely enumerative manner. Now, *meaning* is, generally speaking, a recognition of relation, more particularly of a relation bearing on purpose and causality. In the picture of the horse, for example, only 6 Nupe descriptions and 3 recalls (against 15 Yoruba) attempt to establish the simplest relation on which a unitary meaning could be based, namely a relation which accounts for the presence of the two figures in the picture, the horse and the man; i.e. describes them as a horse and its master, or a horse and its groom, etc. Or, in the picture of the two leopards: 10 Yoruba read a meaning into the picture, i.e., place the data in an explanatory relational context, and describe the two animals as waiting for their prey, as playing together, or as cohabiting. Only 2 Nupe descriptions (1 recall) try a similar solution.

Cognition of meaning and relation in this sense may, however, refer not only to figures and events presented in the picture, but to the picture itself *qua* picture. Some of the Yoruba approach their task in this fashion, and attempt to relate the picture as an item in itself to other facts of knowledge and experience. They try, for example, to explain the fact that such and such a picture had been shown; they understand the picture in the sense of their school-book illustrations, i.e. as an invitation to relate, in the manner of a school examination, everything they know about one or the other item illustrated in the picture. Thus in the picture of the horse and groom:

(Y 9) The horse is an animal that lives with us people. We supply it with grass for food, and we ride it for pleasure or something else. We use it as a pack animal, and also for farming. We harness it.

In other cases, the Yoruba seem to be struck by certain peculiar features in the composition of the picture, and try to explain them, by quite an elaborate process of reasoning, as a result of the formal arrangement:

(Y 20) There is a camel with big loads on his back. He stands near a palm-tree. If one does not look carefully one may think he has no head. But he has one. He lifts his head up to the palm, so that the head is level with the palm-tree. That is the reason why we see only the palm-tree. There is a man close to his hind-leg, he is squatting, and there is a man standing in front. These men are men from the East, because you can see they cover their heads with a cloth.

This attitude of explaining and reasoning which deals with the picture as an object in its own right is completely absent among the Nupe.

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(4) *Exactness*

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The examples will have revealed already that the cognition of meaning does not correspond in any way to exactness of perception or memory in the sense of fidelity to the original. Among the Yoruba the proportion of meaning-oriented interpretations increases from description to recall, among the Nupe it decreases. That means the recall emphasizes still further the type of interpretation manifest in the description. But the main point here is that imaginary additions also increase and decrease in the same proportion. The recall of the Yoruba is therefore, from this point of view, less exact than the recall of the Nupe. The enumerative type of perception and memory on the other hand is less exact in other ways. The Nupe frequently confuse the pictures in their memory and reproduce in the recall descriptions in which the features of two pictures appear combined. This combination is never an improvement from the point of view of consistency of meaning. There is no evidence for this fusion of memory pictures among the Yoruba. The Nupe also forget pictures completely much more frequently than the Yoruba. The first picture was left out by 1 Yoruba and 4 Nupe, the second by 1 Nupe only, the third by 2 Nupe only, the fourth by 1 Yoruba and 7 Nupe, the fifth by none in either group, the sixth by 1 Yoruba and 2 Nupe. The most interesting figure is the one referring to the fourth picture (the oasis) in which Nupe 'forgetfulness' reaches its maximum. For both groups, however, this picture represents a maximum also of meaning-oriented interpretation. This, I think, stresses an important point with respect to the evaluation of these results. It shows that we cannot simply say that meaning-oriented interpretation assists, or lessens, memory. For the meaning-oriented type of memory, meaning-oriented organization of the psychological material assists memory; for the enumerative type, into which it does not fit, meaning-oriented organization of the psychological material constitutes an obstacle to remembering. In short, the situation proves the impossibility of any simple comparative evaluation of the two types of psychological response in accordance with a common scale of exactness and, accordingly, of intellectual efficiency.

(5) *Enumerative response*

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What I called the 'enumerative' response type does not, however, represent a reaction devoid of all unitary organization or integration. It is enumerative only with respect to the meaning read into, or found in, the contents of the pictures. But there exist other aspects of organization

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in Nupe description and recall, which are absent, or nearly absent, among the Yoruba. I have found 3 such principles of organization: (1) The Nupe arrange their material very frequently in a spatial order, working with such descriptive categories as top and bottom, left and right, front and back. This emphasis on the spatial arrangement of the perceptual material seems to correspond to the stress on situational and temporal arrangement which we found prominent in the Nupe reproductions of the narrative. (2) There is the tendency to an integration or consistency in the material of a structural, formal character, such as consistency embodied in symmetric proportion. Imagination is engaged in the service of this specific form of integration, and we find, for example, in the picture of the two leopards that two trees are invented to match the two animals; or we find descriptions such as these:

(N 23) Two cats, white and red, one big, one small, close to two trees.

(N 7) A very beautiful horse, with two men, one standing in front and one standing at the back.

(3) Finally, there is an organizing principle, again working for some form of unification, which can be best described as unity of impression or of emotional tone. The following examples, which illustrate this attitude, refer to the third and fifth picture:

(N 6) A man, he is huge, he wears a big gown, he is an important man.

(N 7) An ugly man, wearing clothes which are not nice looking, holding something in his hand that looks like a snake.

(N 4) This (picture) looks as if one were sowing in all directions, like the sowing of European flowers of reddish colour; that is to say they are not quite red, they are between red and white, there are small ones and thick ones, some are not big, some are on the top and some stand out, enormously big.

This 'impressionistic', emotional attitude is not very pronounced in the Nupe reproductions. It is scattered irregularly, and seems to correspond essentially to the specific emotional response in the story experiment, which we interpreted as the expression of an independent, secondary psychological trait among the Nupe.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The experiments have shown us a people possessing a highly developed realistic image-art, drama, and a rich, complicated, rationalized religious system, which, in the field of psychological reaction, appears characterized by stress on rational elements and logical cohesion, and by a strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach to observational data. On the other hand, a people whose culture possesses no such art or drama, whose

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beliefs revolve round abstract, impersonal magical principles, proves psychologically of a very different type. It is more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, and stresses unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts of meaning and rational consistency. The nature of this psychological differentiation clearly indicates that the experiments have done more than merely shown that a diversity in culture is accompanied by psychological differentiation; they prove the existence of an essential *correspondence* between the specific organization of the culture and the traits and dispositions which characterize the psychological make-up or 'type' of the group. Some aspects of this correspondence are quite evident and easily explained in terms of mutual interaction of culture data and psychological traits: for instance, the correspondence between the rationalized religious system of the Yoruba and their intentness on rational connexions and interpretations; or the correspondence between the ornamental, decorative art of the Nupe and their emphasis of spatial and symmetrical order. The nature of other aspects of this correspondence is less obvious, and can be interpreted only in the context of a detailed analysis of the whole culture: for instance, the correspondence between the impersonal, abstract religious system of the Nupe and their schematic, unspecific attitude to moral judgements.

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The fact that we are dealing here with two groups which we had to contrast in various ways, may give the impression that I am attempting a dualistic theory of memory or perception, or for that matter, of culture. This is not my intention. Rather, the psychological traits and characteristics which the foregoing analysis has disclosed, seem to integrate themselves into *three* different 'types'—types which are distributed in different proportion among the two groups: first, the dominant type of the Yoruba, rational, logical and intent on meaning-oriented interpretation; second, the dominant type among the Nupe, combining an enumerative approach to observational data with stress on spatial and temporal arrangement; third, a less prominent, secondary, type among the Nupe, characterized by an emotional and 'impressionistic' disposition. Evidently, for a fuller understanding of these psychological types, the investigation must be placed on a broader basis, and our correlations of psychological traits extended over other fields of psychological reaction. But such an extension would go beyond the scope of this paper, in which I could only attempt to outline the general trend of this correspondence between psychological and cultural differentiation.

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VII. SUMMARY

1. The aim of this investigation was to study, by means of the psychological field experiment, the correlation between diversity of culture and psychological differentiation.

2. Two primitive groups were studied, two tribes in Northern Nigeria which, living under similar conditions, yet show marked differences in their culture.

3. The experiments were carried out with school boys of the age of 15–18. The selection of the subjects, however, insured that the experimental groups were representative of the culture at large.

4. The experiments examined the repeated reproduction of a narrative, and the description and remembering of a number of pictures. Both the narrative and the pictures represented a material with which the experimental subjects were thoroughly familiar.

5. The results show a marked difference in the responses of the two groups. In the story experiment one tribe laid stress on logical and rational elements while the other showed distinct appreciation of situational facts and connexions of time and place. In the picture experiment the response of the first group was meaning-oriented, the response of the second enumerative and appreciative of spatial arrangement.

6. Between the cultural differentiation and the psychological differentiation there exists close correspondence. The dualism of culture and psychological responses is incidental; the investigation reveals in fact three different psychological 'types' distributed in different proportion among the two groups.

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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different 619
and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 184
'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no [842
Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts 262]
I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit 619
that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpā, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin 619
but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different 173
periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpā and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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to have crossed later to the other side where they settled and became, in the course of time, independent sub-tribal sections.[1] In the case of the Kupa the tradition is more concrete; it describes them as Ebe people who have crossed the Kontagora river (called in Nupe Eku, to cross the river *ɪ̀ɔ*, in Nupe, *lá 'kú pà*, and this is supposed to be the origin of their tribal name) in the time of the big Nupe wars of conquest, about 1800. The Kusopa, the Forest Tenders, appear in Nupe tradition out of nothing. Somehow they grew into a separate sub-tribe the identity of which is based on their habitat in the thick inland forest west of the Kaduna and also on their special occupation, which is the cultivation of kola-nut trees. Gwagba is a deprecatory nickname given originally to a small section of 'Nupe *zam*' from Gbara, followers and henchmen of the Nupe kings who, in the wars for the Nupe throne, fled to Zuguma. *Gwagba* means, literally, Those who threw up their Hands, the Defeated, but it is applied to-day to the whole group of Nupe living in and around Zuguma town. The Benu, finally, represent another sub-tribe of recent origin, formed in historical times. They are people of Bornu origin (*Benu* being the Nupe corruption of *Bornu*), from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Bornu, who came to Nupe country towards the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of *Etsu* Ma'azū and settled, with his permission, in Trans-Kaduna. They came as wealthy traders, bringing with them certain new agricultural techniques—onion growing—horses and cattle (the latter soon disappeared in the tsetse-infested country). They soon became the dominant group, economically as well as politically, in the region where they settled, but they Nupe-ized themselves, intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their language, and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. Thus they are to-day a section of the Nupe, speaking the Nupe language, and conforming in their whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. Only their great annual festival, the *gani*, and the title of their chief, *Zonuwa*, are reminiscent of the ancient culture of Bornu.[2]

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The name Nupe has also been extended to other originally alien groups living in Nupe country, which have become Nupe-ized and are hardly distinguishable to-day from the people among whom they live. In many villages and towns of Nupe we find groups known by the name of *Konú*, Prisoners of War,[3] or Eyagi-Nupe, Yoruba-Nupe, people of Yoruba origin, who are the descendants of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani kings of Nupe against the Yoruba; they were later freed and, by order of the king, settled in various districts of the kingdom. In Bida town I met the makers of horse-trappings—a craft imported from Hausa—who assured me that they were Hausa no longer. 'Yes, our fathers were Hausa,' they admitted; 'but we are Nupe'—claiming Nupe-

[1] They speak, in fact, the same dialect—proof that the tradition is not without historical foundation.

[2] See Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 148. I have given a more detailed description of this process of cultural fusion in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] *Konú* means 'war' in Fulfulde; the adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early times of the Fulani régime, when the rulers still used their own language.

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CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE

621 THE political organization of the Nupe village differs in certain respects in different parts of Nupe-land, but the general outline of the system remains, with one or two exceptions, the same. Every Nupe village, as it constitutes a separate community, also constitutes a separate political system. The area over which its sovereignty extends is formed by the village and its *tunga*, the 'town' and its 'dependencies'. At its head stands the 'town-king', *Žitsu*, who, to use the language of the people, 'owns' the village—*u wũ ži*—and the land on which it stands. By this right of 'possession' he controls the lives of his community and the main resource from which it derives its livelihood, land. The close identification of chief and locality is often expressed in the title which the chief assumes and which is identical with the name of the village: the chief of Jebba (the correct name of which is Gebba) is known as *Gebba*, of Bele as *Belé*, and the old Beni 'town-king' of Bida styled himself *Bida*. In the chief, then, the collective existence of the village community is represented as in a symbol.

621 173 This political configuration is to some extent thought of as having evolved gradually in the course of time. But the Nupe village (unlike the kingdom) possesses no elaborate mythology which tells of the origin and the growth of the present polity. We have spoken of the vague interpretation in a kinship sense of the past of the village, according to which the people of the village have all descended from some common ancestor. As regards the specific political features, we find equally vague traditions of half-forgotten ancestors who were the founders of a village and the first settlers in the locality (we can disregard here the recent memories of fusion and separation of villages). The following tradition, referring to the village Doko, is a typical instance:

> Two brothers came from beyond the river, from a place called Gaze (a village on the river Kaduna). They came to a place now called Kopa [Kopa is about five miles from Doko, on the other side of the hill on the slope of which Doko is situated]. There was nothing in this place then save bush. They settled there, first as hunters, later they began to work the land. After two years the younger brother left Kopa and came down the hill to the place where Doko is to-day. He settled there and called himself chief. He became the first *Žitsu* of Doko, *Žitsu* Lefiya.

These traditions of origin become more articulate only where the tradition of the village can be linked with the semi-mythical history of Nupe kingdom and its ancestor-hero Tsoede. In a number of Nupe villages the people trace their line of chiefs back to one who was confirmed in his office by Tsoede, and invested by him with certain insignia and magical emblems. Of both Tsoede and these insignia we shall hear more at a later stage. Here it may be said that the ancestral chief thus

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi tradition has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed chieftainship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nũsaẽi* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiẽi*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nũsaẽi* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nũsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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121 Visualize this intricate racial and cultural pattern: two *élites* of different order—*kintsoźi* and Fulani—and surrounding them, almost in 563 concentric circles, ethnic groups of varying cultural dissimilitude, each cultural grade also a grade on the scale of political evaluation. This is indeed the exact picture of the historical growth of Nupe kingdom. Through conquests and expansion, with fluid, ever-changing boundaries, Nupe kingdom maintained its conspicuous centre, the core of its political and cultural growth. Like a tree, it grew from the centre, and you can still trace the rings which mark its growth.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

121 Before embarking on the historical account we must clarify the concept of 'history' as we propose to use it. For there is a certain ambiguity in the term 'history' as it is used by anthropologists. History can mean two things: first, what we may call 'objective' history, that is, the series of events which we, the investigators, describe and establish in accordance with certain 'objective', universal criteria of connexion and sequence. Second, the 'ideological' history, which exists in the society which we study, and which describes and arranges events in accordance with accepted traditions about past happenings and developments. The two may coincide (as they do in modern history); or the second may at least supply some source of information for the first. But also it may have significance only as a sociological datum *per se*, i.e. as a system of accepted beliefs and traditions influencing social behaviour in the group. As such, it is often indistinguishable from mythology and from what Malinowski has called significantly the 'mythical charter' of customs and existing cultural usages.[1] Different societies may stress in a different measure either the mythical, supernatural or the rational, pseudo-scientific nature of what they accept as an account of their past. The Nupe are what we may call an historically-minded people. The highest, constantly invoked authority for things existing is, to the Nupe, the account of things past—but an account which is clothed in terms of a sober, pseudo-scientific 'history'. Such is also the nature of the Nupe tradition of the origin of their kingdom. Only for the more recent periods do we possess 'objective' sources; the earliest period of Nupe kingdom is described only in their own 'ideological history'.

173 The earliest history of Nupe centres round the figure of Tsoede or Edegi,[2] the culture hero and mythical founder of Nupe kingdom. The genealogies of Nupe kings which are preserved in many places in Nupe country, and which have also found their way into the earliest written records of Nupe history which were compiled by Mohammedan scholars

his grievance against a certain little unruly relative of his whom he believed to have intrigued against him. He added: 'All Nupe are bad people, you know.' The said relative, himself, of course, as much Fulani as the *Etsu*, retaliated by informing me that 'all Fulani were liars'.

[1] B. Malinowski, in *Encycl. Soc. Sc.*, London, 1931, vol. iv, p. 640.

[2] Tsoede is, linguistically, a contraction of *Etsu*, or *'tsu Ede;* the Nupe more often use the name Tsoede, the Hausa the name Edegi.

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173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [643] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were [778] entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

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173 ling up-river, hotly pursued by his half-brothers and their men. On the way he is helped by two men, whom he later rewards by making them chief and second-in-command of the Kyedye tribe. When he reaches the Kaduna river he turns into a creek called Ega, and lies here in hiding till his pursuers, tired of their fruitless search, return to Eda. Tsoede and his men leave the canoe and sink it in the river; the people of Ega still perform an annual sacrifice on the spot, where, as the tradition has it, Tsoede's canoe was sunk, and at these ceremonies they are able, you are told, to see the bright bronze of the canoe glitter in the water. Tsoede then went to Nupeko, a village near-by, killed the chief, and made himself chief of the place. He conquered Nku, the town of his maternal uncle, made himself the ruler of all Beni (or Nupe—all informants are vague on this point), and assumed the title *Etsu*, king. He made the twelve men who had accompanied him from Eda the chiefs of the twelve towns of Beni and bestowed on them the sacred insignia of chieftainship, brass bangles and magic chains. The present chiefs of Beni (as far as their 'towns' still survive) claim descent from these twelve men, and still treasure bangles or chains as insignia of chieftainship. Tsoede carried out big and victorious wars against many tribes and kingdoms, conquering in the south the countries of Yagba, Bunu (two sections of the Yoruba), Kakanda, as far as Akoko, and in the north the countries of Ebe, Kamberi, and Kamuku. He resided first in Nupeko, which name means 'Great Nupe', for eight years, and when Nupeko grew too small, he built the new capital of Gbara, on the Kaduna, which was to remain the *eẽi 'tsu*, the King's Town, till the Fulani conquest. At that time his residence is said to have counted 5,555 horses, so many in fact, that there was no room for them in Gbara, and one of Tsoede's sons, Abdu, who was in charge of the horses, crossed the Kaduna and founded on the opposite bank a place which is still known by the name of Dokomba, 'Horse Place'.

Apart from the royal insignia and emblems of magic Tsoede is said to have brought to Nupe from Eda certain crafts and techniques hitherto unknown in the country. He brought with him blacksmiths and brassmiths who taught the crude blacksmiths of Nupe their more advanced technique; the canoe-men who came with him imported into Nupe the craft of building large canoes of which the Nupe are said to have been ignorant at that time. Tsoede is also believed by some to have introduced human sacrifices—there is a gruesome story of the first sacrifice, the victim of which was Tsoede's mother's brother—and to have established first the custom of bride-price.

We can to some extent ascertain what there is of historical truth in this tradition. Certain indirect evidence tends to confirm the main facts of the Tsoede tradition. The alien, southern provenance of some of the cultural goods, which in the tradition are linked with Idah and the coming of Tsoede, seems fairly certain. Some at least of the sacred bronze figures in Tada and Jebba, cast in *cire perdue*, a technique unknown in Nupe and the north, bear the stamp of the culture which we are wont to associate with Benin—and Benin, as we know, has for a long period been the political overlord of Idah; the same is true of the beautifully cast brass

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bells—among them the square-shaped bells typical of Benin work—on the state drums found all along the Niger. The heavy iron chains and fetters, on the other hand, are most probably of Portuguese origin; they may have been brought in by slave-traders from the coast and have found their way up the river into the hinterland—the home of these precious trading goods.[1] Even the approximate date of the immigration of Tsoede and his band can be fixed with some accuracy. For on this point all the various genealogies of Nupe kings, obtained from quite different sources, tally. Giving the years of reign of every Nupe king, back to Tsoede, they all place the life of Tsoede in the same period, the early fifteenth century. It is interesting to note that the royal genealogies in two great neighbouring kingdoms, Yoruba and Ewe (in Togoland), also trace back the history of their royal ancestors to the same period, about 1400.[2] We may not be mistaken therefore in assuming that the beginning of the fifteenth century marks the end of a big wave of immigration which eventually led to the firm establishment of a number of new West African societies—kingdoms, in our three instances. For Nupe we can go farther than this. The same period saw the first contact of the Guinea Coast with Europe. In 1498 the Portuguese established themselves in Benin. But at that time they found a Benin already on the verge of collapse, the once powerful kingdom weakened and in obvious disintegration. Idah, once tributary to Benin, and master over Nupe as of many other dependencies, must have weakened with it. The myth of Tsoede's delivery of Nupe from the yoke of Idah may well contain a kernel of historical truth (whatever form the events may have taken in reality); the foundation of an independent Nupe kingdom may have been one of the historical results of the disintegration of Benin and its vassal states. The ancient contact of Idah and Nupe as well as the former sovereignty of Idah, are undoubtedly historical. The tradition of Tsoede is as well known in Idah as in Nupe. And when some years ago the *Atta* of Idah came to Bida—he was keen to visit that country of which the tradition of his tribe had so much to tell—a significant political imbroglio threatened the meeting of the Nigerian potentates. It arose from a question of precedence; the Idah man insisted on being given a higher seat than the *Etsu* Nupe, basing his claim on the unforgotten historical fact of Nupe's ancient vassalship to Idah.

This bare framework of facts—if facts they are—has absorbed many other features, legends, traditions, embellishments; which of them contain any historical truth it is impossible to say. But we are not concerned here to determine what is and what is not historical truth in the rich cycle of traditions round the figure of Tsoede. The myth as it stands, and as it is treasured by the people of Nupe, is to us a sufficiently significant social reality. It represents the typical 'mythical charter' of

[1] Exactly the same chains and irons have been found on the Gold Coast; small models of these fetters, of brass, iron, or gold, are sold as charms all down the river and the creeks of Southern Nigeria. A common origin suggests itself forcibly.

[2] See Bishop Johnson, *History of the Yoruba*, and D. Westermann (personal information).

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173 the kingdom, and its common knowledge constitutes the first and foremost of these common beliefs and forms of cultural 'commonness' which supply the background of political unity. I have found the consciousness of this tradition developed most strongly in the river area and among the Beni, that is, in the area that marks what I have called the 'core' of the expanding kingdom. It is totally absent to-day, and most probably has always been absent, among the Dibo, who have never formed part of the old kingdom, and among some of the Nupe-ized groups (such as the 'Gbari slaves') which, absorbed into Nupe in more recent times, have remained culturally 'Outside Peoples'. The distribution of the 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom and the boundaries of the kingdom itself coincide.

To go on with the tradition of Tsoede. For sixty years he reigned in Gbara; he died, 120 years old, on one of his military expeditions to the north, near Gbagede. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and his sword, are still kept as almost sacred treasure by the people of Gbagede (who are Kamberi, not Nupe). At the time of Tsoede's death the kingdom of Nupe was expanding towards the north, and his four sons who succeeded him as kings of Nupe, one after the other, are said to have founded Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, as their temporary capital. Another of his descendants, Abdu Waliyi, founded the capital Jima, on the Kaduna opposite Gbara.[1] The fifteenth king after Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned according to Nupe genealogies about 1770, was the first Nupe king to become Mohammedan. He was deposed by his son and died in exile, in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen. Under *Etsu* Ma'azû, the nineteenth king of Nupe, Nupe kingdom reached its greatest power. During his reign, about 1810, Mallam Dendo, also called Manko, 'Great Mallam', a Fulani from Kebbi who was destined to change the whole fate of Nupe kingdom, is said to have first appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and seller of charms. With *Etsu* Ma'azû we also reach, for the first time, in this account, the plane of 'objective history'; his death is recorded by one of the first European visitors to Nupe as having occurred in 1818.[2]

THE FULANI CONQUEST

175 [814] We enter now a period of Nupe history which is illuminated by the light of 'real' history. It is described with many details in the written records of Nupe court historians, the earliest of whom was a certain Abduramani, a Mohammedan scholar who seems to have lived in Rabá in the early days of Fulani rule. It was during this period, too, that European travellers first penetrated into Nupe.[3]

[1] In addition to the historical capitals of the kingdom, Gbara, Mokwa, Jima, and finally Rabá (see below), the Nupe records also mention certain other places at which the Nupe kings are said to have resided temporarily at various times, viz. Etsú, Jengi, and Yeti.

[2] Journal of Rev. J. F. Schoen and Samuel Crowther, *Expedition up the Niger*, 1842, p. 191.

[3] I owe to the kindness of the Administration the opportunity of having been able to consult unpublished Government records, compiled by the first officers who were serving in this area; I must acknowledge specially the very complete 'Notes on Nupe History', by Major Burdon (1902).

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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which
467 had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny.
431 The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the
467 whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after
173 them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

323 The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of
438 raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

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KYEDYE sub-tribe:

EBAGI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: very mixed. Have adopted Bida and Kutigi marks.

BASSA NGE sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

and also Bida marks.

KAKANDA tribe:
Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

APPENDIX III

HISTORICAL CHART OF NUPE RULERS

173

A.D.	
1463?	Birth of Tsoede.
1493	Tsoede taken as slave to Iddah.
1523	Tsoede's flight from Iddah.
1531	Tsoede established himself as king of Nupe in Nupeko.
1591	Tsoede's death.
1591–1600	*Etsu* Shaba.
1600–25	*Etsu* Zavunla.
1625–70	*Etsu* Jigba.
1670–9	*Etsu* Mamma Wari.
1679–1700	*Etsu* Abdu Waliyi, foundation of the capital Jima.
1700–9	*Etsu* Alyu.
1710–13	*Etsu* Ganamace or Saci.
1713–17	*Etsu* Ibrahim.
1717–21	*Etsu* Idirisu.
1721–42	*Etsu* Tsado.
1742–6	*Etsu* Abubakari Kolo.
1746–59	*Etsu* Jibiri, the first Mohammedan king of Nupe. He was driven from his kingdom after thirteen years' reign. Died in exile in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen.
1759–67	*Etsu* Ma'azû's first reign. Power of Jima at its height. He resigned the throne and left Nupe to live in Yauri.
1767–77	*Etsu* Majiya I.

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1777–8	*Etsu* Ilyasu. He is said to have disappeared suddenly.
1778–95	*Etsu* Ma'azû's second reign, after having been requested by the people to return to Nupe. Mallam Dendo (Manko), the Fulani emissary, appeared in Nupe.
1795	*Etsu* Alikolo Tankari. Reigned only for eight months, and was deposed by the people.
1795–6	*Etsu* Mamma. Foundation of the capital Rabá. Division of the kingdom.
1796–1805	*Etsu* Jimada, reigning at Jima. War with Majiya II. Jimada was killed in battle at Jengi (Ragada?).
1796–1810	*Etsu* Majiya II, reigning at Rabá.
1806	Majiya's war against the Fulani. Siege of Ilorin and defeat of Nupe armies.
1810?	The Fulani, supported by Idirisu, son of Jimada, conquered Rabá. Majiya fled to Zuguma. Idirisu (Yisa) installed as shadow-king of Nupe in Adama Lelu, near Eggã, by Fulani.
1810(13)–30	*Etsu* Idirisu (Yisa), reigning at Adama Lelu.
1830	Idirisu's rebellion against the Fulani. He was killed in the battle. Mallam Dendo recalled Majiya from his exile and made him shadow-king of Nupe in Zuguma.
1830–4	*Etsu* Majiya's second reign, in Zuguma.
1831	Death of Mallam Dendo.
1836	Rebellion and death of Tsado, Majiya's son. Usman Zaki, son of Mallam Dendo, was crowned first Fulani *Etsu* of Nupe.
1838	First rebellion of Masaba, Mallam Dendo's youngest son, against his brother. Established himself as rival king of Nupe in Lade.
1841	Masaba's second rebellion. Usman Zaki resigned the throne.
1847	Rebellion of the Hausa general Umar Bahaushe against his overlords. Masaba fled to Ilorin.
1850	Fall of Bida and defeat of Umar Bahaushe by Fulani armies under Umaru Majigi. Usman Zaki's second reign.

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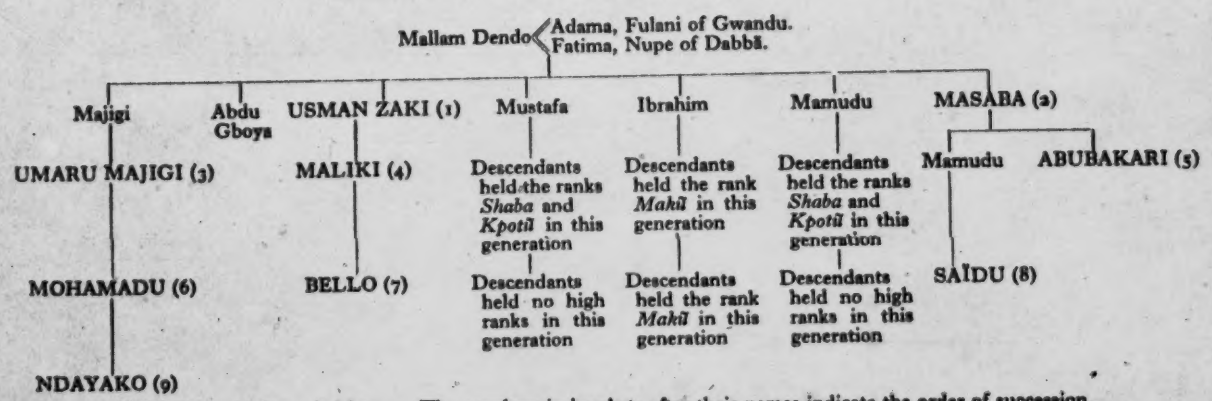
APPENDIX IV

GENEALOGY OF THE FULANI EMIRS OF NUPE



EMIRS' names in capital letters. The numbers in brackets after their names indicate the order of succession.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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VIII

ISLAM IN NUPE

I. THE CONVERSION TO ISLAM

794 If the pagan religions surrounding Nupe lack the features essential to complete conversion, Islam has them all. It is a proselytizing and super-national creed; it is embodied in a church; it provides for the requisite tuition and for special procedures of admission; also, the conversion to the new, non-tribal, religion went together with a significant restructuring of the society so converted.

794 The historical background of the Islamization of Nupe is fairly clear. According to Nupe tradition, the fifteenth king after the 173 mythical Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned about 1770, was the first to adopt Islam. But the names of even earlier rulers seem to indicate Mohammedan influence (Abdu Waliyi, 1679–1700, Ibrahim, 1713–17, Abubakari Kolo, 1742–6). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, under Etsu Ma'azū, the impact of Islam had gained both in strength and purpose. It was then that Mallam Dendo came to Nupe as an emissary of the Fulani Emir of Gwando, entrusted with the double task of spreading Islam and of paving the way for the Fulani conquest, which was itself a phase in the Holy War that had been raised in the north of Nigeria. Even before Mallam Dendo's arrival, apparently, it had become customary to include mallams among the court officials of the Nupe kings, as diviners, chaplains, and advisers on matters spiritual and secular. Dendo filled this role with great efficiency, so great that he soon became the actual ruler of the kingdom. Aided by other mallams and agents of the new regime, and by a mercenary army officered by Mohammedans, he effected the overthrow of the old dynasty and turned Nupe kingdom into a vassal state of the Fulani Empire whose supreme head, the Emir of Sokoto, styled himself *Sarkin Muslmi*—'King of the Moslems'. From then onwards, Islam became the official religion, not only of royalty, but of the state, spreading through all the channels of bureaucracy, to the craft 794 guilds and merchants, and along the main trade routes of the country. Though its firmest hold is still upon the capital it has

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND HISTORY[1]

173 The Nupe kingdom was, according to their own traditions, founded by the culture hero Tsoede or Edegi, born, according to the genealogies of the Nupe kings, early in the 15th century when the Nupe were grouped in various small chieftainships subject to the *Ata* of Igala at Idah, to whom an annual tribute of slaves, traditionally sisters' sons, had to be paid. The son of the *Ata* at this time went hunting in Nupe country, fell in love with a chief's daughter, lived with her for some time, and she became pregnant. On the death of his father the son returned to Idah to succeed but he left a chain and a ring with the woman to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede, who, when he was 30 years old, was sent to Idah by his mother's brother as part of the slave tribute. He enjoyed considerable favour and success at his father's court but was eventually forced to flee because of the jealousy of his half-brothers. He travelled upstream in a bronze canoe to his own country and after many adventures established himself as king of the Nupe.

Tsoede is held to have introduced the arts of iron and brass working and the practice of human sacrifices. He died at the reputed age of 120, on one of his military expeditions to the north in which direction the Nupe kingdom was then expanding. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and a sword, are still treasured by the people of Gbagede, who are not Nupe but Kamberi.[2]

175 The first Nupe king to become a Moslem is thought to have reigned about 1770. The Nupe kingdom reached the height of its power during the periods when the *Etsu* Ma'azuŋ was on the throne (1759–67 and 1778–95).

After the Fulani conquered the Hausa states of Northern Nigeria in the Jihad of 1805, the Nupe came under the domination of the dynasty of the Emir of Gwandu. About 1810 Mallam Dendo, a Fulani from Kebbi, who was to play an important part in its history, appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and charm seller. He gathered around him a following of cattle Fulani, Hausa and Fulani mercenaries, merchants and priests. Taking advantage of the dissensions which broke out after *Etsu* Ma'azuŋ's death, he established himself as a military leader. The Nupe kingdom was at this time split into two halves, with *Etsu* Jimada ruling at Gbara, the ancient capital, and *Etsu* Maija at the newly built capital of Raba on the Niger. Maija gained the support of Mallam Dendo and his followers and attacked *Etsu* Jimada, routing his forces and killing him. Eventually, however, fearing that Mallam Dendo might become a dangerous rival, he drove him from his territory across the Niger into the Yoruba country of Ilorin, and later made war against him and the ruling Fulani in Ilorin. Here Maija was defeated and driven back into the interior of Nupe country, leaving Raba open to Mallam Dendo who established himself there as ruler over the Nupe.

After his death in 1833 Dendo's second son Usman Zaki succeeded him and the old Nupe dynasty, exiled to Zugurma, abandoned all claim to the rulership. For some 10 years there were constant intrigues and quarrels among the sons of Mallam Dendo, and wars against other tribes. Usman Zaki renounced the throne in 1841 but reoccupied it in 1850. Bida then became the centre of the new kingdom in a period of comparative peace.

Between 1870 and 1890 the Niger Company established trading posts along the Niger. They, and later the Government of Nigeria, detached outlying portions of the kingdom. The Yagba and Bunu Yoruba, Gbari, Basa, and Kakanda became independent in 1900–05; the territories on the south and west banks of the Niger were taken away and given to the Emirs of Ilorin, Shonga, Lafiagi, and Pategi; the northern Nupe territories came under the Emir of Kontagora, and only Bida Division remained of the former Nupe kingdom. As a result of this fragmentation there are now groups of Nupe in areas under non-Nupe chiefs.

[1] For fuller accounts of Nupe history see Temple, 1919, pp. 534–6; Nadel, 1942, pp. 72–86; Harmon-Hodge, 1939, pp. 102–10.

[2] According to Nadel. But Mathews (MS, 1936) describes them as "pagan Nupe."

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
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131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
771 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
● 173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[101] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 332] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

411 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or Ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

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till their villages covered the Niger Valley between Eggan and 173
Jebba. At the time when the first European travellers appeared 361
in Nupe country, we find the Kede already firmly entrenched in this part of the Niger Valley. Now, of the ten main villages of the Kede which exist to-day only one represents an independent, purely Kede settlement—the Kede capital, Muregi. It is a well-built village, with solid houses of sun-dried mud bricks, each compound walled in in Nupe fashion, with a big mosque and an imposing chief's house. It is, as I have said, a pure Kede town, a town inhabited entirely by the 'ruling race'—'*u de talakazi a*', say the Kede ('it contains no poor'—meaning persons belonging to the subject groups). All other Kede settlements, without exception, are built on or near the site of a village of 'original inhabitants'. In most cases the Kede settlement occupies the river bank itself, and the 'native' village the stretch of country immediately behind; in a few cases we find the Kede settlements on an island off the bank occupied by the 'native' village or on the opposite side of the river. The result is something like a twin-village, half 'native' and half Kede. The scene of Kede tradition, a tribal home and emigrant settlements, seems indeed visible in the present-day organization of Kede settlement, with its one all-Kede town and its many 'twin-villages' along the river valley.

The more recent history of Kede settlement remains true to this picture of a gradual territorial expansion. We know that towards the end of last century the Kede settled for the first time on the Kaduna River. Later, under the Royal Niger Company, the Kede were encouraged to extend their settlements still farther on Niger and Kaduna. It is easy to trace these new settlements, which were founded near the European trading posts and other places which had similarly gained commercial importance. Only some thirty years ago the Kede founded their latest 'colony'—on Jebba Island

The villages differ greatly in appearance: some villages boast 361
solidly built permanent houses, while others consist largely 184
of more flimsy buildings, grass-walled huts, suggestive of temporary occupation rather than permanent settlements. The habitations of the Kede reflect the flexible, mobile nature of their system of settlement. The degree of permanence attempted in the buildings at the same time betrays the age of the settlement as well as its (past or present) importance as an economic or

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpã*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpã*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takũ* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta dozi*.

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634 is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this
182 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen,
173 concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

634 *Religion*. As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Moham-
771 medans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements
184 you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often
182 pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Nddduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

696 and Wangwa claim to have done so. They state the chains were wound several times round the neck of the victim and the ends drawn tight till he was strangled.

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FIG. 14.

15. Besides the chains there were three pairs of manacles as in fig. 14, staple and neck collar.

16. Edegi's expedition or flight, whichever the case may be, is a well-known historical fact and, in the "Notes on the Tribes, "Provinces, Emirates and States of the North-"ern Provinces of Nigeria," compiled by Mrs. Temple, it is said to have taken place about 1505. A study of this curiously assorted group of relics will hardly assist us in coming to definite conclusions about the nature of this incident or in understanding how Edegi came to found the Nupé state. But it provides interesting material for speculation.

S. W. WALKER.

[p. 172]

9: Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

MAN

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa : West. Nadel.

131 **The King's Hangman: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** With Plate I-J. *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

143

Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggā in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sūlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ẹ́gbā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

● 173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Edc*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

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10: Hassan & Shuaibu I-4, 5 (ca. 1940)1952
MS12 Hausa MS12
Abuja
Nupe FF52

Musulmi[1], Bello of Sokoto, son of Osman dan Fodio, writes in his book 'In Fakul Maisuri':— H 173

> "Strange things have happened in the history of the seven Hausa States, and the most strange of these is the extent of the possessions which God gave to Aminatu, daughter of the ruler of Zazzau. She waged war in the Hausa lands and took them all, so that the men of Katsina and the men of Kano brought her tribute. She made war in Bauchi and against the other towns of the south and of the west, so that her possessions stretched down to the shores of the [illegible]."

Aminatu died at Attagara, which is the town now called Idah on the banks of the Niger. From her dates the predominance of the people of Zazzau who held wide dominion; from the Kwarrarafa to the Nufe country many districts came under her control. The King of Nufe sent her forty eunuchs and ten thousand kolanuts, neither of which had been seen in the Hausa lands before, and in her time came the first trade from the south, and she held sway for thirty-four years. N [173]

This predominance of Zazzau came to an end in 1734 when the Beriberi of Bornu made war on all the Hausa states. It was from this time that the people of Zaria began to pay tribute to Bornu, and for this reason that henceforward the Kings of Zazzau were always installed by a representative of the ruler of Bornu, the Magajin Malam[2]; there was also an Emissary of the ruler of Bornu, called the Kachalla, sent to live at the court of the King of Zazzau. But after this there was no great war in Zaria until the appearance of the Fulani in their Holy War.

HOW THE KING OF ZAZZAU, MUHAMMAN MAKAU, CAME TO ZUBA.

In the year 1804, the Shehu Osman dan Fodio made war on the King of Gobir; and this was the first Holy War of the Fulani which they waged for six years against the Hausa States. Straightway, a certain Malam named Musa, who was a teacher of the strict Faith in the land of Zazzau, called together his fellow Fulani and went to the Shehu at Gobir, and from him received a Flag of Conquest; then he, with Yamusa, a Fulani of Bornu, and three hundred and thirty-three men came down to war against Zaria. H 175

They fell upon the King of Zazzau, Muhamman Makau, on Saturday the tenth day of the month of Zulhaji in the year 1804 whilst he was at the prayer-ground of Idi outside the town. Though Makau had many men with him, he was defeated, for they could not get back inside the town to arm, and he was forced to flee. That is

(1) "Head of the Moslems" or "Commander of the Faithful" in Nigeria.
(2) See p. 13.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

reached also the peasantry in the districts and some of the riverain population. 794

From the beginning, then, Islamization in Nupe was bound up with political interests and represented a change 'from above'. 794 During the long-drawn internal wars which accompanied the Fulani rise to power acceptance of Islam meant identifying oneself with the new regime. Even today Islam stands for some such identification, with the powers that be, with the social élite, and implicitly with the culture that grew up in the capital where that power is centred and the élite resides. Islam thus added to the unification of the conquest-state, extending the area of a common culture over a population otherwise unified only by political means. More precisely, it transformed a mere holding-together, ultimately by coercion, into a belonging-together—the conscious belonging-together that goes with a shared creed. 174

This twin machinery of unification, political and religious, was not an entirely new thing. When the Fulani established their rule over Nupe they did so over a society itself held together essentially by political means. For though the older Nupe kingdom had grown from within the Nupe tribe and largely coincided with it, it did not rest on 'tribal' solidarity or unity alone. Rather, the political unity of the kingdom was superimposed upon heterogeneous tribal sections, autonomous communities, and a population bound to widely diverse religious practices. So that on this level already the state had to create its own religious supports. The emblems of the ancestor king Tsoede and the myths and rituals associated with his person stand in this sense for the kingdom and its overriding unity; much as the 'state church' of Islam stands for Fulani rule. But there are these differences. Islam, of course, is a religion in its own right, and one open to any country or regime; while the religious observances surrounding Nupe kingship derived their sacred import only from this association and have no meaning outside the political or national setting. The 'royal cults' and myths, therefore, specifically buttressed sovereignty and tied the population to the institution of kingship; Islam does so only incidentally and indirectly, through being the faith of sovereign and ruling class. Finally, the royal cults were merely added to the series of rituals peculiar to the various communities and tribal sections; their diverse religious life was left intact, being only made to include some observance expressive of the new 'belonging-together'. Islam supersedes all the diverse beliefs and practices; it makes proselytes, not scattered cult members, and involves complete identification, not merely the acceptance of tokens of identity.

These contrasts reflect both the different potentialities of Islam

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

and of the pagan cults, and the different conditions in which the religious unification occurred, here following upon an alien domination, and there buttressing an indigenous kingdom still 'tribal' in many respects. It is difficult to draw any general conclusion from this fortuitous combination of two sets of factors. It may seem suggestive that the alien conquest and the indigenous state employed religion in radically different ways. But then, the particular employment of religion in support of the alien conquest also accorded with the potentialities of the religion professed by the conquerors. In other words, the alien ruling group happened to carry with it a creed which, being proselytizing and non-tribal, seems to have offered precisely the support their regime demanded; and this being so, it is futile to speculate on the kind of situation that would have arisen had the conquerors not professed such a suitable creed. Indeed, without the impetus of Islam the whole conquest would probably not have taken place or taken that particular form. We may point out two things, however.

The Islamization of the country is far from complete, both in that it reached only a portion of the population and in that it often remained superficial. Thus Islam, far from superseding the indigenous ceremonials, often merely furnished new, additional ones. The new ceremonials stand for a common cult, no more; and this in turn stands for a new unity, of the Mohammedan regime and the conquest-state: but it stands for it only as another 'token of identity'. So that the regime based on conquest is still employing the same religious support which characterized the indigenous kingdom. If this means that the potentialities of Islam have not (or not yet) been fully utilized, in other respects they required correction. For Islam points beyond the state which may adopt it for its church; for the Nupe, it means conversion to a creed uniting a vast population in Nigeria and West Africa (though few Nupe would think of Islam as a world religion). Also, as we have said, this creed of a ruling class lacks the explicit reference to sovereignty which the pagan 'royal cults' possessed. Thus, to serve as a buttress of 'State and Throne', the broad conception of Islam needed some narrowing down and its practice some remodelling. As we shall see, this has indeed been achieved.

Let me first say a few words about the motives which induced individuals and whole communities in Nupe to embrace the new faith. The Fulani did not resort to mass conversions imposed by force. But the prestige value implicit in this creed of a ruling class was only one of its inducements. It offered, besides, two more specific material advantages. First, conversion to Islam promised safety from slavery; secondly, the patronage of nobility, which peasants and craftsmen would seek for economic reasons as well

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

as to secure legal protection, involved accepting the religion of the rulers.[1] The rough and ready conversions which were the result cannot have involved any elaborate rules of spiritual preparation. Indeed, during the early Fulani regime, there were no such rules, though there was a set procedure. A man declaring to his chosen patron, not to any member of the clergy, that he wished to become a Mohammedan, and the gift, in return, of a turban and sword, sealed at once the conversion and the grant of patronage. Today, the procedure is, at least in theory, a little more elaborate and less worldly. The would-be convert is supposed to turn to a mallam for the necessary tuition, which is brief and superficial, consisting only in memorizing a few *surat* of the Qoran. In due course, he will make the declaration of faith (that is, speak the first *surah*) during the service in the mosque, after which he can don a turban, the visible sign of the accomplished conversion. A few older men I met had in fact undergone this procedure. But nowadays most adults as it were slip into Islam; they simply decide to attend the mosque (however irregularly), to perform the prescribed observances (however perfunctorily), and to exchange the indigenous phrygian caps for turbans. They may, however, seek tuition afterwards, many mallams having such 'self-made' Mohammedans among their pupils. The younger people professing Islam have mostly grown up in that faith; many received tuition in a Qoran school in their youth; others merely had parents who, in spite of their own pagan beliefs, arranged for their children a birth and naming ceremony in Mohammedan style.

The observances followed by the Nupe Mohammedans are as simple and liberal as is the procedure of conversion. The five basic duties of Islam—bearing witness to the One God; reciting the five daily prayers (*salât*); giving alms; observing the Fast (Ramadhan); and making the pilgrimage to Mecca—are, for most Nupe, reduced to two. When you ask a Nupe what makes a Mohammedan, the answer is invariably this—*ji salla* (i.e., saying the daily prayers) and keeping the Fast. The declaration of faith in One God has slipped into the background of things taken for granted. This is not unnatural; since the traditional belief of the Nupe knows one deity only, as abstract and remote as the God of Islam, the testimony to His uniqueness strikes no one as a point of great importance. Nor are the Nupe greatly exercised over the finer theological distinctions between *Sokó* and *Allah*; mostly they regard them as two names for the same being. The giving of alms (*sádaka*) is, as we know, embodied in numerous institutional occasions; but it is regarded merely as a desirable thing, not as an obligation in its own right, deserving to be listed among the

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 142–3.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

634 measure of independence in taxation, jurisdiction, and political management in general.[1]

634 In this connexion, we must point out an important development
669 in the history of Nupe kingdom, which in turn greatly affected Kede history. The royal dynasty of Nupe, which traced its origin back to the mythical Tsoede, was in power till the earlier half of last century, when Nupe kingdom, like most of the Native states in Northern Nigeria, fell under the rule of Emirs of Fulani stock who had conquered the country and deposed the indigenous kings. We have no data on the relation between Kede autonomy and the Nupe State under the old dynasty. But it is certain that under Fulani rule conflicts constantly arose, partly perhaps because the Kede (like many other Nupe sections) resented the alien rule, but to a large extent certainly because the Fulani kings, much more than the Nupe rulers before them, had to curb in their own interest the autonomous leanings of their Kede vassals. The Fulani, whose wars at that time were directed chiefly against tribes in the south, could not afford to let an all too independent section control the river—the southern boundary and at the same time the vital artery of trade and traffic of the country. Slave trade, the economic mainstay of the pre-British rulers of central Nigeria, traffic in arms and powder, and troop transports for their military expeditions, all had to cross the River Niger on Kede territory.[2] The Fulani overlords enforced their sovereignty in a number of wars and punitive expeditions, in the course of which (if the reports are true) hundreds were killed, thousands of Kede sold as slaves by the victorious Fulani, Kede notables executed in Bida, and whole districts of Kede country devastated. A typical instance is the Katcha War—the answer of the Fulani to the first attempt of

174 697 [1] There exists certain evidence to show that the Kede chiefs succeeded in enlarging their judicial power at the cost of their overlords and usurped a certain judicial machinery of the Nupe State which had evolved in the river area. To-day, at any rate, the Kede claim that this judicial machinery was under the authority of the *Kuta*, while other, non-Kede, informants state that it represented entirely a prerogative of the kings of Nupe. I am referring to the *Ledu* (lit. prison) villages on the banks of the Niger, which were so called because they served as prisons and places of execution for criminals convicted, by the king's court, of a 'crime of the king'. I have described this system and the attempts of the Kede to claim it as their own in *Man* (1935), 143.

[2] The importance, for example, of Raba as a river port for slave traffic to the south is pointed out by Lander (*Journal of an Expedition* (1832), ii, p. 298). Laird and Oldfield speak of 600 Kede canoes, 'all of which may be employed for Ful troops to cross the Niger on war expeditions' (op. cit., ii, p. 315).

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralized political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *nddduma*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361]
Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [487]
were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (AFRICA, VIII, 3).

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

631 weapon so well suited to their hands. And in their small 'state within the state' this jurisdiction
693 over the 'King's Highway' was still working, a true if smaller copy of the old system, some thirty or forty years ago.

IV.

681 The *lolu* villages are, as we have seen, linked with the king's person by special sacred links;
693 they are made to share the king's guardianship over the law; they thus visibly represent, and almost
642 propagate, the supreme power of the king at what we are tempted to call 'strategic' places. And in this, it seems to me, an important general sociological issue is involved. Strict centralization of legal power, however strong a machinery for political integration it seems, always harbours a disintegrative element as well. For it tends to separate the crime as actually committed from the final act of justice. The element of retaliation and atonement, so essential to the savage mind, becomes meaningless where the criminal is tried and punished a hundred miles away, and by people who are, practically, strangers. The individual community is deprived of one of the most powerful elements of social cohesion, namely, the title to sanction the violation of its laws and of its social order within its own boundaries. It appears to be the meaning of the *lolu* organization to neutralise this influence for that vital area of the Niger valley. For the most conspicuous, final, phase of jurisdiction is returned to a certain extent to the individual community. It is true this applies only to a few selected places. But we remember their surprising regular distribution on the river; and also the rule that the *lolu* village nearest to the place of the crime had to be called upon to perform the execution. These villages are 'representative' places, and 'strategic' places, and their selection is backed by the strongest charter: mythical and religious belief.

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173 the kingdom, and its common knowledge constitutes the first and foremost of these common beliefs and forms of cultural 'commonness' which supply the background of political unity. I have found the consciousness of this tradition developed most strongly in the river area and among the Beni, that is, in the area that marks what I have called the 'core' of the expanding kingdom. It is totally absent to-day, and most probably has always been absent, among the Dibo, who have never formed part of the old kingdom, and among some of the Nupe-ized groups (such as the 'Gbari slaves') which, absorbed into Nupe in more recent times, have remained culturally 'Outside Peoples'. The distribution of the 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom and the boundaries of the kingdom itself coincide.

To go on with the tradition of Tsoede. For sixty years he reigned in Gbara; he died, 120 years old, on one of his military expeditions to the north, near Gbagede. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and his sword, are still kept as almost sacred treasure by the people of Gbagede (who are Kamberi, not Nupe). At the time of Tsoede's death the kingdom of Nupe was expanding towards the north, and his four sons who succeeded him as kings of Nupe, one after the other, are said to have founded Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, as their temporary capital. Another of his descendants, Abdu Waliyi, founded the capital Jima, on the Kaduna opposite Gbara.[1] The fifteenth king after Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned according to Nupe genealogies about 1770, was the first Nupe king to become Mohammedan. He was deposed by his son and died in exile, in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen. Under *Etsu* Ma'azû, the nineteenth king of Nupe, Nupe kingdom reached its greatest power. During his reign, about 1810, Mallam Dendo, also called Manko, 'Great Mallam', a Fulani from Kebbi who was destined to change the whole fate of Nupe kingdom, is said to have first appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and seller of charms. With *Etsu* Ma'azû we also reach, for the first time, in this account, the plane of 'objective history'; his death is recorded by one of the first European visitors to Nupe as having occurred in 1818.[2]

THE FULANI CONQUEST

175 [814] We enter now a period of Nupe history which is illuminated by the light of 'real' history. It is described with many details in the written records of Nupe court historians, the earliest of whom was a certain Abduramani, a Mohammedan scholar who seems to have lived in Rabá in the early days of Fulani rule. It was during this period, too, that European travellers first penetrated into Nupe.[3]

[1] In addition to the historical capitals of the kingdom, Gbara, Mokwa, Jima, and finally Rabá (see below), the Nupe records also mention certain other places at which the Nupe kings are said to have resided temporarily at various times, viz. Etsû, Jengi, and Yeti.

[2] Journal of Rev. J. F. Schoen and Samuel Crowther, *Expedition up the Niger*, 1842, p. 191.

[3] I owe to the kindness of the Administration the opportunity of having been able to consult unpublished Government records, compiled by the first officers who were serving in this area; I must acknowledge specially the very complete 'Notes on Nupe History', by Major Burdon (1902).

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From that time Nupe history is linked indissolubly with the fate of the Fulani conquerors of Nigeria who had made themselves rulers of the main Hausa states in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The history of the Fulani *Jihad* has often been described,[1] so I need say only a few words. The Fulani established their suzerainty over Northern Nigeria in a loosely organized, decentralized dual empire, the western part under the supremacy of the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, and the eastern under the Emir of Gwandu. Nupe kingdom fell to Gwandu's share. The Fulani conquest was achieved in two phases and by two methods: a gradual infiltration of the foreign country by Mohammedan Fulani, and then, ultimately, a military conquest. The same policy was adopted in Nupe. Mallam Dendo was one of those Mohammedan preachers and emissaries to 'heathen countries' who was to collect an ever-increasing group of followers as the nucleus of future conquest. His followers seem to have included men of all stations: cattle Fulani to whom in their semi-nomadic life Nupe had become a second home; Fulani and Hausa mercenary soldiers who took service in the Nupe armies; merchants from northern towns; and Mohammedan priests and missionaries; I estimated their number at the time of the conquest at not more than 1,000 or 1,500. When Mallam Dendo became strong enough to venture the decisive blow, he applied to the Emir of Gwandu, his overlord, for military help and for a *tuta*, flag, which signified his official recognition as a leader and accepted feudal chief of the Fulani Empire.

The opportunity for the Fulani to make themselves masters of the country soon came. Almost immediately after *Etsu* Ma'azū's death internal trouble broke out. The claim of Maazu's son Jimada, the legitimate heir to the throne, was disputed by his father's brother's son, Majiya II. The details of this feud are not clear. According to some accounts Jimada was Majiya's father's sister's son, who had been appointed regent for the boy-king Majiya; later, when Majiya grew up and demanded his kingdom, Jimada refused. Other accounts make the two claimants sons of elder and younger brother respectively, namely, of *Etsu* Ma'azū (the nineteenth king of Nupe) and *Etsu* Ma[illegible] (the twenty-first king of Nupe). Majiya claimed the throne by the right[illegible] general Nupe succession, being the elder brother's eldest son; Jima[illegible], however, was regarded as the legitimate heir according to the ancient Nupe rules of royal inheritance which decreed that the son 'born in the purple' should become king.[2] Whatever the origin of this dynastic feud, it led to a temporary division of Nupe kingdom into a western and eastern half: Jimada reigned in Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe, and Majiya built himself a capital in Rabá, on the Niger. Majiya gained the friendship of Mallam Dendo and the Fulani group in Nupe, and with them on his side he became by far the more powerful, and soon snatched the other half of

[1] See A. C. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1929; A. W. Bovill, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, Oxford, 1933; C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, i, pp. 98–102.

[2] In Africa this rule of inheritance is unique, and cannot, according to Nupe tradition, have applied to Tsoede himself and his four sons who succeeded him. All informants insisted that it became, at some unspecified period, the rule of succession in the Nupe dynasty.

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[643]

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175 Nupe kingdom from his rival. He defeated Jimada in the war, killed him at Ragada, near Jengi, and thus made himself the undisputed king of Nupe, about 1820. Idirisu, Jimada's son, fled with the rest of his followers to Laboži, and later across the river, to Eggã, where he stayed, an exile and fugitive, powerless against Majiya's army. Nupe was not to remain at peace for long. Majiya's gratitude to the Fulani who had helped him to defeat his rival soon changed to jealousy and fear. He turned against them, only to be himself defeated, and to lose his throne to his sometime friends and allies.

This is the story that is told in Nupe of the rise of the Fulani and of the final struggle for the Nupe throne. Majiya, as king of Nupe, had learned of the fame of Manko as a preacher and Mohammedan scholar and diviner. He invited him to his court and installed him there in the influential position of his private counsellor and diviner. He trusted his prophecies and his advice and was convinced that his victories in the field were due to Mallam Dendo's *asiri* (lit. 'secret', that is supernatural powers); he rewarded him magnificently, gave him money, slaves, horses. He took Mallam Dendo's youngest son Masaba into his house as his foster-son, as the Nupe do with sons of friends. More and more of Mallam Dendo's kin and fellow countrymen came to Rabá to take service under him or under the king, till at last Manko's power and influence were more than equal to that of the king himself. Majiya now thought it high time to rid himself of the dangerous rival. He drove Mallam Dendo and all his followers from Rabá, and chased them from his territory, across the Niger, into Ilorin country.

Here another Fulani emissary, Mallam Alimi, had already been established for some time as king over the Yoruba of Ilorin. He now gave protection to the Fulani refugees from Nupe. But *Etsu* Majiya, desirous of uprooting for ever the power of his dangerous vassals, decided to attack Ilorin and to conquer this southern stronghold of the Fulani invaders. He attacked Ilorin with 4,000 horsemen and 10,000 foot-soldiers. He marched for two days from Rabá to Ilorin, and halted his army at the gates of the town. The victory seemed his. This war of Majiya against the Fulani of Ilorin, as it is told in Nupe, is a magnificent epic. There were five Fulani emissaries in Ilorin at that time: Mallam Baba, who had fled with Dendo from Rabá and later became the first Emir of Agaie; Mallam Dendo himself; Mallam Musa, another fugitive from Rabá; Mallam Maliki, who had resided in another Nupe town, Lafiagi, and had been driven from there by Majiya; and Mallam Alimi, the Emir of Ilorin. Dendo was the youngest of the five, but his keen intelligence made him at once their leader. He first sent word to Idirisu, Jimada's exiled son, asking for his support in this fight against Majiya, the murderer of his father. Then Dendo prepared his most powerful *asiri*. Two brave men were sent out at night to steal into the enemy's camp and to bring back some earth. Dendo dug a large pit close to the town wall. He put the earth into this pit, and covered its mouth with grass. On a Friday morning he entered the pit, taking with him fourteen dates. He stayed there till the hour of evening prayer, but what he did in the pit, what secret magic he performed, no one knows.

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When he reappeared, he called again the two men who had brought the earth the previous night, and ordered them to scatter it by night all round the town walls. Next morning Majiya attacked. A thick mist had fallen over the country. Majiya's troops were unable to move in the mist. Then a sand-storm sprang up, blinding men and horses. The horses bolted, and Majiya's cavalry, placed (in accordance with Nupe military principles) behind the infantry, trampled down their own men. When the small army of Ilorin sallied forth from the gates of the town, it met an enemy already half defeated. Majiya was beaten, he fled across the Niger, back to the protected Rabá, with only 1,000 horses and 1,070 men left of his huge army. This was not the end. Idirisu and his followers joined forces with Mallam Dendo. Together they pursued Majiya's troops, marching their men up the Niger as far as Gbajibo, fifty miles north of Rabá, where they were able to cross the river unmolested. Here Mallam Dendo is said to have used a clever ruse: for a week he collected horse-dung, and then threw it into the water; drifting down the river it reached Rabá; and the Nupe, who had hardly recovered from their defeat at Ilorin, thought that an enormous army of horsemen was approaching Rabá and had already crossed the river. Majiya fled into the interior, to Zuguma, leaving Rabá unprotected, an easy prey to the Fulani army.

Mallam Dendo repaid Idirisu's help badly. He let him remain a puppet king of Nupe exiled to Eggã,[1] while he installed himself in the capital Rabá as the real ruler. Dendo and his people collected taxes and tribute; they had the command of the larger part of the army; they began to dispense justice, and generally to direct the affairs of the kingdom. A revolt of Idirisu ended in his being killed by Mallam Dendo's troops, whereupon Dendo, 'true Fulani' (say Nupe informants), turned back to Majiya, previously his enemy, offering him friendship and recognition as king of Nupe—another puppet king, in far-away little Zuguma. Two years after this unification of Nupe, in 1833, the year when Oldfield and Lander visited Rabá, Mallam Dendo died.[2] He left four sons (two having died before their father) and two daughters, the sons being Abdu Gboya, Usman Zaki, Mamudu Gwogi, and Masaba (Mama Saba), the daughters Gogo Sabaci and Gogo Wodiko.

During Mallam Dendo's lifetime Mallam Baba, one of his companions on the flight to Ilorin, set out to conquer a kingdom for himself. Following Dendo's advice, he took twelve men, crossed three rivers, travelling by night and hiding by day from the Nupe troops who might intercept his party. The small troop raided the country, and growing as it marched, finally reached Agaie, which Mallam Baba made the capital of another (much smaller) Fulani Emirate in Nupe country. Revolts of the Nupe of that part, and attacks of Majiya, whose sovereignty had extended over Agaie, were in the end defeated, and soon Mallam Baba could enlarge his small kingdom by new victories: over part of the Bataci tribe on the river; over Kacha, which subsequently fell to Bida;

[1] In 1833 Oldfield, whose ship, the *Quorra*, was anchoring off Eggã, met there the exiled Idirisu (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit. ii, pp. 38–9).
[2] Laird and Oldfield, op. cit. ii, p. 76.

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175 and over the Gbari of Payi, which became later the independent Emirate (again under a Fulani) of Lapai.

Mallam Dendo is said to have advised his sons not to seek, after his death, official secular power, but to remain what he had been: the uncrowned king, nominally only an emissary of Islam and the spiritual head of the country. But the division into real and nominal, spiritual and secular rulership did not work. Two years after Majiya's death (1835?) Tsado, his son, like him puppet king of Nupe in Zuguma, revolted again against the hated Fulani. He was defeated and killed by one of the Fulani generals near Egbako. His son, Dzurugi (The Red One), returned to Zuguma. But now Usman Zaki, the second son of Dendo, himself adopted the title *Etsu* Nupe, demanding the ancient regalia from the exiled shadow king in Zuguma and making Rabá again the official capital of the kingdom. From this time the legitimate dynasty of Nupe abandoned all legal claim to the rulership over the country, and the new Fulani dynasty assumed full powers. Of the other descendants of Mallam Dendo, Abdu Gboya, Usman Zaki's elder brother, whose leanings were more scholarly than warlike, became *Alkali* (judge) of the kingdom, and Mamudu Gwogi, Usman's younger brother, *Shaba*, or Heir Presumptive.

From this time the history of Nupe kingdom is the history of constant intrigues, fights, wars, and rebellions. Fights between the sons of Mallam Dendo, wars against other tribes and against factions in Nupe, and rebellions of the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty, who did not give up hope of recovering the throne from the Fulani, or rebellions of powerful generals of mercenary troops who claimed the rulership for themselves, and often rebellions of both, one using the other as a pawn in this game for the throne of Nupe. Masaba, the ambitious and most popular youngest son of Mallam Dendo, born of a Nupe mother and educated at the court of the Nupe *Etsu* Majiya, claimed the throne on the grounds that he was a real Nupe and not, like Usman Zaki, a Fulani by descent. He won the support of Tsado in Zuguma and Idirisu in Eggã, the two shadow kings of Nupe, and finally even the support of the Emir of Gwandu, the spiritual head of the Eastern Fulani Empire. Masaba led two revolts against Usman Zaki, the first from Rabá, shortly after the latter had assumed power, and the second, from exile in Lade, south of the Niger, in 1841.[1] It was successful and forced Usman Zaki to leave Nupe kingdom together with Umaru, the son of his eldest brother Majigi, and to return to the home of his ancestors, Gwandu. Masaba became king of Nupe.

Let me enumerate the main facts in the involved history of Fulani-Nupe, with its revolts, its constant bloodshed, and its fratricidal wars. During Masaba's reign Nupe kingdom grew extensively. Masaba, residing first in Lade and later in Rabá, conquered the Kamuku in the north, the Gbari in the east, and the Kakanda in the south; he entrenched himself firmly on the Yoruba side of the Niger, snatching the country from other Fulani chiefs who had gained a foothold there. A revolt of one of his mercenary generals, the Bornu general Umar Bahaushe, drove

[1] Schoen-Crowther, op. cit., p. 161.

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Masaba from Rabá, and the king had to seek refuge in Ilorin. Umar Bahaushe, for some time undisputed master of Nupe, attempted to make himself *Etsu* Nupe. All Fulani rallied against him, Usman Zaki and

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SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE DIVISION OF ROYAL LAND

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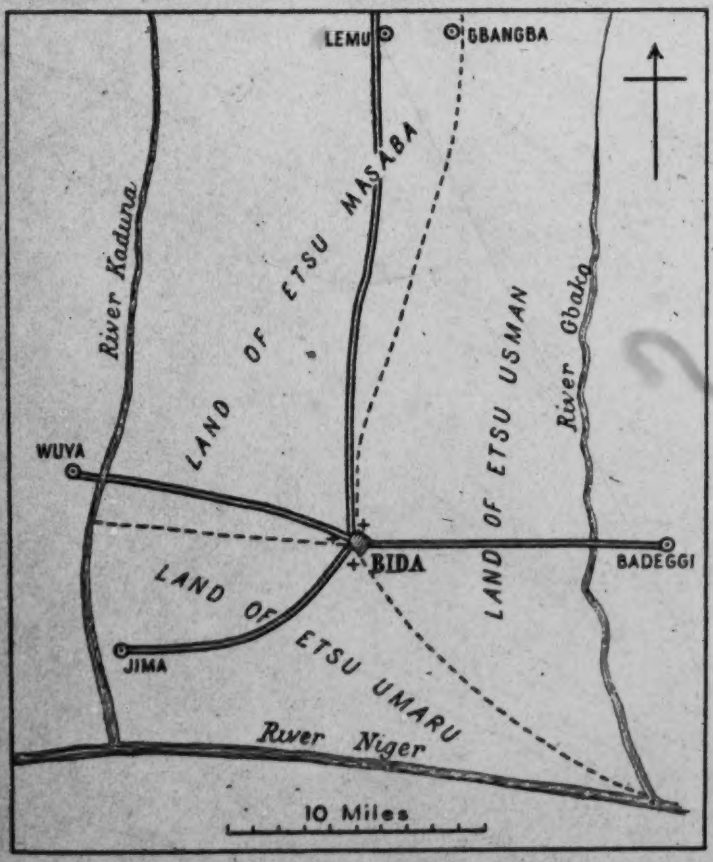

+..... Royal Estates *(esozi)*

Umaru Majigi returned from Gwandu, their self-chosen place of exile, and joined forces with Masaba against the usurper. For three years the Bornu general drove the Fulani armies before him and beat them in battle after battle. At last the luck turned. The Fulani army under Umaru, son of Majigi, fleeing from the usurper's army across the Kaduna river, found protection in the walled town of Bida. With the arrival of Masaba's troops from the south, and with the assistance of

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175 the town-king of Bida and the twelve Beni towns whose confederacy is brought into play for the last time in Nupe history, Umar Bahaushe's army was defeated after a three months' siege of Bida. The rebel general was killed, and when the *Dayspring* reached Rabá, in 1857, Dr. Baikie saw the head of the unfortunate Umar Bahaushe impaled at the landing-place.[1]

Then came a time of comparative peace. Bida became the centre of the new kingdom. Usman Zaki, now reinstated, was the first *Etsu* Nupe to reside there. He died in 1859 or 1860, and was succeeded by Masaba, whose second reign lasted till 1873. Under his rule Bida was transformed from a huge war-camp into a capital worthy of the most powerful kingdom of Central Nigeria. Many great buildings in Bida date from this time: the three royal palaces, the great mosque, and the lay-out of the night market. Masaba, suppressing revolts of the Gbedegi in Mokwa, of the riverain Kyedye, fighting wars against the Kukuruku, Kakanda and Bassa Nge in the south, and Gbari and Agaie Fulani in the east, consolidated the country internally and expanded its boundaries farther and farther afield. Of the two descendants of the original Nupe dynasty, one, Yisa, of Jimada stock, had fought on the side of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe, and had then settled, half guest, half hostage, in Bida. The other, the descendant of Majiya, after having revolted, in vain, several times, fled again to the refuge of his father, Zuguma, in Kontagora. In *Etsu* Masaba's time, Nupe kingdom is said to have stretched from Mulye and Awawu, in Ebe country, in the north, to Akpara in Bunu in the south, and from half Yoruba Tsaragi (Shari) in the west, to Payi, in Gbari, in the east.[2] After Masaba's death Umaru, the son of Majigi, became *Etsu*. He reigned from 1873 till 1884. He is said to have been a fanatic Mohammedan, and he, too, helped to extend the boundaries of Nupe kingdom. He fought against Bunu and Gbira—and in this fight used for the first time gunpowder bought from the first Niger Company trading-post which had newly been established in Eggã, on the Niger. He quelled a revolt of the Kusopa under a chief from Yeti who joined forces with the exiled Nupe king of Zuguma, and another rising of the Kyedye. In this fight he had the help of the Kakanda, now tributary to the Nupe, and of the Niger Company troops which then for the first time played an active part in Nupe politics.

Etsu Maliki, who succeeded Umaru Majigi, reigned from 1884 to 1895. He is said to have been the wealthiest *Etsu* of Nupe, but (which means, perhaps, the same) avaricious and cruel. Under his reign taxes reached an almost insufferable height. His reign was on the whole peaceful except for the usual border raids and punitive expeditions against recalcitrant vassal tribes. Abubakari, 1895–7, followed. It was under his reign that the Niger Company troops were fighting against the

[1] A. C. G. Hastings, *The Voyage of the 'Dayspring'*. London, 1926, p. 90.

[2] About that time Dr. Barth, travelling in Hausa, was told of the great warlike kingdom of Nupe, whose boundaries he records; they are almost exactly the boundaries given above: Faże (in Ebe) in the north, Bunu country in the south, Tsaragi in the west, and Liffe (?) in Oban, in the east. (Henry Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, London, 1857, vol. iv, Appendix V, p. 545.)

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Nupe, finally taking Bida, in 1897, deposing *Etsu* Abubakari and appointing Mohamadu in his place. 175

The story of the Niger Company campaign has been often written. Between 1870 and 1890 the Royal Niger Company had established trading-posts all along the river, its northernmost posts being situated on Nupe territory. Shortly after the accession of Abubakari trouble broke out in the south of Nupe kingdom, in what is to-day Kabba Province, where the Yagba and Gbira had revolted against Nupe suppression. The Niger Company, which had many important trading-posts in this part of the country, promised them protection from Bida. *Etsu* Abubakari, no friend of the white man, decided to kill two birds with one stone, to 'pacify' Kabba country and to oust the hated Europeans. He moved his army south, under the command of *Makũ* Mohamadu. But the latter, who nursed a grievance against the *Etsu* for having refused his claim to the title of Heir Presumptive, made a pact with the British; in exchange for the promise of Sir William Wallace, who commanded the Niger Company troops, to make him *Etsu* of Nupe, he agreed to keep his army out of the fight. The Kyedye, always ready to revolt against the central government, manned their canoes, placed them at the disposal of the Niger Company and, under the command of a gunboat, undertook to guard the river so that no reinforcements should reach the beleaguered capital. The Niger Company troops marched on a city depleted of soldiers and arms. After twelve days' fighting the stubborn resistance of Bida was broken. Abubakari was deposed, and Mohamadu, Sir William Wallace's ally, appointed *Etsu*. The chief of the Kyedye was rewarded with the grant of the semi-independent status which his country had lost under the Fulani, and was placed directly under the authority of the Niger Company (a prerogative which was later withdrawn). Moreover, acceding to the request of the Kyedye chief, Patigi, the territory on the southern bank of the Niger opposite the Kyedye capital Muregi, was detached from Bida and given, as a separate Emirate, to Idirisu, the exiled Nupe king of the Jimada branch, who had been living in Bida as the 'guest' (hostage, in reality) of the Fulani kings.

The Niger Company and later its successor, the Government of Northern Nigeria, continued for some time this policy of breaking up the too dangerous big Nupe kingdom. Kolo Yisa, a grandson of the exiled Majiya, had thought of using the defeat of Bida for his own ends. He hurried to Zuguma, where his ancestors had lived as puppet kings of Bida, made himself king over the territory, and was later confirmed in this position by the Government. Yagba, Bunu, Bassa, and Kakanda had become independent districts and provinces immediately after the conquest of Bida. Now also the Nupe possessions on the southern and western bank of the Niger were taken away from Bida and placed in a different province, Ilorin, where they were divided up between the Emirs of Ilorin, Shonga, and Lafiagi (1900–5). Of the Nupe Empire that had reached from the Benue in the south to Gbagede in the north, only Bida Division remained, bordered on all sides by countries populated by Nupe, but ruled by different sovereigns.

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175 *Etsu* Abubakari, who had been banished to Lokoja after the conquest of Bida, made one attempt to return to his country and to recover throne and independence. He succeeded in collecting a following large enough to threaten Bida. He defeated *Etsu* Mohamadu and drove him from Bida (1906). But the British, by this time firmly established, helped Mohamadu, brought him back to Bida, and sent Abubakari back to Lokoja, where shortly afterwards he died in exile. Mohamadu died in 1914, succeeded by *Etsu* Bello, 1914–26, *Etsu* Mallam Saidu, 1926–34, and finally the present *Etsu*, Mallam Mohamadu Ndayako.

Viewing the historical growth of the Nupe Empire as a whole we discover the familiar two trends which, closely intertwined, force political systems into an endless twofold development: from expansion to military and political consolidation, in the course of which the necessity of further expansion seems invariably entailed. The roots of this development are no less evident in Nupe history than in the political developments of our own history. First, newly conquered territory demanded in due course conquest beyond its boundaries in order to ensure the pacification of the conquered areas and to prevent interference from tribes or states without. And second, the expanding territory absorbing more and more alien groups, all to be controlled and governed from a small nucleus-country, by a population less than one-fifth the size of the population that was brought under political control, necessitated continuous 're-conquests' and wars of consolidation. In the field of social organization this development becomes manifest in the rise of the feudal system; in the military sphere, in the ever-increasing employment of mercenary troops.

Not every step in the expansion of Nupe kingdom was carried out by war. There is evidence of peaceful expansion as well. Certain communities and tribal groups are said to have 'submitted' (*gba*) voluntarily to the Nupe state, accepting the position of tributary groups and claiming at the same time the political protection which the Nupe overlords extended to their subject groups. But accepting this 'protection' meant largely avoiding the more disastrous subjection. Though not the direct result of war and conquest, it was yet a submission to the threat of war and conquest which the momentum of a steadily expanding Nupe must have seemed to entail to her weaker neighbours.

To discover with equal certainty the first stimulus of the whole development, the force which, as it were, set the stone rolling, is impossible. The origin of Nupe rule and expansion is buried in the mythical past. Whether it was the immigration of a large tribal group (condensed in the myth to the small band of men round Tsoede) or a small *élite* of the kind Pareto likes to discover in every political achievement, we have no means of deciding. We do not even know what the original social structure and economic system of this immigrant group was, or whether it contained any stimulus to territorial expansion or conquest. Only in the Fulani conquest does this first 'stimulus' lie open to historical examination. We have described to some extent the gradual infiltration of Nupe by the Fulani, who came as herdsmen, mercenary soldiers, and Mohammedan preachers. Here a distinct tribal section, a semi-nomadic group on its

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wanderings from west to east and south-east, was the carrier of conquest. It was separated from the groups which it subjugated by ethnic descent and social structure, consisting apparently of a loose aggregate of kinship groups and self-constituted warlike bands, and only partly by its system of livelihood; for the predecessors of the Fulani, the Nupe rulers, had already been soldiers and had themselves evolved an urbanized civilization in which Mohammedan culture played its part. But the analysis of Fulani political history goes beyond the scope of this book.

We can study some of the stimuli which, though perhaps it did not initiate, yet certainly influenced and directed the political growth of Nupe. Limiting ourselves to the periods that come under the heading of 'real' history, we can point out the essential difference in the policy of expansion before and after the Fulani conquest. The expansion of the pre-Fulani kingdom appears to have been most marked in the north, and of the Fulani era, in the south. Tsoede's grave, symbolic to all Nupe kings of what we might call his 'political testament', lies in Gbagede, 100 miles north of their northernmost capital, Rabá. The Fulani Emirs, on the other hand, drove their armies farther and farther south; only in recent times, less than two generations ago, did they begin to 'consolidate' the Gbari provinces, thirty or forty miles north of Bida. The conquest of the northern territories, inhabited by primitive pagans who possessed no handicrafts or remarkable wealth, had evidently two main aims (apart from the necessity of pacifying the border countries): first, to tap the rich, easily accessible reservoir of slaves which the Nupe found among these primitive and poorly protected groups; and second, to protect and attract the trade from the wealthy centres of civilization in the Hausa states. Of this latter aim we have concrete proof. The main trade-routes from Hausa passed through, and partly ended in, Nupe, crossing on their way the territories of unruly hostile tribes. Rabá was the goal of the huge caravans that carried regularly *kanwa* (potash) from Lake Chad over Kano to the countries of the south.[1] When the first European explorers, in the times of the last indigenous Nupe kings, reached Nupe country and Rabá, they found it a town rich in cattle (the humped, northern, breed), horses, camels, and ostriches—which must all have come from the north—and the markets full of precious goods from Hausa, Bornu, and North Africa.[2]

The turning to the south represents a new political interest, bound up with a later phase in the history of West Africa. Fulani-Nupe, as the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, carried its wars of expansion into the pagan south and no longer into the northern countries which had come under the sovereignty of various Fulani potentates to whom Nupe was tied by common allegiance. The south offered, over and above new densely populated areas for slave raiding, the command of the main route for the slave-trade, down the river to the coast whence ships took the slaves to foreign ports. Not until the Fulani subjugated the Kakanda

[1] See Barth, op. cit. ii, p. 115.

[2] See J. and R. Lander: Rabá had large herds of 'horned cattle remarkable for size and beauty' and a 'prodigious number of excellent horses' (op. cit. ii, pp. 312-13).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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175 tribe could Nupe canoes, with slaves and various goods, travel unmolested between Nupe and Lokoja and Onitsa, having had, before then, to stop at Eggã and to tranship their loads to Kakanda boats.[1] The highly developed trades and crafts of the south, capable of supplementing the northern trade, proved another attraction to a kingdom that had grown rich and fastidious. We have heard of the Yoruba slaves imported by the Fulani *Etsu* Masaba because of their skill in weaving and dyeing. Finally, the south became of paramount importance as the main door to European imports. This importance reached its climax when *Etsu* Umaru bought gunpowder for his long-barrelled flintlock guns of Arab pattern from the store of the Niger Company on his territory—north and south matched again in most profitable manner.

Our sketch of the growth of this West African kingdom has shown political expansion dominated by economic interests. If other motives—a collective desire for military adventures and glory—were decisive in shaping it, they are now invisible in the historical perspective. The impetus of religious zeal, which drove the Fulani armies across Northern Nigeria, was spent when, as rulers of Nupe, the Fulani turned their faces southward. I will not pursue farther this question of political philosophy, of the ultimate stimulus behind political expansion. But we shall see that economic considerations were involved in the building and maintenance of the kingdom in many other, more subtle, ways. The incentive of gain will appear not only as an abstract, impersonal, historical stimulus, but as a concrete element, directly affecting individual action and directly shaping the motives and interests by which the individual agents of the political system are animated.

[1] See *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 170, n. i.

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CHAPTER VII
POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM
(*continued*)

KINGSHIP

IN the tradition of Tsoede, that 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom, the essence of the Nupe state is already clearly expressed, sanctioned, almost sanctified, by that paramount authority that attaches to prehistoric events: it outlines a system of political domination, growing by conquest and expansion, and governed by a group detached in origin and status from the rest of the population, and claiming its supreme position by the right of might. The small river kingdom which figures, in the Tsoede tradition, as the nucleus of the great Nupe of later times, and the vast empire under the Fulani Emirs, are essentially of the same nature. The twofold process of expansion over alien groups and cultures, combined with cultural assimilation and absorption, is reflected in both, in the ideological history of the Tsoede myth as well as in the 'real' history of the Fulani kingdom. In one there is Tsoede, who conquers Nupe with the help of alien magic, who brings into Nupe the insignia of alien rulership and culture, but who, himself half Nupe by descent, creates a new, independent, and united Nupe. In the other there is this remarkable piece of empire-policy when Masaba claims succession to the Nupe throne on the grounds of his being half Nupe by birth and full Nupe by education. If the mythology of Tsoede establishes the essence and growth of kingship, later history shows its vicissitudes involved in such system of domination which forces unity upon heterogeneous groups and cultures, revolts and feuds, kings deposed and exiled, usurpers and shadow kings. 175

We know little about the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times. I have mentioned one piece of information already which I obtained from various sources, namely, the ancient rule of succession which made the eldest son 'born in the purple', that is, the son first born during the father's reign, the heir to the throne of Nupe. A few other facts concerning the person of the king I was able to ascertain from the *Etsu* of Patigi. Certain ritual rules obtained at the king's court—and some of these rules are still observed in Patigi. Thus the *Etsu* may only wear white; he can travel and go out whenever he likes, but may not eat any food save that prepared by his wives; nor may any stranger watch him eat. Finally, no one may be killed in the presence of the king or in the town in which he is residing.[1] 643 175

[1] This helps us to understand the organization of the 'King's Hangmen', the crucial fact of which was that the royal executioners killed their victims in places far away from the king's capital. Another effect of this observance, which is still visible, is the rule which forbids the performance of the *ndakó gboyá*, a cult believed to lead to the death of witches, in Patigi, the present 'king's town', or anywhere within a distance from which 'the shrieking of the spirit could be heard in Patigi'. (See *Man*, 1935, 173.) [696]

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND HISTORY[1]

173 The Nupe kingdom was, according to their own traditions, founded by the culture hero Tsoede or Edegi, born, according to the genealogies of the Nupe kings, early in the 15th century when the Nupe were grouped in various small chieftainships subject to the *Ata* of Igala at Idah, to whom an annual tribute of slaves, traditionally sisters' sons, had to be paid. The son of the *Ata* at this time went hunting in Nupe country, fell in love with a chief's daughter, lived with her for some time, and she became pregnant. On the death of his father the son returned to Idah to succeed but he left a chain and a ring with the woman to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede, who, when he was 30 years old, was sent to Idah by his mother's brother as part of the slave tribute. He enjoyed considerable favour and success at his father's court but was eventually forced to flee because of the jealousy of his half-brothers. He travelled upstream in a bronze canoe to his own country and after many adventures established himself as king of the Nupe.

Tsoede is held to have introduced the arts of iron and brass working and the practice of human sacrifices. He died at the reputed age of 120, on one of his military expeditions to the north in which direction the Nupe kingdom was then expanding. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and a sword, are still treasured by the people of Gbagede, who are not Nupe but Kamberi.[2]

175 The first Nupe king to become a Moslem is thought to have reigned about 1770. The Nupe kingdom reached the height of its power during the periods when the *Etsu* Ma'azuŋ was on the throne (1759–67 and 1778–95).

After the Fulani conquered the Hausa states of Northern Nigeria in the Jihad of 1805, the Nupe came under the domination of the dynasty of the Emir of Gwandu. About 1810 Mallam Dendo, a Fulani from Kebbi, who was to play an important part in its history, appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and charm seller. He gathered around him a following of cattle Fulani, Hausa and Fulani mercenaries, merchants and priests. Taking advantage of the dissensions which broke out after *Etsu* Ma'azuŋ's death, he established himself as a military leader. The Nupe kingdom was at this time split into two halves, with *Etsu* Jimada ruling at Gbara, the ancient capital, and *Etsu* Maija at the newly built capital of Raba on the Niger. Maija gained the support of Mallam Dendo and his followers and attacked *Etsu* Jimada, routing his forces and killing him. Eventually, however, fearing that Mallam Dendo might become a dangerous rival, he drove him from his territory across the Niger into the Yoruba country of Ilorin, and later made war against him and the ruling Fulani in Ilorin. Here Maija was defeated and driven back into the interior of Nupe country, leaving Raba open to Mallam Dendo who established himself there as ruler over the Nupe.

After his death in 1833 Dendo's second son Usman Zaki succeeded him and the old Nupe dynasty, exiled to Zugurma, abandoned all claim to the rulership. For some 10 years there were constant intrigues and quarrels among the sons of Mallam Dendo, and wars against other tribes. Usman Zaki renounced the throne in 1841 but reoccupied it in 1850. Bida then became the centre of the new kingdom in a period of comparative peace.

Between 1870 and 1890 the Niger Company established trading posts along the Niger. They, and later the Government of Nigeria, detached outlying portions of the kingdom. The Yagba and Bunu Yoruba, Gbari, Basa, and Kakanda became independent in 1900–05; the territories on the south and west banks of the Niger were taken away and given to the Emirs of Ilorin, Shonga, Lafiagi, and Pategi; the northern Nupe territories came under the Emir of Kontagora, and only Bida Division remained of the former Nupe kingdom. As a result of this fragmentation there are now groups of Nupe in areas under non-Nupe chiefs.

[1] For fuller accounts of Nupe history see Temple, 1919, pp. 534–8; Nadel, 1942, pp. 72–86; Hermon-Hodge, 1929, pp. 102–10.

[2] According to Nadel. But Mathews (MS, 1938) describes them as "pagan Nupe."

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134 Lemu, pure white sand is found, a much more fertile soil as far as I can judge, which makes the country in the eyes of the native 'more beautiful' —by which he really means 'more useful'. Lastly, the low broken hills of Nupe are ferruginous, and on their slopes iron ore is mined by the natives.

VEGETATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

137 The geographical position of Nupe country makes it a typical area of transition from the southern forest belt to the arid savannahs of the north. Narrow strips or patches of thick rain-forest-like vegetation accompany river valleys and watercourses; but then, inland, we find a country of thin forest, shrub, and 'orchard-bush', alternating with beautiful open park-land, such as round Bida and Agaie, where intensive cultivation has cleared bush and shrub. The plant-life, again, reflects the geographical position of Nupe midway between north and south. Nupe is one of the northernmost countries in which the oil-palm is found, and yam and the southern variety of maize are cultivated; it is, at the same time, the southernmost habitat of the date-palm, the shea-nut tree, and millet crops. The trees and plants which are important for Nupe production and diet are these, in the order of importance. In the drier inland areas we find the locust-bean tree (*Parkia filikoidea*), in Nupe *lonci*; the shea-nut tree (*Bassia Parkii*), *koci*; the indigo tree or vine (*Lonchocarpus cyanescens*), *eci*, and indigo grass (*Indigofera arrecta*), *tsentse*; baobab (*Andansonia digitata*), *kuci* or *kuka*; silk-cotton tree (*Malvaceae*), *lembubu*; date-palm, *dobina*; and finally the mango, *mangoro*, a European importation. On irrigated land and in the thick groves near watercourses grow the oil-palm and other, less important, varieties of palm-trees, kola-nut tree (*Sterculia acuminata*), *ebi*, and banana, *yaba*. Only the kola-nut tree, the mango, and partly the banana are cultivated, all other trees growing wild. Nupe cultivation comprises the following kinds of crops and edible plants and roots: three millet varieties, 241 bulrush-millet (*Pennisetum*), *mayi*, 'late millet' (*Spicatum*), *kpayi*, and guinea-corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), *eyi*; yam, *eci*; cassava, *rogo*; maize, *kábà*; ground-nuts, *guźya*; rice, *jenkafa*; sugar-cane, *kpāsanako*; and onions, *lubasa*, in the river marshes; further sweet potatoes, *duku*; beans and ground-beans, *ezo* and *edzu*; red pepper, *yaká*, and various kinds of greens which are eaten as vegetable. Of plants utilized commercially and in native industry cotton, *lulu*; henna, *lali*; hemp, *rama* or *egba*, 'rope'; and gourds, *ero*, are the most important.

241 In this enumeration of crops and plants of Nupe we have left the field of physical environment in the narrow sense. This rich and varied 177 system of cultivation reflects already a standard of civilization, technical achievement, and inventiveness of a people which has learned to master its environment. Some of the plants and crops mentioned have been adopted comparatively recently and introduced into Nupe from the north and south. As the Nupe names for hemp, henna, or cassava are borrowed from Hausa the plants themselves represent 'borrowed' cultural goods. The cultivation of onions was introduced into Nupe from

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Hausa, and partly from Bornu, in historical times.[1] Nor is the cultivation of yam an original cultural possession of the Nupe, which is proved by two facts: first, that the Nupe north and east of the Niger are unfamiliar with certain important ways of preparing yam common in all 'real' yam countries, e.g. the drying of yam; and second, that yam, though to-day an important staple food, has still no place in their sacrifices, ritual meals, and first-crop ceremonies: only corn and millet may be used for these ritual offerings.[2] Cassava, finally, has only been introduced in the last thirty years; thirty years ago, I was told by a missionary, it was almost unknown in Nupe. Thus communication and culture contact have helped to mould the physical environment of to-day. This manifold agricultural system, however, could not have been evolved if the natural conditions of the country had not been favourable. The meeting of south and north in the vegetation of Nupe, the coexistence of marsh-land and savannah country, the natural irrigation and the strips and patches of thick forest, all this was as essential to the development of the productive system of the country as was the inventiveness and stage of civilization of its people. We cannot attempt to decide which factor, environment or civilization, has had the larger share in this development. The rigid distinction between environment and culture has long been abandoned as misleading and futile. For our investigation it is irrelevant. We can well regard the environment as it appears at present, the natural resources as they are utilized by the people to-day, as a unitary complex of factors the effect of which, upon the life and well-being of the people, we have to examine.

CLIMATE

Nupe, lower lying than any of the neighbouring districts, with its two big rivers, their dry, blazing sand-banks in the dry season, and their vast swamps in the rains, is one of the hottest and at the same time most humid districts of Nigeria. The river valleys especially, and the hollow in which Bida is situated, are damp, airless, and unhealthy. The following figures give the average temperature, humidity, and rainfall in Bida for 1933:[3]

TABLE 1

	Jan.	*Feb.*	*Mar.*	*Apr.*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug.*	*Sept.*	*Oct.*	*Nov.*	*Dec.*	*Annual total*
Minimum temp.	60	70	72	72	71	71	68	68	68	70	70	67	..
Maximum temp.	93	98	102	103	98	88	92	90	85	91	96	96	..
Humidity (per cent.)	60	50	66	71	78	92	92	92	85	76	75	62	..
Rainfall (in inches)	2·99	..	..	1·99	3·06	12·33	15·41	13·82	11·87	2·29	0·32	..	66·08

[1] It is still practised to-day by the Bornu settlers of Kutigi.

[2] There is one exception: Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, where yam is sacrificed at certain annual rites. But the exception proves the rule, for Mokwa is the gate for cultural influences from Yoruba.

[3] This table was copied from the readings taken regularly in Bida Middle School.

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among the tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, and (a negative evidence mentioned already) the *ndakó gboyá*, which is regarded as 'typical' Nupe by Hausa and Yoruba, is unknown among Dibo and Ebe. There are also other rituals and cults which cannot be assigned (at least not to-day) to a certain sub-tribe, and finally rituals and cults which represent the cultural possession of single village communities. In brief, the possession of a common cult means only an external uniformity of culture. None of these rituals implies co-operation and actual contact in the group at large. They are still but the expression of parallel, 'like', behaviour and not of concrete co-activity and 'togetherness'.

This is equally true of the other cultural features on which the cultural identity of the sub-tribe rests. The consciousness of a cultural uniformity is supported by the actual existing uniformity. But there is still no organized centre of co-activity behind this uniformity or behind the transmission of the consciousness of this uniformity. We can only say this: the sub-tribe, much more than the tribe, constitutes a potentiality of such co-activity and intensive 'togetherness'. The links of a common language, of similar ~~economic pursuits, similar~~ interests, parallel religious ideas, may grow ~~easily into links of co-operation~~ and 'togetherness'. Only in two cases, however, has this potentiality become reality—among the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. In no other section are there contacts and forms of co-activity which make the sub-tribe 'one country', and its people 'one group'. How, then, does that cultural uniformity crystallize into the unified, conscious commonness of 'one country'?

I have described elsewhere the growth and organization of one of the two sub-tribes which have evolved such unified structure.[1] Let me repeat here the main facts. The growth of the Kyedye organization was the growth of a colonizing and conquering group. Expanding from one centre—Muregi, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna—the Kyedye established themselves in the course of time all along the river banks. They built their settlements on the land of the aboriginal sections, Bataci and riverain Gbedegi, and claimed rulership over them. Twin villages arose, half Kyedye and half Bataci or Gbedegi, from which the Kyedye administered the district, assuming judicial authority and levying taxes. This colonization is still going on, and their rulership, rigidly centralized, is still alive and undisputed.[2] Close contact, intermarriage, and regular new emigration link the settlements, old and new, capital and colonies. Delegates from Muregi, relatives of the Kyedye chief, reside in the settlements, and these administrative 'posts' are correlated with the ranks which the delegates hold in the Kyedye hierarchy; promotion in rank involves promotion to a more important as well as more lucrative post. This closely knit ruling group precludes all permanent links between the cultural groups which this political development has thrown

[1] See 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940, pp. 165–95.

[2] Only twenty or thirty years ago have the Kyedye established themselves on the river Kaduna, or on Jebba Island, a place which had only then become of economic importance.

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together. There is no intermarriage, and almost no cultural give-and-take; to-day the Kyedye are Mohammedans (or semi-Mohammedans), but the Bataci and Gbedegi have remained pagans. Yet in one significant field cultural unity has evolved, over and above the differences of culture, tribal origin, and social status, and over and above also the co-operation embodied in the political structure. With the political rulership the Kyedye have assumed spiritual authority as well; myths and sacred insignia confirm the position of the *Kuta*, the Kyedye chief, as the ruler over the whole riverain area and its people; and two most important sacrifices to the river Niger, which secure large catches and safety from floods, the *ketsá* and *ndáduma*, are linked with his person and office. Every new appointed *Kuta* will send one of his near relations to Jebba and Buka, the two places where these sacrifices are performed, with two white bulls to be sacrificed to the river spirits by the priests of these cults. By these sacrifices the chief secures 'greatness' for himself, and success and welfare for his subjects.

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The Beni organization presents an entirely different picture. Unlike the Kyedye system it exists no longer; it was broken and destroyed by the Fulani conquest. It took the form of a confederacy formed by the twelve 'towns' of the Beni: Bida, Tafiẽ, Esã, Doko, Towagi, Egbe, Gaba, Nupeko, Eda, Panjuru, Ewu, Yesã. The political bonds were twofold: the twelve towns recognized the supremacy of one town, and paid a small tribute to its chief, or 'town-king'; further, in case of war, the twelve towns were bound to fight together and to support each other, again under the leadership of one town.[1] Mythology, and the existence of certain common sacred insignia of the twelve town-kings of Beni, supply the spiritual background for the political unity. Moreover, the *gunnu* cult, this most important religious cult of Nupe, appears among the Beni in a special form, namely, as a cult which utilizes comprehensive co-operation between the priests of the whole country, thus underlining, in the religious sphere, the unification of the sub-tribal section.[2]

One might ask why it was that just these two sub-tribes evolved a comprehensive political and cultural unit. The origin of the Beni confederacy is hidden in the dim past of a Nupe of which we have no records. As regards the Kyedye we can, to some extent, answer the question. In the environment of the river valley, and in the pursuits of a riverain people, lies the germ of territorial and political expansion. Long fishing expeditions, an extensive river trade, on which the livelihood of this riverain group depends, demand extension of political influence as security for the very wide area of their economic activities. Trading-posts become political outposts, and fishing colonies become strongholds of territorial expansion. The spirit of adventure and enterprise, finally, which alone could have built up this efficient organization, is part of the life of this riverain people.

Of the enterprising spirit of Kyedye chiefs, born colonizers and

[1] This chief town of the Beni seems to have been Tafiẽ till the Fulani conquest; after that the headship passed to Bida, till it disappeared finally with the absorption of the Beni confederacy in Nupe Emirate (see p. 82).

[2] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, p. 98.

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pioneers, the history of the Royal Niger Company can give many instances. But let us read these examples correctly. They show, first, that political integration tends to widen its basis so as to embrace all spheres of cultural activity; political unification calls into being other forms of contact and co-activity, and thus cements its own unity with the help of a more comprehensive and more intimate 'togetherness'. But these examples show also that the creation of such co-activity and togetherness does not simply follow from the potentiality of cultural uniformity. In the case of the Beni confederacy cultural uniformity appears intensified into co-activity and togetherness; among the Kyedye the political fusion of different sub-tribes, different cultural areas, created the wider area of co-activity and common life. Obviously, the nature of this co-activity and common life is different in each case. The commonness that grows from uniform culture and the commonness that is superimposed upon a cultural diversity represent two different social realities. What we have said above of the links of cultural uniformity which 'grow easily into links of co-activity and togetherness' was not, therefore, quite correct. We have before us not a simple quasi-automatic process of 'growth', but two specific, alternative forms of social development.

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565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

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CHAPTER X

GOVERNMENT IN MODERN NUPE

OFTEN in the foregoing description I have used the present tense as if the Nupe kingdom of pre-British days still existed. True, this was to a large extent an historical chapter; yet it described a development the results of which are still valid and still mould society to-day as they moulded it thirty, fifty, or even a hundred years ago. I was not merely reconstructing dead events and past phases. The Nupe kingdom and its society still exist, not only very vividly in the memory of the people but to a very large extent in concrete reality. This is not denying the force of social changes, but stressing the tenacity of a social structure that survives although its contents have changed materially. The recent economic and political changes have affected fundamentally the 'contents' of the social life of the country, the main interests and incentives round which it revolved. There are no more wars, raids, and conquests; slaves and feudal fiefs exist no longer. But ranks and titles and state offices linked with ranks and titles, still exist. Slaves have turned into *bara* or Native Administration officials; fiefs into administrative districts in the charge of royal princes. That the framework of the political organisation could survive almost unchanged is in large measure due to the Administration of Nigeria under Indirect Rule and its tendency to utilize as far as possible the traditional social system. But a stronger proof of the tenacity of the Nupe social system is the fact that where the Administration had departed from it and tried to make way for a new development the old trend broke through, undeflected.

Two years ago the Administration built a new official residence for the *Etsu* Bida, with a brick wall, an imposing tower, a garage, and a flower garden—an emblem of modern Nigeria. Incidentally, for all its modernity the new house is but a replica of the hereditary palace of the Nupe kings, with special *katamba* for the *ena Ndeji* and *ena Maiyaki*, for *gitsiti* and *bara*, the *ena manzi*, the men of the *Etsu Dogari*, and the commoners who come to wait on the *Etsu*. Now, this new house was built on 'neutral' ground, outside the town gates, as a symbol of the Government's intention to break with the division into three royal houses, which the Government considered harmful to the unity of the country.[1] The Administration believed itself to have overcome successfully the opposition of the late *Etsu*. An old and sick man, he was reported to have said—and his words were all over Bida—that he had agreed to the new site only because he knew he would not have to live in the new house. Which was true enough—he died before the building was finished. But the new *Etsu*, who willingly took up his residence in the splendid new house, one day surprised the District Officer by demanding that his 'proper house' in Bida, in his 'own' part of the town, should be put in repair at the expense of the Native

[1] See p. 93.

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Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúši* and *sarakiši*, or more precisely by those *gitsúši* and *sarakiši* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiẽ*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiẽ*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaši*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934–6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiẽ* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may
621 return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as
425 we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have
621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to
[431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the
[431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who
609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now
621 the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted
425 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first
651 *dzankó*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who
[177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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233 178 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evidently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *hetsd* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

233 471 177 The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappearance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readiness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

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343 diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-
251 like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid. [358] At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

251 Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These
251 ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of
354 millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

The seed plants are as a rule at once divided up from the crop. The
251 seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

[1] This is actually the almost universal method of grain storage in Northern Nigeria. An indirect testimony to its efficacy I chanced to obtain from Hausa settlers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whom I had occasion to visit in 1939. Chiefly for lack of proper building material for the construction of the Nigerian type of clay granary, these settlers have adopted the Sudan method of storage, i.e. storage of threshed grain. They all agreed that this method was inferior to the Nigerian, and preserved the grain much less satisfactorily.

[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the [177] Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.

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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa.

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men.

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*nuuci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
185 who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing
177 trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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to check the attempts to extend kola plantation in Nupe. Whether or not it will check other attempts at agricultural innovations one cannot say.[1]

Often in discussions of this kind the reluctance of a native group to adopt a certain innovation is summarily dismissed as being due to the inveterate, almost proverbial, 'conservatism' of the native races. Clearly, such an explanation does not meet the case. As regards the Nupe we should have to contrast their alleged 'conservatism' with respect to trees with the readiness with which they adopt new crops and agricultural techniques. Evidently, to adopt a new crop which shows results in a year's time, and which is easy to tend, often easier than the traditional crops (as in the case of maize or cassava), and to take up the difficult work of planting trees which may not bear fruit for six or seven years, is an entirely different thing. One can be easily fitted into the framework of established agricultural activities while the other involves a complete readjustment of the productive system. The Nupe are, within limits, extremely progressive people, and keen on trying out new things. These limits are determined by two factors: first, by the time that an ordinarily crowded working year could allow for additional tasks; other work, or precious leisure time might have to be given up for the sake of the innovation—a change that may or may not appear worth while to the Nupe farmer. The second factor is the measure of change which a readjustment of the native production would entail in this closely knit economic system, with its exact balance of specialization and exchange. Every radical change in the production, such as the adoption of tree-cultivation in a district, may upset this balance; it may, in other words, make the innovation less profitable. The fact that the Nupe farmer is go-ahead with respect to certain farm techniques and 'conservative' with respect to others is not due to any tribal or racial 'conservatism', but reveals itself as a clear instance of the working of free economic choice.

TECHNIQUE AND KNOWLEDGE

So advanced a technique and so conspicuous a standard of husbandry must involve a body of theoretical knowledge which goes far beyond the counsels of peasant lore, and could avouch statements of very nearly scientific authority. This is no doubt the case in Nupe farming. The understanding of the basic principle of manuring, the fixed rules with regard to rotation and lying fallow, the practice of thinning-out the growing plants, which is correctly explained as being intended to give the plant more space, they all confirm this.[2] Moreover, while in many African

[1] Rev. Ira W. Sherk, the head of the U.S. Mission at Mokwa, has been successful in making the people of a small neighbouring village adopt the cultivation of grapefruit. This innovation, carried out on a very small scale, and involving hardly any difficult readjustment of the native productive organization, bears out what is said later in the text about the limits that are set to all such innovations.

[2] I must record that one of my Bida informants, an experienced farmer, denied the value of ashes and the burning of fields as manure. He held that animal manure (with the regular use of which he as a Bida farmer was well acquainted) was the only effective manure. This critical attitude only emphasizes the element of empirical knowledge in Nupe farming technique.

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241/463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185/651/322 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a [672] barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving [323] will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already 325 an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted ● 171] down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or 326

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing machines, and such-like. They also practise a crude technique of *cire* [illegible] casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgiši*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s.* for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d.* apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d.*; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d.* Silver bangles are sold for 12*s.* a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s.*, and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d.* to 1*s.* Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s.*; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the profit per

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specifically social and cultural aspect. Efficiency in this sense means continuity of the craft and of craft knowledge; it means the ability to raise, through the medium of an hereditary, imperceptibly changing labour group, successive generations of craftsmen. If in these respects production is planned for an unchanging future, the agency of the third factor must expose it to the disruptive effects of time and change. For it may appear as if modern economic changes directed their most destructive attacks against this third condition of closeness and co-operation, which is dependence upon regular demand. This influence is especially visible in the gradual disappearance of orders from the main customer of the country, king and court. The Great *Sallah*, once the occasion for numerous orders from the court, which kept the workshops of Bida busy for weeks, is now an occasion for making purchases at the stores that trade in European goods. At the *Sallah* of 1935, the first *Sallah* of the newly installed *Etsu*, the traditional royal gifts of kola-nuts were sent out, not in ornamental brass bowls of native make, but in newly bought enamelled teapots; the king's bodyguard, newly equipped, wore, not Bida gowns and turbans or native-made straw hats, but red blankets and Trilby hats; and many notables who would have appeared formerly on horses with costly trappings and gorgeous saddle-cloths, rode in on new, shining bicycles. Conspicuous though the competition of European goods appears, it is not the only reason for the decline of Nupe craft-guilds. The very organization of guild-organized crafts has contributed to lowering their resistance to outside pressure. The inertia inherent in the rigid group-organization with its traditional standards of production prevents the craft-guild from readjusting itself to new demands with the same ease as the individual craftsman, who is free to change his mode of production and to gain success by new methods. The decision of the younger men among the weavers to abandon the traditional production and to turn to the more profitable production of cap-making, the success of the most 'individualistic' of all crafts, brass-work, are instances of this.

But readjustment involves in reality two different and independent processes: adjustment to modern conditions may mean both adjustment in price and cost of production, and adjustment with regard to the kind of goods produced. A close examination of this question is of special interest as attempts to preserve and help native arts and crafts are to-day officially sponsored by the educational departments in many African colonies. In these attempts the second type of adjustment is frequently taken into account exclusively, the first being either ignored or artificially eliminated by turning native crafts into tourist and 'curio' industries which can command prices quite out of proportion to the native economic system. That the Nupe crafts themselves have adjusted prices to demands is clearly shown in the general fall in prices which has taken place during the last five or ten years.[1] Thus mats of the best quality were sold, nine to ten years ago, for 3*s.*; in 1934 for 9*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936,

[1] In the two years I spent in Nupe country—two years which saw a partial economic recovery—I witnessed a corresponding slight rise in prices of native craft products.

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *koni* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s*. to 15*s*., the material costing 5*s*.; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d*. and 3*d*. This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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CHAPTER XVII
INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

464 177 THE influences of modern culture contact which we have seen at work in almost every field of Nupe production gain their fullest expression in this most recent native occupation. The employer is the Bida Native Administration; the employees are recruited from certain specific sections of the Nupe people, and the nature of this selection is deeply significant of the structure of the society.

We must distinguish two different categories of paid industrial labour: skilled permanent, and unskilled temporary, labour.[1] Skilled labour is employed in the workshops of the Native Administration Public Works Department, and comprises blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers, i.e. occupations which (with the exception of the bricklayers) are closely associated with the traditional native crafts of the country. Temporary unskilled labour is employed partly in addition to permanent labour in the N.A. Workshops, but mostly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labourers such as construction work of various kinds. The term 'temporary' must be understood in a very loose sense; men who have been working as 'temporary' labourers, off and on, for ten or fifteen years figure prominently on my lists. Some [167] move from place to place, wherever there is a chance of finding employment. As there are large numbers of alien, non-Nupe, labourers among those engaged in temporary work in Nupe country, so we also find Nupe workmen in other districts and provinces of Nigeria. A few of these labourers have never even had another, more or less permanent, profession, but have adopted their present occupation in earliest youth. None of them, however, are skilled and specially trained labourers. By far the largest proportion of temporary labourers go home and return to whatever their original profession was when their temporary employment comes to an end. In the sense, then, that their work as labourers constitutes an alternative to some other original occupation, they can all be classed under the heading of 'temporary labourers'.

464 The data on which are based the statistical tables which follow were compiled in and near Bida in 1936. It was a fortunate coincidence that at the time a large building programme was being carried out—the construction of new office buildings in Bida, and the rebuilding of a big bridge on the Badeggi road—in which a large body of labourers was employed. My census of temporary labour was taken among the workmen who were employed in this work. I have placed bricklayers in the same category with temporary labourers, although, technically, they represent a group of skilled, permanent, workmen; but the technique of

[1] To be quite precise we should distinguish four different classes of labour: permanent and non-permanent, and skilled and unskilled. As, however, all skilled labour is permanent, and all non-permanent labour unskilled, and as unskilled permanent labour represents only a small minority (8 individuals) it is simpler to deal with the two sub-divisions as one.

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442 It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials 452 from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run [444] lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was dûe). He paid an extremely low price—in certain cases only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

439 The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and, 177 generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

435 4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7s. 6*d*.; one bottle is sold for 6*d*., giving a profit of 8s. The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

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561 554 themselves similarly heterogeneous and arbitrary, including Bida titles among its traditional village ranks.

561 554 576 The system of precedence involved in *ena* ranks and grades is taken very seriously, and the rigid rules of etiquette which govern it are enacted with all solemnity. Much of the *ena* business takes place, as we shall see, within the single *ena*; but when members of different grades meet—for example, at family feasts in the house of a member, or at collective farm-work—submissive or condescending behaviour marks their relation towards each other. Members of a junior grade will never dance when members of senior grades are present, except with their special permission and at their request; in collective farm-work the junior grades work at the back of the team, at less important and less conspicuous tasks. Age-grade etiquette is even more emphatic within the individual association. At communal meals the 'subalterns' will wait till their superiors have eaten; at *ena* feasts subaltern and senior ranks will never dance at the same time; when greeting a superior, the age-grade member of lower rank will squat down and bend his head, exactly as prescribed for intercourse between superiors and inferiors in the social scale of 'real life'.

561 554 369 In the village *ena* it is only in general terms that the ranks indicate social position on the rank-scale of the association. In the town *ena* the ranks are sometimes chosen so as to indicate and do justice to the special gifts, or the special social position outside the *ena*, which characterize individual members. In this the organization of the town *ena* reflects the more highly differentiated social structure of urban society. Thus a Bida *ena*, composed largely of illiterate members, assigned to a young man who had been educated in the Government Middle School the title *Naibi*, a rank of the Mohammedan clergy which can be held only by scholars. The rank-list of another *ena* included the rank *Boroti*, lit. Head of the Bororó, its holder being the son of the late Emir's 'regent-delegate' for the Bororó Fulani. Some Bida age-grade ranks indicate a certain official capacity held by a member in the *ena*. Thus I found a rank *Dzufā* (lit. pocket) bestowed on a young man who acted as 'purser' of the group. All purchases and payments for *ena* purposes were made through him; when, for example, a member decided to give a party for the group he would place his money contribution in the hands of the *Etsu*, who would then hand it over to the 'purser' as the member responsible for financial arrangements. In one *ena* I found the rather curious rank *Matausbe* (Hausa, lit. 'the man who rubs', i.e. 'masseur'), by which name a certain slave or body-servant of the Nupe king was known whose special duty it was to massage the feet of his master. In like manner it was the duty of this 'office holder' in the age-grade association to massage the feet of his *Etsu* at meetings of the group when his master felt tired.

561 554 177 One group of ranks typical of the Bida *ena* deserves special attention, namely the ranks which are organized on 'European lines' and copy, not ranks and offices of Nupe society, but ranks, offices, and even names of Europeans with whom the Nupe had come into contact. Such titles are often amusing and even puzzling. In one *ena* the head of the group was

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), *Likita* (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank *Borti* (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted, forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tdlaka* and *saraki* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real', that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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II

DIVINATION

787 We shall deal with two methods of divination, both of which are known throughout the country and applied on all occasions, trivial as well as serious. The first, called *eba*, consists in throwing strings of shells and resembles in technique the *ifa* divination of Yoruba; the second, *hati*, is of Mohammedan origin and involves drawing mystic patterns in the sand.[1] The two methods appeal to a somewhat different public, the former being practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts, the latter in the sophisticated capital, Bida. The division, however, is far from rigid; also, as we shall see, the two methods share certain essential features in spite of the difference in technique and religious background.

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Two other types of divination, which are used infrequently and mainly on minor matters, and which are known only in the river area, may be disregarded. One, called *evo* ('cowrie shells'), is a simplified version of the method of *eba*. The other, called *kpápagi* ('tortoise'), employs the dried, hollowed-out body of a tortoise, which is made to slide down a taut string. This is a crude oracle, permitting only three answers—'yes' (if the tortoise glides down quickly), 'no' (if it does not glide down at all), and 'doubtful' (if it glides dow[illegible]wly).

1. THE MECHANICS OF EBA

787 The method of *eba* is far from uniform. Although the divining
791 apparatus itself and the principles of interpretation are the same everywhere, the 'key' used by the diviner, his invocations, and his minor paraphernalia may differ from locality to locality, even from one person to the other. This scope for variety does not extend to the attitude assumed in the act of divining. The eight men I observed all went through their act in a serious and tense mood, their gestures and utterances from time to time rising to an excitement which lent to the proceedings a thoroughly dramatic atmo-

[1] The Nupe term *hati* appears to be a corruption of the Arabic *hatim*, 'seal', 'magic square'; cf. the corresponding Hausa term *hatimi*.

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whereupon he announced: 'The grandfather who begot your father—his name is that of the child.' The diviner would not explain his reasoning more precisely beyond saying that pattern 4 in 'house' 1, meaning 'many deaths', must relate to a *kuci* five 'deaths', i.e. generations, removed, while pattern 2 in 'house' 6 indicated the male sex of the *kuci*. Since the Nupe usually regard a great-grandfather as the most remote ancestor likely to be reincarnated, the diviner's reference to an additional generation would seem to be a plausible interpretation of a throw meaning 'many deaths'.

4. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The names of the 'houses' and the meanings attached to the various throws, even in the simple key series, clearly illustrate the close connection between divination and social life. Among the names and meanings we find represented, not only the universal problems of men and communities (death, birth, rain, illness) or particular religious notions (*Sokó*, *kuti*, performance of sacrifices), but also the mundane interests typical of Nupe society. Events on the high roads and travel and trade; the ever-present social issue of 'greatness', that is, of success in the struggle for rank and status; and the equally ubiquitous interest in matters politic, chieftainship, councils of elders, the actions of the ruling class—all these have their place in the scheme of divining and partly even in its basic vocabulary. Similarly, each relevant social grouping is explicitly referred to: the 'house', that is, the large extended family under a family head (*emi*); the 'town' or village (*eži*); the 'whole country', that is, the kingdom of Nupe; and the class of the 'great men' and nobility. As we have seen, the diverse social settings of the capital and of the villages are reflected in certain variants in the rules of divination. These affect the individual case as well; for a diviner would interpret the prophecies referring to 'gifts' or 'greatness' differently when dealing with a *talaka* (a commoner or peasant) than when dealing with a member of the aristocracy. In the former case 'gifts' mean bowls of food and 'greatness' the favours of a nobleman; in the latter case the gifts turn into more valuable presents, and 'greatness' bears on promotion in rank and title. We have seen, too, that the rules of divination are far from static, having been successfully adapted even to recent conditions and to political problems only some forty years old. We can even point to a typical, transitional phase in this process; for the choice mentioned before, of interpreting the same throw as meaning either 'rain' or 'friendly relations with the White Man', means nothing else.

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a new priest is born, the village must temporarily cease to perform the ritual altogether and join instead in the celebrations of a neighbouring, more fortunate, locality. 793

The *gunnu* priest is also in other ways elevated above common mortals. In everyday life there is little to distinguish the *Žigí* or *Ndazo* from the average Nupe peasant. The only visible distinction lies in their manner of dress; for the two priests may only wear a loincloth and a piece of cloth slung across the shoulder, never the more elaborate flowing gown and trousers of Nupe, and must always walk bareheaded. Both the simple dress and the uncovered head are also obligatory for anyone attending the rituals in question (and indeed most rituals), so that the priests are as it were always 'on duty' and constantly display their association with things sacred. In the case of the *Ndazo*, his very life is sacred: he is inviolable, and no one may lay hands on him, even if he committed some serious offence. Also, when the *Ndazo* dies, the usual funerary rites are replaced by a performance of the *gunnu*. Concerning the priestly dress, the usual explanation is that the *Žigí* and *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round the waist' (as they would if they wore trousers); but the people do not speculate further, and the *Ndazo's* birth-mark is taken to mean simply something that is rare and lucky, and attaches to the most vital part of the body, the head. Characteristically, another lucky birth-mark, once more on the head, is linguistically associated with the *gunnu*: children born in a caul are called *Ndagunnu*, 'Father *gunnu*'. [845]

Of the three fixed rituals of Doko the *gunnu* is undoubtedly the most important, representing the peak of ceremonial life and being thought of as harbouring the strongest force of *kuti*. Equally, it is the only ritual bearing so conspicuously the stamp of the miraculous. Somewhat surprisingly, the greater importance of the *gunnu* has not helped to protect it from the impact of cultural change. On the contrary, the *gunnu* is usually the first ritual to disappear or at least to lose its character of a 'fixed' ritual, surviving only as an occasional, 'movable' ceremony. Now several of the villages which abandoned the *gunnu* altogether did so when their 'born' *Ndazo* died or the family of hereditary priests became extinct. Whatever other influences may have tended to weaken the hold of the *gunnu* ritual, the difficulty of finding a successor to this unique priestship must have hastened the process; so that the link with the miraculous, as it helped to raise the cult above all others, also made it more vulnerable. 796x [177]

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

These are quickly described; for they are simple and business-like, devoid both of elaborate proceedings and complicated

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miscuously—no one cares. Which final aspect of the *gunnu* is once more emphasized in all statements.

The ceremonial is thus full of allusions to procreation and fertility. But we noticed also the emphasis on male adolescence, more precisely, on the role of the age grades, on the respect relationship between youth and old age, and on the teaching or initiation of the novices. In the ritual I described this last aspect was only lightly touched upon. But in a fuller version of the *gunnu*, which disappeared in Doko some ten or twenty years ago, the emphasis on initiation was much stronger. The short prelude in the bush was then expanded to a full night; and the youths were made to dress up in elaborate fashion and to paint their bodies red and white, so that everybody should see that they were '*gunnu* men'. All through the night the novices were kept in a state of nervous excitement and fear by tales of the spirits that haunt the bush; often the dreaded apparition of the *ndakó gboyá* would materialize to punish any youth who had, in the preceding year, offended against this or that rule of custom, and especially against the rules of filial respect. We shall hear more of the *ndakó gboyá* later on; let me say here that its part is acted by a member of the secret society of that name, and that it is also referred to as the 'policeman of the *gunnu*', which epithet aptly summarizes its functions.

Today this episode has fallen in abeyance in Doko as elsewhere. The reasons are not the same in all places. In Kutigi, a relatively recent and pseudo-Moslem ceremonial has absorbed the initiation aspect of the *gunnu*, so that the more elaborate version of the ritual came to lose its particular appeal.[1] In Mokwa, the vigil in the bush fell in disfavour with the young men, who refused to suffer any longer the threats and punishments that go with that episode; the remonstrations of parents and elders were met by the argument that even young men were nowadays earning money and paying taxes, and had hence become the equals of their seniors. In Beni country, the attractions of Bida town were seducing more and more adolescents away from the 'crude' village celebrations, so that eventually the greatly reduced attendance made the whole initiation rite seem futile. About that time, too, the Government suppressed the *ndakó gboyá* secret society, the drama in the bush thus losing its main actors. These varied causes reflect the multifarious changes assailing traditional Nupe life, in the political and economic sphere, in family relations, and in recreation as well as in religious belief. That the changes were so effective in truncating the *gunnu* (while falling more lightly or tardily upon other ceremonials) is not due only to the force behind the new influences; rather is it in large measure due to a factor touched upon before,

[1] See my article *The Gani ritual of Nupe*, Africa, 1949, vol. XIX, p. 183.

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the greater vulnerability of the *gunnu* ceremonial. For the very ambitiouness of its scope exposes it, on too many sides at once, to the impact of change.

3. THE RIVER

(i) *Ritual Calendar: Priestship*

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In Jebba Island I recorded the fullest repertoire of rituals anywhere in Nupe country, including three movable and five 'fixed' rituals, one of the latter being also performed 'without a month', whenever the need arises. Not all, however, are still in use, so that the ritual calendar of the island now approximates more closely to that of other communities. Though the people quote specific rational reasons for the discontinuation of the respective rituals, I suspect that the 'repertoire' itself proved too large and simply became unworkable under modern conditions. Jebba Island owes its rich list of ceremonials essentially to two facts; first, to its double livelihood, derived from the land as well as from the river, and reflected in the religious institutions; and secondly, to the possession of the sacred emblems of Tsoede, which are scattered mainly along the old highway of the Kingdom—the river valley.

Today, the Jebba people perform two movable and two fixed rituals, one which serves both purposes and one which, formerly fixed, has now become 'movable'. The movable rituals proper are the *ketsá*, previously mentioned, and the *ídzana*, a sacrifice to the sacred 'Chain of Tsoede'. The fixed ceremonials comprise the rituals *mamma* and *dzokó*, both performed in the 9th month (November–December). The *gunnu*, traditionally performed in the same month, is nowadays celebrated as a movable rite, though in a different sense it still retains its compulsory character. The ritual *ndáduma*, finally, is performed both as a fixed rite, again in the 9th month, and as a movable ritual. Another movable ritual, the *kikinta*, concerned mainly with success in hunting and fishing but also with childbirth and health, is now hardly practised; and a fixed ritual, *sokokó*, was discontinued some twenty years ago. To some extent the observance of the ritual *mamma* has also been affected by the changed conditions; for most of the grass masks worn in the ceremonial were destroyed in a fire some years ago and have not been replaced; the people now husband their two remaining masks and perform the ritual only in years when there is a special reason. Even so, the ceremonial cannot be moved to another date, and has for this reason been included among the 'fixed' rituals.

The different rituals are again in the charge of different officiants.

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*796 766 the *ndakó gboyá*. As mentioned before, the practice was abandoned apparently in the early twenties. But it was since revived once, in 1931, at the death of the village chief, when even the *ndakó gboyá* society played its part (in spite of the official ban).

4. RITUAL AND CULTURE CHANGE

*796 This seems an opportune place to consider the impact of changed conditions upon Nupe ritual, at least in its negative, disruptive ●177 aspects. The changes undergone by the Jebba rituals do not of course stand alone; in the last generation or two numerous pagan rituals all over Nupe country have been disappearing or have suffered more or less radical modifications. But the conditions in Jebba are in some respects unique and hence capable of illuminating factors and processes obscured elsewhere.

Let me, to begin with, say a few words about one of the abandoned Jebba rituals, the *sokokó*, whose name suggests a ceremonial of uncommon importance. It belonged to the cycle of rites performed in the 9th month; it was concerned with fertility, health, and prosperity in general and centred upon a sacrifice performed on the top of a hill overlooking the river valley. It is said to have been discontinued in 1914, when the residence of the Governor was built on the site of the sacrifice.

Now, similar reasons, similarly fortuitous, are also quoted in connection with certain other changes of ritual practice. In each case, my informants maintained, the disappearance of the *bà ḿko*, the 'black' or 'secret place', led to the disappearance of the respective ceremonial or at least to some radical change in the observance. It is true that the place formerly chosen for the esoteric part of the *dzakó*, which used to lie on an uninhabited bank of the river, is today occupied by a riverside camp of Hausa fishermen; the old *gunnu* grove and the place in the bush where the *manma* masks used to dress in secrecy have similarly lost their former seclusion, being now close to crowded thoroughfares. Yet it is equally true that suitable adjustments could be made: the *dzakó* is still regularly performed, with a programme only slightly changed; the *manma*, though performed irregularly, has suffered this change for different reasons, and the masked dancers can still dress in secrecy, now in the privacy of an elder's house. Only the observance of the *gunnu* has been altered in a more far-reaching [778] manner. These facts bear out a point made previously, that sacred places and the like are of relatively little importance in Nupe religion. If, then, a ritual is abandoned altogether or radically modified, this must be due to factors other than the loss of the customary locality and seclusion, inconvenient though the loss might be.

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One such change, affecting the *gunnu*, has already been discussed. The changes that occurred in Jebba, however, show a new and interesting aspect in that they reduced an unusually rich repertoire of rites to dimensions both more moderate and more common. This levelling-down of the ritual schedule would seem to imply two things. First, it suggests that Jebba, which had clearly for a great length of time carried on happily with its numerous rituals, reduced their number in a crisis which did not as seriously affect other communities, whose ritual programme was less ambitious; secondly, we may assume that this levelling-down amounted to a reduction to essentials.

(1) The first assumption repeats, on a more general plane, what we previously said about the *gunnu* and its 'vulnerability' under changed conditions; if this seemed to attach to the ambitious scope of a single cult, the ambitiousness of a whole repertoire of ceremonials now proves to have the same effect. As regards the 'crisis' which precipitated the disruption, I already suggested its nature: the over-rich repertoire proved unworkable under modern conditions. More precisely, its demands upon time, interest, and resources must in many ways have clashed with the increase in trade and production, with the more severe economic competition as well as the new forms of economic stress, and with the many new interests, aesthetic, recreational, and political, which emerged in recent years. These influences, too, have been felt throughout Nupe country. Comparing Jebba and Doko in particular, it may be said that both have been exposed to much the same impact, as they were similarly fortified against it. In Doko, the impact of change came from the proximity of Bida, the centre of trade and political activity, of a new religion, and of a new metropolitan culture. In Jebba the river and the railway, with their large cosmopolitan traffic, exercised a comparable influence. The Doko people are sustained in their traditional way of life by the knowledge that they are neither alone nor isolated, but belong to a large, closely knit group, the Beni sub-tribe, sharing the same institutions, intermarrying, and looking back upon a common history. In Jebba, the links with the riverain communities and the tangible evidence of the past, embodied in the Tsoede emblems, help to buttress the traditional values. If these weakened in the religious field, they did so, not because of the greater weight of changed circumstances in that community, but because of the greater 'vulnerability' of its religious institutions.

(2) The last remarks also suggest the sense in which the changes in the repertoire of rituals can be called a levelling-down to 'essentials'. As we have seen, the association of Jebba with the river and the figure of Tsoede is behind a large proportion of the

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Jebba rituals; and these remained unaffected by the general reduction in number. Jebba, then, abandoned (or abandoned first) the rituals of more general appeal and more common occurrence, and preserved those bearing on its peculiar geographical and historical position. The 'national' rites as it were gave way before those of local importance. Equally, the rituals which gave way—*gunnu*, *sokokó*, *žikinta*—had in essence been concerned with benefits of a very general order, with fertility, health, livelihood and prosperity at large; while those which were preserved voice much more specific aims, bearing on the river floods, on ordeals, smallpox, and the expulsion of 'evil things'. Let us note that, when the former were abandoned, relatively little was lost, since the same aims were common to most other rituals; while the second group of ceremonials, which were not so duplicated, could not be discontinued without a serious loss of this kind. It fits into this picture that the Jebba *gunnu* was preserved in its more specific form, as a funerary rite for titled elders, and not as an annual ceremonial meant to renew fertility and well-being.

This process of change clearly presupposes that 'overlap' in the efficacy of religious observances which we noted so frequently. It is now thrown into relief from a new angle. The 'overlap', as we see, is not irreducible: it may give way, in a crisis, before the assessment of essentials.

A last question remains: do fixed and movable rituals resist change to a different degree? The fact that a movable Jebba rite, the *žikinta*, disappeared together with other, fixed, ceremonials would suggest a negative answer. Yet we also know that certain originally fixed rituals only survived in movable form, or at least in a form no longer rigidly bound up with annual performances, such as the *mamma* in Jebba and the *gunnu* there and elsewhere. By means of this conversion the loss of the religious rite was minimized; though it disappeared as a regularly repetitive institution it remained available as a possibility, to be utilized 'when the need arises'; which compromise seems adequately explained by the lesser demands upon time, energy, and resources of the movable ceremonials, especially when the conversion goes together with performance on a lesser scale and in 'businesslike' manner. But another factor is probably also at work. For we can understand that people who have abandoned or neglected many of their traditional religious institutions will revert to them in sudden emergencies or times of stress, that is, in precisely the conditions for which the movable rituals are designed. The sudden, single revival of the Jebba *gunnu* after a pause of many years seems a case in point; and similar evidence also comes from other Nupe communities.

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*754 577 of medicines almost as unequivocally evil. The same men, let us note, will also administer helpful, beneficial, 'good' medicine. On the whole, the latter are more numerous, and are considered more important when it comes to discussions or arguments. As for the others, the experts would claim that they take due precautions, giving the medicine away only to 'good people' and 'for the sake of God', not for ordinary gain. But these personal qualms do not explain away the confusion of moral standards and do not answer the question why practices contemptible by common agreement should yet be accepted and actively pursued. The answer seems to lie in the amoral character of the Nupe universe. There it is, composed of good things and bad, the handiwork of a deity which unconcernedly sets good beside evil. Man, it would seem, has no call to improve upon creation. The qualms of the *cigbeciži* are a concession to social conscience not to religious scruples; in the last resort they are concerned only with appearances—that their craft should not look like witchcraft. As regards the evil potentialities of 'medicine', they are accepted with the same optimistic cynicism with which the Nupe view the very world in which they live.

6. MODERN INFLUENCES

●177 755 Islam has on the whole brought little change. It bans the hereditary medicines, since they approximate to the pagan worship of *kuci* and *kuti*, and may well have caused some of them to disappear. But the craft of the barber-doctors enjoys the respectability of a truly Mohammedan profession; while the medicines of individuals and the craft of the *cigbeciži* flourish among Mohammedans no less than among the pagans. Indeed many of these experts would regard themselves as good Moslems. Even the Master of the *cigbeciži* dresses like a Moslem, goes to the mosque, observes the fast and other rules of Islam, and boasts of his descent from men who served the Mohammedan Emirs of Nupe.

Nor do specifically Moslem practices compete seriously with the traditional craft. A great many mallams administer cures and sell charms or amulets, both prepared in strict accordance with the Moslem creed as they understand it. The cures all take the same form: the attributes of Allah or certain verses of the Qoran are written in ink on a wooden slate which is then washed clean, the inky water being drunk by the patient. The amulets, called *laya* (a Hausa word), consist of pieces of paper similarly covered with sacred writing, which are sewn into small leather cases and worn on the body. But Nupe religious conscience is accommodating: pagans wear the Mohammedan charms as often as Mohammedans

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consult a pagan (or semi-pagan) *cigbeci*. That the powers of *cigbe* are greater as well as more varied few will doubt; nor do the mallams themselves deny that many of the cures and other effects of *cigbe* are beyond their ken. It was, for example, a Moslem scholar of high repute who put me in touch with the *cigbeciži*, being himself a firm believer in the excellence of their art.

Modern medicine, as practised in hospitals and dispensaries, is a more serious rival. Nupe men and women who for the first time face this novel version of *cigbe* may be suspicious or openly afraid; often they will discontinue the visits to the doctor or dispenser, or leave unused the drugs they are given. A steadily increasing number, however, now have fair confidence in doctors and drugs and would be prepared to admit that our cures are on the whole better than theirs. This is true especially of minor surgical treatments and of injections of all kinds, that is, of treatments utterly unlike the indigenous practices and often 'miraculous' in their effect. This may seem a lukewarm statement; but I do not think that it can be put more positively or optimistically, at least as regards the average Nupe. Administration officials, teachers, and others who have been in close contact with Europeans are exceptions (though only to some extent).[1] Certainly, the Nupe are turning to European medicine much more slowly and waveringly than other African groups I know.

Now these other groups are also more primitive than the Nupe or without a similar, highly organized and would-be rational therapeutic skill. The diverse reaction is thus no accident. Fear and suspicion there would be in either case. But in the more primitive groups organized medicine, as a purely profane skill or knowledge, is entirely novel and unprecedented; it may have to fight religious prejudice, but not its own kind: while in Nupe precisely this is true. Other Africans might feel that European medicine clashes with their religious notions, or identify it with evil magic or witchcraft. The more sophisticated Nupe merely mistrusts the knife which, as everyone knows, 'cannot heal', or cynically suspects the doctors of poisoning patients who fail to recover. At best, he regards the European remedy as one of several possibilities, which he is wont to try out one after the other. And here the odds are not all in favour of the former.

[1] To wit, the following extract from an English composition on *The Hospital*, written in 1936 by a Nupe secondary school boy and corrected by his teacher. 'The disadvantage (of hospitals) is that when a man is taken there to be cured and if the nurses see that they cannot cure him, or perhaps he is given any kind of drugs and he still is exactly opposite as he was brought in, they give him a kind of medicine which makes he will die away.' The teacher found that only the last sentence needed correction, thus—'they give him a poison and he will die'.

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177 755 757 Many cases are already hopeless when they reach the doctors and hospitals, with the result that their remedies will appear to be no better than those of barbers or *cigbeciḿi*; above all, the European doctor does not profess to cure impotence or sterility, or to procure sterility; so that the most widely sought treatments are also an admitted gap in this new knowledge of 'medicine'.

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VII

STRANGE GODS

In this chapter I propose to discuss the adoption, by the Nupe, of originally alien beliefs and practices. We shall not be concerned with the pure mechanics of 'borrowing' or 'diffusion'; at least, we shall be concerned only with the motives behind these processes. For we cannot but assume that the adoption of novel or alien elements into any religious system, far from being haphazard, does follow from intelligible motives, which must in turn relevantly bear on the character of the religion and, ultimately, of the whole culture of which it is a part. So that the information so gained will either confirm our interpretation of that character or correct it, bringing to light hitherto unperceived aspects.

This may only be a heuristic assumption to begin with; and other, more specific ones, could at once be added—that the novel features must bear some affinity to the traditional pattern; or that they serve to redress some pre-existing inadequacy; or that they offer a chance of expression to some new trend, say, a changed outlook of the people, which the traditional beliefs and practices failed to satisfy. It must be admitted that in the anthropological field the prerequisite evidence is not easy to procure and that even the first step, the mere discovery of the alien elements, may be difficult or uncertain. Fairly recent additions are usually readily traced; but in the absence of historical records originally alien features long since absorbed may remain unidentifiable. Which proviso holds fully in the case of Nupe religion. Furthermore, the inferences we might draw from our study of 'adoptions' must be corroborated by the appropriate negative evidence, that is, by instances of 'rejection'. But though here we are likely to meet with further technical difficulties, mainly because there might be no record of the rejected chances, the situation in Nupe does afford relevant evidence of this kind. It lies in the religious observances practised by close neighbours of the Nupe or by immigrant groups in their midst, with which the Nupe people are fully familiar, yet which they did not choose to adopt or imitate. Finally, the adoption of alien features, or indeed of a whole alien creed, may conceivably have taken place under pressure; in which

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case none of our assumptions would apply, or would apply without considerable qualifications. Again, the situation is simplified in Nupe; for only in the case of Islam was the adoption of the alien creed backed by social and political pressure; all other adoptions (or rejections) were spontaneous and voluntary. Let us make this aspect our starting point and begin with a brief outline of the chances of this nature that were offering to the Nupe.

I. ADOPTIONS AND REJECTIONS

The southern neighbours of the Nupe, the Yoruba, possess a religious system which contains many features diametrically opposed to those characterizing Nupe religion. Yoruba religion is based upon a pantheon of deities, all anthropomorphously conceived, who severally govern the universe. Each deity has his (or her) definite sphere—the sky, thunder, rain, land, sea, forests, animals, fishes, crops, special diseases, special skills, divination, and so forth; so that the universe is as it were split up and departmentalized in detailed fashion. The deities are served by a number of specialized orders of priesthood; they are represented, with beautiful realism, in bronze, wood, terracotta, and stone; and masked dances and ritual drama, employing again realistic likenesses, play a prominent part in all Yoruba cults. As has been mentioned, the average Nupe is familiar with the main features of Yoruba religion. Not only has he encountered them on his many travels, but in the area west and south of the Niger Nupe and Yoruba settlements are interspersed, and in certain cases even joined together in twin villages (as in Shari or Shonga). Above all, since 1860 or thereabouts colonies of Yoruba known as *Konú* have been settled in numerous villages of Nupe country, where they form well-defined sections and specialize in their traditional crafts of weaving and indigo dyeing. Though today wholly 'Nupe-ized' in language and mode of life, they still publicly perform one of their masked ceremonies, the *eguŋguŋ*, known as *gugu* to the Nupe, which serves both as a funeral rite and as an annual ritual safeguarding fertility and well-being. The northern and north-eastern districts of Nupe are conquered territory, inhabited by people of Gwari extraction, who came under Nupe domination in the last hundred years and are still referred to as 'Gwari slaves'. Their traditional culture must have closely resembled that of Nupe, while an effective process of Nupe-ization has obliterated most of the differences that did exist. But a few sections of the Gwari-Nupe have preserved a cult alien to Nupe practice; it is called *sogba* and is concerned with childbirth and the cure of barrenness, with the conviction and punishment of

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criminals, and with the special burial rites for people killed by lightning. Again, there is a large and influential colony of Hausa in the capital Bida. These immigrants too have kept alive one of their typical cults, the *bori*, which they stage publicly in the streets and squares of the town. Another group of immigrants settled around Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, towards the end of the eighteenth century; they were Mohammedans hailing from Bornu and brought with them one of their traditional ceremonials, the *gani*, which contains several features strikingly 'un-Nupe' in character.

All these, then, were potential models for the Nupe to follow; as we shall see, the Nupe reaction towards them was neither uniform nor, at first sight at least, consistent.

(i) *The Hausa Bori*

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To begin with a clear case of 'rejection'. It is represented in the *bori* cult, which can at once be described as utterly uncongenial to Nupe religious conceptions. It is based upon the shamanistic idea of spirit possession, revealed in hysterical or cataleptic fits and in trance states, when the person so affected is believed to speak with the voice of a spirit and to behave like one. These states may occur spontaneously or may be artificially induced, especially by the use of music, which is again distinctly foreign to Nupe, employing the monotonous, arhythmic playing of a single-string fiddle. When spontaneous, the fits or trance states are regarded as spirit-caused mental disorders, while the induced states are regarded both as therapeutic measures and as means of spirit control in general. The 'theory' behind the cult is briefly this. There exists a wide variety of spirits (*aljannu*), some benevolent, others evil, each bearing a special name and character, and revealing itself in the particular gestures, gait and voice exhibited by the possessed person. Each spirit also has a tune and dance step peculiar to it, and one believes that the playing of the tune and the performance of the dance both evoke the spirit in normal individuals and placate and control it in those 'possessed'. Any person exhibiting the spirit-caused disorders is therefore placed under the observation of a cult member, who is expected to identify the spirit, and to placate and exorcise it. The latter act does not mean the final departure of the spirit; the aim is, rather, to bring the spirit 'visits' under control, so that they materialize only when evoked in the *bori* dances but do not otherwise threaten the human host. Each person so cured becomes a member of the *bori* cult; but many others will try to join it without this particular qualification, seeking the occasional trance induced in the *bori* dances. The *bori* cult thus has its own society, which is loosely organized (though

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it has a number of officials of varying rank) and is constantly enlarged through the inclusion of 'cured' patients and of those 'normal' individuals who have been successful in soliciting the 'spirit possession'.

There is no secrecy about the cult and its dance performances; they are staged at frequent intervals, both in private houses and in public, and are always watched by interested Nupe crowds. But no Nupe will join in the dances or has ever entered the society. Note that the cult thus rejected revolves upon a 'treatment' of mental derangements, of diseases, that is, for which Nupe therapeutic art admits to have no reliable remedy. Yet, though always ready to experiment with new cures, neither the Nupe public nor the medicine experts have been persuaded by the *borí*. Admittedly, the *borí* is not simply another cure or remedy: it involves the wholly strange experience of auto-suggestion and hysterical abandonment or ecstasis. It equally involves, on the intellectual plane, the acceptance of new premisses (the detailed spirit universe). But as we shall see from our next example, a somewhat similar intellectual readjustment did in fact occur in the case of another alien cult and 'cure'.

(ii) *The Sogba Cult*

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This cult occurs among a section of the Gwari who call themselves Gwari-Basa and live near Wushishi, to the north of Nupe, and also in a number of villages belonging to the conquered, Nupeized parts of Gwari country. Its name, *sogba*, means 'lightning', both in Gwari and Nupe. The cult is widely known also in other parts of Nupe country, and is everywhere regarded as alien, in spite of certain obvious 'Nupeisms'.[1] The name for the hereditary priest, for example, is *Žigí*, while the Gwari priests bear different names, and the whole cult is called a *kuti*, which is once more not Gwari nomenclature. In its more elaborate form the *sogba* cult culminates in an annual communal ceremony, fixed for the 2nd or 7th month, at which the men sacrifice a dog in great secrecy and the women sing and dance, carrying iron rods with bells closely resembling the *sãyi* of the *ndakó gboyá*.[2] The cult further includes a small-scale ritual of the movable type, performed by the priest at the request of clients, both fellow villagers and strangers.

These *ad hoc* ministrations are invoked for one of two reasons,

[1] It is not certain that the cult is in fact of Gwari origin; according to some informants it came originally from Yagba (a southern section of the Yoruba), and has been brought to Gwari and Nupe by immigrants from that country.

[2] This annual ritual was absent in the place I visited, Wushishi, its sketchy description being derived from verbal information only. The account that follows, however, is based on direct observation.

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either to procure the fertility of childless women or to bring about the punishment of offenders, especially of thieves, whose identity is unknown. In either event a small payment in kolanuts and money is made to the priest. The ritual involves the use of a special cult object unknown in the rest of Nupe; it consists of a forked wooden post, cut from a certain tree in such a manner that it resembles a 'tree cut in two by lightning' and planted in the ground in the priest's house, either inside a hut or in the open. Around the foot of the post there are a number of flat, black, polished stones which are described as 'thunderbolts' (*sogba* or *sokógba*). Nothing is known about the origin of the stones save that some had been collected by the grandfather of the present priest and others inherited from more distant ancestors. The priest also owns a few of the bell-rods mentioned before and a *cigbe* shrine containing a nameless 'medicine'.

The client is made to sit in a hut away from the scene of the actual rite, which is executed by the priest and two assistants (his sons or brothers). The priest crouches in front of the forked post, his assistants standing on his right and left, each gripping one of the branches of the fork. The priest pours a little beer on the 'thunderbolts' and on the ground, and briefly and informally invokes the *kuti*, explaining the nature of the request. The operative phrase is—'*Sogba*, may the woman bear a child', or—'*Sogba*, may the evil person (for example, the thief) be killed'. If the aim of the rite is to procure childbirth, the priest afterwards goes to the woman, touches her with one of the bell-rods and gives her a little of the *cigbe*, which she must drink daily for four days. The barren woman will then hope to bear a child; and the person who had suffered injury at the hands of an unknown culprit will be assured that the latter will be killed by lightning—not at once or within a definite period, but surely some time in the future. The latter notion bears on a final duty of the *sogba* priest, which is to bury all persons killed by lightning and to perform the appropriate rites for these victims of divine punishment.

The children born after the intercession of the *kuti sogba* are tied to the cult for life. Immediately after the birth of the child the *Žigí* must be informed, so that he may in turn 'inform the *kuti*' by means of another sacrifice. Afterwards the *Žigí* presents the infant with a special charm in the form of a tiny dagger, which the child (and later the grown person) must always wear around the neck. Invariably, the child is given the name *Sogba*, and is generally referred to as *egi sogba*, 'child of *Sogba*'. If such a child falls ill, his parents will seek help, not from some other *kuti* or from professional medicine-men, but again from the *Žigí*, who does not charge for this further assistance: the child thus remains

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N G 771 177 794 the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

N 771 177 So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

N [766] At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

N [821] N 771 177 842 The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

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communities all over the country, have made the pilgrimage to the nearest shrine and priest, and numerous persons, both young and old, bear the tell-tale name *Sogba*. The degree to which the alien cult has taken root is best seen from a text on the practices surrounding childbirth which I recorded in Bida long before I knew anything about the *sogba* cult, and which contains this straightforward statement: 771 177 842

'If a woman has no child and she is a pagan, she would go and visit the place of *sogba*, she would go and pray for a child. The pagans have a hut with a *kuti* inside. The priest will translate (talk to the *kuti*) on behalf of the woman or man who come to visit the *sogba*. The priest receives money from the person who comes. If God agrees and that person has a child, it will be named *Sogba*. It will wear a charm round his neck, everybody seeing that person will know that he is a child of *sogba*.'

The traditional religious or quasi-religious practices of Nupe certainly do not lack 'cures' of sterility. If here a further magic treatment has been added to the numerous existing ones, this would seem to bear out the ever-visible desire for children. Nor do the religious conceptions of the people, which so readily allow for alternative practices and several trials, conflict with the desire behind this addition. But let us note this. Though the Nupe make use only of one particular feature or benefit of the alien cult and disregard its wider context (of which, in fact, they are mostly ignorant), this piecemeal adoption yet commits them to a radically changed outlook. For they accept, with the miraculous powers of *sogba*, also the tie forged between these powers and the beneficiary. And this whole idea, that an ordinary person can for life be dedicated to a *kuti* and stand under its protection, has no parallel in Nupe religion. The practical consequences of this dedication are neither burdensome nor very important; even so, they clash with the conventional way of looking at 'medicines' or *ad hoc* rituals as at so many expedients, solicited when one needs them, paid for, and then forgotten.

(iii) *Yoruba Influences*

Yoruba religion, the third on our list, has hardly touched Nupe. The elaborate cosmology of the Yoruba, their pantheon, and their effigies or idols had no influence upon the beliefs and practices of the Nupe. Nor has the *gugu* cult of the Yoruba settlers in Nupe found any response other than detached or amused interest. 771 177

There seem to be two exceptions. The first is exemplified in the bronze figures on Jebba Island which have been accepted as sacred

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effigies and cult objects.[1] It is unlikely, incidentally, that these figures are Yoruba in origin; but they are of the same kind as the effigies of deities worshipped by the Yoruba. Now, the Nupe do not regard their figures as representations of deities; indeed the whole question, what or whom they represent, evokes no great interest. For the Nupe, the figures are merely 'likenesses' of a man and a woman (who is sometimes called the man's mother) and, more importantly, relics of Tsoede. Their possession is understood to be exceptional and indeed unique; and even though they figure prominently in one of the Jebba rituals, they do not add anything relevant to the purely religious conceptions. The images are simply the unusual objects of an unusual, 'royal' cult, but not more magically effective or possessed of special meaning because they happen to be shaped in human likeness.

The second exception is more important. In Mokwa and one or two villages in the river valley, we meet with a masked dance called *elo* (a meaningless word in Nupe), which is quite unlike any Nupe dance or ritual.[2] It does, however, somewhat resemble the Yoruba *gugu*, which equally occurs in Mokwa, not only in its paraphernalia but also in certain gestures and motions of the dancers. [539] The *elo* dancers wear long-sleeved hoods of coloured cloth cut like those worn in the *gugu* and cover their faces with coloured wooden masks, carved in grotesquely human features and surmounted by horns. The masks resemble those of the *gugu* only in that both are meant to represent a human face; but in the *gugu* the design is produced by cowrie shells sewn on to the cloth, while the *elo* type is reminiscent rather of the masks used by the southernmost sections of the Yoruba, or by the Ibo and other tribes in Southern Nigeria. The people who perform the *elo* know little about the origin of the masks or, indeed, of the whole ceremonial. It is said that Tsoede brought it from the south and established it in certain villages of his small river kingdom 'because he liked the dance so much that he wanted to see it again and again'. The masks now used are the work of the wood-carvers of Shonga (a mixed Yoruba-Nupe village on the Niger), though this particular skill has since disappeared; one or two masks are quite recent, having been made by a craftsman at Rabah who has preserved the old art. The hoods of cloth, on the other hand, are an innovation; in the youth of one

[1] As has been mentioned, similar figures, though both smaller and cruder, are found in Tada, another riverain village. What is said here about the Jebba figures equally applies to the Tada 'idols'.

[2] I recorded the *elo* in Mokwa, in Rabah (a few miles away on the river) and in Gbajibo, north of Jebba. In addition, smaller villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood, which do not themselves possess the *elo* masks, perform the dance annually with masks borrowed from Mokwa.

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of my Mokwa informants, a man of about sixty, the *elo* dancers used to wear skirts and cloaks made of dried grass, probably like those worn in the *mamma* ritual of Jebba; it was only later that the cloth hoods were adopted, 'because they looked nicer'. I have no doubt that they were modelled on the almost identical dress of the *gugu* dancers, with which the Mokwa people at least are so thoroughly familiar. They themselves disclaim any such connection, which is admittedly not borne out by any other features of the two cults. 771 177

Granting the alien origin of the *elo*, we must add that it has been fairly thoroughly Nupe-ized. To begin with, it has taken its place among the 'fixed' ceremonials, being performed annually in the 9th month (in Mokwa and Rabah) or 6th month (in Gbajibo). Like the other Nupe ceremonials, the *elo* is in the charge of one of the titled elders, whose office includes the responsibility for the annual performance and the tuition of the dancers. The most important mask, called *elokó* ('Great *elo*'), is also stored in his house, while the other masks and dresses are kept in the houses of other rankholders. When the masks appear in the dance they are addressed, in Nupe fashion, by a special salute, *eluló* ('Bird of *elo*'); the songs are in Nupe, the style of the music and most dance steps are typically Nupe, as are also the drums which are played throughout the dance.[1] But the dance performance itself has retained its uncommon character. All the dancers are men; but among them are three, wearing highly ornamented masks with curved twin horns, who are said to represent 'female' figures, the mask of the 'Great *elo*' belonging to this category. Two other dancers, wearing hoods pulled over their faces and head-dresses of feathers, are described as 'male'. Two more figures, wearing simple masks surmounted by one straight horn, are called *gara* (lit. 'robber'). These last figures are perhaps the most unusual; for while the 'male' and 'female' masks stalk about, or jump and dance much as do ordinary dancers or the masks in the *ndakó gboyá* and *mamma*, the *gara* plays the part of a bogey-man who frightens the children, and of a clown whose pranks delight old and young; which double role is otherwise unknown in Nupe dance ceremonial. The behaviour of the 'male' and 'female' masks, incidentally, is in no way suggestive of this ascription of sex. In addition, there are two unmasked young men who join in the dancing and clowning and wear fringed skirts made of leopard skin, their bare legs being painted with white spots ('like the spots of leopards')—another conspicuously non-Nupe feature. 771 177 535

The most incongruous aspect of the *elo* lies in its purpose, or

[1] The *elo* includes only one musical instrument uncommon in Nupe, an iron double-bell, beaten with a stick. [534]

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rather in its absence of purpose. Although it has a definite date like other rituals and although the masks must dress in secrecy, there is nothing sacred about the performance. No sacrifice or ritual preparations precede or accompany it; and the *elo* is positively stated to be nothing like a *kuti*, but merely *dzodzo* 'play'. The dance seems to contain the remnants of some plot or dramatic theme; the various roles of 'male' and 'female' figures and of 'clowns' or 'robbers' can suggest nothing else. But again, the people deny that there is such a plot or that these 'roles' have any meaning. The *elo* songs, certainly, betray none. Here are a few of them, each consisting of a brief line which is endlessly repeated throughout the corresponding phase of the dance.

> *Zwákule, zwákule* (meaningless).
> I am calling Kolo (a name, here applied to *elo*),
> he is coming slowly.
> The *elo* matures every year.
> They are calling Kolo, he swings his leg,
> *ebi du, ebi du* (meaningless).
> Every year we are making *elo*.
> The *gara* appears, there is his face.

In a sense, the *elo* is a mixture of ritual and entertainment. But unlike the usual Nupe ceremonial, in which the ritual part precedes the 'play', the *elo* involves ritual only as it were in its administration (in the fixed date, the secret dressing-up of the actors, the formal apportionment of relevant duties); the rest is pure entertainment. Perhaps, in its original form, the *elo* was more fully a ceremonial, with some religious purpose as well as a plot. But even this the Nupe would deny; for although they sanctify the practice by ascribing it, in familiar manner, to the ancestor king, they impute to him no reasons other than (we might say) aesthetic ones. Nor have these reasons quite ceased to work. At the Bida *salla* in 1936 I saw a dancer with an unusual headdress which I had never seen before, neither at the previous *salla* nor on other occasions. The dancer himself was one of the *sorogi* dancers mentioned in a previous context;[1] but on his head he wore a brass cap with two horns. Subsequent enquiries elicited the fact that the headdress had been made by a Bida brass-smith to the specifications of the dancer: and the latter had meant to copy the horns of the *elo* masks which he had seen and admired in Mokwa.

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(iv) *The Gani of Kutigi*

I have elsewhere described this cult and the manner in which it took root in Kutigi and the adjacent communities, so that I need

[1] See above, p. 188.

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only summarize the salient facts.[1] Unlike the *elo*, the *gani* can clearly be traced to its alien origin, and its importation into Nupe, by Moslem immigrants from the north, can even be dated with fair accuracy (having occurred probably about 1760–70). The Moslem character of the ceremonial is visible, above all, in the esoteric part, which takes the form of a symbolic burial in the Mohammedan manner; it is further emphasized by the often voiced claim that the whole ceremonial represents an observance of Islam, namely, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet—a claim which has little validity.[2] Even so, the *gani* has been firmly adopted also by the pagan population and, what is more important, has been adopted as a ritual or at least as a ceremonial of serious and sacred import. Yet in calling the *gani* a ritual or ceremonial I am stating my own conclusions, couched in our conventional terminology. The Nupe have no suitable name for this performance which has many aspects of a ritual act without conforming to a 'ritual' as the pagans understand it. They all emphasize that it is not a *kuti*; but neither do they call it *dzodzo*, mere 'play', in spite of the great scope given to mummery, display, crude pranks, and merry-making generally. They either use the non-committal term *nya'nya*, 'dancing', or simply argue that 'the *gani* is the *gani*', that is, unlike any other tribal festivity. Linguistic usage, it seems, has not quite caught up with this novel and ambiguous species of ceremonial.

The *gani* ceremonial has for its main theme the periodical reconstitution of the village age-grade associations, that is, the acceptance of novices into the first grade and the promotion of older boys and youths to higher grades. These corporate promotions go hand in hand with a reshuffling of the various ranks held in each age-grade association, and hence with an upgrading or downgrading of its members. If the age grades thus appear dominated by competition and the notions of rank and career, they merely mirror as well as anticipate interests paramount in Nupe political life. As I phrased it elsewhere, age-grade life serves as an 'education for citizenship';[3] and this aspect too is given expression in the *gani* ceremonial, together with other ideas of more general import, bearing on growth and maturity.

In the ceremonial each age grade is assigned a specific role, acting under its leader, who bears the title *Ndakotsu*—'Grandfather of

[1] See 'The Gani Ritual of Nupe' *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949.

[2] This is clearly shown by the discrepancy in the dates. The Birth of the Prophet (*Ma'ulid*) falls on the twelfth day of the first lunar month of the Mohammedan calendar (in 1934 the 29th March), while the *gani* celebrations start on the tenth day of the 4th month in Nupe reckoning (in 1934, the 25th June).

[3] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 383 *et seq.*

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the king'. Thus led, the age grades walk in procession through the village to salute the chief and all the other notables of the community, join in the dancing, engage in wrestling matches, and meet one another in a realistic 'battle', to be described presently. The esoteric rite of the *gani*, the 'burial service' mentioned before, is performed by the leaders alone, in a secret place away from the scene of the public festivities. The younger boys are all dressed up as girls and imitate, in exaggerated and ridiculous fashion, the walk and dance steps of the women. This masquerade, though highly elaborate and considered a most relevant aspect of the celebration, is not further explained; but the context makes it clear that it carries the same meaning of a change of roles which underlies the similar mummery of the *gunnu*.[1] For this meaning is again expressed, now by means of a conspicuous symbolism which everyone understands, in certain other episodes of the *gani*, meant to dramatize the admission of the novices and the various promotions from grade to grade. There is the 'death and burial', loudly mourned by the crowd, of a 'little girl', indicating the abandonment of infancy by the young boys about to enter the first grade. In a preceding phase a 'little boy' is similarly buried and mourned, that is, shown to abandon boyhood for adolescence. Lastly, the youths of the most senior grade appear dressed up as 'warriors' and 'horsemen', meeting their juniors in a mock battle which seems to symbolize the final stage of adolescence, when youth must hold its own against adults, compete and struggle with them, and break into their ranks. All these things actually happen in the 'battle', whose very realism seems symbolic of the severe competition for position and power which characterizes Nupe life. In brief, the *gani* ceremonial is a typical *rite de passage*, dramatizing the crucial phases of male adolescence and adoption into manhood. Seen against this background, an ususual feature of the *gani*, too, falls into place. Obscene sexual jokes and allusions, normally never used, appear in the *gani* songs and are freely bandied about during the festivities, both by old and young: we may conclude that they serve to throw into relief a final aspect of adolescence, sexual maturity.

The ceremonial lasts three days, and each day concludes with a hectic dance in which the sexes meet in utterly unrestrained fashion. Nor does this unrestraint end with the dance; for during the three nights all the normal rules of sex morality are in abeyance. This temporary abandonment of moral restraint, which applies to every person in the community, implies, of course, more than merely a symbolic reference to adolescence and sexual maturity. It represents one of those periodical concessions to moral

[1] See above, p. 113.

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or sexual licence which are familiar from many societies, primitive and advanced. We know that they occur also in the traditional annual celebration of the *gunnu*. And here it seems significant that the people of Kutigi and the other communities now performing the *gani* have abandoned the *gunnu* in this fixed, annual form.[1] Whatever other reasons have contributed to the abandonment of the annual *gunnu*, the fact that it shared with the *gani* this one feature may well have been decisive; for it would seem to be in the very nature of this concession to unrestraint that it must not be duplicated.

There is evidence to show that the sexual licence belonged to the *gani* already in its original form in which it reached Nupe country. This original *gani* equally included some connection, apparently broad and unspecific, with age-grade life and male adolescence.[2] To some extent, then, the Nupe found in the *gani* a cult fortuitously congenial to their own interests and ideas. But let us note that the *gani* expresses them with unaccustomed sharpness: the masquerade of boys as girls, sketchily treated in the *gunnu*, is fully exploited in the *gani*; and nowhere else is age-grade life dramatized with such effect.

Other 'Nupeisms' in the *gani* are clearly the result of adaptation and remodelling. Thus, though the ceremonial retained its original name, its songs and prayers are in Nupe; the latter, spoken at the secret 'burial service', conclude with the typical Nupe formula—'May the whole town have health'; the musical instruments, the music itself, the dance steps, and the whole design of the ceremonial, with an esoteric part preceding the public 'merry-making'—all these are taken from the traditional practice. Yet equally, the *gani* contains conspicuously novel and 'un-Nupe' features. The very notion of a ceremonial having a proper plot and being staged as a drama with consecutive scenes has no parallel in Nupe. The same is true of the precise symbolism of the *gani* and of the masquerade of warriors and horsemen; the latter, incidentally, appear as riders of hobby-horses, which mummery is equally unknown in the rest of Nupe. So are the standards with which the age grades parade during the ceremonial, some of which are combined with crude symbols of the sexes. The open eroticism of the *gani*, finally, contrasts strikingly with the normal mood of Nupe ceremonials.

[1] See above, p. 83. It will be remembered that the performance of the *gunnu* as a movable rite (which is still practised in Kutigi) does not include the 'mixed' dance and the period of erotic licence.

[2] The evidence in question is based on accounts of the *gani* celebrations in its country of origin and among the nomadic Fulani. See *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949, p. 177, n. 2.

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Let me stress that the 'congenial' aspects of the *gani* did not cause it to be simply accepted into the ceremonial repertoire of Nupe; nor do its 'uncongenial' features represent merely unassimilated remnants. In a sense both such a straightforward acceptance and complete assimilation were precluded by the circuitous manner in which the *gani* was adopted and which was meant to preserve rather than to obliterate its alien character. Here I must explain that the community where the *gani* took root represents, on a small scale, a composite or 'plural' society. It is composed of three distinct sections—the Bornu immigrants (called *Benu*); a group of hereditary hunters (*ndaceži*); and a group claiming the status of aboriginal inhabitants and calling themselves 'Owners of the Land' (*kintsoži*). In this heterogeneous community the alien provenance of the *gani* ceremonial remained intact; its esoteric rites are performed only by members of the immigrant group, and the whole *gani* is still, for the people of Kutigi, an observance unequivocally 'belonging to' or 'owned' by that section, even though all others join in the public celebrations. They in turn remained the 'owners' of their own traditional cults, the *žikinta* (performed by the group of hunters) and the *gunnu* (performed, as a movable rite, by the *kintsoži*). But in performing its proper ceremonial each congregation acts on behalf of the whole composite community; and all three ceremonials are considered indispensable, in a supernatural sense and in their diverse ways, for the well-being of that wider group. The *gani*, therefore, came to be adopted, not through simply diffusing to the other sections, but through being acknowledged by them as a vital contribution which its 'owners' can make to the common weal. The sectional 'ownership', in other words, was transformed into a sectional 'task', and the divided congregation, into a religious division of labour.[1]

It is clear that this manner of adoption is adjusted to the particular problems of a 'plural society', helping to maintain or buttress its precarious, divided unity. And other societies, facing the same problems, have evolved much the same solution. Yet though the religious division of labour has this very wide application, it may be pointed out that, in Nupe, it remains 'congenial' to the character of the religious system; for it only develops further the ideas underlying Nupe priestship and the Nupe form of ritual, 'owned' by kin groups but operating for the 'common weal'.

[1] Let me note briefly that the same conception reappears, somewhat modified, in the attitude of the Nupe people at large towards the *gani*, which they regard as the 'possession' of the people of Kutigi. This aspect, which has been fully treated in the article mentioned above, is not relevant to the present discussion.

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2. ON MOTIVES

We turn to our crucial problem, the motives underlying these adoptions and rejections of alien observances. Since in our examples both responses were voluntary, not imposed by extraneous pressure or constraint, we may legitimately argue that the acceptance must have rested upon some appeal, some kind of pull, which the novel practice exercised upon the recipients-to-be, and the rejection upon the lack of such an appeal or perhaps its opposite. This 'appeal' or 'pull' is clearly a complex thing. First and foremost, it is a pull of interest; in other words, we may search for some specific interest or 'need' pre-existing in the recipient culture, which the novel practice seems capable (or incapable) of satisfying.[1] The relevant factor, however, is not the pre-existing interest or need as such, but a residual interest or need; what we must show is not so much that the society is deeply concerned over such-and-such issues (for example, the fecundity of women) but that this concern is unsatisfied even where it is met by pre-existing institutions. The *gugu* ceremonial, for example, answers interests strongly pronounced in Nupe life in the fixed rituals promising communal well-being, and in the ritualization of death; but since a series of traditional ceremonials profess the same aims, the residual interest must be small, if it is felt at all. The concern over childbirth, on the other hand, is by its nature such that it would always remain active and press for additional promises or safeguards.

The concern or aim of the alien observance may obviously be expressed in a form more or less novel and unprecedented; and the degree of novelty must clearly itself affect the ease of adoption. But this effect is difficult to assess. Often, we shall no doubt argue that, the more novel a practice, the more uncongenial must it be to people still thinking in terms of traditional ways of acting; so that the novelty would act as a brake upon the free play of interests, as a counter-pull as it were. Yet we cannot exclude the possibility that the novelty of the practice will help rather than hinder the adoption; for its 'uncongenial' form may itself correspond to some pre-existing interest, that is, to a diffuse desire for unusual and unprecedented experiences. Now all the alien religious practices which the Nupe have adopted contain some 'uncongenial' or unprecedented features. Shall we then say that the latter must have exercised a certain appeal in their own right? Perhaps—though

[1] The term 'pre-existing' is here used in a somewhat loose sense, without the implication of precise chronological evidence. It implies, however, that the interest or need in question can be established independently, that is, can be shown to obtain apart from the adopted (or rejected) practice.

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the same lack of congeniality also characterizes the practices which have been rejected. Or shall we assume that, for the adoption to occur, the pre-existing interest must have outweighed the uncongenial character, while in the case of rejected practices the balance was the other way? There is evidence for this. The *gani*, with all its alien elements, clearly answers powerful pre-existing interests, and indeed improves upon the respective traditional institutions; the *gugu*, conversely, has nothing of the kind to offer: it is only another fixed ritual, duplicating the aims of the traditional rites, so that, apart from being uncongenial in form, it also appears redundant in content. The *bori* could answer at least a weak pre-existing need, since it offers a cure for lunacy of which the Nupe are deficient; yet it also clashes utterly with their religious beliefs and, above all, with the psychological tenor of their religious life. The *sogba* cult seems to exemplify this balance between interest and congeniality even more clearly. For the Nupe adopted only that aspect of it which corresponds to a strongly pronounced and in a sense inexhaustible interest (in fecundity), while rejecting both the annual ceremonial, whose aims seem redundant, and the *sogba* ordeal, which was altogether alien to the pre-existing aims or interests. Much the same is true of the bronze figures of Tsoede, which were embodied in Nupe ritual only as emblems of kingship, without any of the features normally implicit in the worship of 'idols'.

Let us be clear that this assessment of a balance between interests and congeniality holds only with two provisos. First, it is largely based on *ex post facto* arguments. The *gani*, for example, fits a 'pre-existing need' only in the form in which it exists today. If we judge this affinity of interest to be sufficiently great to have outweighed the uncongenial features we do so because in the event the latter proved no insuperable obstacle; but we cannot be certain how much remodelling, of content and purpose as well as of form, has gone into the acceptance. Nor can we say that the *bori* or *gugu* would have proved incapable of such remodelling. All we can really say is that no such attempts have been made. Have they not been made because there was no sufficiently strong interest to make the effort worthwhile? Again we can only answer—perhaps; for the *elo* would seem to contradict this argument. There, an uncongenial practice has been fitted into Nupe life for no apparent 'need' at all, unless we are prepared to consider the addition of a pleasurable (and novel) occasion a felt 'need'. And if we do so, the mummery of the *gugu* and the unusual dance of the *bori* would seem similarly acceptable.

Secondly, our arguments hold only if other factors in the situation can safely be neglected; and of one of these, the relationship

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between the potential donors and recipients, this cannot be assumed *ab initio*. Rather, this factor must be added as a likely third determinant of adoption or rejection. Surveying our data from this new angle we meet with a wide variety of situations. The *elo*, the Tsoede 'idols', and the *sogba* cult were adopted strictly from outside, without any corresponding fusion or integration of the 'owners' with the recipient groups. But here a further distinction must be drawn: while the Tsoede idols and the *elo* were taken over from fully distinct and in fact unknown donors, the *sogba* was found among neighbours and was 'taken over' only in the sense in which people turn to some promising, if otherwise unfamiliar, place of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the 'owners' of the *sogba* cult, viewed with Nupe eyes, occupied the inferior position of a conquered 'slave' population. Perhaps, then, the barrier of status was readily overcome only in the case of the fertility ritual, with its strong affinity of interest, while in the case of the other aspects of the cult it added to the 'counter-pulls' which made for their rejection.

The *gani*, *gugu*, and *bori* represent observances adopted or rejected in circumstances which involved the fusion or integration of donor and recipient groups. But again, the conditions differ in relevant respects. The Bornu and Yoruba immigrants arrived *en bloc*, maintained themselves as compact groups, and were thus integrated, as segments, in the host communities; the Hausa colony in the cosmopolitan city grew haphazardly, as the result of the irregular immigration of individuals of all classes and occupations, and never achieved internal cohesion; it only fused amorphously with the host community, but was not integrated in it. The kind of adoption, therefore, which turned the *gani* into a 'sectional task' was neither feasible nor called for in the case of the *bori*. It might, on the other hand, conceivably have worked in the case of the Yoruba ritual, even though this cult answers no 'residual' need. But here we must consider that the Yoruba came to Nupe, not as immigrants claiming equal status (as did the Benu), nor yet as free immigrants, but as prisoners of war freed and settled by royal command. Whatever the effect of the other 'pulls' in this rank-conscious society, the barrier of status must have weighed heavily on the side of rejection. Admittedly, it did so effectively only as regards the cult as such; minor features, such as the dress of the dancers which reappears in the *elo*, were adopted across the barrier, for their aesthetic attraction and novelty. Yet the barrier has at least prevented this 'borrowing' being acknowledged.

In brief, the acceptance or rejection of the alien observances involves the efficacy of several conditions and results from their

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varying combination and interplay. I have tried to tabulate the relevant data in the form of a synoptic chart capable of exhibiting the multiple correlations. The features listed are those discussed above, plus and minus signs indicating their presence and absence respectively. I also attempted to grade the interests satisfied by the various cults by doubling the plus signs in the appropriate cases; a similar grading of 'congeniality' seemed irrelevant in the light of the final result.

	(I) *Integration of donors and recipients*	(SD) *Status distinction operating against donors*	(C) *Congeniality of form*	(SI) *Satisfaction of interest*	*Outcome*
bori	−	±	−	+ (as therapeutic measure)	Rejection
gugu	+	+	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Rejection
gani	+	−	−	++	Adoption
sogba (fertility cult)	−	+	−	++	Adoption
(general cult)	−	+	−	−	Rejection
elo	−	−	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Adoption
Tsoede idols	−	−	−	++	Adoption

In other words, adoption (of a voluntary kind) occurred when

$$I^{\pm} \ldots SD^{\pm} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{++}$$

and when

$$I^{-} \ldots SD^{-} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{+}.$$

That a strong interest should outweigh the absence of congeniality and render the factor of integration irrelevant is hardly surprising; but it is puzzling that this should be true also where the interest appears to be small and even uncertain (as in the *elo*). Perhaps, then, we have underrated the residual 'need'? If so, it must have sprung from some inadequacy in the pleasures and excitements afforded in the pre-existing situation. Although this

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assumption cannot, for obvious reasons be fully substantiated, it is not altogether unwarranted. Mokwa and the other communities practising the *elo* are in fact poor in ceremonials offering, apart from occasions for worship, also the purely pleasurable stimulations of dancing, singing, and conviviality; for while most Nupe communities have two or three ceremonials of this kind, Mokwa has only one apart from the *elo*—the *gunnu*,—the remaining rituals being sober esoteric sacrifices, unaccompanied by music, dancing, and public 'merry-making'.[1] We mentioned in a previous context that the number of fixed ceremonials is fairly uniform throughout Nupe;[2] we may now add that the proportion of ceremonials of such combined appeal is similarly uniform. This I take to indicate that the Nupe need for regular pleasurable stimulations has as it were found its own level. Which would mean, further, that Mokwa and the other communities were only balancing a psychological deficit when they adopted the *elo*. Certainly, several of the communities which exhibit the normal Nupe level of ceremonial-*cum*-pleasurable occasions had an equal chance of embracing the *elo* or of copying the similar *gugu*, but have not done so. So that the adoption, by a few groups, of the alien ceremonial for no motive other than that of adding another festivity did yet answer an unsatisfied 'need'.

But let us note a final source of error. We have spoken of the 'pre-existing' interests or needs as though they were bound to be constant, the measure of their satisfaction alone being variable. It is conceivable that this assumption is unwarranted, and that the adoption of the new observance reflects, not a pre-existing interest unsatisfied, but an interest strengthened owing to some change in social conditions. As regards the *elo* and *sogba*, there is no evidence to support this alternative hypothesis. It is, however, borne out in the case of the *gani*. This ceremonial, as I put it before, improves upon the traditional Nupe institutions which ritualize adolescence and age-grade life; it dramatizes these events in a specific and detailed manner where the equivalent traditional ceremonial, the *gunnu*, merely deals summarily with the transition from youth to adulthood, embodying it as one aspect among others in its design. Now, though the age grades have undoubtedly always served to mirror the dominant interests of Nupe life, in rank and in promotion in status, the interests themselves must have gained in

[1] The same is true of Rabah, though there Mohammedan influence has today obliterated the *gunnu*. Gbajibo, the third community practising the *elo*, has two other ceremonials which combine religious with generally pleasurable stimulations, the *gunnu* and the *mamma*; but the latter is celebrated in secrecy, by the men alone, and only as a movable ritual.

[2] See above, p. 70.

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importance with the growth of the Fulani Emirate. As the latter gave greater impetus to desires for a political career and imparted greater severity to the competition for rank and status, so the age grades assumed a novel, and more weighty, significance. With this, the fuller and more specific ritual elaboration of adolescence seems entirely consistent. It was not so that the pre-existing desire to give ritual elaboration to important things had been inadequately expressed; rather, things became important in a new way: so that, when the Nupe adopted the *gani* ceremonial, they were seizing upon a chance to express a changed outlook and a desire reoriented.

As we shall see, the more far-reaching conversion to Islam similarly involves such changing interests and newly emerged trends. Are then, perhaps, any trends visible in Nupe today which may in future lead to further adoptions of alien practices? I will hazard this prediction. The pressure of competition and the obsession with promotion in status, grown strongest in the capital, are visibly leading to anxieties and frustrations, and to mental instability. The incidence of neurotic disorders seems to bear out this tendency, though inadequate records forbid a more definite statement.[1] The mass hysteria of the witchcraft trial mentioned before offers clearer evidence. Such increased tensions may well seek relief in some form of self-abandonment: the *bori* possession cult seems to offer precisely this chance, which might one day be seized upon, its 'uncongenial' appeal notwithstanding.

3. THE CHARACTER OF TRIBAL RELIGION

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The preceding discussion referred only to the adoption of isolated practices and items of belief but made no mention of individuals or communities wholly converted to an alien pagan creed. Nor is this unexpected. The religions of pre-literate peoples are not normally of a proselytizing kind. They promise no particular reward to the converted, nor do they place any premium on the conversion of others. Indeed, it seems true to say that this issue never arises, for, as we anticipated, primitive religion is essentially a tribal or national religion, conceived of as inseparable from the particular identity of the group professing it. Expressed differently, primitive religion does not constitute a 'church' which exists in its own right and can be entered (or left) solely by reason of its creed and of the transcendental benefits promised to the believers.[2]

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 402.

[2] Durkheim's famous identification of 'religion' (of any form) with a 'church' seems to me to rest on an arbitrary use of the latter term; for whatever else may be meant by a 'church', it must mean 'a community organized

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No machinery therefore exists to deal with such contingencies—no provision for tuition of the converts-to-be, and no formal procedure of admission or perhaps excommunication. To say it again, that sum-total of beliefs and practices we call Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari religion, is simply the religion of the people who, on other grounds also, call themselves Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari; and though it is possible for single observances or even items of belief (such as the belief in the significance of death by lightning) to be adopted or 'borrowed', the notion that the religion as a whole can be exported or changed for another is inconceivable.

This self-sufficiency of the Nupe faith goes together with a marked detachment and tolerance towards other creeds. The Nupe, as we know, are greatly interested in discussing the religions of others; but they do so dispassionately, and indeed think it possible that the radically different beliefs of their neighbours are justifiable and, in a vague sense, as 'right' as their own. The coexistence of widely varying practices in Nupe itself must have helped in fostering this tolerance towards alien beliefs; certainly, any person showing such tolerance is not for that reason considered an apostate or even a doubter. The Nupe creed simply lays little claim to any exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Yet it is not for that reason less securely held. If the Nupe do not argue that their creed is the best of all possible creeds, neither do they question that, for them, it is simply given, as is their language and all the other features that go with 'being a Nupe'. Their detached tolerance thus seems only the obverse of this self-sufficiency of 'tribal' religions.

The fact that alien observances are sometimes adopted for their apparent utility or some other attraction is not felt to be inconsistent with this notion of a 'given' tribal religion; at least, the inconsistency is corrected by tacitly granting that alien practices could yet 'become Nupe', that is, could be added to those which, at that stage, were indicative of the social identity. The accomplished fact, then, re-establishes the *status quo*; the new religious practice, now regularly executed by a population which by numerous other criteria regards itself as one, as 'the Nupe', becomes itself 'of Nupe'; so that the people can again detachedly view 'alien' observances or beliefs. Let me restate this in more general terms. The conscious identity of Nupe, as of any society, comes from the awareness of a large stable array of modes of behaviour understood to be typical of the society; any single

by officials into an institution which bestows gifts of grace' (on all who seek it), which makes 'the sacred generally 'accessible', and under whose authority members can be 'enrolled' (see Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', *Essays in Sociology*, p. 288).

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change in this array does not alter the continued consciousness of identity, but is subsumed in it.

This is, of course, a familiar situation, which ultimately accounts for the continuity (or continued self-awareness) of societies even when their cultural possessions, or for that matter their populations, change. Much will depend on the gradualness and restricted scope of the change; a sudden change in which new modes of behaviour greatly outweigh the 'array' of pre-existing ones may disrupt the continued identity. But it need not always do so. For the process just outlined may also be reversed: the society facing such far-reaching changes may yet fasten on to some particular cultural possession which remained unchanged, and consider it sufficiently relevant to furnish a criterion or symbol of the continued identity. Often, as we know, a creed or some religious observance preserved amidst the changes will prove to have this relevance.

This process, too, can be observed among the Nupe, among the colony of emigrants in Lagos, who have lost nearly every feature of culture, including language, which would normally sustain that awareness of 'being Nupe' or 'still being Nupe'. But they have preserved one traditional cult, the *gunnu*; and they still regard themselves as Nupe (calling themselves either Nupe or, more often, Takpa or Tapa, by the Yoruba name). The two things go together; in discussions, when the people wish to emphasize their tribal identity, they at once mention the possession of this cult which, to them, seems decisive.

Let me say a few words about the Nupe colony in Lagos. It numbers perhaps 5,000 people, both scattered over the outlying hamlets and villages and occupying a special quarter in the city of Lagos.[1] The Nupe settlement is claimed to be of considerable antiquity, going back to the Portuguese era, and to have attained its present important and honoured position towards the end of the last century, when the self-made head of the Lagos Nupe, a certain Gana and a 'noted warrior', was elevated to high rank by the Yoruba town king. This Gana, who incidentally was taken to England to be presented to Queen Victoria, was the grandfather of the present chief of the Lagos Nupe, a man of about seventy. Gana's rank, *Osode*, is still held by his descendants, and with the rank goes the priestship of the *gunnu*, which Gana had somehow assumed. The Lagos *gunnu* is a combination of three rites all subsumed under the same name, the *gunnu* itself, the *ndakó gboyá*, and the ritual of the Chain of Tsoede, the paraphernalia of the three

[1] The Nupe quarter in Lagos is known to everyone; its main thoroughfares are called *Tapa Street* and *Osode Street*, the latter deriving its name from the title held by the head of the Nupe colony (see below).

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rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *kuso*, 'bush'.

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We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu* and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults. The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos ceremonials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Paradoxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their traditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

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28. Mask of the 'Great *elo*'

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29. Dancer at the Bida *salla* with headdress modelled on the *elo* mask

[p. 230 (A)]

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of the same territory; political autonomy; and numerous norms of behaviour and types of relationship.

With all this the next chapter will deal. Let me here only explain an apparent omission; if this discussion made no mention of that other religion demanding complete conversion, Christianity, the reason is, simply, the unimportance of Christianity in Nupe life. The number of converts is extremely small and the progress of Christianity insignificant. The Nupe generally are not hostile to those who have become Christians; they do not subject them to special disabilities; nor do they despise them; only mallams will sometimes call Christians, contemptuously, *káfiri*, 'unbelievers'. Here, too, the general attitude is one of tolerance, though it is more pronounced among pagans than among Moslems. The former (including nominal Moslems) quite often send their children to mission schools, and most Nupe keep on friendly terms with missionaries or African evangelists. But this tolerance always goes with the conviction that Christian missionizing will remain ineffectual; friendliness with Christians is unobjectionable only because it is of no consequence. Nor do the Nupe ever commit themselves by their association with Christians. They do not intermarry with Christian converts; they do not ask them to their family feasts; and the converts never come from solid, stable families, but from among unattached individuals—old people without relations, young orphans, or the children of strangers. Even among these, I was told, apostasy often occurs in later life. And here it is not the pagan religion which is the greatest rival of Christianity, but the steadily encroaching Islam.

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across the barrier of religion. The following comments by the chief of Pichi illustrate perhaps the extreme of Nupe tolerance, 'There are three benefits', he said, 'Islam, Christianity, and the *kuti*. Some of us have chosen one, others the other. One may be stronger than the rest: but this we do not know.' To be sure, this tolerance cuts both ways; and indeed, this Nupe version of Lessing's Nathan saw nothing strange in 'making *salla*' and attending the *gunnu* as well. But then, he was only a self-professed Moslem, whom others considered a pagan at heart. 794 186

Yet, though his attitude may not be typical of the Nupe Moslems, it is typical of the outlook of the people among whom Islam finds its converts. The final step of conversion changes it but little; indeed, it can hardly be otherwise since conversion is so loose an affair and not a real 'step' at all. But in so far as the outlook of the confirmed Moslem is changed, carrying with it that pride and awareness of superiority, the pride and superiority are social rather than specifically religious. What counts is, first and foremost, the assimilation to upper-class culture, and only secondarily the deliverance from unbelief.

5. CONTACT AND INTEGRATION

In this chapter we were dealing with instances of a much-discussed social process, 'culture contact' or 'acculturation'. The wider theoretical issues involved are beyond our present scope; but no discussion of this kind can avoid touching upon one such general problem, namely, the relationship between the cultures brought into 'contact' and the 'resultant' culture emerging from it. Now, this is a question of end-states, of the final outcome of these processes of change and contact; and logically, we should start with their analysis. 177

The physical model of 'contact', of a 'clash of cultures', or of their 'impact' upon one another, is more misleading than helpful when picturing these processes. We revert, therefore, to our paradigm, a group possessed of given modes of behaviour, habit patterns if you like, which comes to face new models of behaviour of such-and-such pull or attractiveness. That the reactions are likely to be complex and intricate no one will deny; more importantly, they are progressive, that is, take the form of chain reactions. It is clearly not so that the new models are simply accepted, rejected, or exchanged for the habitual ways of acting as it were once and for all, after which no further readjustment will occur. The religious conversion of a people certainly is not a simple all-or-none affair, but a process of many stages in which an initial acceptance may spread further, be deepened or changed in

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177 some other way, and an initial rejection might similarly be modified. My point is that this is not a coherent process moving towards completion, in which a given goal exercises an unvarying 'pull' and steadily gains over the counter-pull of traditional norms; rather, the process is piecemeal, determined by pulls and strains that emerge stage by stage and only operate from one stage to the next.

It might be argued that the Nupe do have before them the 'given goal', namely, the complete observances of Islam as they are taught by its missionaries and practised by the confirmed Moslems. But as we know, the Nupe often resort to half-measures and compromises. Let us not dismiss these as preliminary steps or instances of 'cultural lag'. They clearly represent attempts at reconciling, at a particular stage, the pulls and counter-pulls of customary and novel observances. But no ideal or permanent balance is calculable in advance, partly because the social strains set up by any change in the customary observances will not at once be visible, and partly because the 'pull' of the new models does not remain constant.

The people who accept one or the other new model of behaviour cannot at once assess all the implications of acceptance. They may understand roughly (though even this need not be true) that, say, worship of *Allah* and the observances of *kuti* are mutually exclusive, so that accepting the former must mean abandoning the latter; but they cannot anticipate certain more remote consequences entailed, for example, in the lack of emphasis, in Moslem ceremonial, on paternal authority, in the absence of specific assurances on the productivity of the land, or in the character of the new congregation which no longer coincides with the village community. Yet these consequences will eventually be felt, as strains of one kind or other and as problems requiring solution. The solution can only be achieved by further changes, either through readjusting the pre-existing modes of behaviour or through turning once more to the new model. Stated somewhat crudely, cultural change, once it makes the first breach, is carried on by its own momentum. But we must note that the 'pull' of the new model is itself altered in the process; for any previous response to it, entailing as it does strains and instability, also alters the way in which the people will now view the model, as a solution for hitherto non-existing difficulties, or as itself requiring remodelling. Thus adoption of Moslem inheritance follows logically when Moslem ceremonial (among other things) fails to sustain paternal authority; and Moslem worship is at some stage remodelled to recover the direct appeal to the deity for rain and fertility.

But these processes cannot really be reduced to a precise chronological sequence, the multiplicity of motives effective at any stage forbidding such a reconstruction. Nor can we isolate any first step,

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forced upon the people, from others that followed spontaneously. What was forced upon the people was essentially a total situation, at once political, economic, and religious; any step may be the first, nor need the others follow immediately.[1] Only theoretically can we conclude that they all hang together, though occasionally we can trace the nexus more firmly, even into the future, towards adjustments yet to come. 177

Let me illustrate this on an example bearing on the widest efficacy of Islam, its very success in proselityzing the Nupe. Coming as it did as a religion of conquerors and ruling class, it both endorsed the social barrier and provoked attempts at overcoming it. In keeping conversion loose and easy, and in utilizing the emphasis on learning, which, on an elementary level, was widely accessible, the Nupe turned Islam into a means of social mobility. But the result, a religious division cutting irregularly across the society, even across single communities, clearly presented new problems; and their solution took the form of a 'remodelling of the model'. The ('unorthodox') tolerance of Nupe Moslems towards pagans is one such reaction to a cleavage which, if it were allowed to retain its sharpness, would break up every community. Another, though it occurs in one case only, lies in that 'religious division of labour' between Moslems and pagans which we recorded from Kutigi. But consider also that the spreading of Islam must tend to obscure the class barrier which it formerly sustained and on which Nupe society is still based; and if one day Islam sweeps the whole country, that problem will arise with even greater acuteness. To some extent the commonly accepted distinction between grades of mallams tends to preserve or re-establish the class barrier; for the 'knowledge' which makes the 'true' mallam is more readily accessible to the leisured and wealthy than to the craftsman or peasant. However, the full consequences of this conflict are not yet visible. Indeed, we cannot predict if the conflict itself will stay; for extraneous changes (political or economic) may well weaken or remove the class barrier. Yet if it remains, the model of Islam might again show the solution, its sectarianism offering the possibility of diverse and even opposed religious alignments.

So much for the processes of change and 'contact'. As regards that end-state, it has become almost a dogma of many anthropologists that it always represents a unique cultural situation, something in the nature of a *'tertium quid'* which has no precise 177 182

[1] This should be taken literally. I found communities still observing the *gunnu*, where the economic co-operation of the large family group had disappeared (e.g. Doko or Mokwa); while in others, which had abandoned the *gunnu*, the old system of inheritance was only beginning to break down (e.g. Lemu).

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antecedents in the 'parent cultures' and invariably amounts to more than a mere 'fusion or mixing'. Rather, 'the clash and interplay of two cultures produce new things'.[1] In cultural changes 'old elements are abandoned and new ones developed in close and constant relation to the existing configuration'.[2] To quote Herskovits' summing up of this school of thought: these scholars hold that 'the arithmetic of culture contact is never a process of addition. . . . A culture of multiple origins is different from any bodies of tradition that have contributed to it. The dynamics of acculturation . . . are creative.'[3] In the terms of our subject matter we should have to admit that Nupe-Islam is not so-and-so much Nupe religion plus so-and-so much Islam but a fundamentally novel phenomenon, unprecedented, integrated, self-contained.

Now the processes we outlined, devious, piecemeal, involving partial adjustments and often unstable compromise, make it clear that their end-result is indeed a 'new thing'. Yet equally they suggest that it is not, at any stage, fully integrated or self-contained. Whichever way we understand 'integration', or for that matter its antithesis, the mere 'fusion or mixing', no summary judgment of this kind is possible.

Taken at its most concrete meaning, the integration of a cultural item in a new setting would imply that the respective modes of behaviour are performed regularly and in predictable situations. But clearly there are degrees of this regularity. The Moslem *salla* or the pseudo-Moslem *navũ* represent fully regular, predictable modes of behaviour; so do the Fast of Ramadhan, the daily prayers, and the observance of alms-giving. But Moslem-style divination or medical practices, the Moslem solemnization of kinship events, and the Moslem rules of preferential marriage, are much less regular and predictable. They represent ways of acting which people may or may not choose, having become established only as cultural 'alternatives', to borrow Linton's phrase.[4] The visits to the mosque are even more irregularly observed, while the concern with Islamic mythology or theology is purely sporadic if not exceptional.

Nor is the picture more uniform when we understand 'integration' to mean, more abstractly, a firm fit between the originally alien elements of culture and their new setting. This fit can only be of three kinds: it may be one of purpose, the alien elements exhibiting some rationally intelligible utility or appropriateness in the new setting; or it may be visible in the logical consistency

[1] B. Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change*, 1945, pp. 21, 25.
[2] R. Linton, *The Study of Man*, 1936, p. 360.
[3] M. J. Herskovits, *Man and his Work*, 1948, p. 534.
[4] Op. cit., p. 273.

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obtaining between the two; or the 'fit' may be psychological, in that the old and new modes of behaviour exhibit the same emotional 'tone' or 'ethos'.[1]

Undoubtedly, there is evidence for the nexus of utility or appropriateness, even though its character varies widely. The great ceremonials of Islam conspicuously serve political interests and the regulation of adolescence; equally they have been fitted into the cycle of routine and recreation. The daily prayers, the fast, and alms-giving have no such momentous part to play; yet precisely because they are inconsequential and depend on private decisions alone, they have come to exemplify adherence to the new creed in a manner both conspicuous and easy to assume. In other words, they serve as distinguishing marks, as badges of Islam, much as do the turban or other suggestive items of dress. Yet worship in the mosque rather than in the open, a flexible system of priestship rather than one based on inheritance or supernatural vocation, or the Moslem variants of marriage in the kindred have no particular utility. Indeed, worship in the village mosque tends to weaken the solidarity of the community which all other features of the social organization aim to uphold; while the inadequacy of the Moslem rules of widow marriage had to be corrected by a remodelling of the funeral customs.[2] Again, the Moslem funeral ceremonial fails to express the important social distinction between old age and youth.[3] And the muddled pseudo-Islamic mythology is surely nothing but an incongruous, valueless 'addition'. All we can say about the appropriateness of these novel practices is that they conform to the rules of Islam; which is only repeating that Islam has in fact been adopted, with all these features, whether they have an ulterior purposefulness or not.

Logical consistency, even the interest in simulating it, is widely absent: think of the employment, by the Mohammedan sovereigns, of the *ndakó gboyá* cult; of the *navũ* performed without any notion of or, for that matter, curiosity about the meaning of this ritual of fire; or of the preservation of the pagan marriages between grandmother and grandson by people otherwise consciously committed to Moslem practice.

Only on the plane of psychological effects is there a close and indeed convincing 'fit', the result, quite clearly, of selection and remodelling. Thus the mystic and ecstatic observances of Islam are absent; and the hectic, sexually excited mood of the *gani* or *navũ* merely duplicates the mood formerly evoked in the *gunnu*. Integration, then, is complete only where it bears on the ethos of

[1] For the theoretical basis of this argument see my *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, 1951, pp. 384–5 *et seq.*

[2] See above, p. 122.

[3] See above, pp. 129–30.

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177 182 Nupe religion; but integration here means persistence, so that in the one instance in which the adoption of the new creed is truly not a mere 'addition' it also ceases to be a 'new thing'.

It is hardly surprising that this 'fit' should apply to the emotional 'tone' of religion and should prove the tenacity of predispositions so deeply rooted in the personality. Even so, there can be no finality about it; this is only the picture as we see it today, and it is possible that further developments, or strains only slowly gathering weight, will bring a change here also. In a previous chapter I ventured a prediction of this kind.[1] Let me now add that traces of such a change are already visible. For the *navũ* is more violent than the *gunnu* or any traditional rite used to be, and focuses its violence more sharply. Also, it was left to the new ceremonial to embody the 'licensed liberties' of joking relationship, which are otherwise played out privately and sporadically. As we remember, they are enacted mainly between the sexes and between boys and older men, and hence set aside respect, relationships and rules of etiquette normally scrupulously observed. Thus publicly staged, the 'licensed liberties' clearly provide a gratification sharper and more consciously aggressive than traditional usage could have afforded. Here, then, the greater political tensions in the city and the greater strain set up by changing moral standards seem to demand this more explosive relief: certainly, the older 'ethos' would not have condoned it.

[1] See above, p. 226.

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Kede

634 *Conclusions.* We may say then, in conclusion, that economic
182 co-operation and community life only underline the political and tribal divisions which cut across Kede society. As integrative forces which could foster a solidarity pertaining to the political system at large, they fail. Only the ideological influences, myth and religion, succeed in this. They anchor the external political unit in more deeply rooted interests and sentiments. They add to political coercion the more subtle persuasion of supernatural arguments, of beliefs in the necessity and fore-ordination of the existing system.

634 I have been using the present tense with some liberty. It was
177 applied correctly if we are thinking of the last ten or fifteen years,
182 but inaccurately if we consider the immediate present and, above all, the future. The rite of the *Chain of Tsoede* is still performed annually, in completely Mohammedanized Muregi. The bull sacrifice at the *Ketsá* was performed when the present *Kuta* succeeded to the chieftainship; whether it will be repeated for his successor is open to doubt. The *Ndáduma*, at any rate, although still existing as a local rite, is no longer carried out by the Kede chief. We have spoken before of the decline of authority of the Kede chief. It may seem surprising that a chieftainship which had been forced to give up most of the qualities from which it formerly drew its strength should so easily discard these 'binding forces' of religion. The explanation lies, again, in the changed conception of Kede chieftainship. Kede rule has exchanged its dynamic and expanding nature for the secure, aquiescent authority under the Pax Britannica. It can dispense with the binding forces of religion, which used to uphold the autocratic rulership of a small minority; it can, above all, afford to discontinue a practice which, to the Mohammedan chiefs of Kede country, appears as a concession to their less enlightened subjects. Kede rule has thus paradoxically weakened itself in its new-found security. And in this the chiefs of Kede do not stand alone; this paradox is, I believe, a not uncommon feature of modern, static, Government-backed chieftainship in Africa.

The incipient dissolution of the 'binding force' of religion in the Kede State is only following in the wake of the general dissolution of the solidarity which it was meant to uphold. The economic development of the country led, as we have seen, to an extensive co-operation with outside groups and to the founding of colonies

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. 634 Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage 177 stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation 182 and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group, but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. The Evolution of the Kede State

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither 634 support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, 121 accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of one ethnic group by another.[1] Our data have shown political domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of paramount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'[2] and a gradual emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds that migration and colonization are never a result of over-population, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enterprise' which is absent in countries with over-population.[3] Can we accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final statement? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political role fully explained by this reference to psychological characteristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

[1] See F. Oppenheimer, op. cit.
[2] R. Lowie, op. cit., p. 40.
[3] A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
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Bida

Crafts of Bida

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IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

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The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

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Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

[Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

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[p. 139]

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Musuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukā-nyōū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunyu*—MAN 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds; this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

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sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralized political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *uddduma*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [36] Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [48] were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (Africa, VIII, 3).

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PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION

The description of the political system of modern Bida has illustrated the relation between the social structure of Nupe society and the new Native Administration, the points of harmony as well as of divergence and conflict. I have just formulated one of the graver conflicts; we recognize it as one of the central problems of this analysis, the problem of cultural and social diversity versus political unification. 178

Modern conditions have re-designed the cultural map of Nupe country. Roads, railways, and river steamers demarcate new areas of communication and intercourse. The scope of economic co-operation has widened immensely, far beyond the political boundaries of Nupe. Important trade centres, nuclei of a new, cosmopolitan Nigeria, with their large colonies of strangers, have arisen on railway lines, motor-roads, near river ports or river bridges: Badeggi, on the railway, is such an example, or Baro on railway and river, and Jebba where the railway bridge crosses the Niger. New cultural centres are forming in the villages which are the seats of District Heads, Native Courts, schools, dispensaries, and trading-posts of the big merchant companies of Nigeria. But this development above all emphasizes anew the cultural and social gulf between Bida and the country. Bida is more than ever the seat of 'civilization' and learning, art, and fashion, the residence of the wealthiest traders and of the new ruling class—the salaried officials of the Native Administration. Bida harbours the highest school of the Province, a hospital, the workshops of the Public Works Department which give employment to many, the large 'canteens' of the European trading companies. It represents again, on a new plane, the 'core' of the kingdom, the area of social life close to the 'powers that be'. Modern Nupe has re-defined the old conflict between cultural diversity and political unification, it has not eliminated it. In the political sphere the Government is attempting to do justice to this vital problem by admitting commoners and peasants to responsible offices in the central administration. I have ventured to point out certain weaknesses inherent in this experiment. But the question of the success or lack of success which is likely to meet this administrative experiment is less significant than the fundamental question which of the two principles of social and cultural development these administrative reforms are envisaging, a strengthening of unification and centralization, or support and preservation of the social identity of village communities and cultures. The former tendency has been the trend of the historical development of the Nupe state (as of any state); it has also become almost an accomplished fact in the other spheres of present-day development, in economic progress and in the centralization which is part of educational and health policy. The choice is thus, I think, in reality taken out of the hands of the Government. But whatever policy is adopted, it can, for the present, mean little more than a preliminary arrangement. The final solution cannot be found in the realm of political organization; it will arise—and this our survey of the political history of Nupe kingdom has taught us—from cultural commonness itself. One of the main instruments for achieving this cultural

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178 commonness in modern Nupe is planned *education*. A twofold plan of education: an ever-increasing spread of general education, disseminating the elements of modern civilization which so far have remained a prerogative of the few, among town people and villagers, people of rank and commoners alike; and also a reformulation of the higher education in the capital, so as to make it less specialized and bring it more into harmony with the culture of the country at large, to make it less an expression of exclusive, class-conscious 'town culture', and more an instrument of understanding for Nupe, writ large. Only when this development is complete will the rigid, exclusive class boundaries be dissolved; only then will the *tálaka*, the Poor One, be able fully to stand on his own feet, to have his share in the administration of his country, and to dispense finally with those links of clientship and patronage which so far have been his only weapons to overcome the vulnerability of his position. On this new plane the question of centralization *versus* independent local administration may then be reopened, and with more prospect of a permanent successful settlement. A peasant once said to me: 'I send all my children to school, then they will be able to read and they will know what it says on tax-receipts and fine-tickets. No more cheating or extorting money then!' Put it in this crude and a little aggressive manner, or call it education as a 'means of cultural unification', it means the same thing.

In the town and its rigidly stratified society our problem takes a slightly different form. The question how to transform exclusively political domination into a system with more equal, more 'democratic' distribution of political influence and responsibility reappears as the problem of social mobility. The social mobility of the Nupe class system, restricted as it was under traditional conditions, has been restricted further and at the same time diverted into new channels by the modern development. Of the vast bureaucracy of the kingdom only comparatively few ranks and offices could find a place in the new society and could thus maintain together with the symbols of rank their social significance. True there are a number of newly-created offices and posts under the newly-created Native Administration: the post of *Ma'aji*, Treasurer, posts as teachers in Middle School and elementary schools, posts of clerks, scribes, N.A. 'Mallams', messengers attached to the various offices, and so forth. But the more important of these modern posts demand modern education, which at present has been enjoyed only by a small minority. It is a convincing proof of the fact that this minority is still to a large extent drawn from the classes of the nobility that almost all important N.A. offices, down to scribes and messengers, are in the hands of what have been for a century the privileged classes of Nupe.

War, the paramount factor of promotion and inter-class mobility, has disappeared; free competition, individual success, are almost excluded as channels of a social career. The system of offices is more exclusive to-day than it had been in feudal Nupe. The comprehensive scheme of promotion which used to embrace the whole scale of Nupe society is reduced to insignificance by the exigencies of specialized training and by

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the changed conception of office and responsibility. The Administration itself is undecided in its attitude to the question of promotion and career. Certain distinguished state offices were granted in accordance with the traditional conception of a social career, that is, to men who had attained a high position on the native rank scale. Such are the appointments of *Maiyaki*, *Ndeji*, and the Town Councillors of Bida. But other offices have been bestowed *ad personam*, for special ability, irrespective of the traditional rank or promotion. Thus, a former Head Teacher of Bida Middle School was raised to the position of something like a 'Chief Secretary' of the Emirate, and given the (Mallam-) title *Naibi*. Or the *Nágya*, a member of the *gitsú* nobility, has been made a member of the Emir's council, although according to traditional practice membership of the *Etsu*'s council was reserved for the *sarakiži*, the military or civil ranks. The only promotion with universal application (and sure of universal appreciation) is promotion in salary. Fixed wages have become almost the only officially recognized symbols of social career. How then will class distinctions and inter-class movement re-establish themselves in modern Nupe? How will the native society adjust its conception of those paramount values in their cultural life, promotion, and status to the new situation?

The attitude of the people towards these questions is ambiguous and undecided—the typical attitude towards changing values. It is interesting to study the attitude of the young men of to-day, including those who have enjoyed the highest education the Emirate can supply, in Bida Middle School, towards the occupations which are open to them. It seems of little account to them whether they obtain the position of a clerk, an office messenger, or some other obscure post, or whether they are called to fill the post of a teacher or a responsible political official, as long as their appointment carries a salary. Again and again men of intelligence and high standing have said to me: 'All our native ranks and titles mean nothing to-day; what has meaning are only offices under the N.A., posts which carry real influence and wealth.' Yet it would be incorrect to infer from such statements as this that the traditional system of ranks and the whole concept of promotion and mobility are losing their vitality and significance. The class distinctions of Nupe are reduced to-day to distinctions of status devoid of their former economic and political significance; what seems to have remained intact is only the outer shell, a rigid empty structure. Yet I have often been surprised to see how little the meaning of this structure has been affected.

When I was in Bida a rich trader was just making all possible efforts to entrench himself in the position of a favourite of the king, and he was put down accordingly by 'those who knew' as the next candidate for promotion to a *saraki* rank. I have seen three vacancies occur among the higher ranks of the nobility; I have witnessed the ensuing party feuds, the passionate play of interests, the bartering for support and influence —all these signs of a changed social atmosphere which can be characteristic only of a system still intensely alive. And one of those enlightened, sophisticated informants who deprecated the traditional ranks and titles was the hero of the following story: I have just mentioned that the

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178 former Head Teacher of Bida Middle School, a very able (though unscrupulous) man, had been attached for some time to the Administration in a very distinguished official position, with the title of *Naibi*. When he was dismissed from his post for malversation the new Head Teacher definitely expected to be appointed *Naibi* and even approached his superior officer officially to help him secure this post, to which, according to precedent, he felt entitled. This example is deeply characteristic. It shows that that fundamental trend in Nupe society is still alive: it reveals the anxious search for traces of a routine of promotion to which the people had adjusted their life, and the eagerness to rediscover in the new society in which they are living the paramount social value of their culture.

If the restriction of social mobility and the reduction in the number of official positions under modern rule have caused this moral uncertainty in the ruling classes, indirectly they threaten to unsettle the morale of the people at large. Not only because they render promotion from the lowest orders of the society so difficult, but because they have thrown out of gear the whole machinery of inter-class relationship. Many of the channels through which public opinion—the desires and grievances of the people—used to find its way to the ears of the rulers of the country have been rendered useless; clientship and similar forms of political attachment can no longer promise protection when the large majority of the men whom native society had endowed with status and rank can no longer claim any official standing. Or rather, the channels still exist and still continue to function in their way, but they have been forced underground, and they function in the subterranean sphere of intrigues and scheming. The Government, supporting those whom it has appointed, cannot stoop to recognize an authority resting only on the fluid, ill-defined loyalties involved in patronage and clientship. The former wide distribution of political influence, combined with the system of comprehensive promotion, had secured a fairly efficient 'balance of power', and this 'balance of power' the powerless masses could turn to their advantage through the institution of clientship. The rigid present-day system ranges its authority exclusively behind the few men to whom it entrusts its offices; it must brand all other efforts at political influence as disturbing and even dangerous.

I have a concrete case in mind: a man of highest status in the native society, highly educated (in the Mohammedan sense), who was regarded by a large number of people, in the town as well as in the districts, as their patron and adviser in many questions. However, holding no official position, he was regarded by the *Etsu* and his entourage as an interloper, an unwelcome meddler in state affairs; and an over-cautious Administrator described him officially as a 'subversive element'. In a sense, he was that; he had been forced into this position, since the influence which he attempted to exercise in favour of his clients and followers had to work outside, and not infrequently against, the established system. Yet had the rigidity of the present system not excluded him from an official position I have no doubt that he would have been able to use his influence over the people to the benefit of the country.

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I need not enlarge upon the dangers of such subterranean activity—subterranean through no fault of the people themselves. The terrible flare-up in the witchcraft trial of 1931 is a lesson not easily to be forgotten. A remedy? I have suggested one above, couched modestly in a footnote: bring these channels into the open daylight; let the people themselves elect, periodically, at least in Bida town, their official representatives—Town Councillors in official nomenclature, People's Representatives in a wider sense.

That the people are equal to this task I need not elaborate further; nor would the group of likely candidates be too large and thus render an election difficult. The dangers involved in the solution which I suggest—the dangers of faction politics and intrigues—would be easily controlled once the whole network of relationships lies on the surface. However, one might object to my suggestion on the ground that it tends to keep alive the serf-like link of patronage which should rather be discouraged. To this I would reply, first: the personal link of patronage, little as it may appeal to the modern moral conscience, is for the present the only link of political representation that promises success. For the masses of the Nupe people as they are to-day, unenlightened, only too conscious of their weak position, economically and socially, it would be futile to attempt to find representatives in their own midst—they would be puppets in the hands of the experienced and infinitely better equipped ruling group. And second: a solution such as I have suggested would be most easily adapted to improved social conditions, that is, to a community with a universally higher level of enlightenment. Much more easily, in fact, than a system with carefully selected representatives whose position of confidence among the people is never put to a test. For the solution here suggested looks towards the future; it embodies one of the most vital elements on which the social achievements of the native peoples will finally depend, namely, political education—that training in political responsibility to the achievement of which the colonial policy of this country is irrevocably pledged.

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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpã* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

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233 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evi-
178 dently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and
233 from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the
471 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappear-
177 ance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readi-
ness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

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type of cultivation only would lay himself open at once to the criticism of his fellow farmers. As regards cassava, it is known to have little nutritive value—'only yam or millet or sorghum make a man strong'. Both crops may, however, provide a useful stopgap for the time between the harvest of the main crops.

We have said earlier in this book that the complexity of the agricultural system of the Nupe is due partly to the close contact they have had with other cultures, in particular with neighbouring groups. We realize here that this was more than an occasional contact, and more also than some obscure process of diffusion. It was to a large extent part of that assimilation and cultural 'learning' that goes hand in hand with intensive political unification of long standing and all that it entails—regular intercourse, a wide net of transport and traffic, and an ever-extending economic co-operation. As the kingdom brought together peoples from the marsh-land and from the inland forests, farmers from the 'yam countries' and farmers from the 'millet districts', it made them learn from each other and at the same time utilize each other's special resources. Assimilation and specialization are both features of an expanding economic area. We have, in fact, a threefold correlation; for these two features involve another, third, factor: a large-scale system of organized distribution, that is, trade and marketing.

FARMING TECHNIQUE

Like most African tribes the Nupe practise hoe-agriculture. They use two kinds of hoes, a large heavy type called *zuku*, and a small type called *dugba*. The *zuku* has a heavy handle, about 16 in. long, bent somewhat like a hook, into the angle of which the broad shovel-like blade (8 in. long) is fitted. The *dugba* has a straight handle, 20 in. long, with a less broad, slightly bent blade inserted at the end. The heavy hoe is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, the lighter hoe mainly for weeding and other less heavy work. The Nupe also use a long bush-knife, *gada* (now mostly of European manufacture), for cutting grain stalks or digging out yam.

When using the heavy hoe the farmer stands across the ridge he is making, with legs wide apart, the body bent forward, and, gripping the handle of the hoe with both hands, he lifts it to the level of his head and shoulders and brings it down again between his legs, with one swing digging up the earth and throwing it behind him on to the mound or ridge he is preparing. When the mound or ridge has reached the proper height, he moves a few steps forward to repeat this action, until the ridge extends to the edge of the field. Having finished one ridge, the farmer turns round to throw up the next, parallel, ridge.

Nupe cultivation works both with large round mounds and low long ridges; the mounds are 2–3 ft. high and about 3 ft. in diameter, and are arranged in long rows; the mounds are spaced (measured from top to top) about 4–5 ft. in the same row and 6 ft. from row to row. The ridges are 1 ft. high and are drawn, more or less straight, right across the field in parallel lines about 3 ft. apart. The two types of cultivation are used

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eating together and constitutes one *ménage* coincides in fact with the *efakó*-unit. The *efakó* head further pays the tax for his co-workers and is also expected to make himself responsible for establishing them socially when they have reached full adulthood, i.e. he will enable them to get married, by paying their bride-price. By allotting to the co-workers from earliest youth an individual plot for *bucá* work or allowing them the time for other *bucá* enterprises, he also puts them in the position of earning an independent income. They use it, as I have said, for their personal wants over and above those catered for by the family head—what we may call the small luxuries of life. When they desire to leave the *efakó* group and set up for themselves the family head finally provides the members of his group with the necessary 'capital' in the form of the tools which they may take with them, food for the first year while their new land does not yet bear crops, and, above all, in form of the parcel of family land which he allots to them as their own property. In order to do all this the family head must be able not only to draw on regular supplies of agricultural produce from the family land but also to avail himself of certain commodities of exchange and that universal medium of exchange, money. He must plan his money expenditure and accumulate reserves which can alone enable him to pay the large bride-price (which is always in money) when the time comes. The resources of the family working-unit thus gain the significance of capital proper, invested in the maintenance of labour; without it, without the prospect of fulfilling all these economic obligations towards the members of the working-unit, the *efakó* group cannot be maintained satisfactorily.

Here we come back to the decline or disintegration of the family working-unit under modern conditions which we have outlined in the beginning of this section. Now, every co-operative group must to some extent reckon with a periodical and temporary disintegration, that is, with the necessity of periodically readjusting its body of workers, replacing those who have died or are too old or who for other reasons desire to leave the group and to admit new, young members in their place. This is done through the twofold mechanism of inheritance and succession, and of release with regard to members who leave the group to work on their own. We shall examine inheritance and succession later; here it will suffice to say that in the Nupe system of inheritance the family farm goes to the relation next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son (in the classificatory sense). As regards the release of members from the group, the rule used to be that junior members remained in the *efakó* until they had more than two wives and more than two or three children. In the last five to ten years, however, many large *efakó* groups were dissolved after the death of the family head, and the family land, instead of being worked jointly by the remaining members of the family under the new head, was divided up among the various individuals who now work independently each on his own land. Moreover, nowadays young men who have just married frequently decline to stay in the *efakó*-unit and demand to be given a separate farm. I have noted many cases of this kind, in all parts of Nupe, in which the dissolution of the *efakó* group occurred between six and ten years ago.

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How are we to explain this comparatively sudden change? Viewing it from the general economic point of view all the advantages seem to be on the side of a large labour-unit: our discussion of the agricultural technique of the country has taught us that a large labour group represents, in Nupe, the only means of cultivating a large variety of both useful and profitable crops. Moreover, a large *efakó*-unit assures a certain measure of leisure to the family head and the old men in general, by enabling them to leave a large proportion of the actual work to the younger generation. It assures also a better distribution of responsibility, counting more adults among its members than does the small working-unit. It utilizes more fully the important incentive of competition and is, finally, of great educational value; for only in large labour-units are the young boys likely to work regularly in the company of others of their own age.

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But if from point of view of group efficiency and security the large working-unit appears superior to the small (say) one- or two-men 'group', it is not necessarily so when looked at from the viewpoint of the individual. Take the question of leisure and distribution of responsibility. In one of the instances in which I found a large *efakó*-unit having been dissolved recently (six years ago), after the death of the family head, I was given this as the reason of the change: the new family head, the eldest of five brothers, had availed himself liberally of the privilege of leisure which his position implied, and frequently went hunting while the others were working on the farm. Now, while they had accepted the same arrangement under the old family head, their father, they declined to accord this privilege to their eldest brother, and preferred to dissolve the whole unit and work each for himself. To-day, working on their own, the individual family members have a comparatively larger measure of freedom and leisure, which they are free to use as they like. They can use their own discretion in planning the farm-work: of the five brothers two have taken to spend their spare time in making mats, a leisure-time occupation which, they assured me, is financially very advantageous to them; one has left the village; and the family head himself can still spend part of his time in hunting. Against the considerations of group efficiency thus stand individual considerations of gain, which provide another, and in some respects very different, standard of appreciation by which to measure the value of the large labour-unit. The word 'gain' should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Freedom of movement, freedom to choose a different profession (we remember, for example, the openings which the political life of the capital offered to young men of adventurous spirit), even freedom to enjoy one's leisure independent of the dictates of family requirements—these spiritual values appear under certain circumstances as tempting to the younger generation as does the prospect of material gain.

The two standards of appreciation will coincide where the *efakó* group is in a position to guarantee the satisfaction of all needs and demands which the group-members might feel. Nupe family co-operation in farm-work, once apparently more satisfactorily adjusted, is now failing in this respect. This failure can be attributed to two different develop-

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ments: to an increase in the needs and demands on the part of the individual members with which the system of family co-operation failed to cope; or to a decline in the efficiency of the group to maintain its former standards of maintenance. The Nupe *efakó* system has, in fact, failed on both accounts. As regards the first, a large variety of new needs and wants, temptations and values have spread, primarily from the town, and have begun to transform the original peasant culture; as regards the second, the family head is to-day frequently unable to meet out of the family income two financial demands which are regarded as essential to the *efakó* concept, the payment of the bride-price and the payment of tax for the individual members of the *efakó* group.

Certain of the influences which have thus led to the decline of the large working-unit are no doubt due to factors of modern culture change. Yet it would be wrong to regard the change in the structure of the working-unit merely as a result of the outside influence of culture contact. The structural change forms part of a much wider phenomenon; it is the result of an intrinsic economic development, namely, the readjustment between productive organization and needs existing in the society. If the change were due exclusively to culture contact we should expect to find the larger working-unit preserved only in backward, 'unsophisticated', districts. This is not the case. The table on p. 243 showed that three households out of fifty had working-units composed of more than four adults. Of these three households only one belongs to a backward area—the household of the chief of Doko. The two other examples come both from one of the most progressive places in Nupe, Lemu, and from a group of farmers who, as mentioned before, have but recently undertaken the cultivation of a new commercial crop, red pepper, to replace another commercial crop, ground-nuts, which had not proved an economic success. A large working group is essential to the cultivation of this new crop. In these two households the young men have remained in the *efakó*, content with their position, while the family head, in turn, is able to provide bride-price and tax-money. Here, then, culture contact so far from being responsible for the dissolution of the large working-unit has on the contrary supplied a type of production which enables the large working-unit to maintain itself; paradoxically, culture contact has placed the *efakó*-unit in a position to satisfy those very demands and needs which culture contact has newly imposed upon the society. However, these instances from Lemu are exceptional: neither in Mokwa, the centre of ground-nut cultivation, nor in Kutigi, where cotton is grown on a comparatively large scale, has the large *efakó* group survived. The exceptional cases which I have discovered are too few to warrant a more far-reaching, systematic explanation. Moreover, whereas in this case attractions and temptations appealing to the younger generation are partly responsible for the social change, individual differences must play a considerable part. We can only tentatively point to a certain negative evidence: the absence of some of these 'temptations' in Lemu which have made the younger generation in Mokwa and Kutigi claim an early economic independence. Lemu is neither a centre of native trade, nor does a profitable alternative

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241 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-
592 time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the
178 town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supple-
476 mented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first
476 and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young
241 men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a
435 day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied
with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of
these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes.
178 One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is
the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have
lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-
stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the
Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters
have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen,
their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure
of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the
country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger.
The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
[437] Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes
which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the black-
smiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facili-
ties of transport between town and country have also deflected some of
the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to
the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a
shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final,
more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks
smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the
former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'main-
tenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine
the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-
operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
326 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system
467 —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and
grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as
well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although
the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more
closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system
extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various inde-
pendent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the
result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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326 467 prevent friction in his body of workers. He is also the agency through which important large orders reach the group. On a smaller scale this task also falls to the heads of the other blacksmith groups. But in the case of the guild-head it gains special significance; for these 'royal blacksmiths' worked for the largest customer of the country, the Nupe court. They could be certain of a constant large demand, e.g. for tools for the farm-hands working for the king, or various iron implements needed in the royal household, for horse bits and stirrups for the king's horses, or flint-locks for the guns of the bodyguard. These orders are given by the king or court officials to the *Dokodza*, who then distributes the work among the craftsmen of his group according to their capacity and skill, or, if the order proves too large, among the workers in other guild sections as well. The *Dokodza* also receives the payment for this work, and keeps the largest share; the rest of the money is divided equally among the whole guild section, whether they have been working on this particular job or not.[1] These royal orders have been greatly reduced recently, not only because many of the implements needed are obtained nowadays from the European stores, but also because many of the requirements of the royal household are now catered for by the Public Works Department in Bida. But when the present *Etsu* built his new house, in 1935, he ordered nails and brackets for all doors from the *Dokodza* people.

326 467 178 The part played by the guild-head (and to a lesser extent by the sectional heads) in providing labour and capital for his group explains the authority which he exercises over his fellow workers, and also his ability to act in certain circumstances as their 'financier'. On the other hand, the close co-operative organization of the guild section reveals itself as a device to meet these regular demands upon the production of the group. Here we can attempt to explain why the smaller guild sections in Bida (and similarly the village groups of blacksmiths) have suffered more severely under modern economic changes than did the *Dokodza* group. The size of the groups is itself significant. Only the privileged group of the 'royal blacksmiths' evolved a large-scale professional organization; the other groups, which did not have the same access to constant large-scale demands upon production, remained small, and more loosely organized. Now, we can assume that these smaller groups also obtained formerly a sufficient demand for their products from various sources. It may also be that their sources have failed sooner, and more completely, than the source with which the *Dokodza* people could reckon—the continued orders from the royal household are evidence of this. But these unequal changes are less significant in their direct effect upon production (which may be negligible)[2] than in their indirect effect,

[1] How, on the other hand, the authority of the guild-head can be adapted to new situations is illustrated in the following instance. When I went to inspect the furnaces of the iron-ore miners near Bida, I had to obtain a guide through the *Dokodza*. On our return to Bida the guide at once showed the money which I had paid him to the guild-head; though he was allowed to keep it he could not have done so without first informing the guild-head, who could have deducted a part of the money.

[2] The order for nails and brackets for the royal house which we mentioned above brought in only 2s. and a gift of food.

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through the medium of labour organization. The royal orders, though at present small and irregular, still mobilize the group organization of the *Dokodza* people in the traditional way. The general weakening of the guild organization brought about by recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild-head and sectional heads, has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller, and already weaker, guild sections. In their case the group organization has, in fact, been reduced beyond the margin of safety. We have seen that Nupe blacksmith work demands comparatively large group co-operation for a successful maintenance of labour (in all its aspects). In a weakened organization, a markedly reduced co-operative group, maintenance of labour becomes increasingly difficult. This is what happened in the case of the smaller blacksmith groups. And this difficulty, while not sufficient in itself to disrupt the labour organization, would yet weaken its resistance to the effects of economic change—a decline in trade, the competition of European goods—effects which (at least for the time being) have passed by the larger and more strongly organized section.

We can quote several instances of this: the division of labour which enables a workshop, say, of four men, to continue work while two of the men prepare charcoal is impossible in a small working unit, and a valuable working day, possibly in the busiest time of the year, must be sacrificed. Or a workshop may have to interrupt its work when iron ore runs out and new raw material has to be fetched from the iron-ore miners—a task which, in large-scale co-operation, can be performed by one man for a number of workshops without deranging the work of the group. I have even witnessed cases in which work had been interrupted, or reduced to small repairs, because the workers had no money to buy raw materials; in a large co-operative group money would have been found more easily, especially with the help of the guild-head. In Kutigi I saw one of the two local blacksmith workshops left dilapidated for a whole year because the workers could not muster sufficient labour. The most conspicuous example of all is that of the iron-ore miners who had let their means of production, their furnaces, fall into disuse.

BRASS- AND SILVERSMITHS

The Nupe brass-smiths—*tswata muku*—reside almost exclusively in Bida. The only place outside Bida where brass-smiths have settled is Kacha, the rich trading-place, where these craftsmen from Bida hoped to find a profitable market. There are two groups of brass-smiths in Bida, one in the quarter of *Etsu* Masaba and one in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. The latter has lost its former importance. In technical skill both groups are equal, as I could test for myself; as regards work and design of the traditional type the group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter seems the more efficient. Yet its decline, unmerited though it was, is not difficult to understand. It was partly due to political factors. The group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter flourished during the régime of *Etsu* Bello, who was of the dynasty associated with this part of the town, and also under *Etsu*

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306 time 5d. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
442 the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
439 with his daily wages of 1½d., ever to attain this position. In a few cases I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

306 Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
442 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
467 in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'maintenance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Maji*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the
[434] *Maji* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

306 All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
467 the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
178 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry. With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

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has also disappeared. The result is a complete disintegration of the guild system. The guild-head, no longer able to act as financier and contractor, has lost his position of authority; as his contribution to the productive organization of the group was concerned exclusively with these financial and credit operations, the very *raison d'être* of a guild-head has disappeared. This is evident in the manner in which the *Maji* is treated by the other craftsmen; no one pays the slightest attention to him. Since he is too old now to earn money, he is supported by his son —but this is entirely a family matter, and in no way concerns the professional group at large. He receives no gifts or shares in the profits, not so much as an occasional present of kola-nuts, which even in the greatly weakened guild organization of the weavers still marks the privileged position of the guild-head. If I have called this change in the productive organization of the beadworkers a decline and disintegration, it is also felt as such by the people themselves. To them, it appears as the sad decline of a once highly respected and well-organized craft: as one of them said, 'the beadworkers to-day live from hand to mouth; their *Maji* has no longer any authority; theirs is an unlucky trade' (*gwa ɛi*, lit. an unlucky hand).

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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own. 463 592

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows. 463 178 282 467

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand. 294 [404] [482]

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533 he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy him-
467 self a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the wood-
[322 workers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable
435] wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever
533 taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain
467 bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be
178 paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of
533 limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic
545 style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

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pairs of broadly contrasted categories of wide applicability and 787
with four series of eight, which are relatively easy to remember. In interpreting these series, the diviner will always take into account whether his client is a man or a woman. Thus, if the sign to be interpreted belongs to series 1 (meaning 'success') and series 4 ('concerning women'), and occurs in the consultation of a man, the diviner will conclude that his client will be successful in finding a wife. If the same combination occurs in the case of a female client, it will probably mean that she will be prosperous in business. If the sign belongs to series 1 and 3 ('concerning men'), and occurs in the case of a male client, the latter will 'gain reputation and rank'. If the sign belongs to series 2 (meaning 'misfortune') and 4 ('concerning women') and occurs in the case of a female client, it might mean that she will have a difficult pregnancy, and so forth.

It is clear that in this flexible system of divination the diviner will be guided by the particular case of his client much more fully than is his pagan colleague; in fact, the system of divination itself acknowledges the importance at least of the sex of the client. Also, the diviner has several methods of calculation at his disposal and is free to choose the less complicated one provided it still offers a plausible prophecy. This is borne out by the existence of an optional, final rule which reduces the whole system of divination to a simple mechanical procedure. This rule lays down that all signs which have a single dot at the top and a double dot at the base, so that they 'point away' from the diviner, bear an adverse prophecy; while all signs of the opposite design, 'pointing inward', are propitious. If the diviner uses this simplified method exclusively he will consider only the 'houses' that bear on the client's question and phrase his reply accordingly. In a consultation I watched the diviner was asked if the client would recover some goods that had been stolen. The diviner looked at 'house' 2, meaning 'wealth', at 'house' 9, meaning 'voyage' (since the goods had been 'carried away'), at 'house' 12, 'enemy', and at 'houses' 13 and 14, implying 'success'. The signs at 2 and 13 were inconclusive; the signs at 9 and 12 pointed outward; only the sign at 14 had a propitious meaning. The answer was, quite plausibly, that it was no good looking for the thieves; the client might be successful if he could follow them; but this was difficult since they had by then left the town with their loot.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nupe sand-divining is the 787
contrast between its pretentious theoretical framework and its 182
primitive and slipshod application in practice. In some respects 178
the 'theory' simply evaporates in the 'practice', as in the high-sounding Arabic nomenclature which gives way to common Nupe

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787 expressions or in the astrological notions of which no use is ever
182 made. The practice is clearly meant to cope with the relevant
178 problems and interests of Nupe social life; and these, let us note, are now typical, not only of a Mohammedan community, but also of a highly urbanized one. There is no longer any mention of rain, of the prospects of hunting, or of the influence of *kuti*; instead, we find references to 'writing and prayer', to mallams and barber-doctors, to 'the whole town in strife', and the strong emphasis on travel and trade, including travel and trade 'concerning women'.

The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of *hati* and its practical application suggests once more an attempt to assimilate the Mohammedan system to local conditions. The attempt is crude and unambitious, stopping far short of anything like a true synthesis; rather, any feature which cannot readily be assimilated is left on one side and only nominally acknowledged. Occasionally even this bare acknowledgement is discarded, as is shown in this example. One diviner, able to read his Arabic book on divination, discovered in it a new rule which distinguished between 'fixed' and 'movable' stars and operated with series of seven and the corresponding permutations. The diviner frankly admitted that he did not fully understand the rule: consequently he simply ignored it, not even borrowing the new nomenclature.

7. CONCLUSIONS: DREAM INTERPRETATION

787 I have called the guidance offered by divination mechanical and of a case-to-case kind. The preceding discussion will have borne out this description. Nupe divination is concerned less with foreknowledge in its own right than with resolving the problems and obscurities of the moment. The diviner can discover and disentangle some of the hidden influences which are at work always and everywhere, and can to that extent predict—piecemeal, and illuminating only the immediate future: he cannot uncover any more embracing design. Indeed, as we know, there is no such design in this non-committal and fundamentally amoral religion. Yet within the limits set to it divination has a part to play, providing some of the certainty and guidance required for provident action. We may call Nupe divination a concession or compromise; for as its scope is so restricted by the logic of Nupe religious thought, the fact that it exists at all, is a concession exacted by the practical needs of human life.

Let us note that religion itself adds to these needs. We spoke of the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought which crowds the universe with supernatural agencies overlapping in their effects and multiplies the supernatural aids, so that their appropriateness

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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makes a younger brother or, in the absence of surviving brothers, the eldest brother's son the main heir, excluding wives and daughters. It must be borne in mind that the main property in rural Nupe is land, worked co-operatively by a 'house', that is, by the male members of the extended family—a man, his younger brothers, and his and their sons.[1] The traditional rules of inheritance thus prevent the fragmentation of land and keep intact the large labour team bound to it; for the land descends together with the headship of the family group, and thus with the command over the 'house' and labour team.[2] The acceptance of the Islamic rules of inheritance would change all this: the land would be progressively fragmented, the labour team broken up, and the headship of large families would disappear. But the Nupe have not turned to the new system in summary fashion; they still exclude wives and daughters from inheritance and largely kept intact the succession to the titular headship of the 'house'. But that most critical innovation, the division of landed property among sons, has steadily been gaining ground. It is important to note, however, that this is not simply a result of the pressure of Islam. I have shown elsewhere how the political and economic changes which began with the Fulani conquest and continue to the present day encouraged individual as against family enterprise and deprived the productive organization of the large family group of its former economic advantages.[3] My point now is that the 'individualistic' type of inheritance exemplified in Islam was also the type the new situation demanded, so that the changed outlook which happened to coincide with the impact of Islam provided additional motives for its acceptance, or for the acceptance of the way of life it represents.

In a wider sense the mere presence of the new religion in such circumstances answered the 'demand of the situation'. The political and economic events which were disrupting family co-operation also assailed the whole authority of family heads and their hold over the younger generation. In consequence the latter, sons or younger brothers of men still pagan, were turning away from the traditional cults (and are doing so even today), not for any particular benefits they were expecting of Islam, but because there was logic in the mere 'turning-away'; for this meant abandoning religious practices which, more or less openly, stood for the *status quo*, for parental authority and an outmoded family structure. The great appeal of the *navũ*, which concedes greater freedom to

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, chap. III.

[2] This situation is somewhat modified among the craftsmen in the town (see op. cit., chap. XIV). The conclusions drawn further on, however, apply to the labour teams of craftsmen as much as of peasants.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 124, 374–6.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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794 youth, or of the *salla*, which is silent on issues of family authority, is the obverse of this picture.

[178] Here I am repeating facts mentioned previously, though the emphasis is now not on the 'vulnerability' of the older cults in the face of change, but on their dislodgment by the new religion in the country.[1] Islam, as we have seen, proved the stronger mainly because these other changes had prepared the ground; it was a beneficiary of the social upheaval as much as a cause contributing to it. Differently expressed, Islam acted in the manner of a new model, inviting to be followed since it happened to appear at a critical moment, when older norms were breaking down. To be sure, it was a model doubly inviting; it both typified upper-class behaviour and offered alternatives for usages no longer satisfactory, and hence placed a premium on non-conformism. Without it, the dissatisfactions might not have crystallized so easily and the process of change would have been more erratic. As it happened, they found a ready focus or 'model'.

794 We turn to the final aspect of the Moslem 'way of life', the attitude of the believer towards other creeds. I have called Nupe 186 religion tolerant. Islam, as we know it from other parts of the world, is the exact opposite. It has all the self-righteousness and intransigence of a fervently proselytizing creed; and it lays claim not only to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth but also to an ultimate ascendancy over all other religions—to the 'inheritance of the earth', promised to the believers and meant to be secured by secular domination and 'victory in the field'.[2] In Africa, where Islam now faces pagan peoples as it did in its early history, this claim to supremacy must stand in a literal sense, meaning the superiority of believers over utter unbelievers, of people who have seen the light over mere barbarians, and of Lords and Masters over some lower species of humanity. In the Sudan, for example, this attitude is well marked. But in Nupe there is, by and large, little trace of it.

Undoubtedly, all Moslems pride themselves on being true believers and many, more or less contemptuously, look down upon the pagans. But as I mentioned before, scholarly mallams will yet frankly admit their interest in the pagan cults; few would consider it incongruous or invidious to discuss, in a purely academic spirit, the beliefs and practices of the 'unbelievers'; and the average Nupe Moslem views them as tolerantly. Nor would a Mohammedan bar all social intimacy with pagans (as I have seen it done in half-Mohammedanized parts of the Sudan) or decline to visit them in their houses or receive their visits in his. Even friendship occurs

[1] See above, pp. 97–114.
[2] See D. S. Margulies, *Mohammed*, 1939, pp. 67–8.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child [348 428] inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is 634 situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under 669 allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above 634 all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the 669 river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company 648 campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The 634 *Kuta* lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of 634 modern government has not been an unqualified success. Admin- 178 istrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

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5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

634 178 by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

634 565 563 The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of The dancers" — A Bida brass spinning Toy. FF52 Nupe FF52 Bida

524
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326 The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery
[433] made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental
326 changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves
● 178 to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine
[786] hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The
323 furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

Text continued on page 143

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made :—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukã-nyãã* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunya*—MAN 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds; this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.[1] Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

The second aspect of the preparation embodied in the age-grade system is the training of the adolescent, through discipline and certain concrete activities, in the tasks and duties which await him in adult life, and in the values and incentives which he will have to make his own. In the village this preparation represents a first step towards a final social career; in Bida it mostly implants in the mind of the adolescent values and incentives, as it were, *in abstracto*, without promising equally their fulfilment in later life. It teaches people who will never share in directing the fate of their country to appreciate, and make their own, the motives and values which govern the conduct of those who do. It imparts, if not claims to responsible citizenship, yet its spirit.

THE MEANING OF NUPE LIFE

If we compare Nupe religious teaching with the teaching implied in the age-grade system we find that the two educational institutions supplement each other in many respects and that, between them, they take in the whole field of 'education for citizenship'. The Mallam school offers promotion to one social plane; the age-grade association practises promotion in the framework of a complex scale of steps and grades. The promotion afforded by religious education is 'real', in the sense that it involves social privileges in adult life; that practised in the age-grades is fictitious, even vicarious, and concerns mental readiness rather than concrete achievements. Religious education, finally, creates a loosely organized professional group and at the same time fosters a much wider psychological unity, which embraces the whole of Nupe society, across tribal and class boundaries. The age-grades create an intensive solidarity, but only in a very narrow framework, and give tribal and class boundaries a wide berth. Common to both religious education and the age-grades is the social upward trend, the motive of rise and promotion. This upward trend appears indeed as the paramount motive in Nupe cultural life. If it is possible to reduce a whole culture to a single formula, to a fundamental unitary *ethos*, we find it in this *leitmotif* of

[1] Cf. F. C. Bartlett, in *The Study of Society*, 1939, p. 43: 'A specially interesting question is: if cooperation is established in one respect, when and how far does this help individual members of the groups concerned to cooperate in other respects?'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Nupe education. No aspect of culture affords closer access to the paramount cultural motives and values. For education not only teaches openly the specific aims and conceptions of life accepted by the society, but reveals them also indirectly, in the motives and conceptions which it utilizes to call forth the desired response.

Is, then, the reverse equally true? is behaviour that does not conform to this conception of life met with public disapproval? One might indeed ask if Nupe culture did not reserve some legitimate place within its framework for individuals to whom its dominant trend was uncongenial, and who represent what some anthropologists have called 'deviants' from the type of personality which the society regards as so highly desirable.[1] I must admit that I have found no conspicuous instances of such 'deviant' types. But we can guess the public response towards such social or cultural 'failures' from certain occasional incidents: for an attitude that belies the upward trend, and this dynamic aspect of self-advancement, is indeed regarded as a 'failure'; such individuals would be dismissed by the people with a mental shrug—'*u de kokari à*', 'he makes no effort'. As the Nupe state undertakes to govern the moral life of the people and to co-ordinate rigidly their conceptions of right and wrong, so its education attempts a complete unification of types of personality.

Yet successful suppression in normal life may only mean that the 'deviant' type is forced into abnormality and will reveal itself in psycho-pathological cases. I have admitted in the first chapter the scantiness of data concerning mental disorders among the Nupe. But so far as they exist they seem to bear out the view that mental disorders in Nupe are largely symptoms of the failure of individuals to adjust themselves to the demands of the social environment. I have mentioned that the large majority of psycho-pathological cases that came to my notice presented the clinical picture of paranoid schizophrenia, with marked delusions and persecution-mania. Now modern psychiatry has shown that schizophrenia is essentially the result of inadequacy to a social environment. Indeed, in the few cases which I could examine more closely features of the social environment conspicuously entered the clinical picture. One man was under the delusion that he had been persecuted by a person of very high rank and robbed, through his intrigues, of his home and family; another maintained that intrigues against him at the court had cost him his land; a third case was that of an old man who was under the delusion that his younger brother (whom he admitted to be the more clever and successful of the two) was out to kill him. In creating these very specific delusions the psycho-pathological individual escapes from the consciousness of his own inadequacy. Though distorted and purely negative, the fears and anxieties which make up the delusion are the same fears and anxieties that accompany the successful mental adjustment to the *ethos* of Nupe life—the anxiety to 'get on' in the world, not to be left behind in the race for rank and position or the fear to lose the support of the 'powers that be', on whose influence one's career and safety depend. The border-line between normality and abnormality is that between

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, and Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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anxiety and unceasing efforts to master reality or, conversely, the open admission of inability to live up to the exigent standards of the social *ethos*, and that complete withdrawal from reality and surrender to subjective emotional and thought-life which we classify as pathological.

Have we, as sociologists, to leave off here, and to regard the *leitmotif* of Nupe culture as an ultimate, irreducible, fact—as would be the view of certain modern schools of anthropology—or can we hope to trace it farther, and to correlate it, as we could most cultural traits, with other, more fundamental, social facts?

Not having examined in this book the whole field of culture, we can only venture on a tentative answer. But I believe that such a correlation is possible. The upward trend in social life is entailed in the class structure of the Nupe state; in the existence of a social *élite* which must both renew and widen its ranks by admission of selected groups from outside its sphere, and build its strength on a population whose motives and ways of thought are in conformity with its own aims. The particular form which the upward trend takes, that complex social ladder of many steps and grades, is part of the 'admission of selected groups'; it is explained by the necessity of controlling and canalizing the upward trend, lest it should endanger the position of the ruling group itself. The *ethos* of Nupe society does thus not represent a unique, irrational, and, as it were, autonomous cultural trend, but the product of an interdependence of phenomena which is open to rational interpretation. Behind it we perceive the public approval of forms of behaviour which are essential to the integrity of the class-organized state.

In reducing the *ethos* of Nupe culture to necessities involved in the social structure we have not merely reduced one unknown quantity to another. The class-state built upon, and expanding by, conquest is not a unique phenomenon, but a typical and regular occurrence in the history of society which we have learned to correlate with specific environmental and historical happenings. These themselves fall outside our range of vision: the environmental factors which made the river Niger the hotbed of powerful military states; environmental changes which have most probably started the tribal movements resulting eventually in conquests and the formation of states with an alien ruling class; political developments in the north of Nigeria which resulted in the Fulani conquests of the central kingdoms; or the historical changes in civilization which gradually led up to greater political concentration and the evolution of centralized states. I do not mean to defend an absolute determinism of this kind. I will not deny that Nupe culture may have added specific features of its own to this general development; it may well be that certain autonomous psychological determinants, not entailed in these external conditions, have played an important part in moulding the structure of the Nupe state and the psychological traits and motives which it has made its own. I have worked out elsewhere the principle of 'alternative solutions' of which a cultural adjustment to environmental and historical demands may admit.[1] In these alternative solutions we

[1] 'The Typological Approach to Culture', *Character and Personality*, v, No. 4, The Duke University Press, 1937.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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181 discover the effectiveness of such autonomous psychological tendencies. The specific *ethos* of Nupe culture may indeed embody such an 'alternative solution'. But the extent to which this is true, the extent to which the autonomous psychological forces limit or qualify the effectiveness of historical and environmental factors (which we must regard as sufficient to explain the evolution of the social structure as such), can only be ascertained on the basis of comparative studies of similar, class-organized, societies. This is, once more, outside the scope of the present investigation.

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY

113 THE following list comprises the works of early travellers and writers on Nigeria and Nupe, arranged in chronological order, some of whose data were invaluable for the historical descriptions and reconstructions of this book.

IBN BATUTA (1353), describing the various countries on the Niger (which he knew as the Nile), mentions one called *Youfi* or *Noufi*, south of Mouli (Muri?), as 'one of the most important countries of the Sudan', and its 'sovereign as one of the greatest kings of the area'. 'No white man [Arab?] enters *Youfi*, for the negroes there would kill him as soon as he arrived.' These remarks have been interpreted by some authors as referring to Nupe, or Nouffie as it was called by certain early travellers. But it is very doubtful whether this can be true. Ibn Batuta gives the same name *Noufi* also to a certain tribe in East Africa, some 'six weeks' march' from the sea. Moreover, *Leo Africanus* (1520) makes no mention of Nupe.

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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: TRIBAL MARKS: DRESS

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

BIRTH

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

CIRCUMCISION

304 Circumcision (*zuŋ'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–18.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

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beliefs revolve round abstract, impersonal magical principles, proves psychologically of a very different type. It is more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, and stresses unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts of meaning and rational consistency. The nature of this psychological differentiation clearly indicates that the experiments have done more than merely shown that a diversity in culture is accompanied by psychological differentiation; they prove the existence of an essential *correspondence* between the specific organization of the culture and the traits and dispositions which characterize the psychological make-up or 'type' of the group. Some aspects of this correspondence are quite evident and easily explained in terms of mutual interaction of culture data and psychological traits: for instance, the correspondence between the rationalized religious system of the Yoruba and their intentness on rational connexions and interpretations; or the correspondence between the ornamental, decorative art of the Nupe and their emphasis of spatial and symmetrical order. The nature of other aspects of this correspondence is less obvious, and can be interpreted only in the context of a detailed analysis of the whole culture: for instance, the correspondence between the impersonal, abstract religious system of the Nupe and their schematic, unspecific attitude to moral judgements.

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The fact that we are dealing here with two groups which we had to contrast in various ways, may give the impression that I am attempting a dualistic theory of memory or perception, or for that matter, of culture. This is not my intention. Rather, the psychological traits and characteristics which the foregoing analysis has disclosed, seem to integrate themselves into *three* different 'types'—types which are distributed in different proportion among the two groups: first, the dominant type of the Yoruba, rational, logical and intent on meaning-oriented interpretation; second, the dominant type among the Nupe, combining an enumerative approach to observational data with stress on spatial and temporal arrangement; third, a less prominent, secondary, type among the Nupe, characterized by an emotional and 'impressionistic' disposition. Evidently, for a fuller understanding of these psychological types, the investigation must be placed on a broader basis, and our correlations of psychological traits extended over other fields of psychological reaction. But such an extension would go beyond the scope of this paper, in which I could only attempt to outline the general trend of this correspondence between psychological and cultural differentiation.

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VII. SUMMARY

1. The aim of this investigation was to study, by means of the psychological field experiment, the correlation between diversity of culture and psychological differentiation.

2. Two primitive groups were studied, two tribes in Northern Nigeria which, living under similar conditions, yet show marked differences in their culture.

3. The experiments were carried out with school boys of the age of 15–18. The selection of the subjects, however, insured that the experimental groups were representative of the culture at large.

4. The experiments examined the repeated reproduction of a narrative, and the description and remembering of a number of pictures. Both the narrative and the pictures represented a material with which the experimental subjects were thoroughly familiar.

5. The results show a marked difference in the responses of the two groups. In the story experiment one tribe laid stress on logical and rational elements while the other showed distinct appreciation of situational facts and connexions of time and place. In the picture experiment the response of the first group was meaning-oriented, the response of the second enumerative and appreciative of spatial arrangement.

6. Between the cultural differentiation and the psychological differentiation there exists close correspondence. The dualism of culture and psychological responses is incidental; the investigation reveals in fact three different psychological 'types' distributed in different proportion among the two groups.

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

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BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nûsaži*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *ežî u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

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[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunna* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

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621 of this coextensiveness of the spheres of religious and political control
182 could the village elders of Kutigi to whose 'strike' we referred above effect that political adjustment by religious pressure. And again only because of this coextensiveness of the spheres of political and kinship control could, in another instance, a family head be excluded from the ranks of the titled elders on the grounds that one of his sons had twice been caught thieving. The family head was identified with the moral standards obtaining in the kinship group the headship of which would have entitled him, in the normal case, to a position in the political executive. 'How can a man who cannot keep order in his own house,' said my informant, 'keep order in the village?' But these three agencies of control are only three in a multiplicity of coextensive forms of social organization: economic pursuits, the contacts of everyday life, recreation, education. The political activities take place within this one area of common life. Expressed in one formula: the political system and the closely knit social life of a single community organize an identical human substratum.

Here we may, in parenthesis, touch upon the theoretically interesting question whether this system of 'multiple control' which the political organization is capable of utilizing can be taken to explain the absence, in the case of the Nupe village, of the more conspicuous specifically political instruments of control. However, this question cannot be solved on the basis of Nupe material alone. For here the issue is confused by the fact that the state organization, superimposed upon the village system, obviates the necessity of the more essential of these instruments, especially with respect to legal and military executive. Indeed, the fact that the state removes graver legal cases from village jurisdiction releases the social system of the village from certain social pressure which must otherwise have necessitated a more strongly marked specific political authority.

621 This brings us to the question of the resistance of this delicately
622 balanced system of multiple control to outside influences and, generally,
182 the influence of change. Its efficiency is clearly a function of the uniformity of social interests obtaining in the community. It will fail as soon as the closeness of community life is broken by a strong divergence of interest. Extraneous changes creating new aims which are apt to dissociate the political executive from the rest of the people may disturb its equilibrium, which could then be readjusted only by a corresponding strengthening, at the cost of the other agencies in the multiple machinery of control, of political power as such. The most radical adjustment of this kind is that brought about by the modern political changes which, in accordance with the system of Indirect Rule, have turned the village chief into an official agent of the Administration. In this capacity he may have to give orders, enforce laws, and exact actions unpopular with his people. He is bound to stand for aims and interests which may threaten to estrange him from the community. An inconsiderate Administrative Officer may still more widen the rift. Twice I have come across chiefs who, in their official capacity and by the order of a District Officer, had to forbid all dances and festivities in a district which was

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

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The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'kingmaker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

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[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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621 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the
622 highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadú*. Having been granted this
182 responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.[1] But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results
622 of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very
182 similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the
631 pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

[1] It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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itself ideally. Through the person of its head, first of all, the village organization is bound to duties towards, and linked with the fate of, the wider political organization—the kingdom. Through religious, economic, and educational factors which follow in the wake of political absorption the one-ness of community and political organization which proved the essence of the village society is finally broken. The communities themselves, their areas of integrated social life, are broken open and forced partly into a system of integration, under the dictate of a concept of social unity which is part of the centralized political system of the state. I say 'partly', for the latter has to some extent left intact the social identity of the village. This is not meant only historically, but refers to the relation and actual inter-penetration of two essentially different social systems. Nor does it refer merely to a distinction between political autonomy of the village, or certain villages, as against political domination by the kingdom. One may perhaps speak of a partial autonomy of the villages under or within the kingdom, but the essential point is the different solution of the problem of political integration in one and in the other case. We have met with the analogous difference when we discussed the two different systems of political unification evolved by the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. Let me formulate it again: it is the difference between an organization growing out of and utilizing the potentialities of uniform culture and common life, and an organization relying on the extraneous machinery of political control; between a political integration which remains true to the concept of Community, and an organization which forces unity upon diversity of culture and common life—the State.

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adopt, even more eagerly, the religious practice of the higher and highest classes, Mohammedanism. This is not 'real' social mobility; it serves only to blur the border-line between the strata. It involves attachment to a higher stratum only in the sense of external closeness and assimilation. 565

The assimilation achieved is irregular and of very unequal significance. Yet it is prompted by a definite motive running through the whole society—self-enhancement. The readiness of groups to identify themselves culturally with the representative stratum reveals an incentive to overcome that heterogeneity of cultures and groups in which we have grasped the essence of state structure. Potentially, this incentive may carry forms of cultural reorientation capable of wielding more intensive, more real, commonness. To examine how and how far this potentiality is utilized by the political system is to examine the crucial problem of this discussion: the dynamic relation between political integration and the heterogeneous raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

BINDING FORCES

What then is the specific apparatus of control by means of which this heterogeneous society, severely divided by gulfs of culture, ethnic extraction, community, and class, maintains itself as a unit? And to what extent does it draw into its orbit and use for its own support these other non-political configurations and spheres of social life? When examining the political organization of the Nupe village from this viewpoint we discovered that there the basis of political control is extended to its widest possible limit: political organization utilizes the integrative forces of community life at large; it organizes into a unit what is integrated into the same unit by every existing institution. It might very well seem from our foregoing analysis of the Nupe state that here we have the exact opposite. A state machinery which concentrates political power in the hands of a small *élite* and ignores—save in order to transform into class barriers—tribal and cultural identity, seems committed to the narrowest system of political control: by coercion and physical force. 642 182

However, this section will show that such conclusions would be incorrect. One might, on general principles, reason that no state could afford to rely solely on coercive measures; and that it would rather utilize coercion only as a 'short cut' to bring about sentiments which, 'once established and sanctified, . . . may well flourish without compulsion, glorified as loyalty to a sovereign king or a national flag'.[1] A state that would disdain to call to assistance these bonds of inner unity seems to jeopardize continuously its safety, and to risk being shattered and broken up by unrest and revolts, possibly beyond repair. Such tension and unrest seems indeed characteristic of the political history of Nupe. But the historian would have to point out also that with all these grave disturbances Nupe kingdom yet maintained itself as a unit. Even when the Fulani took over the rule, testing most severely an already strained

[1] R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 117.

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642 182 political structure with the additional weight of alien rulership, the state did not break down but on the contrary appeared to have taken out a new lease of life.

Now we shall be able to prove the existence of strong trends of integration which form within the political unit, incidental to it or fostered by it, and which, bridging over cultural diversity and the rift of social and economic inequality, endorse in their fashion the unit wrought by political control. However, in our search for these 'binding forces' of more subtle and conciliatory type we shall discover that they do not all point the same way. They are indeed 'binding' forces—but what they tend to bind and draw together is not invariably the same group substratum.

We must examine first a significant negative instance—kinship. 183 Kinship has no part in this integrative scheme, either ideologically 642 or factually. No attempt is made to invest the conception of the state with that fiction of genealogical or kinship unity which is linked 602 with the concepts of the sub-tribe and the village community. With the increased freedom of movement which is one of the results of political unification kinship relations become more widely scattered and marriage between distant localities is increasing and is regarded more and more as normal; but these new kinship relations draw only a patchy, irregular pattern that can have little influence upon the integration of the people at large. Moreover, kinship relations are often subordinated to political interests; patronage and the adherence to political factions may even break up family units. The widest gulf, between rulers and subjects, and between the *élite* culture of Bida and the peasant sections, is bridged only by the sociologically less significant form of intermarriage between men of the upper and women of the lower classes. We shall see later that full intermarriage is rigidly restricted and rendered specially difficult, unless it follows already existing political ties of patronage. We shall, in fact, have to speak of a definite class endogamy among the ruling classes. Marriage and kinship ties thus cement the solidarity of the component groups of the state, not of the state itself.

We continue our search in the economic field. Political unification 182 carries in its wake expansion of economic co-operation and interdepen- 642 dence. Economic areas were re-designed in accordance with the new, wider political unit and its centre of gravity, the populous capital, which depends for food and supplies on the agricultural districts. But the contribution of this widened economic co-operation to national solidarity is negligible if not wholly negative. In this reorientation of economic links the boundaries of the state have frequently been crossed and disregarded: trade became 'international'; craftsmen, traders, and even peasants are always ready to seek profitable new markets outside Nupe, and even to emigrate for the sake of better business prospects. Economic interdependence and co-operation even introduce new conflicts and forms of antagonism which set group sections against each other. We shall speak of the village artisans who openly admit (and partly resent) the competition of the superior Bida crafts. In times of crisis conflicts of this kind tend to become more strongly marked. During the depression of 1934–5 I could notice distinct resentment on the part of the peasants

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against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotũ*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotũ*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotũ*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows: 182 144 533

> The needle is coming,
> The Mallam of the needle,
> The father of threading.
> O let me go,
> And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 642 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 642 186 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achieving, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *elite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion—as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1]

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goizi* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'.

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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Song of Etsu Bello

182 The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
643 On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
539 Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
186 The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.[6]
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

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Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'kingmaker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

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[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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182 643 794 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pompous title of *Maji Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 642 797 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Maji Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

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more solid bond of political protection embodied in clientship. Attachment to the ruling group thus fused with conversion to its religion. In the early days of Fulani rule hundreds of pagans are said to have flocked into the capital to seek out an important person as their patron and to declare to him—and not to the religious officers of Islam—their readiness to embrace Mohammedanism. They received their turban and sword, insignia of clientship and new creed in one. Of such men the Nupe say not 'they become Mohammedans' but '*a ze goiži*'—'they become Fulani'.

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Whatever the true essence of Mohammedan faith may be in Nupe, and however sparsely Mohammedanism has so far spread, Fulani rulership did create, and is creating, another 'mythical charter' of the kingdom. It tries again, with its new means, to mould the religious elements into the intensive unit almost of a State Church.[1] The effect of Islam as a 'binding force' of the precarious political system that the Fulani had erected cannot be doubted. A striking example is that under *Etsu* Umaru the whole Trans-Kaduna revolted, refused to pay the tribute, and finally made war on Bida. The rebellious peasants crossed the Kaduna river, marched against Bida and almost reached it, being defeated at a place called Bidakoko, a few miles outside.[2] The whole Trans-Kaduna, that is, with the exception of one town—the strongly Mohammedanized Dabbā, the same town where Mallam Dendo started his proselytizing work in Nupe, and which now refused to join in the war against the rulers with whom they shared their creed.

The identification of State and Church is demonstrated in the annual Mohammedan festival, the *Sallah*, which is as much a pageant of the might and splendour of the kingdom as a religious feast. There are two *Sallah* feasts, the Small *Sallah* and the Great *Sallah*, separated by a two months' interval.[3] Their celebration may be called the climax of the whole year's cycle: the two feasts give the months in which they fall their names—*etswa salagi* and *etswa salakó*, 'month of the Small *Sallah*' and 'month of the Great *Sallah*'; and to these the people look forward and look back, in the long-drawn preparations and anticipation, and in recollections and memories. The *Sallah* feast is like a Friday celebration on an immensely enlarged scale. On the first day the king on horseback under the state umbrella and surrounded by his noblemen and state officials, leads the vast procession to the praying-ground outside the town, where the *Liman* holds the service. After the service the procession returns to the royal residence. Here a great display of horsemanship takes place, at which the bodyguard of the king, his police, and officers of state parade before him and his guests of honour—the foremost among whom are the District Officer and all the Europeans living

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[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, 1925: 'Islam . . . has converted isolated pagan groups into nations; . . . it is largely due to Islam that numbers of tribes are now, before our eyes, forming themselves into nations' (ii, pp. 4, 10).

[2] It is said that this name Bidakoko was later given to the place of the battle, because *koko a tū Bida o*, 'almost they (the rebellious army) had reached Bida'.

[3] The Nigerian *Sallah* is the *Beiram* or *Id* of other Mohammedan countries, which feasts are also celebrated twice, as 'Little *Beiram*' and 'Great *Beiram*'.

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182 642 796 in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

182 642 186 From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.[1]

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

[1] It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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tinguishable from the self-willed conformity born of a closely knit community life. The state itself becomes that twin-creation as which MacIver conceives it, and, with one side of its being, a community.

The process is not yet complete. Existing social divisions and divergent 'interest units' are not wholly submerged in the new consciousness of unity. Sociologically, the incompleteness of the development is visible in the reluctance with which certain sections, especially among the peasantry, respond to the cultural reorientation. Psychologically, it manifests itself in the ambiguous attitude of many individuals in the lower classes, vacillating between bitter resentment against the ruling class and readiness to identify themselves with its glory, of which we have seen examples. It is an attitude familiar in many societies similarly split by sharp distinctions of political and social inequality.[1] One might doubt whether this process of intensive unification will ever be completed now, with new influences coming in, new cultural and class divisions being formed which disturb the steady growth and blur the old border-lines. I do not myself think that this will be so. But in a wider sense the growth of the Nupe nation, even if it were to continue undisturbed, would never be complete: for the nation is a dynamic, not a static, unit, a unit which must constantly readjust itself and constantly absorb new 'raw material'—new generations, newly-formed classes, strata, groups. 182 642

The achieved integration of the state is then in some measure, like that of the village community, the integration of a 'multiple system of control'. Yet the state and the village community differ not only in the intensity and completeness but also in the quality of the integration which they achieve. We noticed that the 'binding forces' of the state appear in varying degrees of concreteness, from actual co-operation to moral orientation, and that those of most abstract appeal were the really effective ones. In this, I believe, lies the essential difference between the integrative mechanism operating in the village community and this new mechanism of creating nation-wide unity. Evidently, the very difference in size and numbers must play a decisive part. In the village all integrative agencies can address themselves to an identical group substratum, and can envelop it in the network of actual collaboration. The state, with its huge human substratum, its subdivisions and sections, precludes the full effectiveness of such direct and concrete integration. Direct contact and direct co-adaptation of behaviour is subordinated to indirect methods of bringing about conformity, through ideological persuasion. Actual concerted action gives way to efforts at securing parallel action, and 'common' interests in the strict sense are replaced by 'identical' interests. Instead of communal rites at which groups that in other contexts act as political units are welded together by the influence of religious experience, we have the spreading of common beliefs and practices designed to call forth identity of outlook and to foster, though not an identical group, a group conscious of identity.

Ultimately and rather surprisingly, then, the binding forces of the

[1] M. T. Herskovits has called it, by a suggestive term, 'socialized ambivalence' (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 295).

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state can be reduced to the fact of cultural assimilation. Yet it is not that random assimilation which is only incidental to the expanding state, and which only superficially obscures social division, achieving but an insecure, external, likeness. This assimilation is designed to carry the foci of cohesion and solidarity—ideologies, and the institutions by which they are sustained. I said 'designed'. But how far are we justified in regarding this assimilation and the incentives behind it as deliberately conceived and employed by the political system and its agents? Certain practices such as the encouragement given to Mallams proselytizing among the pagans, the reward of increased security held out to converts, or the engagement of musicians and poets to sing the praises of the king and the kingdom, represent actual 'propaganda', still carried out under our eyes. Others, such as the supplanting of a local cult by a 'king's ritual', must have amounted to the same in former times (in the case of the royal interest in the *ndakó gboyá* society it can be proved to have been so only two generations ago). Other forms of persuasion, again, may have worked through the unconscious mechanism of habits and views formed imperceptibly. Often their agents are men who have been in the Fulani wars or who have in some other way been associated with the ruling group and then returned to their villages, where their stories and memories aid the other, institutionalized, 'propaganda' of the kingdom. In a wider sense, however, they all are deliberately conceived and employed: they are agencies of an assimilation conscious of itself and of the message which it carries.

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695 But in the Bida Court temper may run high, especially when people of standing and wealth are involved who not infrequently will argue and remonstrate with the judge. I have seen judges lose their patience with such unmanageable parties, shout at them and threaten them with punishment for this 'contempt of court'.

692 Before the pretentious Bida Court with its office hours and fixed rules of procedure, its crowd of subordinate officials, assistants, scribes, ushers, policemen, a multitude of cases are brought daily which fit well into its up-to-date routine: offences against the by-laws of a modern town (riding a bicycle without light, or riotous behaviour in the street or the market, &c.) and all the various disputes bound to occur where you have an intensive trade, complicated money transactions, and suchlike. But before the same court come the cases (and in this book we are only concerned with these) that are the expression of tensions and conflicts of the society in its old unchanged form—cases of inheritance, divorce, witchcraft. The extension of native jurisdiction over the problems and conflicts of a modern urban community, which is merely a question of applying jurisdiction and executive under the guidance of the British Administration, is of less interest to us than the progressive penetration of formal political jurisdiction into the domains of traditional native life, which is a problem of legislation that the native society must itself solve. In this, the modern Native Court is the legitimate heir of the pre-British system of law—heir both to its strength and its weakness.

692 We may say that the modern legal system is both more comprehensive (embracing, above all, the domain of kinship) and, viewed from the 671 standpoint of the groups which submit to its jurisdiction, more alien than the old system. To explain this we must for a moment go back to a question discussed previously. I have said that every extension of a uniform jurisdiction and legislation over new social domains involves potentially the substitution of a new law for original codes and conceptions, and thus a certain disparity between the recognized law and the culture of which the old conceptions were an expression. This disparity is clearly a phenomenon of transition: every society will tend in the course of time to eliminate such a hiatus—either by reacting against the expanding judicial system and forcing it to adjust its too extravagant claims (we shall presently encounter instances of this)—or by completing that process of cultural assimilation of which the co-ordination of legal concepts represents only one aspect. We may assume that our table of jurisdiction in pre-British times, which shows a certain system of law firmly accepted throughout the society, refers to aspects of culture in which this process of mutual assimilation has been completed. Whether or not my hypothesis is historically correct, we must admit that where the process is still in motion, where the politically-backed law is only just extending its hold over new domains, the disparity of which I have spoken must be visible. This is indeed the case to-day, when Mohammedan law is being applied to kinship offences.

671 It would go beyond the scope of this book to study the relation between Mohammedan law as it is practised in Nupe and the traditional 182 concepts of kinship conduct and kinship rights and duties. I may be

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allowed to reduce this relation to a simple formula: if the former is born of the social conditions of an urbanized stratified society and reflects the specific concepts of property and morality which have evolved there, the latter is typical of the peasant community, its economic pursuits, its values and interests. The Mohammedan law as it is applied in Nupe has undergone a number of significant changes in the comparatively short period of Fulani and later British rule. The knowledge of the more important changes (e.g. in the treatment of seduction and adultery) has spread throughout the country and the changes remain linked in the memory of the people with the names of the judges who were their originators. Some changes are regarded as good, others as bad, and accordingly judges have earned or forfeited the reputation of being 'wise men'. The lawgivers themselves have been aware of the necessity of bringing their extraneous legal machinery into at least partial harmony with existing conditions and conceptions.

Here a new aspect of the 'disparity' between law and culture reveals itself. The very fluidity of this evolution of a new legislation must remove the law from the orbit of the average citizen. He is no longer able to keep track of it as he could when the legal system could be reduced to the short list of 'civil offences' and 'crimes of the king'. I have encountered ample evidence of this kind—erroneous beliefs of individuals as to particular laws or forms of legal procedure. Some ten or fifteen years ago unscrupulous judges made use of the ignorance of the peasants and prosecuted, for 'neglect of their parental duties' the parents of girls and young men suspected of illegitimate sexual intercourse. The repercussions of this abuse are still felt, and many peasants dare not bring a case of seduction before the court for fear of being fined themselves. A conspicuous evidence of this gulf between the law and the people is the continued practice of peasants and commoners to seek out a Mallam or a person of standing and have him accompany them to the court when they are about to commit themselves to the vagaries of an unknown law.

The disparity between law and culture is naturally most marked in the slow-moving peasant communities, where social and economic conditions diverge most fundamentally from the social life of which Mohammedan law is an expression. Here the unfamiliarity of the judges, who come from the highest families of the kingdom and who are Bida born and bred, with the local situation and specific customary practices (e.g. marriage rules) may add yet another source of conflict.[1] Even the religious emblems upon which the Nupe were wont to take the oath are absent in the modern District Court which, instead, is using the Koran.[2] Pagans will always be ready to swear by the Koran if asked to do so by

[1] Some of the local *Alkalai* may be very reluctant to regard themselves as permanently attached to their station. They may be hoping for a speedy promotion, eventually to the court in Bida.

[2] In a court in the Nupe district of Ilorin Province a very enlightened *Alkali* used both Koran and the 'chain of Tsoede' to do justice to Mohammedans as well as pagans. In this as in similar respects much depends on the personality (and special training) of the individual judge.

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the *Alkali*, said one of my informants, and will think nothing of perjuring themselves. 671 182

Let me quote a significant instance. An Ebe man had refused to let his daughter marry a Hausa whom she loved, having a different suitor from Ebe country in mind for her. The Hausa brought the case before the *Alkali* of Kutigi (some 50 miles away); the *Alkali* instructed the father to give his blessing to the marriage on the grounds that the Koran decreed that no father should stand between two young people who loved each other. The father swore an oath to that effect on the Koran and returned home. But after a month the Hausa came back, reporting that the girl's father had renewed his opposition to the marriage. Three times they were summoned to court, and three times the father agreed in the presence of the *Alkali*, only to revoke his agreement afterwards. At last I happened to be in the court and asked the man if perhaps the Ebe disliked letting their daughters marry outside the sub-tribe or tribe. Evidently relieved, the man said that this was indeed the case. Curiously enough, the girl, who had till then stubbornly maintained her desire to marry the Hausa, declared that she would obey her father as soon as the customary marriage rule was brought up in the court.

This example also illustrates the effects of what I have called above the 'divided law': the girl and her suitor, well knowing that if they submitted to the customary law as it was upheld by her father and most probably the village elders would not be able to marry, appealed to the Mohammedan court, whose decision, as they anticipated, was favourable to them. Here we see what I have mentioned above—that in districts in which the customary conceptions of law still obtain, modern legislation puts a premium on breaches of the traditional usage. This is shown most clearly in litigation over inheritance. According to Mohammedan law the property and land left by a family head should be divided equally among the sons; traditional rules of inheritance hold that land and property should be inherited by the younger brother, and that sons and brothers' sons should stay on the land working under the heir as under their sociological father. This rule expresses the interest of a farming community in maintaining landed property so far as possible intact, while the Mohammedan rule does justice primarily to owners of movable property, money, trade goods, or cattle. Now, for reasons which we shall examine in a later chapter modern economic developments have led increasingly to the adoption of the Mohammedan solution. But were individuals still to attempt to enforce the traditional rule, dissatisfied family members could easily obtain a reversal of this decision by appealing to the Mohammedan court.

Again we observe the effectiveness of the 'social law' which we have formulated above, that a stronger law ousts a weaker law. The existence of the divided authority which favours 'dissenters' from traditional law, must force chief and elders—the guardians of traditional usage—to surrender in ever larger measure the authority which they are still holding to the stronger authority of the state law, even to invite its intervention—as did the family heads who appealed to their feudal lord for support of their paternal authority. It is important to emphasize this, as 671 182 692 622

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many Administrative Officers think it desirable that the village chiefs and elders should continue to practise their informal arbitration side by side with the existing official courts. Our data preclude the likelihood of such a parallel development; they show that the tendency is rather towards the virtual surrender of one to the other. We have heard that in the present-day judicial arrangement the Village Head is expected to send all legal cases which cannot be settled by arbitration to the District *Alkali*'s court. Now I have found the chiefs quite satisfied with this state of affairs, which freed them of the responsibility in more serious cases. Some seemed, in fact, quite frightened at the idea of taking over this responsibility themselves, and were only too ready to leave a larger and larger proportion of their judicial tasks to the professional judge. 'To-day', a chief said to me, 'people want written judgements in such cases as divorce, inheritance, debts; *ama mi de takarda à*, but I have no papers to give.' ('Papers' are only the modern symbols of the more powerful and more permanent authority wielded by state jurisdiction; in his own words the chief expressed the essence of that principle of 'divided authority'.

Shall we acquiesce with the chief in these results of an inevitable process of change? I think not. Politically, the chief is divested already of much of his former power. To divest him also of all judicial authority is to deprive him of the last vestige of the most vital prerogative of his office, which is the enforcement of a certain line of conduct upon his community, and to sanction all deviations from it as acts detrimental to the welfare of the community. It would amount to turning the chief completely into a petty executive official, entitled only to carry out orders, but with no right to voice public opinion. Besides, the disregard for local customs by the professional Mohammedan judges is felt as a real hardship by many. Even if more change is on the way, bound to promote the final assimilation of Mohammedan law and customary practice, its pace should be set by the people themselves, and not by an alien, uninterested judge. In the nature of things the solution must lie in a compromise. In my view the best compromise would be to vest the Village Head with the right (and, more important, the duty) to act as an assessor in the court, with full consultative authority, whenever cases from his community are brought before the *Alkali*.[1]

This does not contradict what I have said in a previous section about the 'parochial outlook' of the village chief. The parochial outlook may unfit him for responsible posts in the administration of the Emirate at large, such as District Headship, which call for a wide view and an appreciation of policy on, as it were, a national scale. But it is just this parochial outlook which qualifies the village chief eminently for dealing with legal cases, bound up as they are with local conditions. However, there is a wider issue involved in this question—the most intricate problem which modern administration has to solve, the problem of centralization versus local autonomy.

[1] This solution is envisaged in the Native Courts Ordinance, which leaves it to the discretion of the Native Court to appoint assessors from the ranks of village chiefs and elders.

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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3*d.*: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4*d.* weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by N.A. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10*s.* per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7*s.* 6*d.* per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years. 456 554

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8*s.* and 9*s.* from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions. 456 426 [586]

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance —borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of 456 182

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production, the present case demonstrates forcibly that it affects the very stability of the economic system of the country. We cannot claim to be able to describe exactly how the labour-unit was working under traditional conditions, and to state categorically that the scheme of insurance entailed in it operated without difficulty or friction. But on the evidence which we possess it is reasonable to assume that under certain conditions, with a smaller taxation, and protected from severe, incalculable, market fluctuations, the large co-operative group represented—or would represent—an eminently stable and successful labour-unit. The process of transformation cannot be halted. Where the large labour-unit still exists, it may, given the conditions just mentioned, be preserved; where it has disappeared, it cannot be revived. Our conclusions point to one solution only: to the creation of new institutions and labour organizations which can be made to fulfil, under existing conditions, those tasks which fell formerly to the labour organization that has disappeared—above all, the task of insurance. Such institutions can be found in co-operative organization, saving societies, co-operative marketing, and suchlike—organizations which in other parts of Africa have amply proved their efficiency.[1]

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE GROUP

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Throughout this discussion we have dealt with family and kinship group purely in their economic aspect. We have interpreted the mechanisms which maintain the working-unit and thus the co-operation in its human substratum, the family group, in terms of economic relations only. Against this treatment of the problem one might argue that it sees only one side of it, and that the kinship and family structure must be taken into account also as an entity *sui generis*, which, within the framework of economic relations, exercises its own specific influences. One might argue, in particular, that as the Nupe *efakó*-unit is based on the family, kinship ties and kinship sentiments as such supply the binding forces of the labour group—'maintain labour', in our terminology—and that the binding forces which we have recognized, namely, commonness of material interests and benefits accruing from co-operation, are in reality mutual kinship obligations.

The double nature of economic obligations in a productive unit which happens to be a kinship-unit at the same time cannot be denied. The influence of kinship factors can, in fact, be made evident by comparing the labour-unit based on kinship, with similar labour-units in which kinship plays no part. While, in the former, co-operation is achieved by mutual obligations such as payment of bride-price, and supply of clothing, food, and shelter, labour of the latter order must be recompensed in the form of money wages. The effectiveness of kinship

[1] It has been said that our intention should always be to graft these new co-operative organizations on to existing, indigenous, organizations. The scope and the possibilities of such a scheme must not be exaggerated. Although the tasks with which the new organization is to be charged may have formed part of the traditional system, the organization itself may have to be newly created, and may, in fact (as in our case), have to replace a failing indigenous organization, rendered inadequate by modern conditions.

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sentiments in co-operation was also implied in various statements made earlier in the discussion of economics. We have seen that the craft-guilds plan their labour organization on kinship lines, and reinforce the labour group by what we have called 'professional endogamy'. But let us realize that in doing this they do not appeal to abstract kinship ties or 'bonds of blood', but merely duplicate the common labour interests by corresponding family interests, namely, the concrete interests and forms of social interdependence entailed in intermarriage. Another instance of the influence of kinship ties became apparent in the fact that to-day sons would still agree to stay in the *efakó*, while brother's sons decline to do so. Yet we have also seen that even sons desire under certain conditions to be released from the *efakó*-unit. In the case of individual crafts and trade, kinship obligations, even of sons to fathers, are no longer recognized. The dissolution of the large labour-unit, moreover, has made it abundantly clear that its size and coherence is determined predominantly by economic interests and relations. Kinship bonds and sentiments are not strong enough to maintain a labour group once its economic usefulness is impaired. Generally speaking, then, kinship bonds, in order to supply a substratum for productive co-operation, must have the support of economic incentives—material benefits and forms of compensation. Where the latter fail, the kinship bonds themselves will fail in this task.

Though we cannot thus admit the effectiveness of kinship factors as such (at least not in a decisive measure) upon the labour organization, the reverse is no doubt true. The labour organization exercises a two-fold influence upon the structure of the family and kinship group: (1) through contributing to the co-operative mechanisms within the kinship group, and (2) through accepting the responsibility for certain tasks which are vital to the continuity and stability of the kinship group.

(1) The integration of the kinship group, that is, the 'internal adaptation' of the social unit (Radcliffe-Brown), is largely determined by the scope and closeness of contacts and forms of co-operation existing in the group. Co-operation in the same labour-unit thus represents one of the most ~~important integrative factors in this sense. We~~ remember also that the labour-unit coincides with the household-unit, and that the individuals who agree to work together also 'keep house', eat, and live together. The constant contacts and the lasting mutual adjustment entailed in this productive arrangement build up strongly coherent units. The reduction in size, and the splitting-up into small individual units, of the large labour-unit, must detract essentially from the integration of the family group.

(2) Speaking generally, the large labour group, led by old and experienced men, is more far-sighted in its economic planning than the small one-man or two-men unit. It allows for certain group interests which the individual worker will ignore, or discount as of lesser importance; it can assess necessities and wants more objectively, with a view to the fundamental needs of the group rather than immediate individual satisfaction. Thus the family head will place foremost the necessity of finding the bride-price for the junior family members in order to

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602 592 182 establish them socially as full members of the community, i.e. as married men, and, indirectly, to assure the continuity of the family group. We have seen that even if the family head is unable to produce the necessary amount himself, and the young men have themselves to contribute, the family head would keep and save the money for them. The young men, left to themselves, are tempted to squander money on things which appear to them to be of greater urgency, and to disregard, to their own detriment as well as to the detriment of the group, the more distant necessity of marriage. As in the case of the Bida labourers, their money 'goes at once', and they remain unmarried even a considerable time after having reached marriageable age. In the extreme case a family head would even pawn the labour and liberty of a younger family member who is less essential to the group for the sake of keeping in freedom the elder, more important family member, or enabling him to found a family. We can go even farther than this. Older men, tending to uphold tradition, will plan labour and expenditure so that there should be money, food, as well as time available for family feasts or communal religious ceremonies. Their efforts thus serve (unconsciously) the interests of group integration at large, which the younger generation, not so fully steeped in traditional ways of thinking, may hesitate to put before more immediate attractions. Finally, by submitting to the authority of the older men in productive co-operation, the labour-unit also sustains their position of authority in a wider sense, as leaders of the community. We can say, then, that the large labour-unit is committed to the maintenance of the structure and the traditional values of the society, and that with its dissolution an important agency of social integration and continuity disappears.

796 602 182 The changes which the *gunnu* ritual has undergone recently are a convincing instance of this kind. In its traditional form the *gunnu* contained a certain most stirring scene which took place on the eve of the ritual, and which concerned the young men of the village especially. They were herded together in a certain place in the uninhabited bush, where they had to spend the night; they were to wait for a terrifying apparition, the spirit of the *ndakó gboyá*, who would question them about their moral conduct in the preceding year. If they were found guilty of having behaved disrespectfully towards their elders, they were flogged by their comrades at the command of the spirit. I have quoted already the article in which I described in detail the ritual and its effectiveness as a mechanism of social integration in the family group as well as the community.[1] But even from this short description we can gather the psychological importance of a ritual which uses such impressive stimuli to press home moral teaching, and to bind together periodically, in a common experience, the growing generation. Now, although the *gunnu* is still performed, the 'bush night' has been abandoned in many villages, and the explanation given was everywhere that the young men had refused to be subjected to the ordeal of this inquisition and punishment. The young men themselves were outspoken about the reasons of their refusal: 'We are now working as independently as the old men, we are paying tax for ourselves—why should we be flogged and threatened as if

[1] See pp. 25, 63.

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we were small boys?' In their own words they confirm my argument that the weakening of productive co-operation entails a weakening also of other forms and bonds of group unity.

We may for the moment reflect on the fact that this progressive weakening of group integration occurs in a society with decreasing population. Partly this development underlines the strength and urgency of the forces which are working for the dissolution of the large labour-unit, and which here foster the tendency to split and reduce in size a working-unit which is already, as it were, automatically declining. But it also reveals the significant fact that a loosening integration and progressive subdivision of units is not invariably correlated with an increase in the size of groups, and the inherent difficulty of maintaining cohesion.[1]

The present discussion has transcended the domain of economics. Where previously we have attempted to demonstrate the effects of changes in the structure of the labour-unit within the range of economic relations, i.e. on productive organization and the stability of the economic system, we are now studying the significance of these changes for the organization and stability of the social group. We can trace the influence of the changing economic organization upon social structure through wider and wider circles. Take the institution of the Nupe market. We have seen that the peasant attendance of the local village markets coincides with a local group characterized by regular social contacts, intermarriage and 'common living' in general. The market meeting mobilizes the local community, adds to the common interests, and forms an important focus for these contacts and forms of intercourse. Like the labour-unit on a smaller scale, it contributes essentially to social integration. This is no longer true of professional trade, which is carried on across community boundaries, and remains independent of established group-ties. Like the modern labour-unit, professional trade accepts solely the dictate of the impersonal profit motive.

Expanding trade connexions of this kind are only possible in a social system which provides safety and protection outside the narrow boundaries of the local community. They depend, in other words, on the large-scale political organization of the state. Like the economic relations which take place within its confines, the integrative mechanism of the state is essentially impersonal, and based on abstract principles rather than forms of co-adaptation growing from 'common living'. The transformation in the group substratum of economic relations is thus determined by the same concepts which also determine the transformation of the largest group unit, from community to state. Technically, the expansion of trade and commerce, production and exchange, would have been impossible without the corresponding expansion of political control. It would, perhaps, be going too far to say that spiritually also the former would have been impossible without the latter—without the conceptual framework which the latter provided. But we are justified in saying that the two forms of expansion reflect, materially as well as spiritually, two aspects of the same social process.

[1] This latter view was expressed, in the form of a 'social law', by Professor Radcliffe-Brown.

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division goes much farther, and we find a large number of disconnected associations, which are no longer co-ordinated or conform to a common pattern. I estimate the number of age-grade associations in Bida at 200. The individual *ena* is, again, bound up with locality, and includes boys and young men from the same part of the town. But here two new factors enter: social differentiation, and divided political allegiance. The very fact that the Bida *ena* finds its members among friends and close acquaintances already expresses the tendency to make it socially homogeneous, and to limit its membership to individuals from the same social stratum, or the same professional group. *Sarakiši* and *talakaši* never mix in the same *ena*. Nor do prosperous traders or Mallams join the same *ena* as peasants or small craftsmen; nor does, finally, the youth of the craft-guilds intermingle—glass-workers, blacksmiths, weavers, all have their separate age-grade associations. The limitation with regard to locality and close acquaintances is less rigid in the highest grades than in the junior grades. For as in the course of years the membership decreases, some members having died, others having left the *ena* or perhaps the town, it sometimes becomes necessary to open the membership of the higest grade to people from other parts of the town. Yet no *ena* would accept members from beyond the boundary of the town *ekpā*. The political solidarity of the three dynastic divisions of the town is thus reflected in, and even, as we shall see, actively supported by, the age-grade associations of the capital.

Here once more we gain insight into the social significance of the Nupe age-grade association: it underlines and fosters the solidarity of the existing social groupings. This means something different in the village and in the town. In the former it refers to the village community at large, and we find the age-grade associations stretching across it, and across the large kinship units and 'houses' into which the village society is divided. We can liken the age-grade system to a horizontal plane cutting across the separate structures of the extended families, with their wide base, tapering off to the apex of the one official representative of the family group, the titled elder. The age-grade association must thus counteract all possible separatist tendencies of individual kinship groups and sustain the large-scale integration on which the existence of the village as a social unit depends. In large villages this integrative scheme is in some measure narrowed down, owing to the size of the groups that can be absorbed effectively in a single age-grade association. It assumes, in fact, a somewhat different aspect, in uniting the extended kinship units within themselves—in the form of the large *efu* group—that is, in holding together the widely expanded structure which is to support the apex of a common official representative.

In the town the existing social grouping is created and held together by political and class interests. Here again, the age-grade association fosters the unity of a group which is to submit, in 'real' life, to a common head. But he no longer represents the 'apex' of an organically grown structure; as the *ena* is largely the product of a free, voluntary association, the group loyalty which it fosters is towards the freely chosen leader of a local political faction.

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round 369 the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is 561 raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan religion.

I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing 561 collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the *ena* a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat [789] all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice as fast'.

Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the 561 narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional 574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*, *Etsu*, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food, drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the members of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited. At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred guests.

561 Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts 574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle, leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one 535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they 554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers. 369 There exist special *ena gbarúfuźi* dances, performed at these occasions: they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena. Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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561 of the girls' *ena*. So much for the interpretation of the *ena nyentsugiži* on
571 the lines of the Nupe argument.

561 But if for women the age-grade career comes to an end with marriage, while for men marriage represents neither a limit nor even a conspicuous grade in the age-grade career, this reflects also the different sociological significance that marriage has for women and men. For women, it is the end of one life and the beginning of another. It means change of home and family bonds, and initiation into new aims and duties. For men, marriage—a first marriage—does not even coincide with the periodical readjustments in the labour-unit, i.e. the release from the *efakó* group which, as we have seen, takes place as a rule when a man has two wives or grown-up children. The social career of the men—achievement of economic independence, promotion to office, and responsible position in the community—only begins to fulfil itself long after their first marriage; that of the women is meant to enter its last phase in marriage. Indeed we have seen that when the woman claims the right of an independent, continued, social career, she must buy it with the sacrifice of the marriage union.

561 As regards the institution of the parallel age-grades its practical value seems to be that it prepares the ground for the first experiences of sex
564 relations. Or rather, it aims at circumventing, and dulling, this unsettling first experience. Enabling the sexes to meet in the critical age, between 13 and 16, as it were on neutral ground, openly and respectably, it tends to remove some of the secrecy and unhealthy curiosity that is part of the mental transition from the self-contained existence of early youth to the new awareness of the polarity of sex. Our study of adult sex morality has left no doubt about the restricted effectiveness of this native 'co-educational' scheme. It must fail because it is, like all faulty education, in the nature of a palliative. It breaks the adolescent, we might say, gently, to the moral code of adulthood, but it adopts this code in all its dangerous narrowness and its rigid exclusion of amorous experiments and pre-marital sex relations. If age-grade discipline paves the way for adult sex morality, it does so also with respect to its repressions and inhibitions, and that final sweeping reaction against conventional morality which we could study in the adult life of the Nupe people.

To summarize. The age-grade associations include the adolescent
561 male (and to lesser extent female) population of Nupe from early youth up to the threshold of adulthood. The most vital years in individual development are thus brought under the influence of this institution. We have studied the decisive part which it plays in moulding the personality of its members and in defining their attitude towards tasks and problems which they are to face in adult life. The essence of the institution of age-grades is, then, preparation—a twofold preparation. Its first aspect is the fashioning in the framework of the age-grades of sentiments of solidarity which are to bind the group at large.

182 This involves an important theoretical problem which has greatly engaged the attention of modern sociologists and social psychologists,
561 namely, the possibility of transferring co-operation and solidarity

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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.[1] Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

The second aspect of the preparation embodied in the age-grade system is the training of the adolescent, through discipline and certain concrete activities, in the tasks and duties which await him in adult life, and in the values and incentives which he will have to make his own. In the village this preparation represents a first step towards a final social career; in Bida it mostly implants in the mind of the adolescent values and incentives, as it were, *in abstracto*, without promising equally their fulfilment in later life. It teaches people who will never share in directing the fate of their country to appreciate, and make their own, the motives and values which govern the conduct of those who do. It imparts, if not claims to responsible citizenship, yet its spirit.

THE MEANING OF NUPE LIFE

If we compare Nupe religious teaching with the teaching implied in the age-grade system we find that the two educational institutions supplement each other in many respects and that, between them, they take in the whole field of 'education for citizenship'. The Mallam school offers promotion to one social plane; the age-grade association practises promotion in the framework of a complex scale of steps and grades. The promotion afforded by religious education is 'real', in the sense that it involves social privileges in adult life; that practised in the age-grades is fictitious, even vicarious, and concerns mental readiness rather than concrete achievements. Religious education, finally, creates a loosely organized professional group and at the same time fosters a much wider psychological unity, which embraces the whole of Nupe society, across tribal and class boundaries. The age-grades create an intensive solidarity, but only in a very narrow framework, and give tribal and class boundaries a wide berth. Common to both religious education and the age-grades is the social upward trend, the motive of rise and promotion. This upward trend appears indeed as the paramount motive in Nupe cultural life. If it is possible to reduce a whole culture to a single formula, to a fundamental unitary *ethos*, we find it in this *leitmotif* of

[1] Cf. F. C. Bartlett, in *The Study of Society*, 1939, p. 43: 'A specially interesting question is: if cooperation is established in one respect, when and how far does this help individual members of the groups concerned to cooperate in other respects?'

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779 thought. He is a man-become-deity (though there is no pantheon
where he could find a niche), a national hero turned into an
773 ancestral being (though again, there are no named ancestors to whose ranks he might be added). Tsoede is the ancestor only of a line of kings; but in a wider and vaguer sense all Nupe within the kingdom regard themselves with pride as his 'offspring', in the sense, that is, that they were born in a country he founded and made great and come of stock which, originally, lived under his rule and supernatural protection. This protection, which still endures, bears on certain problems of life which are resolved also by means of other rituals or appeals to *Sokó*, namely, the ubiquitous problems of illness and fertility. But these are only incidental effects of Tsoede's mystic power; its main efficacy used to bear on political interests—the maintenance of the 'king's law', the punishment of criminals, and the protection of the 'King's Highway' on the river Niger.[1] Even the 'incidental effects' of the Tsoede cult are bound up with political interests, being embodied in material objects which are at the same time the paraphernalia of secular power. Let me only mention the 'Chain of Tsoede', which is believed to cure the sterility of women but which was formerly also used to strangle political offenders and to uncover crimes in the manner of an ordeal.

[182] In brief, the Tsoede cult is essentially a State religion superimposed upon a pre-existing creed. The cult ties the people to supernatural benefits granted not simply by God, nor by a God who commands his own rituals, but by a God who listens to kings. And its rituals, no longer 'owned' by communities or kin groups, are aligned with the growth and pride of a nation.

5. THE NUPE COSMOS

779 I spoke before of the supererogatory character of certain Nupe
beliefs. In a sense, the greater part of Nupe doctrine has this
772 character. Consider that the Nupe hypothesize a deity who creates the world and then leaves it to itself—uncertain, full of obscurity and accident, and embracing good and evil in entirely fortuitous measure. With such a conception of the relationship between God and the world, the Nupe need not have speculated further about some deeper meaning behind the features of the universe. Anything that exists or happens in it would be sufficiently explained by that key concept of an aloof and non-ethical deity. One might, for example, imagine a religion starting from the same premisses which would leave all further explanations to the crude realism of naïve common sense. Whether so unambitious a theo-

[1] See my article on the 'King's Hangmen' in *Man*, 1935, 143.

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pairs of broadly contrasted categories of wide applicability and 787
with four series of eight, which are relatively easy to remember. In interpreting these series, the diviner will always take into account whether his client is a man or a woman. Thus, if the sign to be interpreted belongs to series 1 (meaning 'success') and series 4 ('concerning women'), and occurs in the consultation of a man, the diviner will conclude that his client will be successful in finding a wife. If the same combination occurs in the case of a female client, it will probably mean that she will be prosperous in business. If the sign belongs to series 1 and 3 ('concerning men'), and occurs in the case of a male client, the latter will 'gain reputation and rank'. If the sign belongs to series 2 (meaning 'misfortune') and 4 ('concerning women') and occurs in the case of a female client, it might mean that she will have a difficult pregnancy, and so forth.

It is clear that in this flexible system of divination the diviner will be guided by the particular case of his client much more fully than is his pagan colleague; in fact, the system of divination itself acknowledges the importance at least of the sex of the client. Also, the diviner has several methods of calculation at his disposal and is free to choose the less complicated one provided it still offers a plausible prophecy. This is borne out by the existence of an optional, final rule which reduces the whole system of divination to a simple mechanical procedure. This rule lays down that all signs which have a single dot at the top and a double dot at the base, so that they 'point away' from the diviner, bear an adverse prophecy; while all signs of the opposite design, 'pointing inward', are propitious. If the diviner uses this simplified method exclusively he will consider only the 'houses' that bear on the client's question and phrase his reply accordingly. In a consultation I watched the diviner was asked if the client would recover some goods that had been stolen. The diviner looked at 'house' 2, meaning 'wealth', at 'house' 9, meaning 'voyage' (since the goods had been 'carried away'), at 'house' 12, 'enemy', and at 'houses' 13 and 14, implying 'success'. The signs at 2 and 13 were inconclusive; the signs at 9 and 12 pointed outward; only the sign at 14 had a propitious meaning. The answer was, quite plausibly, that it was no good looking for the thieves; the client might be successful if he could follow them; but this was difficult since they had by then left the town with their loot.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nupe sand-divining is the 787
contrast between its pretentious theoretical framework and its 182
primitive and slipshod application in practice. In some respects 178
the 'theory' simply evaporates in the 'practice', as in the high-sounding Arabic nomenclature which gives way to common Nupe

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787 expressions or in the astrological notions of which no use is ever made. The practice is clearly meant to cope with the relevant 182 problems and interests of Nupe social life; and these, let us note, 178 are now typical, not only of a Mohammedan community, but also of a highly urbanized one. There is no longer any mention of rain, of the prospects of hunting, or of the influence of *kuti*; instead, we find references to 'writing and prayer', to mallams and barber-doctors, to 'the whole town in strife', and the strong emphasis on travel and trade, including travel and trade 'concerning women'.

The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of *hati* and its practical application suggests once more an attempt to assimilate the Mohammedan system to local conditions. The attempt is crude and unambitious, stopping far short of anything like a true synthesis; rather, any feature which cannot readily be assimilated is left on one side and only nominally acknowledged. Occasionally even this bare acknowledgement is discarded, as is shown in this example. One diviner, able to read his Arabic book on divination, discovered in it a new rule which distinguished between 'fixed' and 'movable' stars and operated with series of seven and the corresponding permutations. The diviner frankly admitted that he did not fully understand the rule: consequently he simply ignored it, not even borrowing the new nomenclature.

7. CONCLUSIONS: DREAM INTERPRETATION

787 I have called the guidance offered by divination mechanical and of a case-to-case kind. The preceding discussion will have borne out this description. Nupe divination is concerned less with foreknowledge in its own right than with resolving the problems and obscurities of the moment. The diviner can discover and disentangle some of the hidden influences which are at work always and everywhere, and can to that extent predict—piecemeal, and illuminating only the immediate future: he cannot uncover any more embracing design. Indeed, as we know, there is no such design in this non-committal and fundamentally amoral religion. Yet within the limits set to it divination has a part to play, providing some of the certainty and guidance required for provident action. We may call Nupe divination a concession or compromise; for as its scope is so restricted by the logic of Nupe religious thought, the fact that it exists at all, is a concession exacted by the practical needs of human life.

Let us note that religion itself adds to these needs. We spoke of the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought which crowds the universe with supernatural agencies overlapping in their effects and multiplies the supernatural aids, so that their appropriateness

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own right; and jokes or horseplay, which seem quite out of place, are inserted in the programme of 'merry-making'. If the dissociation were complete, the ritual would cease to be one and turn into a mere festivity. Normally, this is not permitted to occur; when economic stress or similar circumstances make it necessary to curtail the ritual performance, it is the 'merry-making' which is so shortened or even omitted altogether. But I have met with one instance of the opposite change. The people of Mokwa have a ceremonial called *elo* which has a great many of the essential features of the Nupe ritual: it has its 'month' (the 9th); a titled elder who has charge of it and can alone sanction the performance; and it employs masks and special dresses normally stored away and used on no other occasion. But it is without sacrifice, esoteric phase or prayer; nor is it (today at least) credited with any aim beyond *dzodzo*, 'play'. There is no evidence that the *elo* has been truncated for any particular reason; the evidence merely shows that the dissociation of the esoteric from the public episode can become complete, the latter coming fully into its own.

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3. SYMBOLIC AND IMPLICIT FUNCTIONS

Normally, even the public episodes are permeated with significance or continue to convey the ideas primarily expressed in the esoteric rite. A familiar method of keeping ideas in sight is by means of signs or symbols, that is, by means of objects or ways of acting understood to point beyond themselves, to some 'referent' or *significatum*. This reference may be of a general kind, merely indicating that the situation is of a religious nature or part of a particular ceremonial. Think of the dress obligatory in the esoteric sacrifice but worn also during the public episodes, of the *gunnu* whips or the staves of the old men in the *dzakó*, of the yells or shouted words which are understood to be a salute of the *kuti*, or of the musical instruments which are known to belong to this or that ritual. These symbols, then, act as reminders that even the 'merry-making' has its peculiar, more solemn context. The symbols may be more specific reminders in that they refer to the professed meaning of the ritual performance. Thus the *gunnu* whips and the flogging indicate fertility; the masks of the *mamma* secrecy and a knowledge hidden from women and strangers; and the cult objects of Tsoede stand for the whole past and unity of the tribe and kingdom.

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182 ●

Symbols, of course, also play a part in the esoteric rites. The river water poured on the ground in the *ndáduma* indicates the character of this river ritual; the white cloth, annually renewed in the *gunnu*, signifies the 'end and renewal' sanctified in the cult;

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x796 the freshly cut grain eaten in certain sacrifices points to subsistence and the continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to ● 182 secure. The meaning of all these symbols is fairly obvious and in a sense 'natural', being based on a commonly known nexus between the sign and the thing signified. Symbols of a more artificial kind, resting on some specific and perhaps esoteric convention, are rare in Nupe ritual. The only clear instance is the symbolism of right and left in the *dzakó*, which, as I have said, has no parallel in any other Nupe cult. The sacrifice of fish in one version of the *gunnu* is a more doubtful case; for though fish are associated with fertility (in dream interpretation) and welcome gifts (in divining), that knowledge is far from general. The use of tortoise shells in the same ceremonial reminds the congregation of the Father Tortoise stories, but does no more. The rule that the *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round his waist' evokes no association, say, with constraint inimical to growth and fertility. And though it may be tempting to speculate on the rule of calling the sacrificial beer 'water', that is, by the name of the fluid which (as rain or semen) is linked with the fertility of nature and man, the Nupe attach no ulterior meaning to this metaphor.

x796 Whether these and other details of the ritual procedure do not perhaps involve symbolisms of a more subtle and unconscious 182 nature, I will not discuss. In my view uncomprehended 'symbols 782 have no part in social enquiry; their social effectiveness lies in their capacity to indicate, and if they indicate nothing to the actors, they are, from our point of view, irrelevant and indeed no longer symbols (whatever their significance for the psychologist or psycho-analyst). But let us note that certain modes of acting may be significant for the actors without constituting symbols, merely because they represent a rule, a formalism of acting, that is, a *ritual*, and not accidental or random behaviour. This is true, for example, of the choice of the sacrificial animals. To begin with, they are in every case 'ordinary' animals, without sacred associations and neither rare nor avoided in workaday life. Though most rituals prescribe the sex of the sacrificial beast, males and females are chosen in random manner, suggestive of no symbolic link with the purpose of the ritual. The *ketsá* is perhaps the clearest example; the legend, as we remember, mentions the sacrifice of a cow; yet the actual ritual, when performed at the request of the Kede chief, requires the killing of a bull. In other rituals the sex as well as the species of the animal simply depend on the outcome of divination. It might seem that at least the [822] specification of white or black animals, which is fairly common, must have a symbolic significance since black colour is generally associated with secrecy and evil things, and white colour with prosperity.

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prosperity. But again, both kinds are irregularly employed; all that can be said is that the sex, colour or species of the animals is *laid down*, and hence stands for a rule significant as such.

A few words must here be said about the whole conception of the Nupe sacrifice. It seems anomalous that a non-personified deity or an abstract 'cosmic force' should be offered food and drink. But the prayer formula accompanying the offering speaks concretely of 'giving' these to God or *kuti*, just as the name of at least one ritual implies that the *kuti* (or the stone representing it) 'drinks' the fluid offered. The name for sacrifice, *labá*, offers no further clue; denoting the actual offering as well as the prayer accompanying it, it does not separate the former from the general act of worship. The offering is thus a gesture among others: like the prayer formula, meant to break through the aloofness of the deity, the sacrificial gift serves to attract and hold his attention. In either case the gesture used is borrowed from everyday life, the prayer employing ordinary language, the sacrifice items normally offered by clients to patrons. And this conception of a 'normal' gift is once more consistent with the notion that the various *kuti*, precisely like persons of rank and standing, command their special 'greetings'. If the offerings are anomalous, they share this character with all the other forms of addressing God and *kuti* and indeed with the very conceptions of the deity and of the Force-that-is-in-ritual.

Let me note briefly that the same anomaly also holds in the case of sacrifices made to ancestors or over the vessels of 'great' medicines. The former, as we remember, are brought to the disembodied souls which are 'with God'; mostly, too, they are accompanied by invocations addressed at once to God and *kuci*. The sacrifices to medicines again involve the invocation of God; and though they consist in offerings of beer, morsels of food, and the blood of the sacrificial animal, they are, as we shall see, also understood to strengthen the impersonal force that is imputed to the substance of medicine. Nor are the offerings to spirits, de-humanized beings that they are, any less anomalous; indeed, in a different context I recorded the positive assertion that 'spirits do not eat'.

The first two observances may, like ritual proper, include the sacrificial meal of the congregation; the sacrifice to ancestors does so in most cases, the sacrifice to 'great' medicines only where it has fused with a *kuti* or with *kuci* worship. Invariably, however, the inclusion of the communal meal, even where it means merely a sharing-out of beer, entails the invocation of God, and not only of ancestors or of the 'force' of medicine. Yet the sacrificial meal has in no way the significance of a sacrament. The meal undoubtedly represents a sacred occasion, although it may show

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x796 little trace of awe or emotional thrill.[1] But there is no conception of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing
● 182 bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial
782 meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and
769 drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations' between deity and congregation. Much the same point was made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties'.[2]

x796 Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of
182 very general social import and established by means of a relevant
183 parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal, efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence. The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and afterwards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition, rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dance', and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis, and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, however, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols. They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

[1] This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *bihi* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

[2] *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

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or underline only the professed aims of the ritual; rather do they express additional aims in an implicit and incidental fashion. Consider that the ritual procedure acknowledges distinctions of rank and seniority (for example, in the order in which the congregation is seated and receives food and drink); that it draws a sharp line between those admitted to the esoteric ceremonials or to the ceremonial altogether (certain age sets, men, members of the community), and those excluded from it (other age sets, women, strangers). Again, among the youths admitted to the esoteric rite there are the novices and those already initiated, each group being expected to behave differently, to show fear or not, to teach or to be taught, and so forth. Among the women who may join the public phase the girls might have to keep apart from the old women, as in the *dzakó* dance. Both in the *gunnu* and *mamma* the leader of the age grades assumes the special duty of supervising and organizing the youths. And in all larger ceremonies there is some procession through the village, when one 'salutes' the houses of chiefs and elders.

Now all these instances refer to behaviour valid and meant to be valid also in everyday life. If, then, respect towards elders, awareness of one's place in the society, the very notion of being of it, are given expression in the ritual procedure, this comes to demonstrate, in the manner of a model, the obtaining social norms. Needless to say, it is a very special model since it is presented in the context of stirred-up emotions and to a consciousness artificially heightened. Rarely is this model also explained in so many words; nor does it seem necessary: the norms of ritual behaviour simply parallel or duplicate the norms of 'real' life in a conspicuous manner, the ritual mobilizing the group as it should normally function. And since this 'normality' is an aimed-at state and represents goals or values governing secular life, we may here speak of aims or functions super-added to the professed aims of the ritual, or, with Radcliffe-Brown, of 'social values' rendered visible in the ritual. The important thing is that they are rendered visible *incidentally*, being implicit in the procedure of a ritual overtly directed towards quite other aims. In other words, the form of the ritual adds to its content, and this tends to be cumulative, absorbing a variety of aims.

Yet though these represent ways of acting generally desirable and important in social life, the ritual, in virtue of its professed aims, has its own importance. So that one importance is sustained or thrown into relief by the other. This circle is true of most or all religious rituals. But let us note two things. The additional aims conveyed in the ritual need not be merely implicit in its procedure; they may equally be made explicit by formal pronouncements

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occurring in the course of the ceremonial. In Nupe, this is the case only in the *gunnu*. We remember the exclusion of barren women from the public celebrations: this attitude is not merely left to emerge from the procedural rules but is also laid down in the form of an explicit warning voiced by the *gunnu* priest. Similarly the general obligation of respect towards elders and, especially, of sons towards their fathers is put into words, during the vigil in the bush, when the *ndakó gboyá* catechises the adolescents. Thus the Nupe can rightly say (in one of the *gunnu* songs) that the '*gunnu* teaches men', though in a more indirect fashion this would be true of all their rituals.

Furthermore, the 'desirable and important ways of acting' demonstrated in the ritual, implicitly or explicitly, may be held up as desirable and important in the ritual alone, not having the same weight in everyday life or not appearing in it at all. The ritual would then present, not a duplication or model, but something else—an ideal rarely met with in practice or even a reversal of the practice. This is true in varying degree of four features of the Nupe ritual, all concerned with the relationship of the sexes. There is, first, the rigid exclusion of women from the esoteric rites, which sometimes goes together with intimidation and threats. Yet women play an important part in Nupe social life, in many ways equal to that of the men; many women are influential and wealthy, and ranks and titles are open to them.[1] In no sense are they the 'weaker' or more timid sex. If, then, it is 'important' in the ritual that women should be kept in their place and forcibly reminded of their inferiority, this seems to imply a redress of balance, a compensation for the loss of male prominence, and something in the nature of a wish-fulfilment. The issue seems conspicuously summarized in the *mampa* ritual, which admits the power of women (since the 'medicine' employed is a woman's gift) yet is also meant to subdue and terrify them. The sex antagonism here apparent has a much wider bearing and will occupy us again in the discussion of witchcraft.

Secondly, the ostracism of the childless woman in the *gunnu*, though it does not contradict the norms valid in 'real' life, greatly exaggerates them. The Nupe men will always moralize about the impropriety of contraception and the shameful conduct of mothers who behave as though they had no children, becoming professional traders and, incidentally, prostitutes; equally, everybody will decry the misfortune of barrenness. But the fact remains that a great many women, childless or not, happily live in this 'shameful' state and are able to choose it without necessarily incurring the

[1] For a fuller account of the position of the women, especially in the economic sphere, see *A Black Byzantium*, chap. IX.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual 182
alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren 183
women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in 796x
reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted
or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is 182
severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go 183
together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. 834
Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the 786
whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may
call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve,
a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly,
it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only
improper but unthinkable.

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly 796x
different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as 182
girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that 183
happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this 881
aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in [839]
the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, [838]
is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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x796 like them; and after the first admission to the *gunnu* there will be repetitions of the same ceremonial and masquerade. The *gunnu* 182 thus exaggerates the change of roles and presents it in a manner 183 not exactly true to life; but just because it does so it becomes a 881 means of dramatizing a crucial crisis of life which, in reality, is neither as conspicuous nor as dramatic. So that the *gunnu*, through this part of its procedure, assumes the relevance of a *rite de passage*.

x796 To summarize. By its professed content, the ritual applies and partly affirms the system of religious ideas; and by its form, it 182 becomes part of the machinery which maintains the efficient 183 working of a society of a given structure. By its form, too, the ritual 'accumulates' further aims and ideas, bearing on codes of conduct, on social roles, and hence on the values of 'good' and 'bad'. Surveying all the various Nupe rituals we find that the *gunnu*, as it is considered the paramount ritual, so it is also the richest in 'cumulative' content. There is practically no manner of acting which is not referred to and evaluated in its procedure; furthermore, the *gunnu* alone goes beyond implicit references and contains also express pronouncements upon these 'additional' aims.

As I previously tried to show, it is not paradoxical that a cult of such far-reaching importance should be the first to disappear or to be truncated under the pressure of change; rather, its very ambitiousness exposes it 'on too many sides' to disruptive influences. Let me rephrase this assertion in terms of the 'content' and 'form' of rituals. The disappearance or radical alteration of the ritual clearly implies some weakening of its appeal. The professed content of the ritual would lose its appeal only if the whole conceptual framework of the religion were disrupted, as it would be by the impact of another religion, in this case Islam. Yet this was certainly not true (or not yet true) of the many Nupe communities where the *gunnu* alone of all the various rituals had disappeared or broken down. The form of the ritual, however, since it absorbs so many of the general norms of social life, would be weakened by any change affecting the latter, by any remodelling of the relationship between the generations, by any new attractions seducing the younger people, and by all changes in moral or educational standards. It is precisely dislocations of this kind which have spread most widely through Nupe country; and it is thus the *gunnu* carrying within its 'form' a mirror of the traditional way of life, lost its appeal and indeed its very relevance as its picture ceased to be true.

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764 relevance in Nupe social life.[1] And we should have to assume
184 further, to account for the loss of mystic appeal, that Islam has radically altered the Nupe view of life and death; which, as we shall see, is once more untrue.

5. SOLEMNIZATIONS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 There is no need to point to the close affinity of the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death, with the rituals of more general religious bearing. Both operate with the same elements—private (or esoteric) invocations, libations, communal meals, and public 'merry-making' in the concluding phase. Both, too, conspicuously involve numerical calculations defining the occasion and sequence of rites. The congregations, of course, differ, though there is some overlap; for certain *kuti*, like the solemnizations, mobilize the kin group only, while at the funerary rites of men of standing all the dignitaries of the community will be represented. Like the *kuti*, finally, the ceremonials surrounding the crises of life have their implicit as well as their professed aims. The latter could not be 'professed' more clearly. The *suna* is there to name the infant in solemn fashion, and hence to assign to it its future place in the society while at the same time invoking divine protection; the wedding ceremonial sanctifies the union of man and wife and holds out the promise of progeny; and the funeral ceremonial disposes of the dead while one prays that there may be no further deaths; it imposes mourning as well as cancels it, and thus repeats or dramatizes, in the ritual sequence, the endless cycle of human existence. We have, I think rightly, called these rituals solemnizations; for they hallow all these events through relating them with the supernatural. But they do more. Through the form they take, that is, through the manner in which the rituals mobilize their particular congregations, they also express the principles and values governing the structure of the society. Think of the rules assigned to the father and grandfather in the ceremonial of birth, the former being expected to collect the 'medicines' needed for an easy confinement and to consult the diviner, the latter to announce the new-born's name. Or think of the complicated exchange of gifts which concludes the marriage ceremonial, of the double sacrifice in the bride's and the bridegroom's house, and of the selection of the bridegroom's envoys and the bride's companions. The funerary rites throw into relief both the social distinctions that go with sex,

[1] I am here referring to status in the society at large, i.e. to the access to rank and office open only to older men and to the respect they generally command, not to the kinship authority of family heads; the latter has indeed been weakened (see pp. 83, 251.)

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age, and status and the varying degrees of kinship; even so specific a feature as joking relationship is built into the ceremonial. 182

Now, with a few exceptions—the role of friends in the marriage ceremonial, of age grades in marriage or funerals, and of rank-holders in the funerary rites,—the relationships mobilized in these rituals are kinship relationships; and through being mobilized in a sacred context, they are in turn affirmed and sanctioned. That the implicit efficacy of these rituals should serve to sustain the group based on kinship seems to fit the nature of the events so solemnized, which themselves primarily concern the kinship group. But these events do not only 'concern' the kinship group as, say, rain or fertility concern the village community; they punctuate its life and in fact determine its existence, that is, they create and renew it, birth and marriage replenishing the group and death depleting and re-ordering it. So that the circle is complete, the ritual 'content' and 'form' sustaining one another and, in a sense, coinciding. For the solemnization of these crucial events employs (and hence affirms) the very relationships brought into being by the events; and the professed aims of the ceremonials bear on the perpetuation of the human aggregate which their procedures serve to hold together.

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Most of these medicines, then, are 'multifarious', combining a therapeutic with a mystical or 'magical' efficacy. The latter may 755
even be paramount and take an extreme form, as in the medicines efficacious by their mere presence and of unknown composition. Equally, these medicines are treated as 'magical'. They may only be prepared in certain months and not in others, unlike all other medicines; and while the latter are kept in the usual household containers, gourds or ordinary pots, the hereditary medicines are preserved in special earthen vessels, placed apart and decorated in the manner of sacred objects, with a strip of white cloth, a ring of palm-fronds or a crown of white chicken feathers. They all have mystically obscure names and more or less elaborate *emisa*, and some also involve regular sacrifices, either when the *cigbe* is newly prepared or on the occasion of the usual kinship rites and invocations of ancestoral *kuci*. Finally, all these medicines are extremely secret and never sold for money, if indeed they are disposed of at all; if so, they may be given away only to close relations or perhaps friends, as a free gift 'for the sake of God'. Nor is their recipe (even if it is known) ever taught to others.

The special position of the hereditary *cigbe* is reflected in the 755
nomenclature, for these medicines alone merit the epithet 'great', 182
while all other medicines are called 'little'. Let us note that the verbal distinction refers, not so much to the miraculous effects with which the *cigbe* is credited, as to the procedure it sets in motion; for even a 'great' medicine may only cure headache or stomach trouble, at least with part of its efficacy. But the 'great' medicine alone involves proper acts of worship; and as it is bound up with the identity of kin groups through being hereditary, so it serves as a focus of kinship life, affording its supernatural aid primarily or even exclusively to the group to which it belongs and mobilizing it in the fashion of kinship rituals. The 'greatness' of the *cigbe*, then, lies in its social implications rather than in its concrete efficacy. Let us note also that its very 'ownership' is far from concrete. For the *cigbe* whose composition is unknown is also never examined, being renewed only from the beer and blood of the sacrifice. What is truly 'owned', is not any tangible, physical substance but only the vessel in which it is supposed to exist; so that this becomes a shrine for religious ministrations indistinguisable from ritual proper.

3. THE FAITH IN MEDICINE

The distinction between 'great' and 'little' medicines is drawn 755
only by the practitioners and 'owners' of *cigbe*. The bulk of the 184
people know little about these implications, and so grade the

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monial be repeated, at least year by year, but each performance 794
does no more than restrain the evil machination of witches. When I asked if the *ndakó gboyá* society, given its former power, could suppress witchcraft altogether, the answer was invariably the same: '*u jī táimako*', 'it would help'. As in the belief in the *Lelu*, the Nupe expect their anti-witchcraft magic only to keep down witchcraft, 'so that it would not be too bad'. If the Nupe knew our saying about poverty they would no doubt say that witchcraft, like the poor, will always be with us; all man can hope to do is to keep it within reasonable bounds.

7. ON THE MEANING OF WITCHCRAFT

The discussion has led us back to a question previously raised— 754x
Why should there be this stubborn belief in witchcraft? I am not 182 ●
now referring to the ascription of witchcraft to women or to particular individuals and personalities, but to the notion of witchcraft as such which underlies these specific ascriptions, that is, to the basic premiss that some mystic power of evil is simply given and ultimately ineradicable. As regards the specific ascription of witchcraft in Nupe thought, we explained it as a projection or displacement of hatreds and aggressive desires from the sphere of rational social life into one mystically sanctioned. We may now add that, through such projection and displacement, the doctrine of witchcraft both permits anxieties to become articulate (if in fantasy language) and shows them an outlet, or scapegoat. Other scholars have viewed witchcraft beliefs in much the same light.[1] And they would agree also with this calculation of the 'gain and cost of witchcraft' (to quote Kluckhohn's suggestive phrase). The individual gains inasmuch as he is shown a legitimate outlet for his frustrations and tensions, legitimate since the society has licensed the aggressive talk and action through which the frustration and tension are relieved or 'ab-reacted' (as psychiatrists would say). And society gains inasmuch as the 'ab-reaction' is not random but canalized; indeed, society utilizes the very mode of ab-reaction in turning it into an attack upon behaviour and character traits held undesirable.

None of these explanations, however, touches upon that premiss of 'witchcraft as such'. The former concern, essentially, the social canalization of anxieties, frustrations, tensions, hatreds, into variants of the belief in witchcraft. And these will depend on the make-up of the given society or culture: while in Nupe certain features of the social structure seem to be the determinants, in

[1] See C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, *The Navaho*, 1946, pp. 172–81.

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*754 182 other societies, differently organized, different factors might prove relevant (for example, among the Navaho, the smallness of the group, envy of wealth, and irregular, autocratic leadership).[1] But might it not be that the whole belief in witchcraft (of any kind) is similarly a variant, one of several possibilities of canalizing anxieties and tensions, which would once more depend upon something in the make-up of cultures? It must be so, since there exist societies (if few in number) which are without this kind of belief even though they are not without conflicts or tensions. And it must be so also for another reason.

Granted that suppressed hatreds, unresolved conflicts, and the like occur in most (or all) societies, they could surely be offered adequate relief by means other than beliefs in witchcraft. The hatreds and the persecution of aliens; licensed occasional outbursts of hectic excitement; or the licensed aggression of war or of sectional combats, are familiar instances; all three also occur in Nupe. It may of course be that they offer insufficient relief, or themselves add further anxieties or tensions. But there is no way of measuring the potential of these different chances of relief; we cannot compare them and say 'each can only do so much', as we might say of the lack of vitamins in one kind of food that it must be made good by their presence in another. If the incidence of neuroses and other psychopathological derangements is an index of unrelieved mental tensions, then the reliefs just mentioned are indeed 'not enough' in Nupe; but they are not enough even combined with witchcraft beliefs. However this may be, witchcraft beliefs exist *although* there are these other possibilities of relieving tensions; which is true not only of Nupe but of most societies in the world. We must conclude that they have a *raison d'être* of their own, apart from that implied in the psychological mechanism of projection, displacement, and the rest: which *raison d'être*, as I have suggested, must lie in 'something in the make-up of cultures' (of most cultures).

*754 182 114 In a paper written many years ago I attempted to formulate that reason. As I now know, I was wrong; my attempt was vitiated, above all, by the fact that I had considered Nupe witchcraft in isolation from the rest of the religious system. But since my error too is instructive, I may be allowed to repeat here the main argument.[2] I argued that religious faith, if it clings naïvely to the promises of religion—of guidance as to how to act; of supernatural or divine protection if that guidance is followed; and of some ultimately just and benevolent order of things—must on occasion face failure. For only too often are these promises belied, by

[1] Op. cit., pp. 174, 177, 178–9.
[2] See *Africa*, vol. VIII, pp. 444–5.

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disease, sudden death, misfortune, injustice, that is, by the evil things in the world. Thus in all religions there are attempts to justify or resolve, or to dismiss as merely apparent, this contradiction of promise and fulfilment. The attempts vary in philosophical refinement. The religious doctrine may, in the vein of stoic philosophy, explain the presence of evil as a foil for the visibility of the good; or it can make the evil things, like the sufferings of Job, a touchstone of faith; or it may lay their cause into the imperfection of man, so that his sins (willed or not, actual or intended) are behind the apparent failures of divine providence. Or finally, and more crudely, the religion may contain a loophole within itself, admitting a province where evil is simply allowed to reign. The devil of naïve belief is one embodiment of this loophole-idea; the witch another.

It is true that the belief in the evil actions of witches bears only upon a narrow variety of that abstract 'evil in the world' meant by philosophers or theologians. Even so, the 'loophole' remains. Let us remember also that the belief in witches safeguards itself from being 'found out' and proved or refuted by empirical means; in embracing this incontrovertible belief, then, religious faith itself is safeguarded from being found illusory and refuted by reality. Speaking practically, the acceptance of witchcraft (or of the devil) saves the believer from false hopes or disillusion; speaking philosophically, the acceptance of an ultimate X within the divinely ordered universe saves that order. Admitting that there is a province where the believed-in guidance and protection do not fully reach, we save the belief in laws to guide us and in that promise of protection. Witchcraft, in brief, is a chapter in apologetics, albeit crudely written.

So far my original conclusions (somewhat paraphrased). Now though they are, I believe, correct for other systems of religious belief, they do not seem to apply to Nupe religion. Granting that beliefs in witchcraft can save faith in a divine order of the universe, in Nupe religion, there is nothing of the kind to save; if in other societies or cultures there must be the admission of that ultimate X to account for, or explain away, the failure of religious guidance and promise of protection, in Nupe, this guidance and promise have never been offered. Nupe religion, as we know, admits accidents at every step; it promises only fallible guidance and protection; the observances or ethical rules it upholds are not meant to be counted upon against the many evils which are also in the world—malevolent spirits, diseases, uncontrollable misfortune. Indeed, the deity himself has put them in the world and suffers them to exist, being unconcerned with the fate of his creation. Why, then, should there be this further, special

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assumption of the evil of witchcraft? The problem which it might serve to solve simply does not exist.

Yet there remains another problem, requiring a kindred solution. With the admission of accident, with the conception of an unpredictable and amoral universe, the problem of the presence of evil is solved intellectually or, at least, argued away on the intellectual plane. But this solution leaves an emotional gap. For I hold that there is a deeply seated desire for certainty, which demands satisfaction of an essentially emotional kind, that is, the awareness that the world is not only certain, but concerned with *you*—your fate, your happiness. And where this demand is refused (as in Nupe) anxieties and frustrations must again arise and press for some ab-reaction and solution. But now those other outlets which might relieve the pent-up tension, through random acts of aggression or some explosive catharsis, would prove inadequate; they would take care of the symptoms but not of the conflicts from which these spring. Nor can the disturbance of the longed-for certainty be overcome save by discovering the disturber; the vague dissatisfaction with an abstract state of affairs must be capable of crystallizing into the accusations of concrete agents. Above all, there must be the chance of practical action, so that the people aware of the threat also have the satisfaction of dealing with it. In other words, precisely because you know that the world around you holds out no promise of certainty nor any supreme design, you conjure up an arch-enemy with whom at least you can reckon, on whom you can vent fears and hatreds, and over whom you may hope to triumph, be it Satan or the witch.

The witch is, perhaps, less of an arch-enemy, since only some of the evils of the world can be laid at her doorstep. Yet the conjured-up picture of human beings who are unaccountably evil and unaccountably cause death and disease does take care of a portion of the uncertainty in the world. Now, we previously said that the admission of a province of life where the benevolent design of the universe does not reach saves the faith in that universe: this clearly does not apply. We must now say—the admission of a province of life where malevolent forces can be defined (and attacked), makes it possible to bear a universe devoid of such design. To be sure, this is no longer our 'loophole' theory; but it is as it were its photographic negative, or the same mathematical formula with all pluses changed into minus signs. Crudely speaking, you may have a God of Justice and Mercy, naïvely conceived, and devils or witches in the background; or you may have an Idle God, remotely in the background, but at least devils or witches to grapple with.

That the notion of witchcraft may arise from such opposed con-

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ceptions is, I think, borne out by the history of witchcraft beliefs in our own civilization. For these flourished both when faith was naive and when it was weakened by the first scientific revolution. Science, of course, did not attack certainty at large; rather, it opened the vista of new laws and a new order governing the universe. But it destroyed the subjective certainty, that emotionally satisfying awareness of a universe concerned with man. So that this sudden loss revived the search for some arch-enemy.[1] Among the Nupe, it was not a question of a sudden loss; they had misconstrued their universe from the first.

One final comment. The preceding discussion may seem to imply that the belief in witchcraft serves to maintain or 'save' a state of affairs worth maintaining and saving; previously too, we argued that witchcraft beliefs and practices 'attack undesirable behaviour', 'resolve conflicts', and 'relieve tensions and anxieties'. One might conclude that societies can do no better than foster beliefs in witchcraft, and that our balance sheet of their 'gains and cost' must show a heavy credit side. Such views are sometimes expressed; it has been pointed out, for example, that witchcraft beliefs provide a 'harmless outlet in imagination for impulses forbidden in real life;' that they direct aggressiveness 'into socially non-disruptive channels' and so resolve 'the problem that every society faces: how to satisfy hate and still keep the core of society solid'.[2]

Let me stress that I presumed no such absolute utility of witchcraft beliefs. I suggested that they resolve certain conflicts or problems: but I did not say that this is a 'good' solution or a final one. The aggression invited by witchcraft beliefs is as harmful as anything a society can produce in the way of 'disruptive' practices; the relief offered by witch-hunting and witch-punishing is no more than temporary and their capacity to allay anxieties no more than illusory: for if witchcraft beliefs resolve certain fears and tensions, they also produce others. Nor is there anything unique in this. If witchcraft beliefs represent a very imperfect 'solution', cultures are full of similarly shortsighted reliefs and spurious correctives. In a sense, the remedies are always better than the complaints; for they enable individuals to go on living and societies to go on functioning without having to face the task, often impossible of achievement, of completely re-fashioning the social system. But they are the kind of remedy which both becomes

[1] Cf. this passage from H. Butterfield: 'It would appear to be the case that astrology, like witch-burning, was considerably on the increase in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in spite of what we say about the beginning of modern times' (*The Origin of Modern Science*, 1949, p. 21).

[2] C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, op. cit., pp. 173, 177.

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×754 a drug and poisons the system. Or, to change the metaphor, we may
liken witchcraft beliefs to a safety valve: but let us be clear that
●182 the engine which needs it has been badly constructed; nor is the
safety valve itself safe.

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2. ON MOTIVES

We turn to our crucial problem, the motives underlying these adoptions and rejections of alien observances. Since in our examples both responses were voluntary, not imposed by extraneous pressure or constraint, we may legitimately argue that the acceptance must have rested upon some appeal, some kind of pull, which the novel practice exercised upon the recipients-to-be, and the rejection upon the lack of such an appeal or perhaps its opposite. This 'appeal' or 'pull' is clearly a complex thing. First and foremost, it is a pull of interest; in other words, we may search for some specific interest or 'need' pre-existing in the recipient culture, which the novel practice seems capable (or incapable) of satisfying.[1] The relevant factor, however, is not the pre-existing interest or need as such, but a residual interest or need; what we must show is not so much that the society is deeply concerned over such-and-such issues (for example, the fecundity of women) but that this concern is unsatisfied even where it is met by pre-existing institutions. The *gugu* ceremonial, for example, answers interests strongly pronounced in Nupe life in the fixed rituals promising communal well-being, and in the ritualization of death; but since a series of traditional ceremonials profess the same aims, the residual interest must be small, if it is felt at all. The concern over childbirth, on the other hand, is by its nature such that it would always remain active and press for additional promises or safeguards.

The concern or aim of the alien observance may obviously be expressed in a form more or less novel and unprecedented; and the degree of novelty must clearly itself affect the ease of adoption. But this effect is difficult to assess. Often, we shall no doubt argue that, the more novel a practice, the more uncongenial must it be to people still thinking in terms of traditional ways of acting; so that the novelty would act as a brake upon the free play of interests, as a counter-pull as it were. Yet we cannot exclude the possibility that the novelty of the practice will help rather than hinder the adoption; for its 'uncongenial' form may itself correspond to some pre-existing interest, that is, to a diffuse desire for unusual and unprecedented experiences. Now all the alien religious practices which the Nupe have adopted contain some 'uncongenial' or unprecedented features. Shall we then say that the latter must have exercised a certain appeal in their own right? Perhaps—though

[1] The term 'pre-existing' is here used in a somewhat loose sense, without the implication of precise chronological evidence. It implies, however, that the interest or need in question can be established independently, that is, can be shown to obtain apart from the adopted (or rejected) practice.

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varying combination and interplay. I have tried to tabulate the relevant data in the form of a synoptic chart capable of exhibiting the multiple correlations. The features listed are those discussed above, plus and minus signs indicating their presence and absence respectively. I also attempted to grade the interests satisfied by the various cults by doubling the plus signs in the appropriate cases; a similar grading of 'congeniality' seemed irrelevant in the light of the final result.

	(I) *Integration of donors and recipients*	(SD) *Status distinction operating against donors*	(C) *Congeniality of form*	(SI) *Satisfaction of interest*	*Outcome*
bori	−	±	−	+ (as therapeutic measure)	Rejection
gugu	+	+	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Rejection
gani	+	−	−	++	Adoption
sogba (fertility cult)	−	+	−	++	Adoption
(general cult)	−	+	−	−	Rejection
elo	−	−	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Adoption
Tsoede idols	−	−	−	++	Adoption

In other words, adoption (of a voluntary kind) occurred when

$$I^{\pm} \ldots SD^{\pm} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{++}$$

and when

$$I^{-} \ldots SD^{-} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{+}.$$

That a strong interest should outweigh the absence of congeniality and render the factor of integration irrelevant is hardly surprising; but it is puzzling that this should be true also where the interest appears to be small and even uncertain (as in the *elo*). Perhaps, then, we have underrated the residual 'need'? If so, it must have sprung from some inadequacy in the pleasures and excitements afforded in the pre-existing situation. Although this

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assumption cannot, for obvious reasons be fully substantiated, it is not altogether unwarranted. Mokwa and the other communities practising the *elo* are in fact poor in ceremonials offering, apart from occasions for worship, also the purely pleasurable stimulations of dancing, singing, and conviviality; for while most Nupe communities have two or three ceremonials of this kind, Mokwa has only one apart from the *elo*—the *gunnu*,—the remaining rituals being sober esoteric sacrifices, unaccompanied by music, dancing, and public 'merry-making'.[1] We mentioned in a previous context that the number of fixed ceremonials is fairly uniform throughout Nupe;[2] we may now add that the proportion of ceremonials of such combined appeal is similarly uniform. This I take to indicate that the Nupe need for regular pleasurable stimulations has as it were found its own level. Which would mean, further, that Mokwa and the other communities were only balancing a psychological deficit when they adopted the *elo*. Certainly, several of the communities which exhibit the normal Nupe level of ceremonial-*cum*-pleasurable occasions had an equal chance of embracing the *elo* or of copying the similar *gugu*, but have not done so. So that the adoption, by a few groups, of the alien ceremonial for no motive other than that of adding another festivity did yet answer an unsatisfied 'need'.

But let us note a final source of error. We have spoken of the 'pre-existing' interests or needs as though they were bound to be constant, the measure of their satisfaction alone being variable. It is conceivable that this assumption is unwarranted, and that the adoption of the new observance reflects, not a pre-existing interest unsatisfied, but an interest strengthened owing to some change in social conditions. As regards the *elo* and *sogba*, there is no evidence to support this alternative hypothesis. It is, however, borne out in the case of the *gani*. This ceremonial, as I put it before, improves upon the traditional Nupe institutions which ritualize adolescence and age-grade life; it dramatizes these events in a specific and detailed manner where the equivalent traditional ceremonial, the *gunnu*, merely deals summarily with the transition from youth to adulthood, embodying it as one aspect among others in its design. Now, though the age grades have undoubtedly always served to mirror the dominant interests of Nupe life, in rank and in promotion in status, the interests themselves must have gained in

[1] The same is true of Rabah, though there Mohammedan influence has today obliterated the *gunnu*. Gbajibo, the third community practising the *elo*, has two other ceremonials which combine religious with generally pleasurable stimulations, the *gunnu* and the *mamma*; but the latter is celebrated in secrecy, by the men alone, and only as a movable ritual.

[2] See above, p. 70.

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771 importance with the growth of the Fulani Emirate. As the latter
177 gave greater impetus to desires for a political career and imparted greater severity to the competition for rank and status, so the age
162 grades assumed a novel, and more weighty, significance. With this, the fuller and more specific ritual elaboration of adolescence seems entirely consistent. It was not so that the pre-existing desire to give ritual elaboration to important things had been inadequately expressed; rather, things became important in a new way: so that, when the Nupe adopted the *gani* ceremonial, they were seizing upon a chance to express a changed outlook and a desire reoriented.

As we shall see, the more far-reaching conversion to Islam similarly involves such changing interests and newly emerged trends. Are then, perhaps, any trends visible in Nupe today which may in future lead to further adoptions of alien practices? I will hazard this prediction. The pressure of competition and the obsession with promotion in status, grown strongest in the capital, are visibly leading to anxieties and frustrations, and to mental instability. The incidence of neurotic disorders seems to bear out this tendency, though inadequate records forbid a more definite statement.[1] The mass hysteria of the witchcraft trial mentioned before offers clearer evidence. Such increased tensions may well seek relief in some form of self-abandonment: the *bori* possession cult seems to offer precisely this chance, which might one day be seized upon, its 'uncongenial' appeal notwithstanding.

3. THE CHARACTER OF TRIBAL RELIGION

771 The preceding discussion referred only to the adoption of iso-
177 lated practices and items of belief but made no mention of individuals or communities wholly converted to an alien pagan creed. Nor is this unexpected. The religions of pre-literate peoples are not normally of a proselytizing kind. They promise no particular reward to the converted, nor do they place any premium on the conversion of others. Indeed, it seems true to say that this issue never arises, for, as we anticipated, primitive religion is essentially a tribal or national religion, conceived of as inseparable from the particular identity of the group professing it. Expressed differently, primitive religion does not constitute a 'church' which exists in its own right and can be entered (or left) solely by reason of its creed and of the transcendental benefits promised to the believers.[2]

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 402.

[2] Durkheim's famous identification of 'religion' (of any form) with a 'church' seems to me to rest on an arbitrary use of the latter term; for whatever else may be meant by a 'church', it must mean 'a community organized

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forced upon the people, from others that followed spontaneously. What was forced upon the people was essentially a total situation, at once political, economic, and religious; any step may be the first, nor need the others follow immediately.[1] Only theoretically can we conclude that they all hang together, though occasionally we can trace the nexus more firmly, even into the future, towards adjustments yet to come. 177

Let me illustrate this on an example bearing on the widest efficacy of Islam, its very success in proselityzing the Nupe. Coming as it did as a religion of conquerors and ruling class, it both endorsed the social barrier and provoked attempts at overcoming it. In keeping conversion loose and easy, and in utilizing the emphasis on learning, which, on an elementary level, was widely accessible, the Nupe turned Islam into a means of social mobility. But the result, a religious division cutting irregularly across the society, even across single communities, clearly presented new problems; and their solution took the form of a 'remodelling of the model'. The ('unorthodox') tolerance of Nupe Moslems towards pagans is one such reaction to a cleavage which, if it were allowed to retain its sharpness, would break up every community. Another, though it occurs in one case only, lies in that 'religious division of labour' between Moslems and pagans which we recorded from Kutigi. But consider also that the spreading of Islam must tend to obscure the class barrier which it formerly sustained and on which Nupe society is still based; and if one day Islam sweeps the whole country, that problem will arise with even greater acuteness. To some extent the commonly accepted distinction between grades of mallams tends to preserve or re-establish the class barrier; for the 'knowledge' which makes the 'true' mallam is more readily accessible to the leisured and wealthy than to the craftsman or peasant. However, the full consequences of this conflict are not yet visible. Indeed, we cannot predict if the conflict itself will stay; for extraneous changes (political or economic) may well weaken or remove the class barrier. Yet if it remains, the model of Islam might again show the solution, its sectarianism offering the possibility of diverse and even opposed religious alignments.

So much for the processes of change and 'contact'. As regards that end-state, it has become almost a dogma of many anthropologists that it always represents a unique cultural situation, something in the nature of a *'tertium quid'* which has no precise 177 182

[1] This should be taken literally. I found communities still observing the *gunnu*, where the economic co-operation of the large family group had disappeared (e.g. Doko or Mokwa); while in others, which had abandoned the *gunnu*, the old system of inheritance was only beginning to break down (e.g. Lemu).

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antecedents in the 'parent cultures' and invariably amounts to more than a mere 'fusion or mixing'. Rather, 'the clash and interplay of two cultures produce new things'.[1] In cultural changes 'old elements are abandoned and new ones developed in close and constant relation to the existing configuration'.[2] To quote Herskovits' summing up of this school of thought: these scholars hold that 'the arithmetic of culture contact is never a process of addition. . . . A culture of multiple origins is different from any bodies of tradition that have contributed to it. The dynamics of acculturation . . . are creative.'[3] In the terms of our subject matter we should have to admit that Nupe-Islam is not so-and-so much Nupe religion plus so-and-so much Islam but a fundamentally novel phenomenon, unprecedented, integrated, self-contained.

Now the processes we outlined, devious, piecemeal, involving partial adjustments and often unstable compromise, make it clear that their end-result is indeed a 'new thing'. Yet equally they suggest that it is not, at any stage, fully integrated or self-contained. Whichever way we understand 'integration', or for that matter its antithesis, the mere 'fusion or mixing', no summary judgment of this kind is possible.

Taken at its most concrete meaning, the integration of a cultural item in a new setting would imply that the respective modes of behaviour are performed regularly and in predictable situations. But clearly there are degrees of this regularity. The Moslem *salla* or the pseudo-Moslem *navũ* represent fully regular, predictable modes of behaviour; so do the Fast of Ramadhan, the daily prayers, and the observance of alms-giving. But Moslem-style divination or medical practices, the Moslem solemnization of kinship events, and the Moslem rules of preferential marriage, are much less regular and predictable. They represent ways of acting which people may or may not choose, having become established only as cultural 'alternatives', to borrow Linton's phrase.[4] The visits to the mosque are even more irregularly observed, while the concern with Islamic mythology or theology is purely sporadic if not exceptional.

Nor is the picture more uniform when we understand 'integration' to mean, more abstractly, a firm fit between the originally alien elements of culture and their new setting. This fit can only be of three kinds: it may be one of purpose, the alien elements exhibiting some rationally intelligible utility or appropriateness in the new setting; or it may be visible in the logical consistency

[1] B. Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change*, 1945, pp. 21, 25.
[2] R. Linton, *The Study of Man*, 1936, p. 360.
[3] M. J. Herskovits, *Man and his Work*, 1948, p. 534.
[4] Op. cit., p. 273.

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obtaining between the two; or the 'fit' may be psychological, in that the old and new modes of behaviour exhibit the same emotional 'tone' or 'ethos'.[1] 177 182

Undoubtedly, there is evidence for the nexus of utility or appropriateness, even though its character varies widely. The great ceremonials of Islam conspicuously serve political interests and the regulation of adolescence; equally they have been fitted into the cycle of routine and recreation. The daily prayers, the fast, and alms-giving have no such momentous part to play; yet precisely because they are inconsequential and depend on private decisions alone, they have come to exemplify adherence to the new creed in a manner both conspicuous and easy to assume. In other words, they serve as distinguishing marks, as badges of Islam, much as do the turban or other suggestive items of dress. Yet worship in the mosque rather than in the open, a flexible system of priestship rather than one based on inheritance or supernatural vocation, or the Moslem variants of marriage in the kindred have no particular utility. Indeed, worship in the village mosque tends to weaken the solidarity of the community which all other features of the social organization aim to uphold; while the inadequacy of the Moslem rules of widow marriage had to be corrected by a remodelling of the funeral customs.[2] Again, the Moslem funeral ceremonial fails to express the important social distinction between old age and youth.[3] And the muddled pseudo-Islamic mythology is surely nothing but an incongruous, valueless 'addition'. All we can say about the appropriateness of these novel practices is that they conform to the rules of Islam; which is only repeating that Islam has in fact been adopted, with all these features, whether they have an ulterior purposefulness or not.

Logical consistency, even the interest in simulating it, is widely absent: think of the employment, by the Mohammedan sovereigns, of the *ndakó gboyá* cult; of the *navũ* performed without any notion or, for that matter, curiosity about the meaning of this ritual of fire; or of the preservation of the pagan marriages between grandmother and grandson by people otherwise consciously committed to Moslem practice.

Only on the plane of psychological effects is there a close and indeed convincing 'fit', the result, quite clearly, of selection and remodelling. Thus the mystic and ecstatic observances of Islam are absent; and the hectic, sexually excited mood of the *gani* or *navũ* merely duplicates the mood formerly evoked in the *gunnu*. Integration, then, is complete only where it bears on the ethos of

[1] For the theoretical basis of this argument see my *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, 1951, pp. 384–5 *et seq.*

[2] See above, p. 122.

[3] See above, pp. 129–30.

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177 Nupe religion; but integration here means persistence, so that in the one instance in which the adoption of the new creed is truly not
182 a mere 'addition' it also ceases to be a 'new thing'.

It is hardly surprising that this 'fit' should apply to the emotional 'tone' of religion and should prove the tenacity of predispositions so deeply rooted in the personality. Even so, there can be no finality about it; this is only the picture as we see it today, and it is possible that further developments, or strains only slowly gathering weight, will bring a change here also. In a previous chapter I ventured a prediction of this kind.[1] Let me now add that traces of such a change are already visible. For the *navũ* is more violent than the *gunnu* or any traditional rite used to be, and focuses its violence more sharply. Also, it was left to the new ceremonial to embody the 'licensed liberties' of joking relationship, which are otherwise played out privately and sporadically. As we remember, they are enacted mainly between the sexes and between boys and older men, and hence set aside respect, relationships and rules of etiquette normally scrupulously observed. Thus publicly staged, the 'licensed liberties' clearly provide a gratification sharper and more consciously aggressive than traditional usage could have afforded. Here, then, the greater political tensions in the city and the greater strain set up by changing moral standards seem to demand this more explosive relief: certainly, the older 'ethos' would not have condoned it.

[1] See above, p. 226.

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771 divination). The belief in lucky or unlucky days and months is not really an exception; for the numerical order underlying their selection is neither systematic nor valid apart from this one context.

It is important, however, that the tendency to enumeration and schematic juxtapositions does not characterize the formulated doctrine alone ('There are four things in the world'); it is as typical of the way in which individuals express their own speculative and occasionally unorthodox views, for example—'There are two gods, one in the sky, the other on earth'; 'The female spirits live in the water, male spirits on the land.' Thus there is some interest in speculation, which is often keen and readily engaged in. But it relates only to the given topics of religion, that is, to notions already formulated, and does not attempt to break new ground. In other words, the people are content with a bare and fragmentary *Weltbild*, but feel the desire, though not for wider knowledge, yet for greater clarity in the knowledge they possess. In either case the treatment is schematic rather than syllogistic, and nominalistic in that it leans on the intelligibility of words and on semantic exercises.

771 The religious knowledge so framed exhibits close consistency with other sectors of the culture. The non-anthropomorphous
182 and abstract character of religion tallies with the non-realistic art of Nupe, and the emphasis on schematic arrangements in the former, with the geometrical-ornamental accent of the latter. Perhaps, too, there is a logical nexus between the unconcern with deities or humanized features of the universe and the absence of any drama proper (either in art or religion). The tendency to enumerations is visible also in Nupe folklore and in the Nupe calendar (where months are referred to by numbers). The same is true of status differences, political ranks, and age grades, which are always presented in schematic form and precisely numbered, even at the cost of inaccuracy; let me add that in a large number of communities the senior and politically important ranks number four. Nor are dichotomous arrangements less frequent; think only of the common juxtaposition of *Žitsú* ('town king') and *Žigí* ('town priest'). The dualism of the sexes, in particular, is carried to a considerable extent through Nupe language, which assigns a gender, expressed by adding the attribute 'male' or 'female', also to trees and plants. The interest, finally, in analogies and semantic exercises is amply exemplified: in Nupe literature, where whole stories are based on puns or on the ambiguity of words; in attempts at producing persuasive pedigrees for present customs by means of etymological speculations; and in ordinary conversation.

These are all preferred ways of handling and ordering material (of whatever kind); and since they are visible both within and

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without the sphere of religion we may say of the latter that it is an expression (among others) of the basic intellectual orientation of the people. There is one exception, however. In the secular sphere the Nupe are keen historians, always interested in tracing things back to their past. In their religious conceptions this interest is almost entirely absent; so far as it exists, it ceases to be religious, being satisfied with summary references to extraneous, political-historical events, such as the introduction of a cult by Tsoede or the origin of some religious practice in the reign of a particular king. At this point the attitudes towards things sacred and profane diverge; only the latter require a precise time perspective; the former are simply given, or adequately explained by that timeless *ultima causa*, the deity.

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To return for a moment to the Nupe bias for dualistic conceptions. Though we have grouped it with the other 'intellectual orientations', with predilection for enumerations, parables, and so forth, it clearly betrays more than this kind of predisposition, serving also to articulate the sharply felt and emotionally weighted antagonism of the sexes, as in witchcraft fantasies and in the belief in the deadly female 'germ' of the 'diseases of God'. And since the awareness of this antagonism springs from unconscious sources, it would seem to be of a different and more fundamental order than the other expressions of the dualistic bias. Shall we, then, hold the two apart? Even so, there remains the uniformly dualistic *Weltbild*, whether it expresses the unconscious sexual anxieties of men or their dispassionate intellectual efforts to order the phenomena of the world. Or shall we assume some play of cause and effect between the two, taking the awareness of sex antagonism to be at the root of the intellectual bias, in the sense that it shaped a predisposition towards finding dichotomies also in all other areas of experience? Clearly, we might equally assume the opposite, that is, that the conception of sex antagonism in witchcraft and elsewhere would not have crystallized had it not been facilitated by a congenial intellectual predisposition. There is, I think, no answer to these questions. The dualistic viewpoint is simply one of the cardinal possibilities upon which the human intellect can seize in structuring the world of experience; and the antagonism of male and female represents once more one of very few possibilities available to societies, or to man in society, in their efforts to structure the universe of human relationships. All we can legitimately say is that the two emerged together, in mutual consistency.

The witchcraft belief simply that other dichotomy, of 'good' and 'evil', as does the belief in spirits and in the character of humans inscrutably fashioned by God. But this dichotomy is formulated only on this cosmic scale, referring to the 'things that are in the

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world', and has no narrower, pragmatic or ethical application. As for the realm of ethics, Nupe doctrine is altogether silent. It upholds no ideal man, nor condemns his antithesis. There is no eschatology, no mythology exemplifying rights and wrongs, crime and retribution, and no promise of reward to the law-abiding. Nor is the formulated doctrine concerned with norms of action of more common currency, the simple rights and wrongs of everyday morality. 'Economic ethics' has its place in ritual; since this turns upon such things as birth, marriage and adolescence, crops and the exigencies of the seasons, prosperity and wealth, that is, upon events and conditions involving practical decisions, the respective courses of action are implicitly upheld as desirable, worthwhile and 'right'. But they are not 'announced' or 'revealed', neither commanded nor yet conspicuously dramatized. Their significance is left to preliminary knowledge, the worshippers knowing at the outset what to expect of the ritual, both as regards its aim and the promises it vouchsafes. And these are again silent on ethical issues. The fortunes anticipated and the misfortunes that may befall you imply neither merit nor punishment: they simply happen, while religion means no more than an aid in attaining or evading them. Only two explicit ethical commands occur in the whole range of Nupe rituals. They refer to filial obedience (enjoined in the *gunnu*) and to the blessedness of fecundity. But we remember that the relevant episode of the *gunnu* is also the first to fall victim to change, and that other religiously sanctioned aids, the services of the *cigbeci*, are dispensed in disregard of the moral condemnation of childlessness. On balance, then, Nupe religion is amoral. As we anticipated, the crucial issue in most religions, how to reconcile the discrepancy of religious merit and practical rewards, simply does not arise. Nupe religion takes life as it is, offering no 'annunciations and promises' that would redress its iniquities, and hardly even endorsing the equity that should govern it.

This equity is largely left to the care of secular agencies alone. Religion plays a part only indirectly, through sanctioning the persons—kings, chiefs, executioners—who act as guardians of the accepted good. The sanction lies essentially in ritual, that is, in the various ceremonials involved in the assumption of these offices or entrusted to their holders. But let us note that these men guard, not really morality, but only that part of it which has solidified in the form of politically enforced law. Differently expressed, Nupe society knows mainly crimes and few 'sins', and only lawful, not saintly behaviour. On occasion religion abandons even this indirect support for the conventions of morality; for certain rituals deny these conventions, as in the sexual licence of the *gunnu* and *gani* or in the condonation of violence in the *navũ*. At this point, then, the

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logical consistency between religion and the rest of social life ceases to be valid. Morally, the rituals in question have no message; or their message is a circuitous one, exemplifying the rule by the exception. Their 'competence' cannot therefore lie in this topsy-turvy picture of common morality: rather, as we already suggested, does it lie in the offer of explosive relief from normal constraints.

Let me say a little more on the amorality of the Nupe creed. Nupe religion, as we have seen, sanctions only the powers that be, the machinery of political control, and hence the claims of secular society to declare what is right and wrong. Religion by itself vouchsafes no direct and 'higher' assurance of this kind. It does not as it were speak for society, but only stands behind the appointed spokesmen. Needless to say, most religions go beyond this *carte blanche* for secular society. And in doing so they achieve two things: doubts and conflicts arising in mundane ethics can be resolved by the assurance that there are these other, 'higher' or 'eternal', values; and these can in turn serve as ideals which man is called upon to approach, however imperfectly. So that religion can both absorb the iniquities of human existence and give it an impetus towards making the world better than it is. Nupe religion can do neither. Thus conflicts over mundane ethics can be absorbed into religion only in the one province which itself proclaims the inevitability of conflicts, namely, in the hostile fantasies of witchcraft. And offering nothing 'higher' than an endorsement of mundane ethics, religion is emptied of its impetus towards world improvement: it is static, non-progressive, non-messianic, and once more content to take 'life as it is'.

3. RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

There is a certain overlap between this new nexus and the one just discussed. For since any group, of whatever structure, is such only in virtue of the norms of acting enjoined upon its members, the pronouncements of religion upon 'right' and 'wrong' conduct (say, 'thou shalt honour thy father and mother') already serve to uphold the group so constituted (the family, or the society based upon filial piety). Yet there is that special competence of religion to uphold group existence and structure as such, and not only such specific manners of acting as may form the subject of ethical commands. Nor can group existence and group structure be 'commanded': they can only be demonstrated or circuitously affirmed, though occasionally they are explicitly asserted, as in Judaism with its tenet of a 'chosen people', serving a tribal or national God.

Again, Nupe religion lacks such explicit assertions, as it lacks

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also that conspicuous focus of group existence, a tribal god. There is no conception that the deity is concerned with this one people only or that the Nupe people are the sole or chosen possessors of true religion. To be sure, there are the legends explaining how the Nupe acquired *cigbe*, the Chain of Tsoede, and particular rituals; but it is understood that other peoples also have medicines, rituals, and supernatural skills of various kinds. The Nupe tribe lays claim only to the possession of certain *particular* instances, not of the *genera* ritual or medicine. Even so qualified, this claim or title becomes an aspect of group identity and hence one of the supports of the tribe's existence as a group. A similar possession of particular observances and sacred skills also identifies the groups of diverse or lesser inclusiveness: the state (which possesses the 'royal cults'); the village community (which may possess a special *kuti*); and the kin group (which possesses hereditary *cigbe* and ancestral sacrifices.

This possession is adjusted even more finely, so that it comes to affirm, not only the corporate identity of this or that group, but also its internal structure. For as the administration of the village *kuti* is vested in single kin groups but serves the whole community, so it endorses the make-up of a group in all other respects similarly segmented yet co-operative; and as the administration of kinship rituals falls to the senior man in the lineage and descends in that line but is meant to benefit also wives, mothers, daughters- and sisters-in-law, so it endorses the basic kin group, the extended family or 'house'. All of which implications are contained in the Nupe conception of the 'ownership' of cults.

This ownership, though corporate, does not *make* the group in question; it pertains to groups already constituted as such by other criteria, whatever they may be—common language, territorial possession, citizenship, descent, cohabitation, and so forth. The possession of the religious observances is thus a feature of group identity only in combination with all the others and in fact presupposes them. This relationship is reversed only once, in the case of the Nupe emigrants whose title to 'Nupedom' rests solely on the retention of the traditional cults.

The Nupe congregation, in the wider or narrower sense, is such inevitably, mainly by descent, and not by individual choice, as is the case in a 'church' open to all comers. Fundamentally, this is a closed religion, bound up with membership of tribe, nation, village or kin group, and part of the 'estate' of these groups. In a few instances—most (not all) *cigbe*, divination, the unimportant sacrifices to spirits—the benefits of religion are accessible to individuals *qua* individuals, even to strangers from other tribes. In all other respects individuals share in the ministrations of religion only in

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virtue of their membership of the respective groups, and share in them on equal terms. For there are no qualifications which might make one unpredictably a vessel of divine grace, nor degrees of sacredness attainable by personal endeavour. The miraculous birth of the *gunnu* priest comes closest to the former conception; while the technical skills of *ɛigbe* and the *ndakó gboyá* society with its open recruitment at least enable individuals so inclined to become active agents of the supernatural. Even so, these are not qualifications for religious excellence nor calls for spiritual leadership. The Nupe congregation has equal access to grace and blessings; it knows no spiritual leaders or chosen vessels: it is a 'mass', not a 'virtuoso' religion.

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But consider that secular life, with its ranks and status differences, is governed by precisely these notions of individual effort after excellence and of unequal access to existing benefits. In a sense, then, the ideals of secular and religious life are opposed to one another. Yet if they were not thus opposed, if effort after excellence held good in the religious congregation as much as it does in the mundane society, the diverse achievements might easily clash and lead to divided leadership. As it is, this cannot happen. One of the results is that Nupe religion, unlike other creeds, is incapable of compensating the failures of secular ambition with the promise of spiritual success or exaltation; another, that religion can achieve that other competence, of fully supporting 'mundane ethics'. It need not have been so. The egalitarianism of this 'mass religion' might have meant the promise, and hence that other 'compensation', of equality before God, as against the inequalities of which Nupe life is full. But this potentiality is left unexploited. In so far as Nupe religion deviates from the values governing secular life, it does so with insufficient emphasis to carry such a message of hope; indeed, the message it might have carried would be belied by too many other features of the creed and manner of worship.

We have so far considered the 'congregation' in the wider sense, as a community possessing such-and-such observances and means of communing with the supernatural. Understood as a collection of individuals worshipping together, the congregation again endorses or upholds the relevant groups existing within the society, now through mobilizing them in the act of worship. The tribe is not a congregation in this narrower sense, and the nation becomes one only intermittently and partially; but the presence of these inclusive groups is recalled in the prayer formulæ which mention the ancestor king Tsoede and on occasion call divine blessing upon 'the whole land of Nupe'. The village community is invariably a congregation-in-worship (and is mentioned in the prayer), as is

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also the kin group, in the different kinship ceremonials. As for individuals, they may by themselves solicit the more technical supernatural aids; but there is no true worship by individuals, only worship in groups or, in solitary sacrifices and the like, on behalf of groups.

The congregation-in-worship, over and above mobilizing a particular group, also mobilizes it in such manner that its internal structure is thrown into relief. We recall such features as the 'inner circle' of worshippers, composed of mature men; the roles of officiants, vested in titled elders or family heads; the precedence of rank, observed in the communal meal; the subordinate tasks assigned to adolescents, the obedience demanded of them, and the partial exclusion of women and strangers. The arrangement of the congregation, then, mirrors the status arrangements meant to be valid in mundane society, so that the latter is demonstrated so-so-speak, in model form, dramatized, and endorsed by the sacred context.

We note again that religion has no message of its own, transcending or reversing the secular norms: there is no preaching of, say, 'the first shall be last'. Even the festivals of youth, *gani* and *navũ*, though they grant to the adolescents a freedom and initiative not normally enjoyed, also exemplify in various ways respect for rank and loyalty to political leadership. Nor does religious practice cancel that paramount factor in secular society, wealth: we remember the cost of rituals (communal or kinship) and of supernatural aids privately solicited, which causes the former to vary in scale with available means and may make the latter inaccessible to the poor. This point is important since one feature of ritual procedure may seem to indicate a reversal of the secular ideal. I am referring to the uniform, simple dress obligatory in the pagan rites, which thus excludes the visible tokens of wealth from the circle of worshippers. It was left to the Moslem ceremonials with their chances for display to remove this egalitarian touch. But it is only a touch and no more, representing no effective symbolism; for the people do not derive any message or moral from it but regard it merely as a ritual rule among others, meant to draw the line between sacred and profane occasions.

Let us therefore call Nupe religion conservative, non-revolutionary, and again, non-messianic. Only in one respect does the congregation fail to 'mirror' social reality correctly, in that it upholds a subordinate position of the women which is not true in real life. For the men, religious practice thus expresses an ideal frustrated in every-day experience. But in this one sphere of conflict where religion no longer endorses 'life as it is', it is also incapable of contenting the believers, forcing them to resort to the fantasies

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about female witches and to the vicarious satisfaction of witch-hunting. Nupe religion, we must conclude, cannot hold its own as a messenger of ideals. 771 182

4. ASSURANCE AND STIMULATION

We have already mentioned the circular efficacy linking these two components of religious experience. Yet they can be separated in analysis, as much (or as little) as the mere knowing and learning of religious truths can be held apart from the actual living through acts of devotion. 771 781 182

Concerning the assurances about the world and man's place in it which can be known and learned, there is little to say, and most that can be said is negative. Nupe doctrine does not teach that the universe is benevolent or that the deity is closely concerned with human fate. Though man has skills and ritual procedures to invoke supernatural aid, their outcome will often remain uncertain. Thus these skills and procedures contain only traces of the calculable forcefulness of 'magic'. The strictly technical manipulations of *cigbe* come closest to this conception; yet they, too, are subject to the will of God, or accident, and even the miraculous medicines in which one places absolute confidence involve 'invocations' (not 'spells') and hence an element of submission. In the last resort, man can only appeal and supplicate; if, on balance, Nupe religion is optimistic, this only means that it holds out hopes in the face of a world governed by accident, not that there is an assured or reassuring design behind it.

To turn to the 'stimulations'. We need not stress again that the self-abandonment of the mystic or visionary is utterly foreign to the Nupe. Never does the worshipper face his god in solitude, drawing only upon his inward experience or seeking private illumination. Nor is the mood he seeks in his worship entirely religious, that is, unattainable save through the 'thought of supernatural relations'; for in all the major rites at least, that mood emerges also from the added stimuli of music, dancing, crowd behaviour, and perhaps sexual excitement. Generally, the mood of Nupe worship is restrained and calm, leading to no extremes either of fear and stress or of exultation. The absence of elaborate ritualism precludes the tensions that go with rigidly prescribed gestures or speech; in avoiding nocturnal performances most rituals also avoid the sharp accents of fear and mystery; and the rules of ritual etiquette usually curb abandoned behaviour.

Above all, the mood of Nupe worship lacks development. The ritual prepares and holds a sense of the sacred in various, familiar ways—through rules marking off the ritual occasion from ordinary

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ones; through the subdued, solemn manner of applying oneself to the ritual task; and through the serious import of the supplication. But this mood is merely 'lived through'; it involves no mounting expectancy, pressing for some culminating experience or final fulfilment. In the act of worship proper, embodied in the esoteric phase of any rite, the prayer or the sacrificial meal might play that part. Intellectually, the prayer represents the crucial moment, when the whole purpose of the ritual is made clear and the appeal or hope articulately expressed. In the large-scale ceremonials, too, there is some emotional preparation for that moment, drumming and singing being abruptly silenced when the prayer is about to be uttered. Yet it is uttered too early in the proceedings and uttered too informally to come as a culminating stage. The sacrificial meal stands out in that it concludes the act of worship proper; but just then the solemn mood is also visibly fading.

The movable rites and minor observances; consisting as they do only of prayer and sacrifice, do not progress beyond that short-lived 'sensing of the sacred'. And if the great ceremonials offer further excitements and something akin to a final climax, these no longer grow out of the awareness of transcendental events, but are achieved through the massed stimuli of more common appeal —music, dancing, and so forth. As I suggested in an earlier context, some anticipation of the final stimulations must fuse with the mood of the worship proper; as the congregation in turn retains some sense of the sacred even in the phase of the 'merry-making', though in the absence of elaborate symbols acting as 'reminders' that sense is none too secure. What is important is that the worship as such does not work up to any final 'fulfilment'; rather, the emotional tensions remain diffuse and without climax. They only sensitize the congregation to the 'annunciations and promises' voiced in the ritual but do not prepare the worshippers for revelations.

The bush vigil in the *gunnu* may seem an exception since here certain pronouncements are made to a congregation previously exposed to fear and the thrills of mystery. But again, this is not a true climax of religious experience; this episode is only a prelude to the actual rite (and can in fact be omitted); while the pronouncement is concerned with nothing more momentous than an admonishment of adolescents. Indeed, the very mood of fear and mystery, which would seem so congenial to the expectancy of revelations, must be called exceptional. One other ritual, the *mamma*, is staged in a similar atmosphere; but it occurs only in a few communities and is performed with little excitement or awe; nor does it carry any message or 'annunciation'.

Another exception is more important. In each Nupe community the calm and restrained mood of worship is reversed once, in the

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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

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a sense crude, containing no intellectual insight or gain; nor perhaps is the gain a lasting one. In a cruder form still, much the same change is entailed in any exciting or pleasurable interruption of workaday routine and in the consequent readiness for further work; which effect, too, must be ascribed to the Nupe ceremonials and festivities. But clearly, the fusion of 'stimulation' and 'assurance' can operate also on a higher, that is, more conscious, plane. It is in this sense that theologians think of the access of faith or fortitude entailed in acts of worship and William James speaks of the 'assurance of safety' and the 'new zest which adds itself like a gift to life'.[1]

Undoubtedly, this is true also of Nupe religion, even though its acts of worship are without precise revelations and merely voice hopes impressive only because they are reinforced by diffuse excitements. Yet if we grant this access of faith, we must grant also that it will have to prevail against difficulties, failures and disappointments. Acts of worship, therefore, both build up faith and draw upon it. Somewhat differently expressed, we have made this point in an earlier context; there, too, we suggested that only the fixed rituals, whose aims are fundamentally unspecific and whose design brings into play all the more stirring stimulations, can assume the former role; while the movable rites and all the other contingent observances, being prosaic and meant to be successful in specific needs, apply faith and draw upon it as much as, fortuitously, they may strengthen it.[2] Let me add this observation only. The fixed rituals, though they engender faith, are not meant to be repeated or changed for the sake of greater efficacy. They are prescribed occasions when man can commune with the deity and touch divine power, and through this alone a source of assurance. Also, their number is small, so that Nupe life is not punctuated with occasions creative of faith. Here, then, we meet with something like an economy of faith which seems to have found its own level.

In other religions this economy may work differently. Certainly, it seems to work in Nupe, where it goes together with an unambitious doctrine allowing for the failure of specific appeals and upholding no firm over-all assurance. For by and large, the tenor of Nupe life is optimistic; nor are there any instances of individuals turning cynics or being driven into unbelief by disappointed hopes. Does this mean that the zest and assurance evoked in the acts of worship (but tempered and hence protected by the cautious doctrine) are sufficient to endure and pervade all the efforts of practical life? or only that religious experience is not meant to be enduring and pervasive?

[1] Op cit., pp. 403–4.

[2] See above, pp. 105–6.

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We cannot precisely measure this psychological aftermath of acts of worship. But we can assess it indirectly, from the concern with religious experiences visible in everyday life. And here it is quite clear that our second assumption is the correct one. For the acts of worship do not leave any vivid awareness of the achieved communion with the deity nor any lasting sense of the holy. There is nothing of 'religiosity' in the Nupe character. He knows, of course, at all times, that there is a God and a realm of the supernatural; but ordinarily this is tacit knowledge, of no practical relevance, neither permanently awe-inspiring nor permanently exhilarating. Crudely speaking, the Nupe are religious only on religious occasions; in between, life is an affair of secular values and rules-of-thumb. That even sacred places are 'sacred' only at certain times of the year is part of the same attitude; so is the absence of any conception of personal holiness. Even Islam, with its daily prayers, its Friday service, and its pious scholars, has hardly affected this attitude. For the daily prayers have become unthinking routine, without any touch of the mystic; being a mallam is a profession among others and often combined with them; and the Moslem cult of saints or 'holy men' found no response.

All this means that the spheres of religion and the profane remain clearly separable. Probably few religions merge completely with secular life so that every possible action bears some reference to transcendental notions. Nor, of course, can we conceive of religions which would at no point coincide with mundane interests. But the border zone between the two can be more or less wide and more or less sharply circumscribed. In Nupe, this zone is narrow and sharply outlined. Wherever the 'competences' of religion bear on mundane interests we can readily mark the point where the coincidence ceases. There is no 'carry-over' from one to the other. Thus religion sustains the offices of chiefs, kings, and other exponents of authority and law: but their person is not sacred, and criminals convicted by these holders of supernaturally sanctioned offices are not treated with any show of awe or sacred horror. Religion helps to bind together the kin group through the belief in reincarnation, through ancestral sacrifices, and through the solemnization of marriage and birth: but the Nupe do not, on normal occasions, speak the names of the ancestors with bated breath or constantly worry about placating their spirits. Marriage is in no sense sacred, and children are not holy; even children whose birth is ascribed to the efficacy of sacrifice are not treated in any special way.[1] Nor, finally, are the sick who recover with supernatural aid or the crops that thrive after some rite has been duly

[1] The only rules of this kind are entailed in the *sogba* cult, of alien origin.

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performed subject to special taboos or other rules meant to recall the divine intervention.

Nupe religion, then, has a defined place in the scheme of things. It is not that scheme itself, embracing or giving meaning to all other things with which human life is concerned. If religion engenders assurance and optimism, human life yet relies equally on the assurance and confidence that go with rational skills and mundane experiences. This is hardly unexpected. A religion which provides no *Weltbild*; which keeps aloof from moral judgments; which upholds no messianic ideals; and which rejects the incalculable revelations of mystics, is also a religion content with its own province. That province still 'supplements' or completes all the others and 'transcends' whatever they offer in the way of rational understanding, practical measures, and exhilarating or reassuring experiences. But this careful fit of a province among others, even though it completes their series on a higher, transcendental plane, has something of the rational. It savours of some plan of giving unto religion only what is hers, by some right that can be reasoned out. Perhaps we should say that Nupe religion is as rational as religion can be.

But this is, in religion, not a golden mean. The Nupe case does not prove that a religion thus rationally tempered saves the believers from disturbing doubts or cosmic fears just because its claims and promises are so unambitious. Nupe religion may well aim to be a sort of Plutarchian creed, steering a middle course between unbelief and too much belief, where man neither 'directeth and opposeth all his plaints and lamentations against fortune and casuality', nor yet 'will think and say that every disease and infirmity of his body, all his losses . . . and his repulses and disgraces are so many plagues inflicted upon him by the ire of the gods and the very assaults of divine justice.'[1] But in thinking neither wholly one thing nor wholly the other, the Nupe yet invite one sharp repulse to their mood of optimism: for they know the deep fear of witchcraft. And this is not, in their case, a fear of the consequences of impiety or of 'divine justice'; rather is it born of the awareness that the universe is inadequately controlled, and hence that the province of religion is too narrow.

[1] Plutarch, 'Of Superstition'; *Moralia*, translated by Philemon Holland, 1911 edition, p. 380.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–70; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 182

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *kintsoji* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

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634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsozi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsozi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsozi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede
[582 marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
184] villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsozi*.

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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpã*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpã*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takũ* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta doji*.

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is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen, concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

Religion. As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Mohammedans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Ndâduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndáduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndáduma* rituals, the *Ndáduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndáduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

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634 182 *Conclusions.* We may say then, in conclusion, that economic co-operation and community life only underline the political and tribal divisions which cut across Kede society. As integrative forces which could foster a solidarity pertaining to the political system at large, they fail. Only the ideological influences, myth and religion, succeed in this. They anchor the external political unit in more deeply rooted interests and sentiments. They add to political coercion the more subtle persuasion of supernatural arguments, of beliefs in the necessity and fore-ordination of the existing system.

634 177 182 I have been using the present tense with some liberty. It was applied correctly if we are thinking of the last ten or fifteen years, but inaccurately if we consider the immediate present and, above all, the future. The rite of the *Chain of Tsoede* is still performed annually, in completely Mohammedanized Muregi. The bull sacrifice at the *Ketsá* was performed when the present *Kuta* succeeded to the chieftainship; whether it will be repeated for his successor is open to doubt. The *Ndáduma*, at any rate, although still existing as a local rite, is no longer carried out by the Kede chief. We have spoken before of the decline of authority of the Kede chief. It may seem surprising that a chieftainship which had been forced to give up most of the qualities from which it formerly drew its strength should so easily discard these 'binding forces' of religion. The explanation lies, again, in the changed conception of Kede chieftainship. Kede rule has exchanged its dynamic and expanding nature for the secure, aquiescent authority under the Pax Britannica. It can dispense with the binding forces of religion, which used to uphold the autocratic rulership of a small minority; it can, above all, afford to discontinue a practice which, to the Mohammedan chiefs of Kede country, appears as a concession to their less enlightened subjects. Kede rule has thus paradoxically weakened itself in its new-found security. And in this the chiefs of Kede do not stand alone; this paradox is, I believe, a not uncommon feature of modern, static, Government-backed chieftainship in Africa.

The incipient dissolution of the 'binding force' of religion in the Kede State is only following in the wake of the general dissolution of the solidarity which it was meant to uphold. The economic development of the country led, as we have seen, to an extensive co-operation with outside groups and to the founding of colonies

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. 634 Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage 177 stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation 182 and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group, but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. *The Evolution of the Kede State*

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither 634 support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, 121 accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of one ethnic group by another.[1] Our data have shown political domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of paramount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'[2] and a gradual emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds that migration and colonization are never a result of over-population, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enterprise' which is absent in countries with over-population.[3] Can we accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final statement? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political role fully explained by this reference to psychological characteristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

[1] See F. Oppenheimer, op. cit.
[2] R. Lowie, op. cit., p. 40.
[3] A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.

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a tribal culture, and the area of cultural unity reveals itself in some respects as coextensive with the tribe.

This is not merely an enumeration of isolated 'traits' selected at random. Each cultural factor which we reviewed affects, and is interdependent with, a wide range of other cultural factors. Culture, as anthropologists are realizing, is not a sum total of discrete traits; it possesses a definite structure and identity; its traits or elements, interdependent and mutually determined, build up a 'pattern' that tends towards coherence and consistency. This consistency—a functional consistency—reveals its existence to the student of the society in those cultural characteristics which he learns to regard as 'typical' or 'non-typical' of a culture. Each of the three cultural units which we enumerated shows, in some measure, the features of this consistency and identity. We will not here probe deeper into the nature of this consistency which seems to crystallize in different degrees of intensity and comprehensiveness. But we must clarify our concept of culture. So far, we have used the word in a rather vague sense. It is not the same culture, the same category of culture, which we discovered in these three relations between cultural and tribal unit. Cultural unity is, speaking generally, unity and correspondence in forms of social behaviour. When speaking of culture units wider than the unit of the tribe, we referred to a correspondence of behaviour among disconnected groups which we as students of cultures and peoples discover, classify, and name; it is a correspondence upheld by the unconscious processes involved in tradition and the perpetuation of custom; it impresses upon the groups a certain external *uniformity*. When speaking of the smaller cultural units which reflect common environmental conditions and common interests, common spheres, that is, of organized social life, we refer to something that goes beyond an externally visible uniformity. We mean a *conformity* of behaviour, a conscious unity created by, and embodied in, a common group life and the mutual control and adjustment of behaviour among the people who form the group.[1] The identification of cultural group and tribe implies, in the observer's interpretation, something of both.

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But were this all it would enable us only to define the tribe as a natural species is defined—unknown to the subject of the definition. It would amount to colouring a certain space on a cultural map and calling it 'Nupe tribal culture'. It would not explain the crucial point in our argument, that the people are themselves conscious of the reality of the tribe. But culture has also another, new, meaning: it represents the conception of the people themselves. To the Nupe the tribe possesses a certain culture, specific to it and only to it, irrespective of variations within or similarities with groups without the tribal boundaries. Their awareness of this unity is expressed in the form of almost axiomatic statements, 'the Nupe do this or that', 'this and that is a Nupe custom',

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[1] The historian may attempt to link the two, and derive 'uniformity' from an original 'conformity', that is, explain the present cultural correspondence among disconnected groups by cultural diffusion from a centre in which culture was identical with organised common life. But considerations of this kind remain outside this discussion.

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121 contrasting Nupe usages with customs and forms of behaviour characteristic of other tribes. You discuss, for example, the worship of human
183 figures and idols of the kind you see in every village and every house in
619 neighbouring Yoruba; or the face-like masks which the Yoruba and many southern tribes wear in their ritual dances; or perhaps the ceremony of spirit possession which the Hausa who live in Bida town perform on Bida market. Your Nupe informant will tell you positively: no —we have none of this; only Yoruba do it, or Hausa do it, as the case may be. Or you ask a Nupe man what all Nupe have in common. He will, as a rule, enumerate the same few traits. All Nupe, he will say, have the *ena gbarúfuši* (age-grade associations), all Nupe have the same system of *tici* (ranks), and all Nupe have the *gunnu* cult. Of the Nupe community in Lagos, a group which has forgotten its traditions and abandoned its language, I was told that they were still Nupe, because they still practised the Nupe *kuti* (ritual) of the *ndakó gboyá* (a ritual closely linked with the *gunnu*). Yet on closer examination this shibboleth of Nupedom proves only half true. Worship of idols and human figures exists also among the Nupe, in the riverain area; mask dances with face-masks are practised in a large section of the Nupe, in Mokwa and the neighbouring villages. The age-grade associations are common both to Nupe and Hausa. The rank system is common all over Northern Nigeria, but the details in its organization (very significant details) vary considerably among different groups of the Nupe. The *gunnu* cult exists also among Gbari, Gara, Basa Kom, and, what is more important, appears in Nupe itself in strikingly different forms in different parts of the country.[1] Finally, as regards the Nupe colonies outside Nupe country: I have visited the Nupe communities in Lagos and Ibadan. They are descendants of Nupe slaves and serfs, completely Yoruba-ized to-day in language, custom, and everyday habits. It is true they have the *ndakó gboyá* (which they call by the Yoruba name *igunnu*). But the *ndakó gboyá* is completely absent among the eastern section of Nupe, the Dibo, and also, I believe, among most groups of the Ebe, the northern section of the Nupe tribe.

Objectively, then, the rigid distinction of Nupe and non-Nupe on the basis of cultural characteristics often proves incorrect, and must do so, since culture is both wider and narrower than the tribe. True, there exist certain traits, or 'patterns' of traits, which are typical of all the Nupe, and possibly only of the Nupe—facts of material culture, social organization, religious beliefs. Like the Nupe who mean to uphold the identity of their tribe, I shall speak of things 'the Nupe do' or 'do not do'. True it is that the people admit the existence of certain cultural variants which qualify the cultural unity of the tribe. But the essential fact to us here is not the objective constellation of cultural traits. The identification of Nupe tribe with a core of Nupe culture represents a concept, a spiritual reality, rather than a critical interpretation of cultural facts. It reflects not the quasi-scientific calculation of more essential against less essential traits, or of a majority of common characteristics as against a minority of

[1] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

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dissimilarities, but a phenomenon of a different order, a theory and ideology which ignores divergences *ex definitione*. It represents, in one word, the theory of the Nupe tribe. Our tautological definition of tribe then reads thus: a tribe or people is a group the members of which claim unity on the grounds of their conception of a specific common culture.[1]

To define the unity as conceptual does not make it less real or less significant. The awareness of unity is the basic element in all social unity. Consciousness of commonness is the primary element in social commonness. 'Communities, for all their external marks, are not objective things, they are spiritual realities.'[2] The tribe is not a community in the strict sense of the word: it lacks, as we have seen, the element of 'common life' and co-activity. But communities exist in different degrees of intensity; they have a different compass of social inclusiveness; there is not *one* community, but a complex hierarchy of communities.[3] The consciousness of a uniform culture defines the widest, loosest unit in the hierarchy of communities—potential rather than actual 'common life'. One turns easily into the other. 'One of the great processes of society . . . is that thereby the common is built out of the like, common interests growing out of what were at first merely like interests.'[4] We add that the consciousness of uniformity is the first step towards conformity of culture.

At the same time this uniformity of conduct which is conscious of itself is more than merely a potential stage of social existence. It represents, in itself, a specific social reality. Let me define here a vital concept of social existence which will occur throughout this book: social integration. The essence of integration is co-activity—potential or actual; social integration is predictable co-adaptation of behaviour in a group. It reveals itself in the certainty with which, in the group, certain actions of individuals or group sections will call forth appropriate response actions of other individuals or group sections. Now uniformity of behaviour is, sociologically, meaningless. Conscious uniformity, however, is predictable uniformity; the knowledge that a certain familiar pattern of activity will be repeated endlessly throughout the group represents a first form, and a degree at the same time, of social integration.

These two types of integration, uniformity and conformity, do not exhaust the forms of unity of behaviour existing in society. We shall meet in this analysis also with a third interpretation of cultural commonness or likeness, namely, the co-adaptation of behaviour involved in all organized associations. We shall speak of it as *co-ordination* of behaviour, for it represents essentially a planned, controlled organization of behaviour in the group, regulated and enforced by specific social mechanisms. In

[1] This definition claims to hold true for all large tribal groups ('peoples') of a similarly complex structure. It does not apply to smaller and more homogeneous groups. The factor of size and numbers is of importance. Evidently, for a small group on a Pacific Island tribe equals local group; or among American Indian tribes the tribal unit may coincide with the political group (see A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, 1923, p. 232).

[2] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 66. [3] Ibid., p. 10; *Community*, p. 23.

[4] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 8.

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X796 little trace of awe or emotional thrill.[1] But there is no conception
182 of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing
782 bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial
769 meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations' between deity and congregation. Much the same point was made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties'.[2]

X796 Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of
182 the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of very general social import and established by means of a relevant
● 183 parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal, efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence. The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and afterwards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition, rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dance', and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis, and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, however, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols. They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

[1] This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *biki* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

[2] *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

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or underline only the professed aims of the ritual; rather do they express additional aims in an implicit and incidental fashion. Consider that the ritual procedure acknowledges distinctions of rank and seniority (for example, in the order in which the congregation is seated and receives food and drink); that it draws a sharp line between those admitted to the esoteric ceremonials or to the ceremonial altogether (certain age sets, men, members of the community), and those excluded from it (other age sets, women, strangers). Again, among the youths admitted to the esoteric rite there are the novices and those already initiated, each group being expected to behave differently, to show fear or not, to teach or to be taught, and so forth. Among the women who may join the public phase the girls might have to keep apart from the old women, as in the *dzahó* dance. Both in the *gunnu* and *mamma* the leader of the age grades assumes the special duty of supervising and organizing the youths. And in all larger ceremonies there is some procession through the village, when one 'salutes' the houses of chiefs and elders.

Now all these instances refer to behaviour valid and meant to be valid also in everyday life. If, then, respect towards elders, awareness of one's place in the society, the very notion of being of it, are given expression in the ritual procedure, this comes to demonstrate, in the manner of a model, the obtaining social norms. Needless to say, it is a very special model since it is presented in the context of stirred-up emotions and to a consciousness artificially heightened. Rarely is this model also explained in so many words; nor does it seem necessary: the norms of ritual behaviour simply parallel or duplicate the norms of 'real' life in a conspicuous manner, the ritual mobilising the group as it should normally function. And since this 'normality' is an aimed-at state and represents goals or values governing secular life, we may here speak of aims or functions super-added to the professed aims of the ritual, or, with Radcliffe-Brown, of 'social values' rendered visible in the ritual. The important thing is that they are rendered visible *incidentally*, being implicit in the procedure of a ritual overtly directed towards quite other aims. In other words, the form of the ritual adds to its content, and this tends to be cumulative, absorbing a variety of aims.

Yet though these represent ways of acting generally desirable and important in social life, the ritual, in virtue of its professed aims, has its own importance. So that one importance is sustained or thrown into relief by the other. This circle is true of most or all religious rituals. But let us note two things. The additional aims conveyed in the ritual need not be merely implicit in its procedure; they may equally be made explicit by formal pronouncements

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occurring in the course of the ceremonial. In Nupe, this is the case only in the *gunnu*. We remember the exclusion of barren women from the public celebrations: this attitude is not merely left to emerge from the procedural rules but is also laid down in the form of an explicit warning voiced by the *gunnu* priest. Similarly the general obligation of respect towards elders and, especially, of sons towards their fathers is put into words, during the vigil in the bush, when the *ndakó gboyá* catechises the adolescents. Thus the Nupe can rightly say (in one of the *gunnu* songs) that the '*gunnu* teaches men', though in a more indirect fashion this would be true of all their rituals.

Furthermore, the 'desirable and important ways of acting' demonstrated in the ritual, implicitly or explicitly, may be held up as desirable and important in the ritual alone, not having the same weight in everyday life or not appearing in it at all. The ritual would then present, not a duplication or model, but something else—an ideal rarely met with in practice or even a reversal of the practice. This is true in varying degree of four features of the Nupe ritual, all concerned with the relationship of the sexes. There is, first, the rigid exclusion of women from the esoteric rites, which sometimes goes together with intimidation and threats. Yet women play an important part in Nupe social life, in many ways equal to that of the men; many women are influential and wealthy, and ranks and titles are open to them.[1] In no sense are they the 'weaker' or more timid sex. If, then, it is 'important' in the ritual that women should be kept in their place and forcibly reminded of their inferiority, this seems to imply a redress of balance, a compensation for the loss of male prominence, and something in the nature of a wish-fulfilment. The issue seems conspicuously summarized in the *mamma* ritual, which admits the power of women (since the 'medicine' employed is a woman's gift) yet is also meant to subdue and terrify them. The sex antagonism here apparent has a much wider bearing and will occupy us again in the discussion of witchcraft.

Secondly, the ostracism of the childless woman in the *gunnu*, though it does not contradict the norms valid in 'real' life, greatly exaggerates them. The Nupe men will always moralize about the impropriety of contraception and the shameful conduct of mothers who behave as though they had no children, becoming professional traders and, incidentally, prostitutes; equally, everybody will decry the misfortune of barrenness. But the fact remains that a great many women, childless or not, happily live in this 'shameful' state and are able to choose it without necessarily incurring the

[1] For a fuller account of the position of the women, especially in the economic sphere, see *A Black Byzantium*, chap. IX.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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like them; and after the first admission to the *gunnu* there will be repetitions of the same ceremonial and masquerade. The *gunnu* thus exaggerates the change of roles and presents it in a manner not exactly true to life; but just because it does so it becomes a means of dramatizing a crucial crisis of life which, in reality, is neither as conspicuous nor as dramatic. So that the *gunnu*, through this part of its procedure, assumes the relevance of a *rite de passage*.

To summarize. By its professed content, the ritual applies and partly affirms the system of religious ideas; and by its form, it becomes part of the machinery which maintains the efficient working of a society of a given structure. By its form, too, the ritual 'accumulates' further aims and ideas, bearing on codes of conduct, on social roles, and hence on the values of 'good' and 'bad'. Surveying all the various Nupe rituals we find that the *gunnu*, as it is considered the paramount ritual, so it is also the richest in 'cumulative' content. There is practically no manner of acting which is not referred to and evaluated in its procedure; furthermore, the *gunnu* alone goes beyond implicit references and contains also express pronouncements upon these 'additional' aims.

As I previously tried to show, it is not paradoxical that a cult of such far-reaching importance should be the first to disappear or to be truncated under the pressure of change; rather, its very ambitiousness exposes it 'on too many sides' to disruptive influences. Let me rephrase this assertion in terms of the 'content' and 'form' of rituals. The disappearance or radical alteration of the ritual clearly implies some weakening of its appeal. The professed content of the ritual would lose its appeal only if the whole conceptual framework of the religion were disrupted, as it would be by the impact of another religion, in this case Islam. Yet this was certainly not true (or not yet true) of the many Nupe communities where the *gunnu* alone of all the various rituals had disappeared or broken down. The form of the ritual, however, since it absorbs so many of the general norms of social life, would be weakened by any change affecting the latter, by any remodelling of the relationship between the generations, by any new attractions seducing the younger people, and by all changes in moral or educational standards. It is precisely dislocations of this kind which have spread most widely through Nupe country; and it is thus the *gunnu* carrying within its 'form' a mirror of the traditional way of life, lost its appeal and indeed its very relevance as its picture ceased to be true.

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education. Let me make it clear that the mother is always expected to do the best for her children, and to pamper them in small matters, by giving them sweets, tasty tit-bits, and occasional presents. Nor is her more consequential economic help strictly unexpected and against the rule: but it is a rule of *faute de mieux*, whose coming into play inevitably connotes the failure of the more basic rule, that it is the father's role to meet the economic requirements of the household. Here, as in the instance mentioned before, the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men. 754x 562 593

There is a further point, already touched upon in a previous context. In Nupe, the women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes. This is true even of the many women who only visit the market in the town, the Bida night market being a recognized place of assignation. All this is bad enough in the case of childless women; but in their case such immoral conduct is condoned, if with a shrug of the shoulders. As proverbial, however, as the moral laxity of the women traders is their desire to avoid having children. It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'. They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness. 754x 562 593 842 837

Whether the woman exceeds the proper role of a wife and mother or rejects it, in part or entirely, she has successfully set aside a believed-in social norm. Now, this is no longer an instance of social abnormality, rather the opposite, if by 'normality' we mean all that is common, usual, expected: but it is a normality one hates and regrets, and contrasts with a desired state of affairs unhappily uncommon. This is borne out in every conversation; in the many quarrels between husbands and wives; in the many divorces and separations (and equally in the resigned attitude of husbands); in the comments of the medicine experts which we quoted before; in nostalgic talks of the men about a happier past when 'women knew their place'; and in the exclusion of unchaste and childless women from religious ceremonials. 754x 562 593

This, then, is a clash between ideal and reality. But it is in no sense seen as fortuitous or transitory, as the result of some unfortunate maladjustment which could have been avoided and can conceivably be set right if one only made the effort. The harking-back to 'the good old days' is merely an escape from a reality which one is helpless to alter. For no one speaks about a future when everything should be better than it is now; and though the 754x 562 593 183

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*754 impact of alien influences and the vast increase in trade and traffic
562 in the last few decades may well have aggravated the situation, all
593 the available evidence (of genealogies and life histories) proves that
183 the morals of women and the fate of marriages were, for the last four or five generations at least, much what they are today. Nor is this harking-back more than half-hearted; no one would claim that there was a time when all women were chaste and submissive, when they did not trade and earn money, and when contraceptive practices were unknown. Indeed such a claim, were it ever made, would be belied by the character of the *gunnu* ritual and by various legends and stories. Briefly, for the people the ideal was always out of step with the reality; so that we must judge this conflict to be inherent in the make-up of the society, whose economic system (which has certain moral consequences) is as unquestioned as are its ethical conceptions (which condemn these consequences).

*754 This is important: for it is the inescapable nature of the conflict
154 which finds expression in the belief in women witches. Nupe
562 society, forced into an ambivalent attitude towards the role of women, which it cannot but accept and cannot but hate and call evil, also ascribes to them the powers of witchcraft. The coincidence as such is a matter of observed fact. But we can go further, and interpolate the psychological mechanism which turns the coincidence into a causal nexus, and hence enables us to call one thing the 'cause' and the other the 'symptom'. The mechanism is familiar: it lies in the projection of internal conflicts and of the frustrations so caused upon an external agent, real or imaginary. In our case, the awareness of an ideal state disturbed fastens upon the successful disturber; the helplessness in the face of a threatening situation turns into the positive fear of persons; and while one is incapable of dealing with the situation, one can at least deal with concrete individuals, whom one can accuse, persecute, and punish. So that in being made the witches of the society, the women are made to carry its fault or failure.

It is clear that this explanation holds good only on the assumption that the beliefs in witchcraft have been fashioned by men; for on almost every point we argued from a male standpoint. The legitimacy of this assumption need hardly be defended. The assertion of mundane morality, through legal institutions, falls to the men exclusively; above all, Nupe religion, its practices and doctrine, are fundamentally a male concern; and as it is the men who know and speculate about religion and have charge of the transmission of religious knowledge, so the notions of witchcraft must have been their creation. Situations of this kind are of course common; a great many societies are in this sense men-made and men-run; and if, like Nupe, they also afford considerable initiative and import-

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619 and Kupa. Nupe proper differs from Ebe, or Bassa from Žitako, no less
197 than Nupe differs from the languages of the other, related, tribes, Gbari and Kakanda. Dialects, language, language group, or linguistic class—these are all fluid categories, shading over into one another, and none of them capable of being identified with tribe or people.

619 Political group and language group thus imply the existence of the tribe, they do not explain it. The objective reality of political and linguistic organization leaves undefined the nature of that elusive human substratum, tribe or people. Nor can we count on any external symbols of tribal unity to help us with the definition. No tribal costume, or tribal emblems, exist, no tattoos or face-markings characteristic of all Nupe.[1] Yet to the Nupe man himself the Nupe tribe or the Nupe people is a clearly defined, unmistakable entity. He will rarely hesitate whether to describe the population of a district or village as Nupe or to put it down as alien, non-Nupe. This is, of course, an expression of traditional, historically accumulated, and transmitted knowledge. People and tribe themselves represent but the product of complex historical processes, contacts, and ramifications. These processes are no longer traceable to-day; but even if we could trace them they would tell us nothing about the nature of this social fact which we witness to-day, the classification of groups which do not speak the same language and do not live together in 'one country' unified by political organization, under the heading of 'one tribe'. The only definition of tribe that seems possible is the tautological statement that a tribe or people is a group unit the members of which claim to form a group unit. But perhaps there exists some other, objective, social reality which can help us to define this evasive concept?

619 We have not examined yet that paramount social reality, culture. But culture no less than language or living-together seems a fluid criterion of
184 tribal unity. The only definition of tribe that we can give in terms of culture is to call the tribe a group possessing more or less the same
121 culture—as it possesses more or less the same language or lives more or less in contiguity and 'togetherness'. In Nupe the unit of culture is in certain respects smaller than the unit of the tribe. The different 'countries' of Nupe represent different, and differently organized, cultural 'provinces'. Culture varies with environment and the productive organization which it entails; it expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. We can thus speak of a riverain Nupe culture, a hunters' or peasant culture, and distinguish town from rural culture, or the culture of the ruling group from the culture of the subjects and commoners. The cultural unit is also wider than the unit of the tribe. Nupe shares its political and social system with many tribes in West Africa, its traditional religion with neighbouring groups in the north, east, and south, its modern religion, Islam, with the whole Sudan. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking of a West African culture, or a culture of the inland groups of West Africa (as against the culture of the groups in the rain-forest and near the coast). Finally, culture appears also, as it were, crystallized in the form of

[1] See below, p. 22.

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a tribal culture, and the area of cultural unity reveals itself in some respects as coextensive with the tribe.

This is not merely an enumeration of isolated 'traits' selected at random. Each cultural factor which we reviewed affects, and is interdependent with, a wide range of other cultural factors. Culture, as anthropologists are realizing, is not a sum total of discrete traits; it possesses a definite structure and identity; its traits or elements, interdependent and mutually determined, build up a 'pattern' that tends towards coherence and consistency. This consistency—a functional consistency—reveals its existence to the student of the society in those cultural characteristics which he learns to regard as 'typical' or 'non-typical' of a culture. Each of the three cultural units which we enumerated shows, in some measure, the features of this consistency and identity. We will not here probe deeper into the nature of this consistency which seems to crystallize in different degrees of intensity and comprehensiveness. But we must clarify our concept of culture. So far, we have used the word in a rather vague sense. It is not the same culture, the same category of culture, which we discovered in these three relations between cultural and tribal unit. Cultural unity is, speaking generally, unity and correspondence in forms of social behaviour. When speaking of culture units wider than the unit of the tribe, we referred to a correspondence of behaviour among disconnected groups which we as students of cultures and peoples discover, classify, and name; it is a correspondence upheld by the unconscious processes involved in tradition and the perpetuation of custom; it impresses upon the groups a certain external *uniformity*. When speaking of the smaller cultural units which reflect common environmental conditions and common interests, common spheres, that is, of organized social life, we refer to something that goes beyond an externally visible uniformity. We mean a *conformity* of behaviour, a conscious unity created by, and embodied in, a common group life and the mutual control and adjustment of behaviour among the people who form the group.[1] The identification of cultural group and tribe implies, in the observer's interpretation, something of both.

But were this all it would enable us only to define the tribe as a natural species is defined—unknown to the subject of the definition. It would amount to colouring a certain space on a cultural map and calling it 'Nupe tribal culture'. It would not explain the crucial point in our argument, that the people are themselves conscious of the reality of the tribe. But culture has also another, new, meaning: it represents the conception of the people themselves. To the Nupe the tribe possesses a certain culture, specific to it and only to it, irrespective of variations within or similarities with groups without the tribal boundaries. Their awareness of this unity is expressed in the form of almost axiomatic statements, 'the Nupe do this or that', 'this and that is a Nupe custom',

[1] The historian may attempt to link the two, and derive 'uniformity' from an original 'conformity', that is, explain the present cultural correspondence among disconnected groups by cultural diffusion from a centre in which culture was identical with organized common life. But considerations of this kind remain outside this discussion.

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121 this book we shall be dealing mainly with the political association, which seems characterized by two sets of factors: first, by its inclusiveness, being the relatively widest unit of co-ordination, and, underlining it, by the conception of a collective identity which is emphasized, above all, in inter-group dealings. And second, by the nature of its regulative mechanism (here the 'Government'), which rests, in the last resort, on the employment of force and coercion, and which controls both co-ordination for the purpose of internal stability ('law and order') and co-ordination for the purpose of external, inter-group, action ('offence and defence'). Cultural groups and communities have fluid boundaries; the association (in our case the political unit) is or is not rigid, but its boundaries—the boundaries of the group and sphere of conduct within which the co-ordination is to be valid—are by definition rigid. The consciousness of this validity defines the membership of the political association—in modern terminology, nationality. The political unit, unlike culture and community, is exclusive: one either is or is not a citizen of a country; one either comes or does not come under its laws and restrictions. However, one remains at the same time a representative of a culture which may not simply coincide with the cultural uniformity upheld by the political system. One remains also a member of a community or of communities which may exist apart from the 'common life' embodied in political co-ordination. Planned co-ordination of behaviour cannot ignore these other forms of integration—cultural likeness and commonness. Whether it utilizes them, creates them anew, or simply accepts their existence, they are the cultural raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

The three planes of integration, and the group units which they define, thus cut across each other, overlap, and possibly grow out of each other, It will not always be easy to separate them clearly in the concrete description. The preceding analysis has to some extent defined their theoretical boundaries. In what follows we can attempt to isolate, in our concrete material, these three social realities: the integration of (conscious) cultural uniformity or the tribe; the integration of cultural conformity or the community; and the cultural co-ordination typical of organized society, above all, the political system and its paradigm, the state.

THE TRIBE

619 The conception of a common tribal culture is kept alive, as part of Nupe tradition, by the transmission of traditional knowledge. It forms
184 part of the general ideological background of all institutionalized behaviour. For many forms of customary behaviour membership of the tribe constitutes a convincing *raison d'être*. The tribe, lacking all unity of comprehensive co-operation, also lacks the unity of a common centre of cultural teaching. The consciousness of a common tribal culture is thus maintained by the scattered, disconnected mechanism to which the transmission of traditional knowledge is entrusted in Nupe. It is implied in the nature of this transmission that the same *raison d'être*—'we do this

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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpā, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpā and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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619 in fact, doubtful if a tribe not backed by any political organization could make proselytes on any larger scale.) Later we shall see more clearly
563 how it happens that tribe and kingdom become, for the people, one and the same thing. But the mark of the 'theoretical' tribal distinction is not obscured completely. It is visible in the qualified adoption of these new 'naturalized' sections. They 'have become Nupe'; but they are still called 'Gbari slaves' or Yoruba-Nupe. And perhaps now, since the expanding Nupe kingdom no longer exists, there will be no thirteenth sub-tribe of Kakanda-Nupe, after all.

THE SUB-TRIBE

184 The fact of common origin which is excluded from the concept of the tribe becomes an essential element in the definition of the sub-tribe. The sub-tribe is thus not a 'tribe' on a smaller scale; it differs essentially from the wider unit of the tribe. If the Nupe tribe possesses no external symbols, costumes, or body markings, such emblems exist to some
[304] extent for the sub-tribe. The Nupe practise body and face markings, *etsa*, 'patterns', which are cut into the skin of newborn babies, male and female, and which differ in the different sub-tribes.[1] The sub-tribe, too, has its ideology in which the conception of unity and differentiation from other groups is expressed. The ideological criteria are two: one we have just discussed, the unity of origin and of historical continuity. The other is, again, the criterion of cultural unity. But the physical fact of the smallness of the group as compared with the tribe makes 'culture' here a more concrete, so to speak more concentrated reality. No Nupe term which corresponds to our 'sub-tribe' or 'section' exists. The Nupe refer to the various sub-tribes as to 'lands', they speak of *kin* Beni, land of the Beni, or *kin* Kusopa, land of the Kusopa, and even of *kin* Kyedye, land of the Kyedye, a 'land' which consists of a narrow strip of territory running across river banks and islets. The sub-tribe is thus, like the tribe, a territorial unit. But again the fact of physical size changes the meaning of the concept. The smaller locality is, in fact, more of one 'land'; it implies a more unified environment. This is partly expressed already in the names of the sub-tribes, some of which refer to the nature of the environment in which the group lives and to the nature of the occupation by which it earns its livelihood. The Bataci or Marsh Dwellers are a group of marsh-land farmers and fishermen whose hunting-grounds are the pools and backwaters of the Niger. The Kusopa or Forest Tenders work the famous kola-nut plantations of Laboži and

king of Nupe), or explained the development as due to the fact that '*one Etsu* established his rule (or law) over the whole country'.

[1] I must add, however, that even here these external symbols of group unity are not quite unequivocal. Fashion is changing the markings to-day—and there is no reason to assume that this has not always been so. I have seen fathers and sons whose faces bore different markings. The markings of the Bida people, like other fashions associated with the capital of the kingdom, have been adopted by the people of the districts. And the modern Bida and Beni markings are in turn said to have been adopted originally from the Yoruba, whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found 'nicer' than their own crude slashes. (See Appendix II.)

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Kudu and occupy the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. The name Kyedye, finally, is often used synonymously for all canoe-men and fishermen on the main river. Unity of environment, a uniform productive system, a uniform material culture, represent a first aspect of the cultural unity of the sub-tribe.

Then there is language, certain linguistic differences which throw into relief the cultural boundaries between sub-tribes. The Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa still speak dialects which differ considerably from each other and from the Nupe spoken in the rest of the country. To-day most people in these sub-tribes are bilingual and understand and speak both their own dialect and 'Nupe proper'. The Gbedegi, too, are said to have spoken a special dialect, only a generation or two ago. No trace is left of their language; I found only one old man in Jebba Island who could speak a little Gbedegi. In the area where Nupe proper is spoken only insignificant dialectal differences exist. This linguistic unification within Nupe is the counterpart of the expansion of Nupe language (Nupe proper) and culture beyond the tribal boundaries. Both reflect the same development. The linguistic unification proceeded from the political centre of Nupe kingdom, the area of the Beni, Kyedye, and Bataci sub-tribes. Their dialects, identified with the language of the Nupe state, gradually came to embrace all other tribal sections. The language map of Nupe reveals the phases of this process, the stages in the growth of a supreme, unified culture. We can see the resistance to assimilation increase as we move away from the centre of expansion: the dialects spoken on the borders of the kingdom are losing their identity more slowly and more reluctantly than the dialects of the groups in the centre. The last phase of this development is not yet completed. We are yet to see the full Nupe-ization of Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa.

But in the centre of this expansion the differentiation between cultural centre and periphery gains a new meaning. It is conceived of as a differentiation not of dialects representative of tribal sections, but of dialects, or forms of *patois*, representative of a cultural and social milieu and upbringing. To-day we have a Bida-Nupe, a 'higher', more refined Nupe (a Nupe which, for example, has replaced many Nupe words by words adopted from Hausa and Arabic); and we have, besides, the cruder, 'low', peasant Nupe—sometimes called 'pagan' Nupe—spoken in the districts. However, this new attitude towards cultural differences, this evaluation on the scale of a 'lower' and 'higher', a more or less refined culture, belongs to another chapter.

The cultural unity of the sub-tribe manifests itself also in the religious field. Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to single sub-tribes, and inter-tribal contact and assimilation have hardly obscured these cultural boundaries. Certain cults, bound up with conditions of environment, seem linked naturally to special areas: a sacrifice to the mythical ancestor of kola-nut planting among the Kusópa; cults which have to do with the water, with floods, with the dangers of the river, and success and safety in fishing, among the riverain groups. The *elo* ritual, and the *mamma* cult, masked ceremonies, are known only among the Gbedegi; the *ikinta* among the Ebe, the *gani* among the Benu, the 'white' *gunnu*

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among the tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, and (a negative evidence mentioned already) the *ndakó gboyá*, which is regarded as 'typical' Nupe by Hausa and Yoruba, is unknown among Dibo and Ebe. There are also other rituals and cults which cannot be assigned (at least not to-day) to a certain sub-tribe, and finally rituals and cults which represent the cultural possession of single village communities. In brief, the possession of a common cult means only an external uniformity of culture. None of these rituals implies co-operation and actual contact in the group at large. They are still but the expression of parallel, 'like', behaviour and not of concrete co-activity and 'togetherness'.

This is equally true of the other cultural features on which the cultural identity of the sub-tribe rests. The consciousness of a cultural uniformity is supported by the actual existing uniformity. But there is still no organized centre of co-activity behind this uniformity or behind the transmission of the consciousness of this uniformity. We can only say this: the sub-tribe, much more than the tribe, constitutes a potentiality of such co-activity and intensive 'togetherness'. The links of a common language, of similar economic pursuits, similar interests, parallel religious ideas, may grow easily into links of co-operation and 'togetherness'. Only in two cases, however, has this potentiality become reality—among the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. In no other section are there contacts and forms of co-activity which make the sub-tribe 'one country', and its people 'one group'. How, then, does that cultural uniformity crystallize into the unified, conscious commonness of 'one country'?

I have described elsewhere the growth and organization of one of the two sub-tribes which have evolved such unified structure.[1] Let me repeat here the main facts. The growth of the Kyedye organization was the growth of a colonizing and conquering group. Expanding from one centre—Muregi, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna—the Kyedye established themselves in the course of time all along the river banks. They built their settlements on the land of the aboriginal sections, Bataci and riverain Gbedegi, and claimed rulership over them. Twin villages arose, half Kyedye and half Bataci or Gbedegi, from which the Kyedye administered the district, assuming judicial authority and levying taxes. This colonization is still going on, and their rulership, rigidly centralized, is still alive and undisputed.[2] Close contact, intermarriage, and regular new emigration link the settlements, old and new, capital and colonies. Delegates from Muregi, relatives of the Kyedye chief, reside in the settlements, and these administrative 'posts' are correlated with the ranks which the delegates hold in the Kyedye hierarchy; promotion in rank involves promotion to a more important as well as more lucrative post. This closely knit ruling group precludes all permanent links between the cultural groups which this political development has thrown

[1] See 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940, pp. 165–95.

[2] Only twenty or thirty years ago have the Kyedye established themselves on the river Kaduna, or on Jebba Island, a place which had only then become of economic importance.

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together. There is no intermarriage, and almost no cultural give-and-take; to-day the Kyedye are Mohammedans (or semi-Mohammedans), but the Bataci and Gbedegi have remained pagans. Yet in one significant field cultural unity has evolved, over and above the differences of culture, tribal origin, and social status, and over and above also the co-operation embodied in the political structure. With the political rulership the Kyedye have assumed spiritual authority as well; myths and sacred insignia confirm the position of the *Kuta*, the Kyedye chief, as the ruler over the whole riverain area and its people; and two most important sacrifices to the river Niger, which secure large catches and safety from floods, the *hetsá* and *nddduma*, are linked with his person and office. Every new appointed *Kuta* will send one of his near relations to Jebba and Buka, the two places where these sacrifices are performed, with two white bulls to be sacrificed to the river spirits by the priests of these cults. By these sacrifices the chief secures 'greatness' for himself, and success and welfare for his subjects.

The Beni organization presents an entirely different picture. Unlike the Kyedye system it exists no longer; it was broken and destroyed by the Fulani conquest. It took the form of a confederacy formed by the twelve 'towns' of the Beni: Bida, Tafiẽ, Esã, Doko, Towagi, Egbe, Gaba, Nupeko, Eda, Panjuru, Ewu, Yesa. The political bonds were twofold: the twelve towns recognized the supremacy of one town, and paid a small tribute to its chief, or 'town-king'; further, in case of war, the twelve towns were bound to fight together and to support each other, again under the leadership of one town.[1] Mythology, and the existence of certain common sacred insignia of the twelve town-kings of Beni, supply the spiritual background for the political unity. Moreover, the *gunnu* cult, this most important religious cult of Nupe, appears among the Beni in a special form, namely, as a cult which utilizes comprehensive co-operation between the priests of the whole country, thus underlining, in the religious sphere, the unification of the sub-tribal section.[2]

One might ask why it was that just these two sub-tribes evolved a comprehensive political and cultural unit. The origin of the Beni confederacy is hidden in the dim past of a Nupe of which we have no records. As regards the Kyedye we can, to some extent, answer the question. In the environment of the river valley, and in the pursuits of a riverain people, lies the germ of territorial and political expansion. Long fishing expeditions, an extensive river trade, on which the livelihood of this riverain group depends, demand extension of political influence as security for the very wide area of their economic activities. Trading-posts become political outposts, and fishing colonies become strongholds of territorial expansion. The spirit of adventure and enterprise, finally, which alone could have built up this efficient organization, is part of the life of this riverain people.

Of the enterprising spirit of Kyedye chiefs, born colonizers and

[1] This chief town of the Beni seems to have been Tafiẽ till the Fulani conquest; after that the headship passed to Bida, till it disappeared finally with the absorption of the Beni confederacy in Nupe Emirate (see p. 82).

[2] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, p. 98.

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pioneers, the history of the Royal Niger Company can give many instances. But let us read these examples correctly. They show, first, that political integration tends to widen its basis so as to embrace all spheres of cultural activity; political unification calls into being other forms of contact and co-activity, and thus cements its own unity with the help of a more comprehensive and more intimate 'togetherness'. But these examples show also that the creation of such co-activity and togetherness does not simply follow from the potentiality of cultural uniformity. In the case of the Beni confederacy cultural uniformity appears intensified into co-activity and togetherness; among the Kyedye the political fusion of different sub-tribes, different cultural areas, created the wider area of co-activity and common life. Obviously, the nature of this co-activity and common life is different in each case. The commonness that grows from uniform culture and the commonness that is superimposed upon a cultural diversity represent two different social realities. What we have said above of the links of cultural uniformity which 'grow easily into links of co-activity and togetherness' was not, therefore, quite correct. We have before us not a simple quasi-automatic process of 'growth', but two specific, alternative forms of social development.

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623 economic control which he exercises, by granting him access to special
554 economic resources (above all, fruit-bearing trees) unattainable to the other members of his group. Thus supported, the titled family head is qualified to assume his double role, as official agent of the community at large and as representative of his group *vis-à-vis* the village community.

The relation between the two roles and their relative preponderance varies with the rank which an elder may attain. For the *nūsa* ranks are not of equal order. They are defined by strict order of precedence, and there is never any doubt which title ranks higher or lower. The measure of political responsibility closely corresponds to the place in the scale of village ranks. In some villages we even find a formal distinction between the 'great' and 'small' ranks, the former three or (more often) four in number, forming as it were the 'inner council'. Where the village is arranged in a number of separate large clusters of compounds (as in Doko, Kutigi, or Sakpe), the distinction between 'great' and 'small' ranks also implies a distinction between headship over the whole cluster of compounds, the *efu*, and headship over single compounds or 'houses' only.[1] The professional ranks of blacksmiths and drummers are always at the bottom of the list of village ranks. The political importance of the rank of the Head of the Hunters and of the ranks which are combined with priestly offices differs in different communities.

623 It would be wrong to think of the village council of elders as of an elaborate, rigidly formalized, instrument of government. The full council is rarely summoned except on important occasions, such as the election of a chief, or the visit of the *Etsu* and his delegates or the District Officer. The normal routine work of village government is carried on by the chief and his 'inner council' of two or three elders of highest rank. And here again we have no formal appointed assembly, but rather casual meetings in the houses of the chief or of one of the elders, at which current questions are discussed and the necessary decisions taken. If more elders have to be consulted or instructed, a messenger will be sent to their houses, or they will call individually at the house of the chief or the head *nūsa*. If in the case of the *nūsaži* of high rank their position of authority transcends the component groups to the headship of which they have risen in virtue of their kinship position, this latter aspect preponderates in the case of the *nūsaži* of lesser rank who are excluded from the 'inner council'. They are executive organs of the village in the indirect sense of intermediaries through whom decisions of the chief and the leading elders reach the various kinship and local groups, and through whom, in turn, these groups can voice claims and interests so far as they call for action on the part of the community.

623 The graded scale of village ranks does not command an unequivocal
554 corresponding system of appointment and succession. Succession to the lowest, professional, ranks is invariably hereditary. So is succession to
● 184 the priestly ranks or the ranks linked with a priestly office: the secret

[801] [1] In eastern Nupe, especially among Dibo and Beni, the number four plays an important part in the arrangement of *efu* as well as in the order of ranks. We find four *efu* and four ranks, or four head ranks and four secondary ranks, or four ranks plus the chief's rank.

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623 of the ritual office remains vested in one family group. But succession to
554 the other ranks involves a certain ambiguous situation. Only a few com-
184 munities have worked out the principle of precedence consistently, evolving a system of promotion from lower to higher rank—Jebba Island and Mokwa are examples. In these communities every vacancy is made an occasion for a reshuffle of the ranks. A *nũsa* whose seniority and standing qualify him for the rank that has fallen vacant is appointed, his own rank going to another *nũsa* deserving promotion, and so forth, till finally one of the lowest ranks becomes vacant, which is then duly bestowed on a fitting, as yet untitled, candidate. But in other communities all promotion from one rank to another is excluded, the titles in almost caste-like rigidity remain linked with 'houses', and a man can claim only this one title whether or not it is one for which his age, experience, and personality would qualify him.[1] The people are themselves well aware of this ambiguity. It is overcome, in practice, in various ways. First, the appointment to the rank which has fallen vacant may be postponed till the candidate has reached the age and gained the status appropriate to the rank; a 'young man' of Kutigi (he was about 45) had been waiting for ten years for the title which his father's brother had held before and which had been 'reserved' for him; every time I saw him and asked how his affair stood, he replied with the same words: *n'wa ke degi*, 'just a little longer'. Or one may introduce new titles, intermediary ranks, by which device the rigid order of traditional ranks is circumvented. Finally, hereditary succession in Nupe is never understood in the narrow sense of a quasi-automatic appointment. Often it is a selection from a number of candidates of suitable seniority—younger brothers or eldest sons (in the classificatory sense) of the deceased. Though seniority counts above all, old age and debility will disable a prospective successor to family headship. Apart from seniority, other attributes are also essential: good reputation, skill and experience as farmer, a friendly temper, and good health; a leper or a man suffering from elephantiasis or blindness is ineligible; so is a complete invalid. But so long as his impediment (e.g. a short leg, a crooked arm) does not interfere with his work on the land and his ability to move about, it does not matter. The main attribute is *ánkali*—intelligence. In Kutigi a serious quarrel had broken out between the chief and some of his elders who refused to give their consent to the appointment to a high rank of a man whom they considered 'to have no brains'.

623 The following genealogy illustrates the succession to the position of a certain titled family head, the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa. We

[1] An interesting transition from hereditary ranks to ranks of the promotion type has evolved in Faže, a village in Ebe country. Only recently the former system of hereditary ranks was replaced in this village by a promotion system, the depopulation of the village in the Fulani wars having made this step necessary; for some of the families in which the most important ranks had been vested had died out, and only promotion from lower to higher ranks could prevent this untoward vacancy. This local development cannot, for various reasons, be taken as affording the explanation of the origin of the promotion system of *nũsa* ranks in Nupe. But it clearly shows that the people are aware of the inherent conflict between the rank system based on precedence and the strict rule of hereditary succession.

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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nũsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nũsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nũsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nũsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people [576] who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nũsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

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highest in the order of village ranks, and one of the senior elders of the village is promoted to the position of the chief. In all other areas chieftainship is hereditary and bound up with one 'house'. Chieftainship of the promotion type goes invariably hand in hand with a rank system of promotion type. But hereditary chieftainship does not invariably imply hereditary *nūsa* ranks. In Dibo country, for example, chieftainship is hereditary, but the *nūsa* ranks in some villages follow promotion. The elected chief is by no means regarded as less closely identified with the village which he 'owns' than the hereditary chief. The rule that he assumes the name of 'his' village as title holds good both for elected and hereditary chiefs: the *Gebba* of Jebba (Gebba) is, as we have just seen, an elected chief.

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Neither chieftainship by election nor hereditary chieftainship implies an automatic, rigidly fixed, succession. Under the former, any elder who has reached an important rank is eligible for the final promotion. The latitude which this arrangement allows is illustrated in the succession to the chieftainship in Mokwa, where, in the case of the last five chiefs, the following rank-holders were elected as chiefs: *Sámaza*, the fourth on the village rank-list, *Sojekó*, the second on the village rank-list, *Majī Bagidi*, the eighth, and *Sarkin Zongu*; this last rank, borrowed from Hausa, has been abandoned during the régime of the present chief. It was attached to the position of a caretaker in the camp prepared for the trading caravans stopping at Mokwa—a responsible and lucrative, though from traditional point of view inferior, post. (See chart I, p. 54.)

Hereditary succession to chieftainship follows the same elastic rule which governs succession to hereditary *nūsa* ranks.[1] A few communities have adopted the practice of appointing beforehand the successor to chieftainship, an 'heir presumptive', mostly known by the title *Shaba*. But it can be shown that this practice is of comparatively recent origin, in fact, a copy of the system of succession characteristic of Nupe kingship. The larger the family group or 'house' of the hereditary chief, the more scope there is for the selection of a fitting successor. Expansion of the chieftain family may lead to a splitting-up of the 'house' as a result of which the chief's office, vested in two or more related houses, is taken in rotation by these families. In at least one case hereditary succession itself was abandoned, and replaced by free election: in Doko the line of hereditary succession was interrupted two generations ago, and a 'new man', a man of outstanding ability, was appointed as successor by the old chief and accordingly 'elected' later by the elders of the village. The genealogy of the Doko chiefs (p. 52) up to the appointment of this 'new man' may illustrate the latitude allowed even in strictly hereditary chieftainship. We see that sons, grandsons, younger brothers, and brothers' sons are all equally admitted to the succession of village chieftainship.

The appointment or election of the new chief is a matter for the council of elders. It is presided over by a certain *nūsa* of high rank who is in many places called *Ndeji* (a corrupted form of *Ndeźi*, viz. *nda eźi*),

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[1] In one village, Etsú, I found matrilineal succession to hereditary chieftainship, through the mother's brother's son, although in all other respects the rules of inheritance were the same as everywhere else in Nupe. I am unable to explain this isolated instance, unless perhaps historically.

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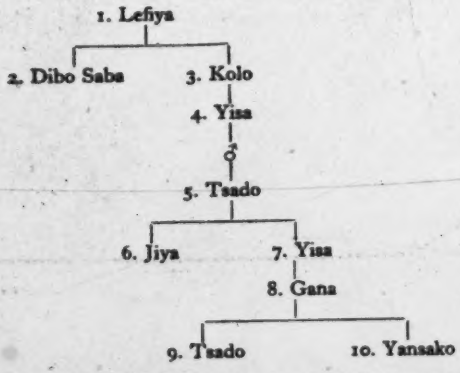
Genealogy of Doko Chiefs



Father of the Town, and who stands somewhat apart from the other village ranks. He plays the part of the chief 'elector' or 'king-maker'; he is never himself a candidate for chieftainship, but is entrusted with the rule of the village during the interregnum. We shall hear more of him presently. The Nupe dislike a long interregnum: as a rule only a few weeks, filled out with discussions and the consultation of diviners, elapse before the appointment of a new chief.[1] This appointment will eventually need the confirmation of the *Etsu* Nupe and, to-day, of the Administrative Officer. This last rule, however, applies only to those chiefs who are recognized as official Village Heads under the modern Native Administration. In the reorganization of the Emirate under British rule only the larger villages have been created seats of official Village Heads. Their number does not comprise all the places which are 'villages' or 'towns' in traditional native conception.[2] A significant terminological dualism has been the result: the people speak of *Žitsu*, 'town-king', when referring to their traditional, officially unrecognized, chief, and call the officially appointed Village Head *Etsu Nyenkpa*, 'Money Chief' (i.e. tax chief).

I can offer no explanation for the coexistence of these two different systems of chieftainship, of hereditary and promotion type. There is no evidence of either having developed from the other. Nor can local conditions, economic factors, or the factors of size and population be made responsible. But I could discover the sociologically interesting correlation between the system of succession and the religious elements which surround Nupe chieftainship. In the villages where chieftainship is hereditary we find that vague mythology of origin which tells of the first occupation of the land, and of the foundation of the village by the

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[1] I have been told that formerly unanimity between the various diviners of the village was considered necessary. In Mokwa my informants stated that the normal duration of the 'interregnum' is ten days.

[2] In connexion with a scheme to raise the salary of Village Heads the number of Village Headships in Bida Emirate has recently been further reduced.

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ancestor of the present chief. A certain special magic and sacred insignia are linked with the house in which chieftainship is vested. Thus the chiefs of various Beni villages and of Sakpe possess the brass bangles of Tsoede; chiefs in Dibo country an iron staff; chiefs in the riverain area the sacred chain of Tsoede. The magic ritual which is associated with chieftainship varies as widely: in Doko it is a harvest rite, the 'eating of the bulrush-millet'; in other villages it appears as magic against barrenness, as a rain sacrifice, an ordeal, or as a general rite to secure health and prosperity of the community. But invariably the chief's ritual, whatever its more specific aim, will be performed as funeral rite and ceremony of installation of chiefs, and also whenever certain great calamities befall the community—a drought, famine, or epidemic. The chief is not himself the priest of this magic, and often has not the insignia in his own possession. Insignia and magic are entrusted to another member of the chief's family. The office of the *Žigi*, the village priest, is kept in the junior branch of the chieftain house, and *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, Town-king and Town-priest, appear in the genealogies as elder and younger brother (in the classificatory sense).[1]

In the communities, on the other hand, where the chief is elected from the senior rank-holders, his house 'owns' no special magic or insignia, and there is no mythology of a founder of the village, but tradition speaks of the village as having 'always been there'. The religious duties fall, instead, to the *nūsa* who acts as chief 'elector' and who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum. This man's office will be hereditary and sacred, he will own insignia or a special powerful magic, which is, again, invoked at the death and the appointment of chiefs or in the case of great calamities. A supernatural agency, a mystic safeguard, is thus always assumed behind the chief's authority. But Nupe village organization has evolved two different solutions, in accordance with the two different systems of chieftain succession: one makes the chief or his family the agents of the supernatural power which supports the claim to chieftainship; the other separates the political rule from the mystic safeguard and, instead of a hereditary king, brings into being a hereditary 'king-maker'. (See chart II, p. 55).

This division of religious and secular office seems to eliminate effectively conflicts between chief and priest. The priests of the village cults, experts in religious matters only, have no influence in political affairs; they are, as we saw, not even granted the general prerogative of their age: a seat on the council of elders. The priest of the chief's cult, if of the chief's family, is classed as a 'younger brother' and thus equally barred from the position of an influential elder. Only the priest-king-maker (where he exists) could gain the position of a rival power and interfere with secular affairs. However, by his office the main 'elector' of the chief, he should be a supporter and ally of the chief, whose office reflects to some extent his own authority, rather than his adversary or rival. He may prefer a puppet at the head of the village—I saw an instance

[1] See the genealogy given in chart II, p. 55.

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I

Rank System from Mokwa (Promotion Type)

Rank order	Title	Office	Locality ('*efu*' or '*emi*')	Succession	Insignia, magic, &c.	Remarks
1	*Lile*	Chief	Efugbo or *efu* Lile	Promotion	..	Present chief was promoted to chieftainship from rank *Sarkin Zongu*
2	*Shabo Lile*	..	Gunmubo (so called because *gunmu* priest lives here)	"	..	Title introduced under Fulani influence; replaced original title *Sojshé*.
3	*Ndeshi* (Sheshi)	'King-maker'	Ilancita	Hereditary	Sacred chain, priesthood of Tsoede	Title *Ndeshi* corresponds to *Ndeshi*, 'Father of the Town'.
3a	*Guye*	Successor to 3	Etisheshi and Korofugi	Hereditary in family of *Ndeshi*[1]	..	..
3b	*Tswashe*	Successor to 3a	Ntaci	As 3a	..	..
4	*Sdmaza*	..	Gbaye and Yafu	Promotion	..	Was promoted to present rank from *Tsonkwa*.
5	*Ndagoro*	..	Goro	"	..	..
6	*Maji Koshegbe*	..	Kpege	"	..	Newly introduced rank.
7	*Tronkwa* (Tsowa)	..	*emi* Ndakogi	"	..	..
8	*Maji Bagidi*	..	Ilancita	"	..	..
9	*Maji Dende*	..	"	"	..	..
10	*Maji nya Kota*	..	Goro	"	..	..
11	*Maji Guya*	..	Kpege	"	..	..
12	*Maji Tswaci*	Head of Blacksmiths	Tswata	Hereditary	..	..
13	*Etsu Dul*	Head of Drummers	*emi* Dzezi	"	..	..
13a	*Shabo Dul*	Successor to 13	*emi* Dzezi	Hereditary in house of *Etsu Dul*[2]	..	..
•	*Wangwa*	..	*efu* Wangwa	..	..	This rank no longer exists. The position of the head of the *efu* has fallen, quasi-unofficially, to the *Liman*, the Mohammedan priest, who is not yet, however, officially admitted into the village council.

[1] These secondary ranks defining succession to the hereditary rank of 'king-maker' I have found only in Mokwa. The *Sheshi*, *Guye*, and *Tswashe* regard each other as elder and younger brothers respectively. I was told that originally the office of *Sheshi* was inherited matrilineally, and that this is the explanation why it has become divided between three kinship sections living in different *efu*. Though this explanation is, logically, incorrect, and although these three offices have actually been inherited in paternal line since the people can remember, the fact remains that the three groups which succeed each other in rotation are vaguely thought of as of matrilineal origin. The aloofness from the other village ranks which characterizes the office of the 'king-maker' is thus further enhanced by the different conception of succession.

[2] Secondary professional ranks of this kind are found also in other craftsmen groups, e.g. blacksmiths. Sometimes there exists also a third rank of this order, with the title *Kpota*. This organization of craftsmen ranks will be discussed in Chapter XIV.

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II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

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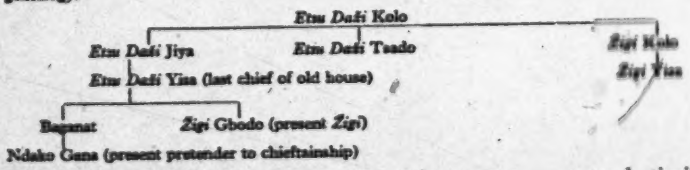
Rank order	Title	Office	Locality ('efu')	Succession	Insignia, magic, &c.	Remarks
1	*Etsu Dafi*	Chief	Dafi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Ziri* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dafi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotii*	..	"	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Makii*	..	"	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dzuko*	..	Takogi	"	..	..
8	*Boke*	..	Kpacinefu	"	..	..
9	*Shabaeti*	..	Ndadofu	"	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dafi	"	..	..
11	*Zitsu Bobi*	..	Edokó	"	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	"	"	..	..
13	*Maji Egbe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	"	"	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Zitsu* and *Ziri*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences. 622 793

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Zitsu* and *Ziri*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon 622 793 518

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

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group, the 'town culture' typical of Northern Nigeria. These habits and customs exist, as it were, in their own right, quite apart from questions of economic or political opportunity. But as in the growth of the kingdom certain customs and habits have become representative of the *élite*, they have set the standard of cultural desirability and superiority in general. They have imparted to habits and customs which differ from the standard the stigma of lower, less 'respectable' ways of life. In this sense, then, class differentiation as we find it in present-day Nupe can be said to represent a direct result of the growth of the state. 565 184

The intensity of class cohesion and the vividness of class consciousness are determined by 'the amount and ease of social mobility', that is, inter-class movement.[1] We have denied to the economic and social stratification that obtains in the Nupe village the character of a social class, on the grounds that the higher and highest social orders were potentially attainable to all—universal mobility contradicts the conception of social class. Exclusion of all social mobility, on the other hand, would turn social class into hereditary caste. Nupe society, a true class society, steers a middle course. 565

The social classes in Nupe represent to a large extent self-recruited, closed groups. A man born of commoners as a rule remains a commoner, a craftsman a craftsman, and the ranks of nobility are filled with men of noble birth. But there exists promotion from grade to grade within the class, and a certain amount of inter-class mobility. Inter-class mobility in the fullest sense, that is, formal adoption into the higher orders, is attained, as we have seen, through service in war and, to less extent, through wealth and clientship. Its scope is narrow and closely controlled: there exist only thirty to forty ranks to which an 'outsider' may aspire, and only seven out of the thirty-seven civil and military ranks enumerated in our lists were granted to men whose families had held no rank previously. Moreover, adoption into the titled classes means only gaining a first foothold on the long social ladder. All social rise possible in Nupe is rigidly canalized by the hierarchy of ranks and grades. Here, viewed from the angle of social mobility, the Nupe rank system reveals its full significance: it controls and restricts as much as it aids social advancement. In the interest of governing the extensive kingdom, carrying on its wars, and administering its subject groups, political power had to be distributed and delegated. Individuals whose services were of value had to be attracted by the promise of admission to privileged positions. But by making social rise subject to the formal investiture and, above all, by admitting individuals only gradually, through a step-by-step promotion, to increased power, the ruling class could regulate the infiltration of new blood as well as the accumulation of power by its members. We have seen that ranks and promotion are subject to changing political fortune; even the meaning of ranks and offices may change under different sovereigns. Recognition can be withheld or withdrawn from men who might prove dangerous or from families already too powerful. The hierarchy of ranks thus helps to pre- 565 555

[1] M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 163.

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POSSESSION OF LAND

In the discussion of the rights to land obtaining in Nupe two facts must be borne in mind. First, the Fulani conquest, which resulted in the appropriation of part of the vacant tribal land; and second, the very low birth-rate and sparse population of the country. These two factors limit each other's effectiveness; moreover, they affect different parts of the country in different measure. We have seen that the appropriation of tribal land took place only in the area east of the Kaduna (Cis-Kaduna).[1] In the area west of the Kaduna (Trans-Kaduna),[2] land-tenure on the traditional tribal or village basis still obtains, and here the population factor shows itself effective in that it eliminates almost all pressure on the land and all more severe competition for landed possession. Owing to the political factors the opposite is true of Cis-Kaduna, and here a complex system of land ownership and land transfer, which in the extreme case amounts to outright purchase for money, reflects the attempts of the people to counteract the pressure on the land. That land disputes are extremely rare in Trans-Kaduna, but very frequent in the 'conquered' territory, is evidence of the same development. One exception may be mentioned at once: the especially valuable marsh-land groves and plots near river-courses, which the Nupe call *bata* (the Hausa *kurmi*). Disputes about this valuable kind of land occur now and again even in the land-rich Trans-Kaduna, and they are fought with special bitterness in Bida and the crowded 'conquered' territory. The following figures may be quoted in support of this statement: in the years 1934 and 1935 24 cases of land litigation came before the *Etsu*'s Court in Bida; 21 referred to Cis-Kaduna and 3 to Trans-Kaduna; of the latter none was a land case in the narrow sense of the word—one was a dispute about trees, and two were disputes over marsh-land plots.

The description of Nupe land-tenure may start most profitably with an enumeration of the various methods by which a man, stranger or native of Nupe, may acquire land or has been able to acquire land in the past. It must be said first of all that under traditional conditions only men can hold or claim possession of land. The dynastic policy of the Nupe kings has first led to women being invested with fiefs and landed property. Mohammedan law, besides, is inclined to confirm land holding by women in their own right. But the holding of land by women is still extremely rare, and limited to Bida and the surrounding districts I have come across one case only—a court case in which sons and brothers of a recently deceased woman contested the inheritance of her landed property. Needless to say, none of the parties concerned were peasants; the land had been acquired first through the channels of clientship, and the present claimants—Bida Mallams—wanted it only in order to sublet it for profit.

To return to traditional land-tenure. For a Nupe man who comes

[1] The territory between Kaduna and Gbako river, i.e. Beni country, and the districts east of the Gbako river, i.e. Bedeggi and Kacha districts.

[2] Trans-Kaduna is the literal translation of the Nupe name for the area: *Lawakpá* (*Lawa* being the Nupe name for the Kaduna river).

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of tax): the owner of oil-palms or locust-bean trees would sell a year's yield of his trees to another person, who in return would pay the tax for him. The issue is still more confused where the transfer of the land with which the trees go appears to be in the nature of a lease for an indefinite period. In this case the original owner or his heirs could claim that the trees, at least, were essentially inalienable, and could be transferred only temporarily, that is, could only have been 'lent' and 'borrowed'. This is itself a compromise, and the attitude of the court in these disputes constitutes a further compromise. In 1934 a farmer had ceded a farm-plot with locust-bean trees on it to another party. After the death of the original owner his heirs reclaimed the trees (though not the land) on the plea that the transfer of the trees could in the nature of things have been meant only as a temporary transfer. The decision of the court was that the new owner should share the crop, fifty-fifty, with the former owners.

Long-term Lease and Purchase

We come now to forms of land-ownership which are typical of Bida and the conquered areas east of the Kaduna and which are almost completely absent in the Trans-Kaduna districts.[1] Among the people of Bida town who derive their livelihood from the land, a few descendants of the original Beni population still own land under tribal conditions, that is, under the conditions described under the heading of village land. Their farms are scattered over the land around Bida—the village land that used to belong to the old, pre-Fulani Bida. But most of this land had been expropriated early in the conquest, under one or other pretext, and the former owners and their descendants had left Bida and moved into the country to other villages or *tunga* settlements, where they found vacant land. Thus of the descendants of the Beni 'town-kings' of Bida only Ndakotsu, the eldest of a number of brothers, had remained in Bida and continued to work the small plots that he had been able to keep; the other brothers had left the town and settled in the country.

Long absence, or the dying out of a family branch, too, gain a totally different aspect here in Bida, as compared with conditions in the village. For the vacated plot is as a rule at once appropriated by one of the big landlords whose lands may surround it, or possibly by one of the three royal houses on whose territory the plot may lie. The latter procedure was, as we shall see, the practice in pre-British times and in the early days of British rule. A somewhat similar case happened during my stay in Bida: a Bida man had returned to the town after a long absence and, claiming his old land, found that it had gone to another man. According to Nupe customary law he had forfeited his right to the land, having been away for such a long period. However, the customary law is not adapted to cope with conditions as they obtain in the town and in 'conquered territory': for here no spare land exists that could be offered to

[1] The exceptions are a few *tunga* settlements which some Bida noblemen have founded outside the 'conquered territory', for example on the Wuya-Kutigi road. There are no *tunga* of this kind west of Kutigi.

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WANTS AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Let me repeat that all these wants and incentives which are realized in the social *élite* also represent common incentives of the society at large, and of every social stratum, unattainable though they may appear in actuality. They remain 'ideals', and the inability to realize them is regarded as a failure, a shortcoming in the socio-economic system. There exist, however, certain exceptions: instances of that divergence, or rift, in the appreciation of certain wants and incentives which divides town and country. Though few in number, they occur in widely different domains of social life—nutrition, recreation, sex morality.

Certain instances concern the form of a want, the conventionalized taste in which it appears, rather than its essence. I have spoken in an earlier context of the different taste in intoxicants typical of town and country. The Bida people prefer palm-wine to the sorghum-beer which is drunk commonly in the village. Palm-wine is the native drink in the oil-palm countries of Southern Nigeria; we also find it, side by side with sorghum-beer, in certain riverain districts of Nupe where the oil-palm is cultivated. Bida itself imports palm-wine from these districts and the south. The adoption of this, as it were, alien drink by the people of Bida was explained to me as being due to the demands of Islam, which forbids fermented drinks like sorghum-beer, but permits palm-wine—at least in the eyes of the Nupe followers of the Prophet. I do not know how far this vindication of palm-wine will pass muster with Mohammedan scholars. But I think we may accept the negative feature of this interpretation, namely, the condemnation on religious grounds of sorghum-beer, which, as we shall see presently, represents a drink closely associated with pagan religious rites. Or I might quote the instance of the different styles of dance and music appreciated in Bida and in the peasant districts: in the town we find the dance of professional women-dancers who are watched by an appreciative audience; in the village the dance of peasant men and women who are performers and public in one.

In other tastes and wants town and country differ fundamentally. Let me quote two striking examples: the attitude towards sexual licence (about which I need say no more here),[1] and the attitude towards travelling. What I have said above about the appreciation of travelling in the social *élite* of the country could be extended to apply to the whole of Bida. To have travelled widely, to have 'seen the world', helps to establish the social standing of the townsman. The interest in travels even outweighs other, similar, interests. When I was collecting Nupe folk-lore I met with almost complete failure in Bida, although the villages had proved a most fruitful field. And this was the explanation which my Bida informants gave me: 'You must go to the villages to hear folk-tales. We Bida people have forgotten them all. No one wants them now. Why? Because when we tell stories, in the evenings, we like to hear about travels, and about other towns; we listen to the people who

[1] See Chaps. IX, XIX.

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184 can tell us about Kano, Zaria, or Lagos.' The widespread familiarity
369 with travelling, indeed the love of travelling, which characterizes the
484 Bida people, has no counterpart among the peasants.[1] We have heard
517 that even journeys to another district are rare and of little appeal to the villagers.

184 How are we to explain this negative form of culture contact? Why did
369 cultural assimilation stop short of these few traits while so many other incentives and wants are spreading from the capital to the rural districts? When we examined, in a previous chapter, the different sex morality in town and country, we discovered its close functional interrelation with other social facts. Behind the divergent attitude we perceived the effectiveness of political and economic factors. This also points out the answer of the present problem. Sex morality can change only together with those other social determinants. Let me recall the main facts. Negative facts, such as the absence in the village of the 'double morality' of the capital, and also the absence of a large floating population which proved one of the incentives for the creation of semi-professional prostitution in the town. Positive facts, such as the more closely knit village life, which forbids the open and condoned matrimonial laxity characteristic of Bida; the efforts of peasant family heads to provide bride-price for an early marriage of the men, and thus to maintain the labour-unit; the conditions of labour in peasant households which tend to preclude sexual promiscuity among the women. The 'negative' culture contact which we are observing does not, then, represent a failure of assimilation in certain specific domains of culture, but the inertia of a cultural whole which cannot suffer changes in these domains without undergoing far-reaching changes itself.

The same is true of the incentive of travelling. In Bida, travelling serves the political interests of the ruling group; it is helpful to the productive enterprises of the town population; and it follows the political interests converging in the capital of the kingdom. None of these factors exists in the village. On the contrary, productive organization, political and religious life, move in a narrow compass beyond which the community affords no protection or promise of attachment.

In the case of the other, minor, instances of cultural divergence, which refer only to the form which a particular satisfaction takes, one might argue that the essential similarity of the wants themselves must tend to retard a more complete assimilation. But here again we must view the situation under the aspect of the cultural whole and the close integration within the whole even of apparently ephemeral traits. The appreciation of a certain kind of drink or a certain style of dance is indeed built firmly into the framework of village culture. Thus all religious rituals involve a libation of beer. The temptation to replace it with palm-wine would have to break down, not only an existing nutritive habit, but also, partly, the spiritual background against which the people (consciously or unconsciously) must regard their traditional beverage. The alternative solution of admitting palm-wine, and having different drinks for ritual and profane purposes, would involve an equally radical change in other

[1] See p. 39.

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respects: not only in the productive arrangements which, in these circumstances, would no longer supply the ritual beverage as a matter of course, but also in the psychological attitude, which would have to admit a ritual beverage largely emptied of what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'social value', i.e. which would be nothing but a ritual beverage, completely removed from the habits of ordinary life. The village dance, again, is an expression of group co-operation and coactivity in the recreational sphere. Like the traditional occasions themselves on which it is performed—kinship feasts, *egbe* work, religious ceremonies, and so forth—the dance mobilizes and intensifies group sentiments. We might even go so far as to say that the unitary nature of the group which is thus mobilized forbids a division into neutral performer and aloof lookers-on. The correlation between professionalized performance and differentiation within the group is indeed clearly visible in Bida. An aloof aesthetic appreciation of professional dancers and musicians appears to represent the only form of entertainment acceptable to a society in which class prejudices and motives of status and prestige dominate all gatherings and festivities. Class prejudice has fostered a conception of dignity set against public exhibitions of this kind. The explanation is, I believe, that it would obliterate, even though only temporarily, the demarcation of rank and status. It is, in fact, quite inconceivable for a man of status to join in a dance, even in his own house, for example, at a family feast—to dance, that is, together with, and in front of, people who must invariably include persons of lesser station. Yet in the villages old men, even titled elders, commonly join in the dances of the younger folk, without danger to their dignity. To assimilate, then, the village dance to the performances which appeal to the 'sophisticated' people of Bida would mean assimilating the complete social organization.

For the sake of the theoretical argument I have stated the case of this negative form of culture contact a little more strongly than is warranted by actual conditions. Throughout this book we have found evidence of the gradual closing of the rift, and of the advancing assimilation even in these domains of culture. But indeed our argument is supported by this development. For the assimilation does not advance by the narrow channels of confined, specific, cultural changes. Rather these changes are carried by the tide of a far-reaching cultural adjustment which is transforming the whole productive system and the organization of labour as well as the social life at large in the Nupe village. The breaking up of the family labour-unit, and the appearance, in the country, of professional Bida musicians as spokesmen of what I have called the 'propaganda for the kingdom', are two convincing instances.

WEALTH AND STATUS

Hitherto we have been using the terms 'status' and 'prestige' as meaning one and the same thing. It becomes important now to distinguish between them. By 'status' we understand a more or less fixed place on the social ladder; 'prestige' represents a more fluid form of social recognition, gained by certain services or deeds in accordance with the

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APPENDIX V

NOTES ON THE NUPE CALENDAR

THE calendar of the Nupe peasant is an agricultural calendar. It is based on lunar months, and starts with the first rains, i.e. roughly in April. From the beginning of the rains the people count twelve, thirteen, and sometimes fourteen months until the new rains break. The last month of the old year (i.e. the 13th or 14th month) is then identified with the first month of the new year. The year is divided into six seasons, each comprising two months, as follows: 805

gbama first rains
zuzūkā rainy season
malikā (cf. the Hausa *marka*)—heavy rains
sabakā time of growth
gbāfere cold season
banagū hot season, or small-pox season.

Frequently, however, the Nupe peasant refers to the different months of the year by their number only, speaking of 'first month', or 'second month', and so on. The name *zuzūkā* is also used to denote the whole rainy season, and the whole dry season is called *yikére*, which means, literally, harvest.

This calendar is the pre-Islamic, original, Nupe calendar, which is rapidly going out of use, specially in Bida and the larger, semi-Mohammedan, villages, being superseded by a Nupe adaptation of the Mohammedan calendar. The latter, also operating with twelve lunar months, may coincide with the Nupe peasant calendar in the years when the Mohammedan New Year falls in the neighbourhood of April. But when the two do not coincide, and differ by a month or more, the time reckoning of the peasants in the semi-Mohammedan districts is thrown into serious confusion.[1] The Mohammedans, incidentally, unlike the pagan peasants, use the names of the months rather than the numbers. The Nupe-Mohammedan names of the months are as below. It will be seen that the idea of the original Nupe calendar, with its twin months grouped in six seasons, has been preserved in the new nomenclature: 805 184

1. *Etswa navū*—month of the torches (so called after the custom of throwing fire-brands during the celebration of the Mohammedan New Year).
2. *Etswa bawa gani*—month preceding the *gani* (a Nupe ceremony).
3. *Etswa gani*—month of the *gani*.
4. *Etswa togaya*—'twin month' (taken over from Hausa).
5. *Etswa togaya guba*—second twin month. These two months are believed to be unlucky, and no important events, such as a wedding or naming-ceremony, will be celebrated during them.
6. *Etswa bawa azū za gbakó*—month preceding the fast of the old men (i.e. first part of Ramadan).

[1] In June 1936, travelling from Kutigi to Jebba, I found that the Mohammedanised people of Kutigi were counting the second month, while the pagan Jebba Islanders maintained that it was the fourth.

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7. *Etswa azũ za gbakó*—month of the fast of the old men.
8. *Etswa bawa azũ*—month preceding the (general) fast (i.e. Ramadan).
9. *Etswa azũ*—month of the (general) fast.
10. *Etswa Salagi*—month of the small 'Sallah' (the first Mohammedan *Id* festival).
11. *Etswa bawa Salakó*—month preceding the great 'Sallah'.
12. *Etswa Salakó*—month of the great 'Sallah' (the second *Id* festival).

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I

THE NUPE CREED

I. PROLEGOMENA

THE title of this book, *Nupe Religion*, suggests a logical unity in our subject-matter which, at the very outset, might appear problematical. Two questions, in particular, might be raised. First, are we in fact dealing with *one* religion of *one* people, that is, with beliefs and practices which both form a coherent system and occur uniformly throughout the society? And second, how far are we dealing with 'religion' in the strict sense of the word, and with it alone, to the exclusion of 'magic', mere 'superstitions', and other, cruder forms of belief?

The answer to the first question cannot be given in the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no'; nor can all the issues involved properly be judged so early in the discussion. Let me, however, anticipate the relevant points. The religious beliefs and practices of the Nupe differ considerably in different parts of the country; we shall frequently meet with local cults and with forms of worship varying from region to region, even from village to village. Furthermore, the main acts of worship, their execution and promises, concern the single village community, and not that widest group, the Nupe people or tribe. Nor indeed is that widest group an unequivocal unit. The people who call themselves Nupe are internally divided in various ways—by ethnic descent, by tribal segmentation and, partly, political allegiance, by the cleavage between urban and peasant population, and by the barriers of social class. The bulk of the Nupe people is held together in the kingdom of that name, and in the following description we shall mainly be concerned with the politically united tribe or nation. Even so, certain of the internal divisions remain, and these, too, entail corresponding divergences in religious belief and practice.

It might seem, therefore, that in speaking of 'Nupe religion' we are merely employing a convenient descriptive phrase, a summary reference of the kind ethnographers find useful when they wish to state that such-and-such observances are found in a particular group or area. But the phrase is intended to mean more than this.

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founder of Nupe kingdom and serving the interests of the state. We shall later deal with these 'exceptions'. Let me here stress that in calling them that I am taking my lead from the people. Indeed, the Nupe would altogether disregard these lapses from a wholly abstract creed, which seems to require no effigies or visible symbols; for when comparing their religion with that of other peoples, the Nupe will always emphasize that they have no sacred emblems, idols, masks, or 'little likenesses' (*zazagiži*).

It is perhaps not surprising that so abstract a conception as that of *kuti* should not be held with equal clarity by everyone. In particular, I met with two as it were heterodox notions; one was the idea that *kuti* represents a part of *Sokó*, or a *Sokó tetengi*, a 'Little God' (which, in Nupe language, is a contradiction in terms); according to the other, God was 'up above', but *kuti* was somehow of the earth, being a 'thing' buried in the ground, very likely in the places of ritual. These notions were always put tentatively, and were moreover voiced by individuals who could not claim the fullest knowledge available in the society, that is, by younger men or by Nupe under the influence of Islam; the older men, and especially the priests of *kuti*, declared such views to be false. But supernatural power understood more concretely and associated with specific material objects also has a place in the Nupe universe. This notion is embodied in the third tenet of the religion, which concerns the existence of *cigbe* or 'medicine'.

(iii) *Medicine*

Let me say, first of all, that 'medicine' is the literal translation of the vernacular term, which is applied not only to 'magic' substances but also to medicinal herbs or drugs of any kind, native as well as European, whose properties are assessed essentially empirically. Of the relation between the two we shall speak in a later context. Here we must note that the Nupe inventory of the 'things in the world' does not mention 'medicine', although in some respects it is an exact counterpart to *kuti*, that is, an agency meant to aid man in a universe governed by an all-too-distant deity. But unlike *kuti*, 'medicine' is not thought of as being part of the creation and a primordial gift of God. If it now exists in the world, it does so because of man's own endeavours. There is a legend, well known throughout the country, expounding this view.

'There was a certain younger brother, called Kpara, whose elder brother was Tswasha Malu. They lived in the time of *Etsu* (king) Shagó.[1] There existed a certain medicine, called *cekpyeca shina*

[1] The two brothers are mentioned in no other myth. The name of the king, Shagó, occurs also in the myth describing the origin of the

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787 Shell pattern 2—Some misfortune will befall the family head. Reversed—The family head will acquire greatness.

Shell pattern 3—Smallpox will visit the town in the rainy season, but there will be no deaths.

Shell pattern 4—The diviner will receive gifts. Reversed—Misfortune will threaten everyone, in the whole country.

Shell pattern 5—The women will quarrel. Reversed—Everyone in the country will enjoy good business; the women will have children.

Shell pattern 6—All the men (not the women) of the town will have grounds for distress, for example, because of the death indicated in shell pattern 1.

Shell pattern 7—Trouble on the highway.

Shell pattern 8—All the important people in the town will be happy.

Transposed position

Pattern 1 in house 2—Happy relations between the nobility and the White Man.

Pattern 1 in house 3—Many deaths.

Pattern 1 in house 5—Refers to menstruation.

Pattern 1 in house 7—There will be fights on the road, possibly death or murder.

Pattern 2 in house 1—Rain will fall; or—Happy relations between the nobility and the White Man.

Pattern 2 in house 4—Many deaths.

Pattern 2 in house 7—Pregnancy.

Pattern 3 in house 4—The diviner will receive a gift of a goat or sheep.

Pattern 3 in house 5—The women will quarrel among themselves.

Pattern 3 in house 6—Highway robbery.

Pattern 3 in house 7—War.

Pattern 4 in house 1—Many deaths.

Pattern 7 in any house other than 5—A guest will arrive.

Pattern 7 reversed in any house—A case of death.

Pattern 7 in house 5—Pregnancy.

Pattern 8 in house 1—There will be greetings and gifts for the nobility.

Pattern 8 in house 2—The client should stay at home and not travel.

Pattern 8 in house 3—Success in trade.

184 787 Let me note that different diviners, using a different key series, will also interpret it somewhat differently. Mostly, this merely means that the interpretations are moved about, from one place

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on the list to another, while the list as a whole remains unchanged. Sometimes, however, the lists themselves differ; though these differences are few, they bear relevantly on the social background of the diviner and the interests current in his setting. Thus the diviners in the villages interpret shell pattern 3 as meaning, on occasion, a 'good hunt', which interpretation does not occur at all in the list of the diviners in or near Bida town, where there is no hunting. Again, in the villages shell pattern 8 is sometimes taken to mean 'a council in the house of the chief'; the connection with the 'important people' mentioned in our version is clear; but in that version, coming as it does from the capital where there are no councils of elders or chiefs, the reference to a 'council in the house of the chief' would clearly be out of place. Conversely, shell pattern 1 reversed has in Bida a meaning which hardly affects the life in villages remote from the political difficulties and tensions of the capital; characteristically, in the villages the same pattern reads 'rain will fall', a prophecy which in turn has less importance for the townspeople. In one instance at least—the transposed pattern 2 in 'house' 1—the diviner's key allows for both these interests. I need not point out especially that it allows also for modern conditions and problems of a thoroughly topical kind. 787

Let me finally quote two examples of complete divinations. The first was performed for a canoe-man who was about to set out on a trip up the river. The cords fell as follows: 787

Cords	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Shell patterns	6	2 rev.	4	7	3	4	2 rev.	1
Prophecies	The people will fore-gather	Refers to evening	A pleas-ant trip	Good trad-ing	The women will pick quarrels	The men will be pleas-ant	Gifts for the chief	The *kuti* is friendly

The advice to the client was to be of good cheer: he should start out in the evening, take along gifts for the chief, and be careful in his dealings with women; he would return, after a successful trip, in four or five days (which last prophecy was nowhere indicated in the cords). The second divination was concerned with identifying the *kuci* of a boy just born to the client (a man). Here the diviner was interested only in the first two 'houses', the first referring to 'God', the second to 'House', that is, to the client's position of a family head. After several throws the diviner obtained this combination: 775 787 852

Cords	1	2
Shell patterns	4	6

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III

RITUAL

I. PRELIMINARIES

*796 ON the grounds of time and occasion the Nupe rituals fall into two sharply distinct groups. On one side we have rituals occupying a regular, fixed place in the calendar of the country; on the other, rituals which, as the Nupe say, 'have no month', that is, whose performance is contingent upon the variable needs of the moment. A few 'fixed' rituals which can also be performed out of season and others which, originally 'fixed', have become 'movable' represent intermediate or transitional forms. But even here the twofold division is not obscured. For in the case of rituals performed both regularly and contingently, the latter performance is clearly marked off as an adaptation to particular circumstances; it is on a much smaller scale and lacks the festive features which accompany the regular ceremony, being as it were only concerned with the business in hand.

*796 Surveying Nupe country as a whole the number of different rituals is strikingly large and their geographical distribution irregular; the chart on p. 69 lists a number of them by name and locality, and also shows their varying times of performance. Only one ritual, *gunnu*, occurs everywhere; others are common to one or two tribal sections only or even to a few villages, where special local conditions appear to justify the special cult. In the extreme case a particular ritual may be restricted to a single village community. We met already with instances, such as the Mokwa ritual of the sacred crocodile, the rituals called *ketsá* and 'Father Niger' in the riverain area, and the worship, once more on the river, of the sacred bronze figures associated with Tsoede. Let me add some further examples: in the kolanut-growing district of Labozhi we find the special cult of an ancestress reputed to have introduced the planting of kolanut; a somewhat similar cult, concerned with the cultivation of the oilpalm, occurs in the village Kutiwengi, in the 'oilpalm belt' to the north; Jebba Island possesses a special ritual, unique in Nupe country, which is meant to ward off smallpox; while Mokwa and a few villages in the neighbourhood practise the similarly unique masked dance *elo*.

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CHART OF NUPE RITUALS

	Month	LOCALITIES—INLAND								LOCALITIES—RIVER			
		Doko	*Sakpe*	*Kutigi*	*Etsu*	*Laboshi*	*Ewugi*	*Wuna*	*Mokwa*	*Jebba*	*Leaba*	*Gbajibo*	*Bele*
'Fixed' Rituals	1(13)	[navũ]	gunnu [navũ]	[navũ]					[navũ]				
	2												
	3			gani	lugba*								
	4												
	5	žiba					gbara		gunnu				
	6	sakó											
	7					gunnu	sara				gunnu	elo	
	8							dakunu			mamma		
	9	žiba					gunnu*	gunnu*	elo	mamma; dzakó; ndá-duma		gunnu	gunnu
	10			[sallagi]		nnakógba			sara; bukpe		ndáduma	mamma	žiba; ndáduma
	11	gunnu	mamma		gunnu			fufobo		gunnu			
	12			[sallakó]									
'Movable' Rituals		Dibo Saba; fitakũ	sara; žikinta	gunnu; žikinta	tídzana	gunnu	dzanavu; žikinta	žicigbã	sara; bukpe	tídzana; žikinta; ketsá; ndáduma	žikinta	sara; žikinta; ndáduma	žikinta

Note : Names in square brackets indicate Moslem observances (see chap VIII). Rituals marked by a star are performed triennially; as these are isolated cases they are disregarded in the text.

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With so much variety it is impossible to select a particular community whose rituals would be 'typical' of Nupe practice; rather, each village cycle of rituals is typical (or atypical) in its own way. Yet neither is it possible to describe every variety of Nupe ritual (several of which I only knew from hearsay or from informants' reports). What seems more important is to examine some such cycle of rituals within the setting in which it operates, that is, within the corporate life of the community for which it is primarily valid or, in Nupe parlance, by which it is 'owned'.[1] As regards the question, which particular cycle of rituals to select, I propose to resolve it by taking two instances, one from Doko and the other from Jebba Island. This compromise seems the most expedient both since I have actually observed the majority of rituals in these two places and since these represent an interesting contrast, Doko being a 'typical' inland village, with hereditary chieftainship, and Jebba Island a riverain community where chiefs are elected. Let me add that, from other points of view, both communities are also 'atypical'; Jebba, because it is one of the two villages possessing major 'relics' of Tsoede; and Doko, because it formerly belonged to a federation of villages (or 'towns' as the Nupe would say), which type of political organization is unique in Nupe country. As regards the two communities themselves, a full description has been given elsewhere and need not be repeated.[2]

One further point of more general import may be anticipated. In spite of the great variety of local cults the number of rituals performed and their place in the year's cycle do not differ greatly in the different communities. Usually there are one or two movable rituals, rarely more, and two or three fixed rituals, only a few villages having four or five; and though the dates of the fixed rituals vary somewhat from place to place, they fall more frequently in certain months (e.g. the 9th and 11th) than in others (e.g. the 3rd or 5th).[3] The corresponding months in our calendar, incidentally, can only be calculated approximately since the Nupe reckon in lunar months, the year beginning with the onset of the rains, and insert a 13th month every five years. In other years the 1st month is usually also called the 13th, especially when the rains are late, which not infrequently leads to confusion, some localities being temporarily a month out in their reckoning.[4]

[1] I am here using the phrase 'primarily valid' since certain rituals imply an additional, wider validity (or 'ownership') which extends to the whole sub-tribe or even tribe. This point will be examined later (see below, p. 103).

[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 19, 25, 35. [3] See the chart on p. 69.

[4] In 1934, for example, the 1st month was taken to have begun on March 15th in the eastern part of Nupe, but at the end of April I found that the people of Mokwa, in the west, had just started with their 1st month. For a fuller description of the Nupe calendar, see *A Black Byzantium*, Appendix V.

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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 796x
'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division. 766

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an 616
original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe communities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular 554
rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. [184]
The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *žiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Ṣamaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements.

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be 796x
performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage.

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a 796x
disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and 773
brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the

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764 sees nothing tragic, and is meant to meet social demands as much as metaphysical fears. The ceremonial surrounding death differs somewhat in different communities; mostly, these variations are of [184] a minor character (concerning, for example, the precise duties of the grave-diggers), and can be ignored.

The full funeral ceremonial includes a whole series of rituals, beginning with the burial, called *mba*, and spun out over three funerary rites, performed after eight days, forty days, and one hundred and twenty days, and called after these time intervals. Poor [184] families may be unable to perform the last rite, which is altogether absent in the riverain area and in a few pagan inland villages. Several informants maintained that the Hundred-twenty Days' rite was an innovation, though long since established in many parts of the country (both among pagans and Mohammedans), and that it had come to Nupe with Islam. This last assumption is without foundation since the Mohammedan funeral customs include no such observance. Yet it does seem likely from the present distribution of the ritual that it originated in the Mohammedan capital and then spread to the pagan villages. The villagers, of course, show in a great many ways their readiness to imitate the 'superior' way of life in the town; and there need have been no stronger reason for an innovation otherwise congenial to the traditional outlook. But in the town the addition of another funerary feast fits more specifically into the social conditions.

764 To some extent it merely reflects the greater preoccupation, in the town, with occasions for the display of wealth and status. But 587 there seems to be this also. When discussing the final funerary rite the Nupe always stress that it is 'important for the women' or concerns 'the women especially'; as we shall see, it does in fact bear specifically on the end of widowhood and on the parentage of posthumous children. In the villages which do not perform this rite, these questions are settled, three months after the death, in an informal family council. The last funerary rite thus ceremonializes the same occasion as well as postpones it. Now, this occasion is much more important, the issue being more uncertain, among the townspeople than among the peasants in the villages. Only in the town, among the aristocracy and the wealthier classes, does large-scale polygyny occur, so that the re-marriage of widows becomes a complicated matter; equally, levirate and marriage of the mother's brother's widow which, in the villages, greatly simplify the problem, are disappearing among the Mohammedans of the town. The postponement of the decision by another month would thus seem to be a useful expedient; while the added ceremonial lends moral weight to an occasion grown more critical.

764 The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with

The Number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with the age, sex, and status of the deceased. The full series is performed only for married men; in the case of old men who are not survived by widows the last ritual is omitted. Children, young men who are as yet unmarried, and most women are accorded only the Eight Days; only old women, married or widowed, who hold the position of *nũsako* (the 'Great-old-one') are entitled also to the Forty Days. This position goes to an eldest surviving sister in the oldest generation, and the nature of this qualification, referring as it does to the woman's own descent and not to her status by marriage, is also reflected in the arrangement of the ceremonials; for in the case of widows who returned to their own family after the husband's death (as many do), both rites take place in that house; while if the woman died in her husband's house, the Eight Days is performed there, and the Forty Days in the house of her kin. Differences of age and kinship position also determine the burial proceedings and the choice of the burial place. Old men and family heads, and old women, are buried in their sleeping huts, beneath the floor, and a sacrifice is performed over the grave; everyone else is buried, without special ceremony, in the space between huts or by the compound wall, or perhaps in a disused, roofless hut. At the death of old people, finally, the Eight Days' and Forty Days' rites include (among pagans) drumming, singing, and dancing, while this festive aspect is absent in the case of younger people; for their death makes 'the heart ache', while old people 'have seen the world', and there is no cause for grief.[1] [764] 766

At the death of chiefs or priests the performance of the particular *kuti* they 'owned' may replace the funerary rites of the Eight Days and Forty Days. Similarly, the hunters will perform their own rituals on these occasions. But the rules differ widely; in some communities, as we know, the *gunnu* is the ritual appropriate to the funeral of chiefs and elders. Whichever solution is adopted, the combination of the funeral ceremonial with a fully-fledged *kuti* once more exemplifies the Nupe view of death as warranting the heaviest ceremonial. [184]

The general rules are further modified when the death has been

[1] The qualification of old age cannot be stated more precisely. Old women who do not also hold the position of *nũsako* are sometimes treated like younger people. And in the case of men one always considers these three things—ripe age; possession of an elder's rank and title; and headship of the family. When these three qualifications coincide, there can be no doubt as to the appropriate ceremonial, burial place, and so forth. When only one or the other applies, there is some latitude, the final decision depending mainly on practical considerations, such as the economic position of the family and the likely number of mourners. Thus the observances appropriate to 'old' people do not always form an unbroken series; a person may, for example, be buried in the sleeping hut, with a sacrifice, but without the subsequent festivities of the Eight Days or Forty Days.

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766 of an abnormal kind. Lepers, we remember, are buried in the bush, by the *Ndazo*; people who die of smallpox are buried in the normal manner, though their body is wrapped in dirty rags instead of a new piece of cloth, and there is no ceremonial or mourning. In most parts of Nupe death by lightning does not affect the ceremonial; but in the north and east, apparently under Gwari in- [[124] fluence, such persons are buried by the priests of the *sogba* cult, which flourishes in Gwari country.[1] When a person dies on the farm or in one of the outlying hamlets, the body is taken to the village for burial, and all ceremonies are performed there. A person who dies on a journey or in another part of the country is buried locally, without ceremony, all the rites being performed at his or her home; but if the deceased's kinsfolk are not certain that he has been buried at all (say, in the case of people killed in the war), they will perform a fictitious burial with a shroud representing the body. Criminals who have been executed used to be buried, without rites, by the executioners; but in the case of unconvicted criminals, even if they are known to have been guilty of the most hideous crimes, the usual ceremonial is observed: as moral depravity does not count in the beyond, so it ceases to be important on the threshold.

764 Let me begin with a few words on the technique of burial. The grave is oblong, square, and shallow, only about two feet below the ground. There are no marks on the grave; on the contrary, the ground is carefully levelled and repaired so that it looks like any other place. If the grave is inside a sleeping hut, the latter remains in use after the burial, the same hut often containing two or three graves of successive inhabitants. The body is placed in the grave lying on its side, 'as though asleep', and, among Mohammedans, facing east. The grave chamber is kept clear of earth by a roof of wooden beams, covered with a white grass mat; the body rests on another mat of the same kind. Among Mohammedans, fresh leaves and boughs are in addition scattered over the floor 764 and roof of the grave chamber.[2] The grave-diggers are called *goro*, 767 and are charged also with preparing the body and performing a first sacrifice over the grave. Their duties, ritual already in their secrecy, are usually hereditary in certain families which hold no other religious function. Among Mohammedans the body is prepared by four male or female relatives, according to the sex of the deceased, and mallams are grave-diggers.

[1] See below, p. 211.

[2] I was told of an older form of burial, in which the grave chamber is dug into the side of a circular shaft five to six feet deep. This practice has now disappeared, though the people of Doko assured me that chiefs would still be buried in this fashion. I have seen burials of this kind only in the neighbouring country of Gwari.

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765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably so, that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, 184 are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the

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pious aims are again made a vehicle for ostentation. The gifts of condolence are once more in money and are made, not once only, but two or three times, every guest being expected to give in accordance with wealth and status. Equally, the gifts have changed their name, being now known as *sadaka*, 'pious alms', although like the pagan 'greeting' gifts they are intended as contributions towards the funeral expenditure. The subsequent ceremonials become further occasions for alms giving, now on the part of the hosts; for a portion of the food prepared at these feasts is sent out to the mallams of the town or distributed among the poor.

The three funerary feasts are in fact described as *sadaka*, 'alms', or as *walima*, 'sacred feast'. The latter name seems hardly appropriate, since in the Mohammedan version these rites are almost entirely devoid of sacred or religious features. The sacrifice of beer and the private invocation of the deity have, naturally, disappeared; yet the mallams' prayer, which might have taken their place, is not repeated after the burial service. In other words, there is nothing in the funerary ceremonies that would show them to be 'ceremonies', sacred and not secular events, save the pious distribution of alms. But perhaps there is also less chance of confusing the sacred with a worldly occasion; for the Mohammedan version of the Eight Days and Forty Days does not admit singing and dancing and thus maintains the outward appearance of mourning. Only the last ceremonial includes 'merry-making' and finally discards the show of grief.

The Mohammedan funeral ceremonial clearly represents something like a compromise between traditional Nupe practice and the orthodox requirements of Islam; and like most compromises it led to unintended results. To begin with, the contrast between youth and old age has been minimized; for while traditionally only the old were buried with special religious offices (the *goro* sacrifice) and mourned in the early stages with singing and dancing, the former (in the form of the mallam's prayer) are now generally applied, and the latter are altogether omitted. Moreover, there has been a certain loss of mystic appeal and of emotional weight; for the secrecy which traditionally surrounds the burial has been allowed to disappear; and in the subsequent ceremonials the religious appeal is sustained, no longer by an esoteric sacrifice and invocation, but merely by the exercise of charity. If I considered both results to be unintentional and accidental I did so for these reasons. If we took the first result to be a planful adjustment to changed conditions, then we should have to assume that the distinction between youth and old age has been made less sharp because it ceased to be important; yet it has lost none of its

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relevance in Nupe social life.[1] And we should have to assume further, to account for the loss of mystic appeal, that Islam has radically altered the Nupe view of life and death; which, as we shall see, is once more untrue.

5. SOLEMNIZATIONS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

There is no need to point to the close affinity of the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death, with the rituals of more general religious bearing. Both operate with the same elements—private (or esoteric) invocations, libations, communal meals, and public 'merry-making' in the concluding phase. Both, too, conspicuously involve numerical calculations defining the occasion and sequence of rites. The congregations, of course, differ, though there is some overlap; for certain *kuti*, like the solemnizations, mobilize the kin group only, while at the funerary rites of men of standing all the dignitaries of the community will be represented. Like the *kuti*, finally, the ceremonials surrounding the crises of life have their implicit as well as their professed aims. The latter could not be 'professed' more clearly. The *suna* is there to name the infant in solemn fashion, and hence to assign to it its future place in the society while at the same time invoking divine protection; the wedding ceremonial sanctifies the union of man and wife and holds out the promise of progeny; and the funeral ceremonial disposes of the dead while one prays that there may be no further deaths; it imposes mourning as well as cancels it, and thus repeats or dramatizes, in the ritual sequence, the endless cycle of human existence. We have, I think rightly, called these rituals solemnizations; for they hallow all these events through relating them with the supernatural. But they do more. Through the form they take, that is, through the manner in which the rituals mobilize their particular congregations, they also express the principles and values governing the structure of the society. Think of the rules assigned to the father and grandfather in the ceremonial of birth, the former being expected to collect the 'medicines' needed for an easy confinement and to consult the diviner, the latter to announce the new-born's name. Or think of the complicated exchange of gifts which concludes the marriage ceremonial, of the double sacrifice in the bride's and the bridegroom's house, and of the selection of the bridegroom's envoys and the bride's companions. The funerary rites throw into relief both the social distinctions that go with sex,

[1] I am here referring to status in the society at large, i.e. to the access to rank and office open only to older men and to the respect they generally command, not to the kinship authority of family heads; the latter has indeed been weakened (see pp. 83, 251.)

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Most of these medicines, then, are 'multifarious', combining a therapeutic with a mystical or 'magical' efficacy. The latter may 755 even be paramount and take an extreme form, as in the medicines efficacious by their mere presence and of unknown composition. Equally, these medicines are treated as 'magical'. They may only be prepared in certain months and not in others, unlike all other medicines; and while the latter are kept in the usual household containers, gourds or ordinary pots, the hereditary medicines are preserved in special earthen vessels, placed apart and decorated in the manner of sacred objects, with a strip of white cloth, a ring of palm-fronds or a crown of white chicken feathers. They all have mystically obscure names and more or less elaborate *emisa*, and some also involve regular sacrifices, either when the *cigbe* is newly prepared or on the occasion of the usual kinship rites and invocations of ancestoral *kuci*. Finally, all these medicines are extremely secret and never sold for money, if indeed they are disposed of at all; if so, they may be given away only to close relations or perhaps friends, as a free gift 'for the sake of God'. Nor is their recipe (even if it is known) ever taught to others.

The special position of the hereditary *cigbe* is reflected in the 755 nomenclature, for these medicines alone merit the epithet 'great', while all other medicines are called 'little'. Let us note that the 182 verbal distinction refers, not so much to the miraculous effects with which the *cigbe* is credited, as to the procedure it sets in motion; for even a 'great' medicine may only cure headache or stomach trouble, at least with part of its efficacy. But the 'great' medicine alone involves proper acts of worship; and as it is bound up with the identity of kin groups through being hereditary, so it serves as a focus of kinship life, affording its supernatural aid primarily or even exclusively to the group to which it belongs and mobilizing it in the fashion of kinship rituals. The 'greatness' of the *cigbe*, then, lies in its social implications rather than in its concrete efficacy. Let us note also that its very 'ownership' is far from concrete. For the *cigbe* whose composition is unknown is also never examined, being renewed only from the beer and blood of the sacrifice. What is truly 'owned', is not any tangible, physical substance but only the vessel in which it is supposed to exist; so that this becomes a shrine for religious ministrations indistinguisable from ritual proper.

3. THE FAITH IN MEDICINE

The distinction between 'great' and 'little' medicines is drawn 755 only by the practitioners and 'owners' of *cigbe*. The bulk of the 184 people know little about these implications, and so grade the

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755 medicines differently. For them, medicines are simply either easily
184 procured or not, available to the 'public' or monopolized, by families or perhaps communities. And they conclude, equally simply, that the more secret and private a medicine, the more powerful it must be. Experts and public, we may say, speak different languages. And here certain other discrepancies also arise. There are a great many stories current about extremely powerful (and extremely secret) medicines 'owned' and rarely if ever disposed of by certain villages, families or occupational groups (blacksmiths, hunters). When you know the 'owners' you will usually discover either that they credit the medicine with far less impressive powers or that it is by no means as secret as the public believes, or even that the medicine in question does not exist. Again, the people generally are convinced that certain very 'private' and miraculous medicines can yet be acquired at exorbitant prices: in reality, the medicines so described may not be for sale or, once more, may not exist. The public is also impressed or swayed by certain clever tricks which the experts perform with the ingredients of medicine in order to astonish the layman and advertise their skill but which they never regard as a true part of their craft. Thus a certain medicine for headache and stomach pains can be shown to extinguish flames or, more wonderful still, to make hands and feet insensible to burns; a piece of ironwood used in a very secret anti-witchcraft medicine can be shown miraculously to sink in water. But the Nupe expert rarely resorts to this method of self-advertisement; rather, he strongly insists on the difference between *cigbe* and *enya mã*, mere 'conjuring tricks', such as the Hausa charm peddlers and 'magicians' are fond of performing. Nor does he ever offer 'fakes', of this or any other kind, for the 'real thing' or show any cynicism regarding the value of his products. He believes in them as much as do his clients; and if their trust shows in the eagerness and awe with which they approach the expert, his seriousness and scrupulous attention to detail leave no doubt as to his good faith.

755 The question arises, what concrete proof the believers can have of the efficacy of the more fantastic and 'magical' medicines. In the case of the therapeutic remedies there exists, as I suggested, at least the possibility of some apparent if spurious empirical support; also their efficacy is understood to be in some measure uncertain and subject to the will of God. But no amount of belief in those medicines which turn a man into a miraculously successful farmer or make him invulnerable and invisible can conjure up the desired proof. The confidence inspired by their possession may indeed make the owner a keener farmer or a more courageous soldier and hunter; but though fortune may favour the brave it

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in this or other female professions; all these things I found in fact to be true of the *Sagis* I met. And I would conclude further, that the position of leadership among the women who practise a trade or profession is apt to be identified with power of witchcraft, as the whole market organization of the women is in a sense identified with the fantasy organization of witches. So that the economic independence of women, which is so largely a moral independence as well, seems to furnish the logical basis for the ascription of witchcraft. Let me break off at this point, which we shall reach again by a different route.

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2. MALE AND FEMALE WITCHES

The Nupe text from which we started requires a final correction. Its summary assumption that only women are witches is somewhat inexact. Women alone are *evil* witches, who would desire to do all the things that witches are supposed to do; but there exist also male witches, who are in some measure their partners in crime. They are odd partners: they do not work evil themselves; they do not go out on the nightly search for human victims; on the contrary, the male witches are said to be 'good' people, who would curb the evil desires of the women. Yet precisely the most sinister effect of witchcraft, the killing of the victim (as against merely weakening his health), is thought to depend on the co-operation of both sexes.

We note the exact parallel to the two fatal 'diseases of God', leprosy and sleeping sickness. There, too, the two sexes appear as the two components of the supernatural threat, which is less grave if one alone is involved, and deadly only when the two are combined; and there, too, the female agent plays the decisive part. In the sphere of witchcraft, that part stands for the active evil will; while the role of the male agent is merely permissive or perhaps negative, that is, consists in *not* willing that the evil intentions be frustrated.

Thus far all Nupe are agreed. But on all other details concerning the alleged partnership of men and women opinions are once more divided. Only in Beni country and around Kutigi are the male witches called by a special name, *eshe*; elsewhere one uses *gaci*, and specifies the sex if necessary. If this is not done, the word is taken to refer to women. Most people hold that the male witches are much fewer in number than the female ones; thus it is thought that all the witches in a village, or seven, or three, share one male helper. They would visit him at night to solicit his help; but while some think that it is only the *fifingi* of man and woman who meet in this fashion, others are certain that it is the real persons who do

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change in this array does not alter the continued consciousness of identity, but is subsumed in it.

This is, of course, a familiar situation, which ultimately accounts for the continuity (or continued self-awareness) of societies even when their cultural possessions, or for that matter their populations, change. Much will depend on the gradualness and restricted scope of the change; a sudden change in which new modes of behaviour greatly outweigh the 'array' of pre-existing ones may disrupt the continued identity. But it need not always do so. For the process just outlined may also be reversed: the society facing such far-reaching changes may yet fasten on to some particular cultural possession which remained unchanged, and consider it sufficiently relevant to furnish a criterion or symbol of the continued identity. Often, as we know, a creed or some religious observance preserved amidst the changes will prove to have this relevance.

This process, too, can be observed among the Nupe, among the colony of emigrants in Lagos, who have lost nearly every feature of culture, including language, which would normally sustain that awareness of 'being Nupe' or 'still being Nupe'. But they have preserved one traditional cult, the *gunnu*; and they still regard themselves as Nupe (calling themselves either Nupe or, more often, Takpa or Tapa, by the Yoruba name). The two things go together; in discussions, when the people wish to emphasize their tribal identity, they at once mention the possession of this cult which, to them, seems decisive.

Let me say a few words about the Nupe colony in Lagos. It numbers perhaps 5,000 people, both scattered over the outlying hamlets and villages and occupying a special quarter in the city of Lagos.[1] The Nupe settlement is claimed to be of considerable antiquity, going back to the Portuguese era, and to have attained its present important and honoured position towards the end of the last century, when the self-made head of the Lagos Nupe, a certain Gana and a 'noted warrior', was elevated to high rank by the Yoruba town king. This Gana, who incidentally was taken to England to be presented to Queen Victoria, was the grandfather of the present chief of the Lagos Nupe, a man of about seventy. Gana's rank, *Osode*, is still held by his descendants, and with the rank goes the priestship of the *gunnu*, which Gana had somehow assumed. The Lagos *gunnu* is a combination of three rites all subsumed under the same name, the *gunnu* itself, the *ndakó gboyá*, and the ritual of the Chain of Tsoede, the paraphernalia of the three

[1] The Nupe quarter in Lagos is known to everyone; its main thoroughfares are called *Tapa Street* and *Osode Street*, the latter deriving its name from the title held by the head of the Nupe colony (see below).

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

General

105 Most of the Nupe participate in a complex exchange-economy. Before the introduction of British money, cowrie shells were used as currency and are still used at funerals, and in reckoning marriage and other traditional payments.

The trans-Kaduna area and the country north of Bida (e.g., in Lemu), where land is fertile and plentiful, is the most prosperous. Wealth is greater where the household has a large labour unit or where a craft is practised in addition to farm work. Bida town exhibits greater extremes of poverty and wealth than the rest of the country but outstanding differences are not between individuals, but between groups, for example, urban and rural populations. It is said to be unusual to see badly-clothed men, women, or children, and under-nourishment is rare.

The traditional political offices are no longer inseparably linked with wealth, though high social status still attaches to them. Members of the *élite* can maintain their prestige fairly cheaply, as symbols of status (glazed turban or silver sword) are either heirlooms or not costly; the inherited house shows status even if in disrepair; polygyny is facilitated by the low marriage payment for " marriage in the family ";[1] travelling can be sustained by claiming hospitality from relatives.[2]

Agriculture[3]

241 Nupe farming shows considerable technical knowledge and little magic or ritual is associated with it. Shifting cultivation is practised but plots are worked for 3–4 years (Doko), 4–5 years (Mokwa), and 6–7 years (Kutigi) before they are allowed to lie fallow for from 4 to 15 years. Rotation of crops is not generally practised, though Line reported it from the area round Jima, where three years of groundnuts were followed by two of guinea-corn. Intercropping is practised and two or three crops are often grown together. The size of a plot worked by one man is usually 2–2½ acres.

A large heavy hoe (*zuku*) is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, and a small hoe (*dugba*) for weeding and lighter work. A long bush knife (*gada*), nowadays of European manufacture, is used for cutting grain stalks and digging out yams.

Farms are cleared and burnt during the dry season. First-year cultivation after clearing is in mounds; those made for yams are 2–3 ft. high, 4–5 ft. apart, and in rows 6 ft. apart. Subsequent cultivation is in ridges 1 ft. high and 3 ft. apart. Groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and some vegetables are planted in this way. Marsh cultivation is carried out in small areas of 4–6 parallel ridges. Around Doko (Beni sub-tribe) manure is obtained from the cattle of nomad Fulani, who are invited to camp on fallow plots during the dry season.

134 241 In the area west of the Kaduna River the chief cash crop is groundnuts, and cotton also grows well there. The staple food crops are millet, sorghum, yams, and, to a lesser extent, rice. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes are less important. The most profitable commercial crops are rice, groundnuts, cotton, and shea-nut. There is a poorer range of crops round Bida town owing to the scarcity of land; fewer yams are grown there than elsewhere and there is no bulrush millet.

In the Nupe areas of Ilorin Emirate yams are not regarded as a Nupe crop but close contact with Yoruba farmers is said to have improved the Nupe methods of cultivation. In Share[4] each farmer has two farms, one for grain and the other for

[1] See below, p. 42.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 239–85; Line, 1947.
[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–14, 237–8; Line, 1947.
[4] Anon. 1934–5.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[434 386] cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in 344 the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference 592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying 423 bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[24]

The Political System of the Kyedye

634 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the
184 monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nuwa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticiši*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaši*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaši*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alkali*n Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[25]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

655 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsóši*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*šitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndaceši* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benši*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benši* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[26]

[24] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–8.
[25] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1940a, pp. 174–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[26] Nadel, 1936.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[5]

584 According to Temple,[6] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[6] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is 184 buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 532
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage.

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 588 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 351 425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
● [184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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THE KEDE: A RIVERAIN STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By S. F. NADEL

I. *Introduction*

THE Kyedye or Kede,[1] with whom this paper is concerned, are a section of the large Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria, whose general culture and social organization I have described elsewhere.[2] The Kede have many cultural traits in common with their mother tribe; their kinship system is the same; they speak the dialect which is spoken to-day by the majority of the Nupe sub-tribes and has become the acknowledged language of the Emirate, Nupe 'proper'; they have also adopted the religion of Nupe kingdom, Islam. Yet combined with this cultural affinity we find certain marked divergencies. The Kede are a riverain group—the only purely riverain group among the various Nupe sub-tribes. Their economic pursuits and general social life centre round the river on which they live and from which they derive their livelihood. This means already that their social and cultural life must present certain features which are absent in Greater Nupe. Their political organization, moreover, contains certain distinctive and unusual traits—unusual even for Africa at large. It is for this unusual nature rather than for its relation to practical problems of African administration that I have chosen the political organization of this small Nigerian sub-tribe for the subject of this contribution.

II. *Demography*

The main body of the Kede lives to-day on the Rivers Niger and Kaduna between 8° 30′ and 9° 40′ North Latitude, inhabiting a narrow strip of land on both banks. The Kede share their territory with a number of other tribal sections of the Nupe, which lead a semi-riverain life, pursuing—unlike the Kede—agriculture

[1] The proper Nupe name is Kyedye. But the Hausa, Yoruba, and other neighbouring groups (as well as, to-day, Government officials) prefer the more easily pronounced Kede. We shall adopt, for the sake of simplicity, this latter name.

[2] See *Africa*, viii, 1935, and also my forthcoming book, *A Black Byzantium*.

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131 beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are
184 scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage:
101 for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synony-
184 mously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as
[173] *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

161 We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called
634 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group,
184 and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or Ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

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political boundaries, came to lie in three different provinces and six different (modern) Emirates or Divisions.[1] However, we shall see later that this distribution of a comparatively small group over so many political divisions is not due entirely to the re-alignment of political boundaries. It is also a result of movements of Kede groups in recent times, after the political boundaries had been fixed by the present Government. 634 184

By far the largest section of the Kede lives on the left bank of the Niger and Kaduna, in Bida Emirate. In this area the Kede have also maintained their political status of a separate political unit, with their own chief as the administrative head. In all other areas the Kede communities are absorbed politically in the districts on whose territory they lie, and live under the local, non-Kede chiefs and district heads.[2] The modern political situation has not, however, obliterated the other features of their social life; the characteristics of their political organization, more specially, live on, though on a smaller scale, in the one area where it has been given official recognition. Although many of our political data will of necessity be derived from this one area, we may again take them to be representative of Kede country at large, and when speaking in the following of Kede, Kede culture and social system, we shall mean the group as a whole, disregarding the modern political subdivisions.

There exists, however, one subdivision of a different nature, deep-seated and of old standing, which we may not ignore. I have spoken so far simply of the Kede. But there exist in reality two Kede groups: the Kede *Tifin*, or upper-stream Kede, and the Kede *Tako*, or down-stream Kede, the boundary between the two groups lying roughly at Jebba Island (the two groups overlap for a short stretch north and south of Jebba).[3] Now, what I have said about the specific features of the Kede social and political system applies only to the down-stream group. The upper-stream Kede show none of the traits which give to the culture of the sister group

[1] The Kede on the right bank of the Niger belong now to Ilorin and Kabba Provinces, and to the Emirates, or political divisions, of Ilorin, Lafiagi, Patigi, and (in the south-west corner) Koton-Karifi. The Kede on the left bank of the Niger and on the River Kaduna belong to Niger Province (formerly Nupe Province) and to the Emirates of Bida, Agaie-Lapai, and Kontagora.

[2] In one place (Ogudu) a certain compromise has been effected, the head of the fairly numerous Kede community acting as a titled 'second-in-command' to the village chief.

[3] The upper-stream Kede are also called Kede *Gbede*, after the Nupe sub-tribe (Gbede or Gbedegi) with which they share their territory.

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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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till their villages covered the Niger Valley between Eggan and 173
Jebba. At the time when the first European travellers appeared 361
in Nupe country, we find the Kede already firmly entrenched in this part of the Niger Valley. Now, of the ten main villages of the Kede which exist to-day only one represents an independent, purely Kede settlement—the Kede capital, Muregi. It is a well-built village, with solid houses of sun-dried mud bricks, each compound walled in in Nupe fashion, with a big mosque and an imposing chief's house. It is, as I have said, a pure Kede town, a town inhabited entirely by the 'ruling race'—'*u de talakaʒi a*', say the Kede ('it contains no poor'—meaning persons belonging to the subject groups). All other Kede settlements, without exception, are built on or near the site of a village of 'original inhabitants'. In most cases the Kede settlement occupies the river bank itself, and the 'native' village the stretch of country immediately behind; in a few cases we find the Kede settlements on an island off the bank occupied by the 'native' village or on the opposite side of the river. The result is something like a twin-village, half 'native' and half Kede. The scene of Kede tradition, a tribal home and emigrant settlements, seems indeed visible in the present-day organization of Kede settlement, with its one all-Kede town and its many 'twin-villages' along the river valley.

The more recent history of Kede settlement remains true to this picture of a gradual territorial expansion. We know that towards the end of last century the Kede settled for the first time on the Kaduna River. Later, under the Royal Niger Company, the Kede were encouraged to extend their settlements still farther on Niger and Kaduna. It is easy to trace these new settlements, which were founded near the European trading posts and other places which had similarly gained commercial importance. Only some thirty years ago the Kede founded their latest 'colony'—on Jebba Island

The villages differ greatly in appearance: some villages boast 361
solidly built permanent houses, while others consist largely 184
of more flimsy buildings, grass-walled huts, suggestive of temporary occupation rather than permanent settlements. The habitations of the Kede reflect the flexible, mobile nature of their system of settlement. The degree of permanence attempted in the buildings at the same time betrays the age of the settlement as well as its (past or present) importance as an economic or

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361 political centre. The Kede settlement at Raba is a typical instance
184 of the more solidly built settlement. It was founded about 1840, when Raba was the capital of Nupe Emirate. The first settlers were five men with their families from Muregi, who belonged to one 'house'; to-day the Kede colony at Raba (which now also possesses a Niger Company storehouse) numbers seven 'houses'.

The Kede settlement at Katcha is an example of the other, poorly built, type, which gives the impression as if the settlers had not yet found time, or had not yet quite decided, to build themselves permanent quarters. The present Kede settlement dates back to 1905–10, at which time a group of Kede who had settled previously at Eggan, on the main river, abandoned this colony for Katcha, attracted by the opportunities of the place. Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, owed its rise to importance to the introduction of steamer traffic on the Niger and the building of the first Nigerian railway from Baro, through Katcha, to Minna. Its five or six 'houses' of original Kede settlers have now increased to seventeen.

Our list of Kede settlements would not be complete without the mention of the purely temporary riverside camps, meant to last for one season or a few weeks only, which the Kede put up in the larger villages where they are wont to stop on their journeys up and down the river. During the main trading season, Jebba, Patigi, Wuya, or Katcha are crowded with these lightly built shelters, grass-huts, tent-like structures of grass-matting or —crudest of all—the wattle-and-matting awnings of the canoes simply pulled ashore. Kede settlement has not yet come to a standstill. Places which are gaining in importance still attract new groups of immigrants; and the seasonal shelters in a busy trading centre may at any time be turned into permanent quarters, as, indeed, it has happened repeatedly in the course of time.

361 Reviewing the history of Kede settlement, we find its depen-
166 dence on economic factors fully confirmed. We may conceive of it as of a progressive realization of the dictates of the productive system of the country. The Kede, as we have seen, did not occupy new, uninhabited country, but settled in places where an existing population had already established a certain level of social and economic life. In the choice of places for settlement and in their subsequent development, the Kede were invariably guided by commercial considerations. They were, moreover, not satisfied

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634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsozi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsozi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsozi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
[582 villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the
184] (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsozi*.

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634 is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this
182 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen,
173 concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

634 *Religion.* As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Moham-
771 medans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements
184 you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often
182 pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Ndáduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, 634
the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, 771
a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which 184
rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans 182
as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first 634
two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to 771
some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself 182
responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of 782
these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndáduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndáduma* rituals, the *Ndáduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndáduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

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634 dependence on economic factors and, tied up with them, environ-
121 mental conditions. The impetus to colonization and expansion, as we saw it, was already implied in the way in which the people gain their livelihood. We can render this argument even more conclusive; the cultural situation in the river valley itself offers us the comparative material from which to draw our deductions. We remember the upper-stream Kede, who, neighbours, fellow
634 tribesmen and in many details of culture close relations of the
121 down-stream Kede, yet do not share their political achievements—
184 and also do not share their productive system and economic life in general. We can even go further and point to the environmental factors on which the economic system of the Kede in turn depends. The environment in which the upper-stream Kede live indeed forbids a development of river trade and traffic similar to that evolved by the sister group. The river in their area is narrow, barred in several places by rapids and rocky, frequently dangerous, passages, and generally impassable during half the year. On its banks there are few settlements, and the hinterland is thinly populated, inhabited largely by comparatively poor and backward groups. Hold against this the down-stream country: a broad river, navigable all the year round, the banks covered with numerous villages and the hinterland a rich, populous country with highly developed trades and crafts.

634 It will have been seen that I am speaking here of environment in
121 a rather wide sense, including, beside the physical constellation of the country, also such factors as distribution of population and the existence of a certain type of civilization. Methodologically, these facts stand in the same category as physical environment proper. True, they are essentially historical facts, representing the results of various historical developments. These developments themselves, however, are beyond our line of vision; their results—the fact that the Kede area happens to lie in the centre of a rich and powerful kingdom—are to us 'unique events' in the phraseology of the historian, extraneous factors of chance, which, like environmental facts, we have to accept as ultimate data.

Let me admit that this causal chain, environmental conditions—economic enterprise—political system, is not fully conclusive. It is weakened by another aspect of our comparative evidence—namely, the fact that the *kintsozi*, who are also close neighbours and tribal relations of the down-stream Kede, and who share with

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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
185 who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to
177 the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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to check the attempts to extend kola plantation in Nupe. Whether or not it will check other attempts at agricultural innovations one cannot say.[1]

Often in discussions of this kind the reluctance of a native group to adopt a certain innovation is summarily dismissed as being due to the inveterate, almost proverbial, 'conservatism' of the native races. Clearly, such an explanation does not meet the case. As regards the Nupe we should have to contrast their alleged 'conservatism' with respect to trees with the readiness with which they adopt new crops and agricultural techniques. Evidently, to adopt a new crop which shows results in a year's time, and which is easy to tend, often easier than the traditional crops (as in the case of maize or cassava), and to take up the difficult work of planting trees which may not bear fruit for six or seven years, is an entirely different thing. One can be easily fitted into the framework of established agricultural activities while the other involves a complete readjustment of the productive system. The Nupe are, within limits, extremely progressive people, and keen on trying out new things. These limits are determined by two factors: first, by the time that an ordinarily crowded working year could allow for additional tasks; other work, or precious leisure time might have to be given up for the sake of the innovation—a change that may or may not appear worth while to the Nupe farmer. The second factor is the measure of change which a readjustment of the native production would entail in this closely knit economic system, with its exact balance of specialization and exchange. Every radical change in the production, such as the adoption of tree-cultivation in a district, may upset this balance; it may, in other words, make the innovation less profitable. The fact that the Nupe farmer is go-ahead with respect to certain farm techniques and 'conservative' with respect to others is not due to any tribal or racial 'conservatism', but reveals itself as a clear instance of the working of free economic choice.

TECHNIQUE AND KNOWLEDGE

So advanced a technique and so conspicuous a standard of husbandry must involve a body of theoretical knowledge which goes far beyond the counsels of peasant lore, and could avouch statements of very nearly scientific authority. This is no doubt the case in Nupe farming. The understanding of the basic principle of manuring, the fixed rules with regard to rotation and lying fallow, the practice of thinning-out the growing plants, which is correctly explained as being intended to give the plant more space, they all confirm this.[2] Moreover, while in many African

[1] Rev. Ira W. Sherk, the head of the U.S. Mission at Mokwa, has been successful in making the people of a small neighbouring village adopt the cultivation of grapefruit. This innovation, carried out on a very small scale, and involving hardly any difficult readjustment of the native productive organization, bears out what is said later in the text about the limits that are set to all such innovations.

[2] I must record that one of my Bida informants, an experienced farmer, denied the value of ashes and the burning of fields as manure. He held that animal manure (with the regular use of which he as a Bida farmer was well acquainted) was the only effective manure. This critical attitude only emphasizes the element of empirical knowledge in Nupe farming technique.

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241 463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 651 322 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving [323 will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already 325 an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted 171] down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

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and commerce have greatly benefited from the new development, the position of the peasants and craftsmen has not improved to the extent of enabling them to accumulate reserves and increase their resources to any considerable extent. The introduction of commercial crops, the cultivation of which is officially encouraged, represents a policy designed to open to the native cultivator the way to economic betterment. Yet the insecurity of these new resources may defeat their own ends. A more recent move to improve the economic position of the farmers was the launching of a policy to introduce mixed farming into Bida Emirate. Mixed farming, which had been adopted some years previously in certain northern Emirates, was started in Nupe towards the end of my second expedition. At that time only the demonstration farms of the N.A. and certain stretches of land belonging to the Emir, all worked by wage-labour, had been put under the new cultivation. While it is thus too early to describe actual results, it is possible to outline, from the study of the underlying principles, certain probable effects of this agricultural policy on the economic and social system of the country. They are sufficiently far-reaching to warrant here a more extensive examination.[1]

This policy envisages a gradual transformation of the whole of Northern Nigeria into arable country cultivated on Western lines, on the basis of individual landholdings. The working team should consist of one man and a boy. The 2 acres per head which have hitherto corresponded to an individual worker would be extended to 12, and eventually to 20 acres. The manure gained from the draught cattle would do away with the necessity of shifting cultivation and would allow practically unlimited cultivation of the same stretch of land. A four-field scheme of rotation is suggested, with one field manured, and the following crops grown on the different fields: sorghum and millet (on the manured field); cotton; ground-nuts; cassava and small crops. The most prosperous farmers in a district are to be persuaded to take up mixed farming first, thus giving an example which, it is hoped, many others will soon follow. The total cost of the draught cattle (two bullocks and one cow) and plough is £7 for an iron, and £5 for a wooden, plough. Farmers who are unable to buy the equipment outright will be given an advance on future profits of £1 to £1. 10s., or can pay an 'entrance fee' of approximately that amount, being expected to pay the rest, viz. repay the advance, in four yearly instalments which include a hiring charge of 5 per cent. The greatly increased yield should make these payments easy: it has been calculated that the farmer will be able to increase his production eightfold by the new method.

The scheme, admirable though its intentions are, may easily be wrecked if certain inherent dangers and difficulties are not carefully considered. Let us take the example of the most prosperous and progressive farmers of Lemu whose landholdings we have examined in an earlier chapter (see p. 212). We found that the total land under cultivation in the case of a working group of five and three men was 9½ and 6 acres,

[1] I am greatly indebted to the Superintendent of Agriculture in Bida for having allowed me access to the departmental files on mixed farming.

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respectively. The larger group possessed one, the smaller two, fallow fields of the same size as the field under cultivation. Their total landholdings, including both cultivated and fallow fields, thus amounted to 18 and 19 acres. Now, under the new scheme one individual would take under cultivation very nearly the whole landholdings of the family group. The other adult members of the family will have to obtain new land or (only too probably) they will give up farming. In Trans-Kaduna, with its large land supplies, new land might be found with no great difficulty from vacant or virgin village land. But even under these favourable conditions the fourfold increase of landholdings entailed in this development must lead, if not to actual land shortage, to serious competition for land. For one thing, farm-land for ploughing should lie closer together than it does now. The Nupe farmers will soon find it profitable to exchange their scattered ½ acre or 1 acre fields for larger and compact areas, an exchange which, involving a discriminative appreciation of land, must invariably lead to land purchase and land sale. In Cis-Kaduna, with its limited land resources, land sales are, as we have seen, already practised on a small scale. Here, in the country of the big landowners, land purchase and land sale will increase rapidly under the new scheme.

The redistribution of land resources will go hand in hand with far-reaching changes in the economic stratification of the country. The prosperous peasant who was able to take advantage of the new scheme will in a few years' time command considerable resources. No doubt, the obvious way to invest the newly won capital will be in more ploughs and more land.[1] The more unfortunate farmers who, for reasons of poverty or lack of enterprise, are not able to avail themselves early of the new scheme will be hopelessly outdistanced by the rapid development. The increased agricultural production, of which a half will be for internal consumption, must lower the price of food crops in the country. The small farmer, who relies on food crops more than on commercial crops, will be compelled to sell his produce at a price so low that he may be unable to pay his tax or to maintain his labour costs. Sooner or later he will succumb to the temptation to sell or let his land to those who, having benefited from the new scheme, will be anxious to acquire new land, and he will be forced eventually into the position of a landless labourer on the farms of the new landowning class. The Emir, on whose estate mixed farming has been established first, will be foremost among the new landlords of the country.

The levelling-down of economic inequality which accompanied the establishment of British rule in Nigeria will thus be replaced by a new, much more defined stratification. Poverty in the present productive system of the country is due, as we have seen, mainly to inadequate labour (disregarding here the factors of land shortage and tax), that is, to such factors as age, illness, misfortune, or ill-planned labour-

[1] This is not a mere hypothesis. The tendency to accumulate land is already noticeable in the northern Emirates where mixed farming was introduced earlier, and has led more than once to official attempts to keep landed property within certain limits.

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organization, all of which—in theory at least—can easily be remedied. Poverty in the new scheme will be due to a fundamentally different inadequacy, the inability to secure the necessary means of production. It is a permanent, and even progressive, inadequacy, which must get worse with the continued process of production. For the same process that leads to accumulation of capital (in the modern sense of the word) in the hands of the owner of the adequate means of production will render more and more remote the chances of their acquisition by the people who are as yet without them. Economic inequality in its most extreme form, *latifundia* existing side by side with a landless proletariat, will be the final result.

These grave consequences can be avoided, and the valuable elements in the new policy saved, I think, by slowing-up the transformation of the agricultural system of the country until a corresponding transformation of the labour organization can be achieved. The increase in the cost of the means of production must be met by widening the basis of the co-operative unit which makes itself responsible for the maintenance of labour in this sense into co-operative societies. Co-operative societies, which could buy the new means of production from common funds, and would jointly own ploughs and cattle, would enable also the less prosperous farmer to profit from the technical improvements. A co-operative society which would include, for example, all the owners of adjacent fields would also be able to utilize ploughing to the fullest advantage without incurring the danger of large-scale land-exchange. The increase in the extent of cultivation would be gradual and well controlled, and the traditional labour-unit not rendered useless overnight; it would still be useful for supplementary farm-work (in the traditional fashion) at times when plough and cattle are employed on the field of a fellow member of the farm co-operative.[1]

RISK AND INSURANCE

Every productive organization must include in its calculations the factor of risk and insurance against risk. Certain risks are over and above the normal in that they are due to accidents outside the productive system itself, and beyond the range of foresight which the producers

[1] When I discussed this question in a lecture given at the Summer School for Colonial Studies in Oxford, in 1937 (see the *Summary of Lectures*), I was attacked by a member of the audience for attempting to 'boost poverty'. Now, this is a serious charge. However, I hope to have made it clear that my attempt was not towards fostering poverty or pampering backwardness, but towards avoiding a development which would create, and make permanent, the most dangerous form of poverty and economic dependence. To organize the less prosperous so that they should not be left behind in economic progress does in no way imply putting obstacles in the way of the more enterprising. 'The rich', as the chairman, who came to my assistance in the discussion, put it, 'will look after themselves.' It is interesting to note in this connexion that when mixed farming was discussed at the Residents' Conference in 1936 one Resident suggested that it might be feasible to utilize the Hausa *gaya* (collective farm-work) for the new agricultural organization. I presume that he, too, had in mind a co-operative organization of the kind suggested above.

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621 pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly.
571 Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little [494] interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

621 Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in
186 the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

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621 and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of
186 Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

361 Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of
162 Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

361 And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

361 Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross, from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river
363 enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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565 serve the precarious balance of power in the feudal state. It becomes, in
555 the hands of the established ruling group, an efficient weapon to safeguard their class privileges.

Social mobility of a more fluid, indirect kind, which admits individuals
565 to a close association with the privileged classes and indirectly to a
186 certain share in their privileges, reaches a much larger proportion of the population. It is upheld by the institution of clientship and by the existence of the Mallam intelligentsia 'between the classes'. The possibilities of social mobility, above all, the extensive possibilities of this indirect mobility, account for the lack of cohesion among the lower classes of Nupe, or at least of Bida. The conspicuous symbolism of rank and the rigid definition of the social estates cannot but stimulate class-consciousness: commoners will always describe themselves as *tálaka*, and men of rank will leave you in no doubt about their consequential position. But this class-consciousness is blurred by thoughts and prospects of a social career that might raise anyone to a higher estate. Concern about betterment rather than sentiments of group solidarity define the nature of class-consciousness in Nupe. This can be seen most clearly in the attitude of the younger generation, who are just planning their future career. Only in two social groups do we find a more strongly pronounced and self-contained consciousness of common fate and common, class-bound interests; they are characteristically groups in which mobility, direct or indirect, plays hardly any part—the closed group of guild-organized artisans and (in the framework of their scattered communities) the peasantry.

565 How far social mobility took the form of local mobility, that is, of a movement to the town in the attempt to bridge over the cultural and social gulf between townspeople and peasantry, we cannot say. If it existed, it could only have been of very limited scope. For there were strong natural limits to such a development, above all, the scarcity of land near the capital.

Now to be complete and convincing, social rise must go hand in hand with assimilation to the habits and modes of life typical of the higher classes. This, in Nupe, proves no stumbling-block. The familiar instances of 'parvenus' who, though adopted into the higher social order, do not fit into the picture of its social life are unknown. The explanation is that cultural assimilation of this kind is much more widespread than actual mobility. The mechanisms of social mobility which we have enumerated all accord their benefits to individuals, not to groups; on the contrary, individuals may succeed where groups (local communities, tribal sections) would fail to achieve that improvement of social conditions and that increased security bound up with classes. But the assimilation of which we have just spoken must be regarded as a qualified form of social mobility which includes groups and whole sections of the population. Whole groups are free at least to imitate the external characteristics of the higher social orders. Where economic conditions allow it commoners and peasants adopt habits and modes of life of their betters—fashions in dress and housing, their way of talk, their food habits, and the forms of entertainment which they patronize. They also

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes
642 the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achieving, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To
642 formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-
186 enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *elite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1] 182 642 186

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiši* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'. 182 643 533 186

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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Song of Etsu Bello

182 The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
643 On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
539 Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
136 The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

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Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

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[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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182 in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and 642 title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to 796 offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral 182 orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of 642 Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round 186 the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.[1]

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

[1] It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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tinguishable from the self-willed conformity born of a closely knit community life. The state itself becomes that twin-creation as which MacIver conceives it, and, with one side of its being, a community.

The process is not yet complete. Existing social divisions and divergent 'interest units' are not wholly submerged in the new consciousness of unity. Sociologically, the incompleteness of the development is visible in the reluctance with which certain sections, especially among the peasantry, respond to the cultural reorientation. Psychologically, it manifests itself in the ambiguous attitude of many individuals in the lower classes, vacillating between bitter resentment against the ruling class and readiness to identify themselves with its glory, of which we have seen examples. It is an attitude familiar in many societies similarly split by sharp distinctions of political and social inequality.[1] One might doubt whether this process of intensive unification will ever be completed now, with new influences coming in, new cultural and class divisions being formed which disturb the steady growth and blur the old border-lines. I do not myself think that this will be so. But in a wider sense the growth of the Nupe nation, even if it were to continue undisturbed, would never be complete: for the nation is a dynamic, not a static, unit, a unit which must constantly readjust itself and constantly absorb new 'raw material'—new generations, newly-formed classes, strata, groups.

The achieved integration of the state is then in some measure, like that of the village community, the integration of a 'multiple system of control'. Yet the state and the village community differ not only in the intensity and completeness but also in the quality of the integration which they achieve. We noticed that the 'binding forces' of the state appear in varying degrees of concreteness, from actual co-operation to moral orientation, and that those of most abstract appeal were the really effective ones. In this, I believe, lies the essential difference between the integrative mechanism operating in the village community and this new mechanism of creating nation-wide unity. Evidently, the very difference in size and numbers must play a decisive part. In the village all integrative agencies can address themselves to an identical group substratum, and can envelop it in the network of actual collaboration. The state, with its huge human substratum, its subdivisions and sections, precludes the full effectiveness of such direct and concrete integration. Direct contact and direct co-adaptation of behaviour is subordinated to indirect methods of bringing about conformity, through ideological persuasion. Actual concerted action gives way to efforts at securing parallel action, and 'common' interests in the strict sense are replaced by 'identical' interests. Instead of communal rites at which groups that in other contexts act as political units are welded together by the influence of religious experience, we have the spreading of common beliefs and practices designed to call forth identity of outlook and to foster, though not an identical group, a group conscious of identity.

Ultimately and rather surprisingly, then, the binding forces of the

[1] M. T. Herskovits has called it, by a suggestive term, 'socialized ambivalence' (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 295).

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No machinery therefore exists to deal with such contingencies—no provision for tuition of the converts-to-be, and no formal procedure of admission or perhaps excommunication. To say it again, that sum-total of beliefs and practices we call Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari religion, is simply the religion of the people who, on other grounds also, call themselves Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari; and though it is possible for single observances or even items of belief (such as the belief in the significance of death by lightning) to be adopted or 'borrowed', the notion that the religion as a whole can be exported or changed for another is inconceivable.

This self-sufficiency of the Nupe faith goes together with a marked detachment and tolerance towards other creeds. The Nupe, as we know, are greatly interested in discussing the religions of others; but they do so dispassionately, and indeed think it possible that the radically different beliefs of their neighbours are justifiable and, in a vague sense, as 'right' as their own. The coexistence of widely varying practices in Nupe itself must have helped in fostering this tolerance towards alien beliefs; certainly, any person showing such tolerance is not for that reason considered an apostate or even a doubter. The Nupe creed simply lays little claim to any exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Yet it is not for that reason less securely held. If the Nupe do not argue that their creed is the best of all possible creeds, neither do they question that, for them, it is simply given, as is their language and all the other features that go with 'being a Nupe'. Their detached tolerance thus seems only the obverse of this self-sufficiency of 'tribal' religions.

The fact that alien observances are sometimes adopted for their apparent utility or some other attraction is not felt to be inconsistent with this notion of a 'given' tribal religion; at least, the inconsistency is corrected by tacitly granting that alien practices could yet 'become Nupe', that is, could be added to those which, at that stage, were indicative of the social identity. The accomplished fact, then, re-establishes the *status quo*; the new religious practice, now regularly executed by a population which by numerous other criteria regards itself as one, as 'the Nupe', becomes itself 'of Nupe'; so that the people can again detachedly view 'alien' observances or beliefs. Let me restate this in more general terms. The conscious identity of Nupe, as of any society, comes from the awareness of a large stable array of modes of behaviour understood to be typical of the society; any single

by officials into an institution which bestows gifts of grace' (on all who seek it), which makes 'the sacred generally 'accessible', and under whose authority members can be 'enrolled' (see Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', *Essays in Sociology*, p. 288).

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771 We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without
177 exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good
Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu*
636 and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between
the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults.
167 The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith
belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a
past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a
Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos cere-
monials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country
[186] prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

771 The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed
has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Para-
177 doxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their tra-
797 ditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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794 youth, or of the *salla*, which is silent on issues of family authority,
[178] is the obverse of this picture.

Here I am repeating facts mentioned previously, though the emphasis is now not on the 'vulnerability' of the older cults in the face of change, but on their dislodgment by the new religion in the country.[1] Islam, as we have seen, proved the stronger mainly because these other changes had prepared the ground; it was a beneficiary of the social upheaval as much as a cause contributing to it. Differently expressed, Islam acted in the manner of a new model, inviting to be followed since it happened to appear at a critical moment, when older norms were breaking down. To be sure, it was a model doubly inviting; it both typified upper-class behaviour and offered alternatives for usages no longer satisfactory, and hence placed a premium on non-conformism. Without it, the dissatisfactions might not have crystallized so easily and the process of change would have been more erratic. As it happened, they found a ready focus or 'model'.

794 We turn to the final aspect of the Moslem 'way of life', the attitude of the believer towards other creeds. I have called Nupe
● 186 religion tolerant. Islam, as we know it from other parts of the world, is the exact opposite. It has all the self-righteousness and intransigence of a fervently proselytizing creed; and it lays claim not only to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth but also to an ultimate ascendancy over all other religions—to the 'inheritance of the earth', promised to the believers and meant to be secured by secular domination and 'victory in the field'.[2] In Africa, where Islam now faces pagan peoples as it did in its early history, this claim to supremacy must stand in a literal sense, meaning the superiority of believers over utter unbelievers, of people who have seen the light over mere barbarians, and of Lords and Masters over some lower species of humanity. In the Sudan, for example, this attitude is well marked. But in Nupe there is, by and large, little trace of it.

Undoubtedly, all Moslems pride themselves on being true believers and many, more or less contemptuously, look down upon the pagans. But as I mentioned before, scholarly mallams will yet frankly admit their interest in the pagan cults; few would consider it incongruous or invidious to discuss, in a purely academic spirit, the beliefs and practices of the 'unbelievers'; and the average Nupe Moslem views them as tolerantly. Nor would a Mohammedan bar all social intimacy with pagans (as I have seen it done in half-Mohammedanized parts of the Sudan) or decline to visit them in their houses or receive their visits in his. Even friendship occurs

[1] See above, pp. 97–114.
[2] See D. S. Margulies, *Mohammed*, 1939, pp. 67–8.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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across the barrier of religion. The following comments by the chief of Pichi illustrate perhaps the extreme of Nupe tolerance, 'There are three benefits', he said, 'Islam, Christianity, and the *kuti*. Some of us have chosen one, others the other. One may be stronger than the rest: but this we do not know.' To be sure, this tolerance cuts both ways; and indeed, this Nupe version of Lessing's Nathan saw nothing strange in 'making *salla*' and attending the *gunnu* as well. But then, he was only a self-professed Moslem, whom others considered a pagan at heart. 794 186

Yet, though his attitude may not be typical of the Nupe Moslems, it is typical of the outlook of the people among whom Islam finds its converts. The final step of conversion changes it but little; indeed, it can hardly be otherwise since conversion is so loose an affair and not a real 'step' at all. But in so far as the outlook of the confirmed Moslem is changed, carrying with it that pride and awareness of superiority, the pride and superiority are social rather than specifically religious. What counts is, first and foremost, the assimilation to upper-class culture, and only secondarily the deliverance from unbelief.

5. CONTACT AND INTEGRATION

In this chapter we were dealing with instances of a much-discussed social process, 'culture contact' or 'acculturation'. The wider theoretical issues involved are beyond our present scope; but no discussion of this kind can avoid touching upon one such general problem, namely, the relationship between the cultures brought into 'contact' and the 'resultant' culture emerging from it. Now, this is a question of end-states, of the final outcome of these processes of change and contact; and logically, we should start with their analysis. 177

The physical model of 'contact', of a 'clash of cultures', or of their 'impact' upon one another, is more misleading than helpful when picturing these processes. We revert, therefore, to our paradigm, a group possessed of given modes of behaviour, habit patterns if you like, which comes to face new models of behaviour of such-and-such pull or attractiveness. That the reactions are likely to be complex and intricate no one will deny; more importantly, they are progressive, that is, take the form of chain reactions. It is clearly not so that the new models are simply accepted, rejected, or exchanged for the habitual ways of acting as it were once and for all, after which no further readjustment will occur. The religious conversion of a people certainly is not a simple all-or-none affair, but a process of many stages in which an initial acceptance may spread further, be deepened or changed in

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 654
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [186]
permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida, whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [48]
and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285]
Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771 782]
rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips. 441 574 484

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course 441 167 484 571 [191]

LANGUAGE

197 Nupe belongs to the Larger Unit[3] of Kwa languages of West Africa, which also includes the languages or dialects spoken by the Igbira, Igala, Idoma, and other peoples dealt with in this volume of the Ethnographic Survey.[4]

The Nupe Dialect Cluster together with those of Igbira and Gbari[5] make up the Nupe Language Group. But the Nupe are not linguistically homogeneous or exclusive. The bi-lingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai also speak Nupe, while some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe have lost their native tongue. The Kakanda are said to speak a closely related language which may be a Nupe dialect. Although Gbari is a separate dialect cluster of the Nupe Language Group much of its vocabulary is identical with Nupe, which also has a close structural resemblance to both Gbari and Kakanda.

The Nupe cluster consists of five markedly different dialects: Nupe proper; Ebe, spoken by the Ebe sub-tribe; Zitako or Dibo, more closely related to Gbari; Kupa, spoken by the Kupa and Cekpan sub-tribes; Basa-Nge, spoken by the Basa-Nge, a split-off section. The Gbedye sub-tribe are said to have spoken a separate dialect which is now lost. Nupe proper is spoken by the Kyedye sub-tribe and others and there are only insignificant dialectal differences between the areas where it is spoken. Bida Nupe ("higher Nupe") exhibits a fondness for Hausa words and phrases which have replaced many Nupe words. The other four dialects differ considerably from each other and from Nupe as spoken in the rest of the country, but most of the speakers of these dialects are bi-lingual and also speak Nupe proper.[5a]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

133 The Nupe country is low-lying and undulating, not more than 200 ft. above sea level in most parts. A few ridges of rocky hills and some flat-topped hillocks rise above the plain; the highest of these are not more than 800 ft. above sea level. On the banks of the Niger there are stretches of thick riverain forest alternating with shrub and low bush. During the rains, the forest-covered banks and the open bush are flooded far inland and become vast swamps.

The Niger and the Kaduna Rivers form the two axes of the country. A network of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, provides an efficient system of natural irrigation. Upstream from Jebba Island the Niger is narrow, with rapids and dangerous rocky passages. Between Jebba Island and Baro it is broad and navigable for big steamers for half the year.

134 The soil is mostly rich and fertile, especially in the thinly populated districts to the west of the Kaduna River. Round Bida town fertility has been much reduced by over-cultivation. The soil consists of red earth mixed with laterite and is rich in silicates. There is some iron ore which is mined by the natives on the slopes of the low broken hills.

137 The vegetation is typical for an area of transition from the southern forest belt to the northern savannah. Narrow strips or patches of thick forest vegetation lie in the river valleys and watercourses; inland, thick forest, shrub, and orchard bush alternate with open parkland, except round Bida and Agaie, where it has been cleared by intensive cultivation. There is virgin forest west of Kaduna.

Nupe country is the most northern area for oil-palm, yam, and the southern variety of maize; it is at the southern limit for date-palm, shea-nut, and millet. Other trees are: locust-bean, indigo, silk-cotton, mango (a European importation), kola-nut, and banana.[6]

[3] Westermann and Bryan, 1952, pp. 85-6. Their terminology is used here.
[4] See below, pp. 55-155.
[5] To be dealt with in a forthcoming volume of the Survey.
[5a] Nadel, 1942, pp. 13-14, 18, 23, 122; 1940, p. 165; Westermann, 1935; Meek, 1925, p. 137 (and map); Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 117, 320, 324.
[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 1; 1940a, p. 194.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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is, is his creation. But the relationship between God and the created world is once more viewed as a dichotomy. And in this final context only the forms of religious action which bear on the living, active powers of the deity are 'of God', while all others, having become part of his completed creation, are classed with the 'things in the world'. 779 776

We shall later exemplify this somewhat sophisticated point in Nupe theology. As regards the dualism of God and the World, it is aligned with yet another, of more concrete character, of the sky and the earth. Together, these four concepts describe the Nupe universe; for it contains no other cosmic entities, for example, no underworld or some yonder inhabited by the spirits of the dead; nor have the Nupe anything to say about the stars, the sun, or the moon. In all relevant respects the created world (*yiže*) is identical with the earth (*kin*); while the Creator is identified with the sky. Though the supreme being is also addressed or referred to as *tsóci*, 'Our Lord',[1] his proper name is *Sokó*, which is best translated as God-the-Sky, the same word also denoting the sky in the visible, physical sense.[2]

As God is identified with the sky, so he is also said to dwell in the sky. But this belief is vague and contradicted by other statements, as are most assertions on the nature of the supreme deity. In fact, nothing very definite can be said or is known about God. He is not on earth, and the most common and most strongly emphasized comment on the nature of the deity is *Sokó lokpá*, 'God is far away'. Yet in a different, more mystic sense he is present, always and everywhere; thus in a song I recorded it is said—

God is in front,
He is in the back.

God has clearly awareness, intellect, and some of the sensitiveness of man; for he is addressed and appealed to in everyday language. But he is hidden and cannot be seen; nor is he personified more concretely; indeed, no one knows if he is or is not like man.[3]

[1] The suffix *-ci* means 'our'; the word *tsó* occurs normally as a suffix of other words, denoting 'owner of' or 'master of', e.g. *kin-tsó*, Owner of the Land, *emi-tsó*, Family Head.

[2] There exists another word for 'sky', *sama*, which is of Hausa-Arabic origin and is used, at least today, when referring to the sky and firmament in the material sense, e.g. 'the sky is black', 'the sky is clear', etc. The word *Sokó*, incidentally, also indicates something big or great, the suffix *-kó* having that implication.

[3] Strictly speaking, therefore, there is no justification for calling the supreme deity 'he'. In Nupe language this issue does not arise since the personal pronouns have no gender and do not distinguish between animate and inanimate objects. For purely practical reasons, however, I shall continue to employ the personal pronoun in the masculine. [193]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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only among the Beni) the burial of lepers is the responsibility of the *gunnu* priests; and leprosy, as we know, is considered a 'disease of God', as the *gunnu* is a '*kuti* of God.' In their speculations about the meaning of the myth the Nupe indeed seize upon this last point. But they would only enlarge upon the terrifying aspects of leprosy and its divine preordainedness, being content to draw the parallel with a *kuti* equally powerful, dangerous, and divinely preordained. Their interest does not go further; none of my informants, for example, referred to the male-female principle believed to govern leprosy (and unrepresented in the ritual); nor did they attempt to relate the name *gunnu* to the name for leprosy, *Sokó 'gũ*, an etymological speculation which, from my knowledge of the Nupe ways of thinking, I should have expected. The Nupe, in brief, do not feel the need for any closely argued 'mythical charter' of their religious practices; and indeed, as I have stressed, the *gunnu* myth is altogether an exception. 796x [766]

A few informants offered me their theories about the derivation of the name *gunnu*. According to one the ritual was so called because of *egũ na dã miní 'nu ɔ̃ na*, because of the 'red earth that is inside (the furrows) of hoeing'; according to another the reason was that, in the ritual, 'one reaches the end of the wandering, it is accomplished', *àgũ 'nu mã, nwa dà zo*; in a third interpretation *gunnu* was taken to be the word *nugũ* ('boundary', 'limits'), reversed.[1] The first version would merely bring out the character of the *gunnu* as a farmer's ritual; the other two versions go more deeply, alluding to the characteristic concern of the ritual with the completion of a phase, and with 'end' and 'renewal'. Even so, the arguments are specious ones, ignoring, for example, the tone structure of Nupe language. Let us call them what they are, a play upon words and mere speculation. 796x 829

To turn to the ceremonial itself. It lasts for three to five days, according to the amount of food and drink which the people are able to accumulate. The celebration I observed in Doko started on the 17th of February and lasted until the 19th.[2] Like the *ɓiba*, the *gunnu* has an esoteric part, performed outside the village, in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'bà* ('*gunnu* place'), and a public one, performed on the village dancing ground. The congregation of the esoteric rite includes both older men and youths, the youngest being about 15. The *gunnu* place looks much like the places of 796x

[1] Such reversals of bisyllabic nouns occur quite often in Nupe language; they turn the noun into the corresponding verb, so that *nugũ*, 'limit', would become *gũ(ɔ)-nu* 'reaching the limit', 'accomplish'. [193]

[2] The date is not inflexible; in the same year the nearby village of Pichi celebrated the *gunnu* almost a month later, since the people had no 'leisure' before that, being kept busy by the collection of tax arrears.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

'The women are those who have witchcraft. The *Lelu* is the one who is the elder (i.e. head) of the witches. If a woman should wish to practise witchcraft, she would go and visit the *Lelu*, saying she desired witchcraft-doing. The witches are wont to forgather at night under a tree; they would hold council as to the place they would be going to that day. The people say that the witches eat the body (*nakã*) of human beings. But it is one by one that they kill a person, the person whose turn it would be that day. The witches would go and look for someone to kill, they would then bring along the body, they divide and eat it. If the witches have no (other) person to kill, they will kill one of their own people, divide the body and eat it. One witch would do thus—kill her son or brother or grandchild, she would bring the body along, they would divide it and eat. But if the witches want money, they would take the man (the victim) to another country and go and sell him (to the witches there).—The Nupe believe that witches have medicine which makes them fly. They would be flying for example from this town to the place where the Hausa live, inside the night, they would return at daybreak. If they intend to kill a person they keep on looking for a person who is not healthy. Then, people say, they have a medicine which eats the life (*rayi*) little by little. They keep him so that he may be eaten, but if they find a person who is not sick, they would seize the shadow (*fifingi*) of the person who is healthy. Then he would begin to be ill, then they keep on eating his life (*rayi*), little by little, until he is dead. But if they find a person who has a medicine against witches, it would help him, he would recover, he would not happen to die.' 754x

Let me add these comments. The word for witchcraft is *ega*, and for witch *gaci* (pl. *gaciši*), the suffix *-ci* indicating the actor or owner;[1] used by itself, *gaci* always denotes females. As the first sentences show, one can 'have' witchcraft, or 'do' and 'practise' it, much as one 'has' or 'practises' a faculty or skill. It is not hereditary; many examples are quoted of witches whose children 'have' no witchcraft or of girls who became witches in a family not otherwise contaminated by witchcraft. But a mother who is a witch may make her child one also, by feeding it on witchcraft *cigbe* or in some other fashion initiating it into the secrets of witchcraft. The method of acquiring witchcraft described in the text, by an approach to the head of the witches, is not the only one; a woman desirous of becoming a witch may also approach another woman who is known to be one and through her gain entry into the circle of witches; or she may buy one of those [193]

[1] Cp. *lati*, farm, and *latici*, farmer; or *cigbe*, medicine, and *cigbeci*, medicine-man.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

41:Nadel P,E-5 (1934-1936) 1937
FF62 Yoruba FF62
Nupe FF52

the Nupe have nothing of the sort, their art is imageless, they have but crude wall paintings, and their strength lies in ornamental, decorative art. Also the Yoruba have a strong sense for pantomime and drama, for which again there is no parallel among the Nupe.

IV. The story experiment

The story was read to the students at 8 a.m., i.e. during their first class. At noon they were asked to relate the story for the first time (each boy by himself) and after one week for the second time. Each time the leader of the experiment wrote down the story as it was told. The story (in free translation) runs as follows:

> Long, long ago there were a man and his wife. They had two children, sons. When these sons had grown up, they saw a beautiful girl. They both made friends with her, and loved her very much. They loved her with one heart. But the girl did not love the elder brother, she only loved the younger. Thereupon the elder brother went to the younger and told him to give up the girl. He said: "I am the one to marry the girl for I am your elder brother." Thus he spoke. But the younger refused. They quarrelled a great deal till the elder brother became furious. When the night fell he went to the hut where the younger brother was sleeping and killed him with his sword, he killed him with one stroke. When the people heard the news they said: "He did an evil deed, God will revenge it." But the girl cried, she cried for twenty days and her heart was full of pain. When she had finished crying she left and went to another place. Nobody saw her again.

The responses which the contents and structure of the story evoke in the experimental subjects can be analysed under four or five different headings: There are points in the story which stress emotional reaction; points which bear on moral ideas; and points which appeal more specifically to reasoning, i.e. crucial points in the logical progress of the narrative. The text also contains certain set phrases and formulae; and, finally, a number of situational or circumstantial details. Obviously, these different categories in which the features of the narrative can be grouped must overlap to a certain extent. But it is just this overlapping, the application of different and even divergent aspects of interpretation to the same features, which will reveal to us most strikingly the different psychological attitudes with which the two groups approach the data presented in the narrative.

(1) *Set phrases and formulae*

The beginning and the end of the narrative, and one or two other phrases, represent more or less fixed formulae typical of all such stories. These phrases were in most cases repeated literally, both by Nupe and

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Yoruba. In the reproduction of one formula-like phrase, however, we grasp a first striking difference between the two groups. The phrase in question is the sentence '"God will revenge it"', spoken in the story by the people when they learn of the crime. This set phrase, which is commonly used in a context of this kind, is repeated verbally by 10 Nupe (13 in the second recall); 6 (3) Nupe leave it out altogether; and 4 (4) substitute another sentence of the same meaning. Among the Yoruba 5 (5) quote literally; 3 (1) leave it out; and 12 (14) substitute another sentence. Yet the new sentence which the Yoruba substitute does not merely reproduce, with different words, the same meaning. In 5 (10) Yoruba reproductions the changed phrase introduces an altogether new element, namely a rational explanation of the expression '"God will revenge it"', uttered under these particular circumstances. Thus (Y 8), in the first recall, lets the people speak as follows: "The elder brother has done wrong; we cannot revenge it, God will revenge it." In the second recall this reasoning is more cogent still: "The people said: 'They should not do anything about it; God will punish him.'" Or (Y 12): "They said, 'One should leave the elder brother alone. God will judge him.'" Or (Y 15): "His sin is very grave; no one but God can judge him." Only two Nupe in the second recall (none in the first) felt it necessary to supply this additional rational link which turns a stereotyped phrase, quoted almost automatically, into a logically sound judgment.

(2) *Rational aspects*

In the stress which is laid upon such rational links and logical elements lies in fact the most fundamental difference between the Nupe and Yoruba version of the narrative. A characteristic example is the reproduction of the third sentence of the story ("when these sons had grown up"), a 'crucial' sentence in so far as it supplies an essential rational link in the narrative; obviously the brothers must have grown into men before they could have had their love affair. Now among the Nupe only 3 mentioned this fact in the first, and 4 in the second recall. The corresponding figures among the Yoruba are 17 and 18. But even the most salient and most essential points in the story, the preference of the girl for the younger brother and his refusal to renounce his claims, points which are missing in none of the Yoruba reproductions, are neglected by the Nupe: 9 Nupe in the first and 5 in the second recall leave out one or the other of these facts on which the whole development of the story depends. Similarly, the quarrel between the two brothers which supplies the motive for the murder is mentioned by 3 (3) Nupe only as against 12 (14) Yoruba.

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But, as we have seen already, the Yoruba do more than merely observe the existing rational connexions in the story. They introduce new ones, or try to render existing connexions more striking. For instance, towards the end of the story there is the sentence "when the girl had finished crying, she left the town". Among the Nupe 19 (16) reproductions include a sentence the meaning of which closely corresponds to the original; among the Yoruba 2 only kept to this rather weak connecting link; 7 (8) placed the two sentences simply side by side: "she wept for twenty days, and then she ran away"; and 10 (9) turned the connexion into a sentence such as this: "when she thought of all this sadness that existed in this matter, she left the town." Now the most interesting fact is that this sentence is a typical expression of Nupe 'mentality'. When I first composed the story I had placed the two sentences side by side: "the girl cried for twenty days. Then she left the town." But my two Nupe informants, with whom I worked out the text, objected to this expression, and insisted on bringing in the sentence "when she had finished crying". This sentence was then simply taken over into the Yoruba text. But in the experiments most of the Yoruba rejected it as we saw, left it out or, more characteristically, reformulated it, thus strengthening the logical cohesion of the story.

One could try to establish statistically this difference with respect to the stress laid on elements of reasoning. Contained in the story are four sentences which represent specifically rational or logical links. Every rational link which appears in the reproductions, both an original rational link which was already contained in the story and any new, additional 'rationalization', is scored as 1. The means for the 20 experimental subjects then amount, among the Nupe, to 2·3 (2·4), and among the Yoruba to 5·5 (6.0), i.e. the Yoruba figure is more than twice the Nupe figure, and considerably above the theoretical value of 4.

(3) *Situational aspects*

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The retelling of the Nupe, although neglectful of the rational connexions embodied in the text, does itself introduce certain new, additional links and connexions. These links stress situational, circumstantial facts, details of place and time, which are of little importance for the logical progress of the story. They may amount only to irrelevant remarks, filled in between sentences, such as "this went on for some time", or "thus they lived", etc. Or they may completely replace the logical connexion, as in the version of (N 7) who, leaving out the quarrel of the two brothers, jumps from the statement about the girl's preference for the

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younger brother to the scene of the murder, by simply stating: "one day, at night, the elder went to the sleeping hut of the younger...." N 153

In other cases, however, the situational and temporal details tend to build up a vivid, concrete picture of the happenings in the story. Thus, for example, 4 Nupe (6 in the second recall) mention that the brothers were 'travelling about' when they saw the girl; 3 (5) let the brothers meet the girl 'in town'; (N 25) adds the information that the brothers 'afterwards returned home'. And after describing the murder 3 (6) Nupe continue the story as follows: "On the morrow", or "when it became day, the people heard of the crime." Yet these connexions never strengthen the cohesion of the narrative as such. On the contrary, one gains the impression that the story dissolves itself into a number of different scenes and situations. 195

This difference between the tense, logically convincing way in which the Yoruba reproduce the story, and the loosely knit Nupe way of retelling which is concerned more with details of situation and temporal sequence, becomes most evident in connexion with the 'situational' item in the story, that the murder was done 'at night'. Among the Nupe this is in itself an important feature which is given a prominent place in the reproduction. Thus: Y N 171 153 195

(N 54) The younger brother refused to leave the girl. The elder left the matter then. Till one day, at night,....

(N 60) The younger brother said: "No." Then it became night. The younger brother slept in his hut. The elder took his sword, and killed him on that night.

But among the Yoruba the reference to the night is clearly a minor detail which is pushed into a relative sentence and is quite overshadowed by the really relevant fact, which is the connexion between the anger of the elder brother and the murder.

(Y 6) The two brothers quarrelled terribly. The elder pulled out his sword and went to kill the younger brother where he slept.

(Y 9) The brothers quarrelled, and when night came the elder took his sword. He went and cut off the head of the younger brother because he had spoiled his heart.

(Y 15) They quarrelled about the girl. So much that at night the elder took his sword, went to the place where the younger slept and attacked him with his sword till he killed him.

(4) *Emotional and moral aspects*

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In this experiment, rather surprisingly, the emotional factor seems to go hand in hand with the reasoning factor. Emotional and rational aspects do not seem to represent divergent or even independent principles; the more 'rational' Yoruba stress at the same time emotional reaction; and N 152 171

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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

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and Kupa. Nupe proper differs from Ebe, or Bassa from Žitako, no less than Nupe differs from the languages of the other, related, tribes, Gbari and Kakanda. Dialects, language, language group, or linguistic class—these are all fluid categories, shading over into one another, and none of them capable of being identified with tribe or people.

Political group and language group thus imply the existence of the tribe, they do not explain it. The objective reality of political and linguistic organization leaves undefined the nature of that elusive human substratum, tribe or people. Nor can we count on any external symbols of tribal unity to help us with the definition. No tribal costume, or tribal emblems, exist, no tattoos or face-markings characteristic of all Nupe.[1] Yet to the Nupe man himself the Nupe tribe or the Nupe people is a clearly defined, unmistakable entity. He will rarely hesitate whether to describe the population of a district or village as Nupe or to put it down as alien, non-Nupe. This is, of course, an expression of traditional, historically accumulated, and transmitted knowledge. People and tribe themselves represent but the product of complex historical processes, contacts, and ramifications. These processes are no longer traceable to-day; but even if we could trace them they would tell us nothing about the nature of this social fact which we witness to-day, the classification of groups which do not speak the same language and do not live together in 'one country' unified by political organization, under the heading of 'one tribe'. The only definition of tribe that seems possible is the tautological statement that a tribe or people is a group unit the members of which claim to form a group unit. But perhaps there exists some other, objective, social reality which can help us to define this evasive concept?

We have not examined yet that paramount social reality, culture. But culture no less than language or living-together seems a fluid criterion of tribal unity. The only definition of tribe that we can give in terms of culture is to call the tribe a group possessing more or less the same culture—as it possesses more or less the same language or lives more or less in contiguity and 'togetherness'. In Nupe the unit of culture is in certain respects smaller than the unit of the tribe. The different 'countries' of Nupe represent different, and differently organized, cultural 'provinces'. Culture varies with environment and the productive organization which it entails; it expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. We can thus speak of a riverain Nupe culture, a hunters' or peasant culture, and distinguish town from rural culture, or the culture of the ruling group from the culture of the subjects and commoners. The cultural unit is also wider than the unit of the tribe. Nupe shares its political and social system with many tribes in West Africa, its traditional religion with neighbouring groups in the north, east, and south, its modern religion, Islam, with the whole Sudan. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking of a West African culture, or a culture of the inland groups of West Africa (as against the culture of the groups in the rain-forest and near the coast). Finally, culture appears also, as it were, crystallized in the form of

[1] See below, p. 22.

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Kudu and occupy the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. The name Kyedye, finally, is often used synonymously for all canoe-men and fishermen on the main river. Unity of environment, a uniform productive system, a uniform material culture, represent a first aspect of the cultural unity of the sub-tribe. 184

Then there is language, certain linguistic differences which throw into relief the cultural boundaries between sub-tribes. The Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa still speak dialects which differ considerably from each other and from the Nupe spoken in the rest of the country. To-day most people in these sub-tribes are bilingual and understand and speak both their own dialect and 'Nupe proper'. The Gbedegi, too, are said to have spoken a special dialect, only a generation or two ago. No trace is left of their language; I found only one old man in Jebba Island who could speak a little Gbedegi. In the area where Nupe proper is spoken only insignificant dialectal differences exist. This linguistic unification within Nupe is the counterpart of the expansion of Nupe language (Nupe proper) and culture beyond the tribal boundaries. Both reflect the same development. The linguistic unification proceeded from the political centre of Nupe kingdom, the area of the Beni, Kyedye, and Bataci sub-tribes. Their dialects, identified with the language of the Nupe state, gradually came to embrace all other tribal sections. The language map of Nupe reveals the phases of this process, the stages in the growth of a supreme, unified culture. We can see the resistance to assimilation increase as we move away from the centre of expansion: the dialects spoken on the borders of the kingdom are losing their identity more slowly and more reluctantly than the dialects of the groups in the centre. The last phase of this development is not yet completed. We are yet to see the full Nupe-ization of Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa. 184 197

But in the centre of this expansion the differentiation between cultural centre and periphery gains a new meaning. It is conceived of as a differentiation not of dialects representative of tribal sections, but of dialects, or forms of *patois*, representative of a cultural and social milieu and upbringing. To-day we have a Bida-Nupe, a 'higher', more refined Nupe (a Nupe which, for example, has replaced many Nupe words by words adopted from Hausa and Arabic); and we have, besides, the cruder, 'low', peasant Nupe—sometimes called 'pagan' Nupe—spoken in the districts. However, this new attitude towards cultural differences, this evaluation on the scale of a 'lower' and 'higher', a more or less refined culture, belongs to another chapter.

The cultural unity of the sub-tribe manifests itself also in the religious field. Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to single sub-tribes, and inter-tribal contact and assimilation have hardly obscured these cultural boundaries. Certain cults, bound up with conditions of environment, seem linked naturally to special areas: a sacrifice to the mythical ancestor of kola-nut planting among the Kusopa; cults which have to do with the water, with floods, with the dangers of the river, and success and safety in fishing, among the riverain groups. The *elo* ritual, and the *mamma* cult, masked ceremonies, are known only among the Gbedegi; the *žikinta* among the Ebe, the *gani* among the Benu, the 'white' *gunnu* 184 711

LANGUAGE

197 Nupe belongs to the Larger Unit[3] of Kwa languages of West Africa, which also includes the languages or dialects spoken by the Igbira, Igala, Idoma, and other peoples dealt with in this volume of the Ethnographic Survey.[4]

The Nupe Dialect Cluster together with those of Igbira and Gbari[5] make up the Nupe Language Group. But the Nupe are not linguistically homogeneous or exclusive. The bi-lingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai also speak Nupe, while some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe have lost their native tongue. The Kakanda are said to speak a closely related language which may be a Nupe dialect. Although Gbari is a separate dialect cluster of the Nupe Language Group much of its vocabulary is identical with Nupe, which also has a close structural resemblance to both Gbari and Kakanda.

The Nupe cluster consists of five markedly different dialects: Nupe proper; Ebe, spoken by the Ebe sub-tribe; Žitako or Dibo, more closely related to Gbari; Kupa, spoken by the Kupa and Cekpaŋ sub-tribes; Basa-Nge, spoken by the Basa-Nge, a split-off section. The Gbedye sub-tribe are said to have spoken a separate dialect which is now lost. Nupe proper is spoken by the Kyedye sub-tribe and others and there are only insignificant dialectal differences between the areas where it is spoken. Bida Nupe ("higher Nupe") exhibits a fondness for Hausa words and phrases which have replaced many Nupe words. The other four dialects differ con-
[191] siderably from each other and from Nupe as spoken in the rest of the country, but most of the speakers of these dialects are bi-lingual and also speak Nupe proper.[5a]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

133 The Nupe country is low-lying and undulating, not more than 200 ft. above sea level in most parts. A few ridges of rocky hills and some flat-topped hillocks rise above the plain; the highest of these are not more than 800 ft. above sea level. On the banks of the Niger there are stretches of thick riverain forest alternating with shrub and low bush. During the rains, the forest-covered banks and the open bush are flooded far inland and become vast swamps.

The Niger and the Kaduna Rivers form the two axes of the country. A network of smaller rivers and creeks, rich in fish, provides an efficient system of natural irrigation. Upstream from Jebba Island the Niger is narrow, with rapids and dangerous rocky passages. Between Jebba Island and Baro it is broad and navigable for big steamers for half the year.

134 The soil is mostly rich and fertile, especially in the thinly populated districts to the west of the Kaduna River. Round Bida town fertility has been much reduced by over-cultivation. The soil consists of red earth mixed with laterite and is rich in silicates. There is some iron ore which is mined by the natives on the slopes of the low broken hills.

137 The vegetation is typical for an area of transition from the southern forest belt to the northern savannah. Narrow strips or patches of thick forest vegetation lie in the river valleys and watercourses; inland, thick forest, shrub, and orchard bush alternate with open parkland, except round Bida and Agaie, where it has been cleared by intensive cultivation. There is virgin forest west of Kaduna.

Nupe country is the most northern area for oil-palm, yam, and the southern variety of maize; it is at the southern limit for date-palm, shea-nut, and millet. Other trees are: locust-bean, indigo, silk-cotton, mango (a European importation), kola-nut, and banana.[6]

[3] Westermann and Bryan, 1952, pp. 85–6. Their terminology is used here.
[4] See below, pp. 55–155.
[5] To be dealt with in a forthcoming volume of the Survey.
[5a] Nadel, 1942, pp. 13–14, 18, 23, 132; 1940, p. 165; Westermann, 1935; Meek, 1925, p. 137 (and map); Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 117, 320 324.
[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 1; 1940a, p. 194.

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NUPE.

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131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
171 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[101] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 582] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

641 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

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77/ offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however,
626 losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

● 197 The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the
634 following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

634 The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the
[304] name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba
[304] Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in
[411] Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

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In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, 634
who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held 771
and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but 776
is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, 634
having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was 776
founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants 634
from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they 304
have adopted the Nupe language. 197 167

[1] [i.e. The Kusopa subtribe.--Analyst]

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

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The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'kingmaker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangua*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangua* was recognised officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

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[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The presiding chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Saape.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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121 in the study of these historical cultures is equally barred. Very few historical records exist, and they are hardly informative from the sociological point of view. [212] The people of Nupe have not yet risen to the stage of education producing written records and accounts of important events or institutions. With the exception of a few educated Mohammedan [126] scholars whose co-operation I was able to enlist in the recording of folklore and historical traditions, I have been unable to use a single literate informant, for example, to keep diaries of important events, or to handle questionnaires. Lastly, the most essential evidence in the study of complex societies, namely statistics, scarcely exists. The statistics in this book were, with few exceptions, compiled single-handed and on a scale of the inadequacy of which no one can be more aware than the author.

121 I have described elsewhere the technique of inquiry which I applied, and need say nothing on that point here.[1] But it is necessary to describe 114 the general plan of research I pursued, for it illustrates the methods by which I attempted to circumvent some of the difficulties just mentioned. I spent two years in the field, in the course of two expeditions in 1934 and 1935–6. From the outset I was confronted with the problem how to cover, in intensive study, the vast area inhabited by the Nupe people. The political configuration forbade the selection of one section to the disregard of others. The widespread political system had clearly to be studied at different points, in its centre as well as on its periphery. Moreover, a short preliminary survey already revealed the existence of considerable cultural differences within the tribe. The further my studies proceeded the more manifest became the significance of these differences as variations of a common pattern, the study of which was essential to the understanding of the forces that moulded the culture of the people. The investigation thus became perforce a comparative study within the framework of one tribe and one culture. At a certain stage of my investigation I even had to go outside this framework and devote some study to neighbouring groups—the Kakanda, Gbari, and Bassa—which, closely akin to the Nupe and partly their fellow citizens in the Nupe kingdom, might throw light on certain aspects of Nupe culture.

The main problem was to discover representative sections and centres for the study of this widely spread social system and its varying culture. I will not speak of the difficulties which I encountered in this task, helped as I was only by records and information which soon proved superficial and inexact. In the first six or seven months I was reduced almost to the method of trial and error: a very short stay in a new place would have been useless even merely to discover whether or not this place might prove a useful centre; and once I decided on a long stay the time was gone and could not be recovered even if the place turned out to be less profitable than I had expected. Let me admit that this did indeed happen in two villages (Mokwa and Sakpe) which I had made my centres upon the advice of various informants and which, as I discovered later, were not as significant or essential as certain other places would have been. However, certain general facts about the culture and the

[1] See 'The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, chapter xiii, 1939.

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hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaha*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katū*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe.

The Mallams are, above all, teachers. They teach both children and adults, the former the Koran and the latter 'knowledge'. Every Mallam may, besides, be called in to perform a marriage ceremony or to officiate at a funeral—services for which they are remunerated according to their status and reputation. A few are well-to-do and own land, which is worked by their sons and pupils or, in some cases, by wage-labour. But most Mallams practise, in addition to teaching, some other occupation, which may or may not be associated with their scholarly profession, to supplement the meagre income of a Koran teacher. Some write out and illuminate pages of the Koran, or copy Arabic manuscripts, for sale. You can buy a sheet of this sort, very beautifully illuminated, for 5*d*. on the Bida market; more ambitious scribes would sell a whole copy of the Koran and receive for it—the work of five months—£1. Students of 'knowledge' eagerly buy these copies and use them in their studies. Other Mallams, again, embroider gowns, make straw hats or saddle-cloths, or do tailoring.

The size and standard of the Koran schools varies as widely as the status and standard of learning of the Mallams. You find 'schools' with two little boys for pupils, and these close relations of the teacher; and you find others—the schools of famous Bida scholars—the classrooms of which (as a rule the *katamba* in the Mallam's house) are crowded with pupils. The teachers are very jealous of the reputation of their school. When I was a regular visitor to Bida Koran schools the Mallam of one which I had not yet visited came to me complaining that I had left out his school, and quoted as reference a Bida Mallam of very high standing who was a special friend of mine. In the large Koran schools the Mallam himself teaches only the adult students of 'knowledge', while the elementary teaching is carried out by his sons or certain advanced pupils.

[1] Bida learning has a great reputation even outside Nupe; Mallams from Bida have been given important posts in other countries, and several Bida Koran teachers have established flourishing schools in Ilorin.

[2] One aspect of this spiritual advice is divining, which, as we have seen, plays an important part even in such political activities as the election of a high officer of state or the preparation for war.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XI

ECONOMICS: RESOURCES

121 ALFRED MARSHALL, discussing possible definitions of Economics, says: 'The less we trouble ourselves with scholastic inquiries as to whether a certain consideration comes within the scope of economics, the better.'[1] If any student of society is entitled to follow this practical advice it is the anthropologist. Clearly, his working definition of economics must be as wide and fluid as possible. In his field every fact referring to what Marshall would call the 'business side of life' must claim his attention; even apparently irrelevant details in the technique of production, exchange, or consumption may be significant because new and not hitherto examined under the aspect of economic problems. Such a wide definition of economics must do justice to three realms of facts: (1) the primary resources, in the sense of the physical substratum on which all productive activity ultimately depends; (2) the technical processes and forms of group organization which make up production in the narrow sense, i.e. which actuate and bring into existence the resources; and (3) the specific needs that exist in a society and on the satisfaction of which the efficiency of a productive system must prove itself.

This, then, will be our definition of the realm of economics: the utilization of resources for the satisfaction of culturally (or socially) standardized needs. The description of the needs themselves, elements of culture as they are, is part of the general description of the society. The relation between resources and the satisfaction of the needs will be examined under the heading of Economic Balance. In the description of the technical processes, however, we shall have to limit our field. In accordance with the general theme of this book we shall be concerned more with the group organization involved in production than with technology proper; we shall view productive labour under the aspect of human occupation rather than under the aspect of technical development. The description of the primary resources and their distribution will form the subject of this first section. It will examine above all that primary and ultimate resource of every productive system, savage or civilized, land.[2]

[1] A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1930, p. 27.

[2] For various reasons I have thought it better to omit from this book a discussion on hunting and fishing. Hunting is indeed of little importance in the present-day productive system of the country; it has been reduced everywhere to a secondary additional activity in the nature almost of a leisure-time occupation. In some parts of the country (e.g. in Bida and surroundings) hunting has disappeared altogether. Fishing stands in a different category. It is of paramount importance in the riverain area. But a description of the greatly varying fishing techniques in use in Nupe country, and of the very specific forms of labour organization involved in fishing, would lead too far. For the economic system of the country at large fishing becomes important in so far as it produces one of the most highly valued trading-goods of the country both in local and export trade. This aspect of fishing will best be discussed at a later stage, in the chapter on trade.

[224] [226]

[p. 180]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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during my stay in the country, so that my description is based on the account of informants. But their account tallies with the ancestral sacrifices I had seen elsewhere; and the *Dibo Saba* ritual is, in essence, nothing but a sacrifice to the *kuci* of an ancestor, though both the ancestor and his invocation are here matters of public concern. This double significance of the ritual is clearly expressed by the people, who would say that, on this occasion, the chief is performing two sacrifices at once, one for his own 'house', and the other for the 'whole town'. It is interesting to note that the present chief of Doko does not come of the dynasty of Dibo Saba but of a new family, which came to power two generations ago; even so, he continues the sacrifice to this alien ancestor. In other words, the transformation of the chief's private kinship rite into an official and public ceremonial has become complete. In the ceremonial the chief, accompanied by the older men, sacrifices beer, a goat, or some other food over the grave of Dibo Saba and addresses both the *kuci* and *Sokó*. The choice of the sacrificial animal depends on the diviner's instruction. The formula of prayer is of the usual kind, mentioning the need of rain (or whatever the cause), of food in abundance, and ends with the stereotyped wish that 'the whole town may prosper'.

796x 769

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

Let me start with the simplest of the three, the ritual called *sakó* (meaning 'Great Deer'). As already mentioned, it is 'owned' by the hereditary hunters of Doko, that is, by a small number of families, all kinsmen of the *Majī Egbe* ('Master of the Hunt') and descended from some earlier holder of that office. In Doko everybody is also a hunter, or can be one if he is so inclined, and every house has its bows and arrows, traps, and hunting nets. Conversely, all the hereditary hunters are also farmers. But it falls to them to organize the large-scale drives carried out in the dry season (now increasingly rarely since the bigger game is fast disappearing), and it falls to the head of this group to ensure, by ritual means, success in hunting. He receives a share of the big game killed by any Doko man; he also keeps the horns of buck and deer killed by his own group in a small hut in his house, while other people would throw these trophies away. Whenever the Master set out on a large-scale hunt or desires to invoke his ancestors, he pours a small libation of beer outside this hut, addressing an anonymous *kuci*. In his case, then, the hut containing the trophies replaces the ancestral grave or shrine of other families. Once a year, the same offering is brought in order to secure good hunting for the whole community, the ritual being now performed in the Master's sleeping hut. No particular secrecy surrounds the sacrifice, though it

796x 224

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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×796 must not be seen by women. I saw it late in August; it was
224 attended (as is the rule) only by the Master and his adult sons, and consisted in pouring beer on the ground, drinking the rest, and breaking some reeds over the place of the libation. The Master spoke thus—'*Sokó*, may the town have health, may everything be prosperous (now that) we are breaking the reeds finally'. The breaking of the reeds was explained to me as follows: 'Reeds grow in the bush, and game is found in the bush'; which devious analogy seems to have little bearing on the very general character of the prayer formula. As regards the latter, let us note that here again a private ceremonial is linked with the well being of the whole community.

×796 Of the two *žiba* rituals I only saw the earlier one, performed in July; I understand, however, that the two performances are exact replicas. The name is explained as meaning *ežì bà*, i.e. the 'town prays'; but this interpretation is somewhat doubtful since the same phrase can also be read as *ežì 'bà*, 'the place' or 'ground of the town', which would tally with the name of a very similar ritual in other places, called *žikinta*—'the ground (or soil) of the town'. The early *žiba* coincides with the harvest of bullrush millet, the first crop of the year. On the eve of the ceremonial the priest cuts a bundle of millet on his farm and has gruel made from it. About noon the next day he goes to the place of the sacrifice, which closely resembles that of *fitakũ*, accompanied by much the same congregation. A black she-goat is killed (contributed by the chief), blood and beer are poured on the mound of earth (now concealing no sacred 'stone'), and the food is eaten by the people present; a share is once more sent to the chief. In this as in the other ritual in his charge the *Žigí* is assisted by his sons and brothers. The *Žigí* prays twice, first while killing the animal and again when making the offering of beer and blood:

(1) 'May the whole town have health; may it have to eat, may it have to drink, may the whole town have health'.

(2) '*Tsoci* (Our Lord), what we are giving this year, (what) we are doing thus: God may give health (for that reason); the doing of new (things), may it come (to prosper) also next year, also (in) a thousand years.'

When the sacrificial meal is over, the *žiba* assumes the new aspect of a public ceremonial and festivity, which sharply distinguishes it from the *fitakũ* and all other movable rites. The congregation walks back to the village, stopping at the chief's house. The priest alone may enter the chief's sleeping hut, where the latter has been awaiting his visitor, while the others stay in the

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 443 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 449 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for marketing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, 164 Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

231 The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

164 In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of 732 leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity, 158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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233 178 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evidently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

233 471 177 The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappearance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readiness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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235 There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are
438 kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly
[782] in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as house-
[267] hold-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make
[842] men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

231 About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong
492 to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number
231 of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol
554 of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

231 Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying
471 enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic
433 stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241 we have little land, much less than people in other parts of the country. We even have to make our farms up on the hill-side since there is no vacant land left in the valley.' This is true enough. When I visited Doko on my second expedition I saw that a few enterprising men had started farming on the steep stony hills at the back of the village—a thing nobody dreamed of doing when I stayed in Doko on my first expedition two years before.

241 The appreciation of manure has led in Beni country to an interesting co-operation between the population of a village, or a certain landlord, 231 and the groups of nomadic Fulani herdsmen who come down regularly in the dry season to find pastures for their herds. The Nupe landowners invite the head of such a nomadic group, and sometimes induce him by presents of food or assistance in the building of the camp, to make his camp on their fallow land. This procedure is repeated every year with a new plot of fallow land. The year after the land has been thus manured it is taken under cultivation. I have myself seen the enormous difference in the growth of the crops between a plot on which the Fulani had made their camp and other, ordinary farm-plots.[1]

241 Cultivation is also to some extent carried on inside the villages and even inside Bida town. In the villages, where large open spaces separate 311 the different *efu*, the cultivation inside the village is fairly extensive, and one grows there the main crops, millet, guinea-corn, ground-nuts, &c. In densely populated villages where there is little open space left, and in Bida town, the people still grow a few things. Something will be planted, in fact, wherever there is room, all along the town walls, round the compound wall, on any open space in front of the house and even inside the house. Here are grown chiefly greens and vegetables, beans, sorrel, red pepper, also sweet potatoes, cassava or maize, and hemp. As a rule the small plots in or near the house are planted with crops which are easy to tend, and this work is left to the old men who can no longer walk long distances and do heavy work. Even inside Bida there exists a certain specialization; on the small stretch of marsh-land that runs through the town, and in the thick groves on the banks of the two streams, typical marsh-land crops are grown: sugar-cane, rice, and bananas.

241 In this large variety of crops cultivated in Nupe not all are, of course, of equal importance from a nutritive or general economic point of view. Again, it is impossible to give a simple formula. The staple crops, the crops on which the food supply of the people primarily depends, are millet, sorghum, yam, and, to a lesser extent, rice. From the point of view of trade the most important crops are rice, ground-nuts, cotton, but also sorghum and yam and a few lesser crops. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes (grown-inland) are of secondary importance only. This is shown clearly in the attitude of the Nupe farmer towards these crops. The pride of the farmer is always his millet, sorghum, and yam farm. Cassava and maize, the Nupe would say, grow anywhere, and anybody, farmer or no farmer, can grow them. A man who would rely on this

[1] Among the Bida landlords it is an accepted arrangement to place one's fallow land at the disposal of the Bororó previous to leasing it to a new tenant. The landlord can then obtain a much higher price for his land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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251 of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used [231] as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

251 439 The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not [415] for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

251 438 Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*), and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of 241 agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each 476 male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*hastsi*, Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by 422 butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens 492 which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are 594 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947; Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Patagi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 261–4.

7: Forde E-4 (no date) 1946 MS12 Hausa MS12
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likely to require a concomitant programme of technical training and capital provision for the development of secondary industries. At the same time there is no lack of other needs which can be met by the diversion of labour freed from farming into other activities. The staffing of schools, medical services, co-operative organisations, transport services and more specialised marketing systems will all make considerable demands. If the promise of the initial phase is fulfilled and a fifty per cent increase in agricultural output above existing levels were achieved, the full development of mixed farming at present standards would permit the release of about a quarter of the existing farming population for other forms of economic activity.

The point referred to above is particularly important in connection with fears that have been expressed lest mixed farming may lead to a system of *latifundia* and the growth of a class of depressed landless farm labourers. There is indeed the likelihood in certain areas, especially near big markets and where considerable landed estates are retained by the nobility of the emirates, that the opportunities offered by mixed farming techniques for commercial agriculture and capital investment in land and farm equipment will be taken. The Emir of Bida is, for example, one of the leading mixed farmers. Moreover, the tendency to *de facto* sale and purchase of personal rights to land is likely to grow in closely settled and productive areas and a new class of landlords will emerge.

Steps to limit the acquisition of land beyond the limits needed by the farmer to run his mixed farm with household labour and local co-operation are already being taken in some areas. On the other hand, mixed farming is a more exacting technique and one that involves the maintenance of more capital equipment than the traditional hand farming. The optimum size of the mixed farming unit can hardly be said to have been settled yet, but the isolated one- or two-man farm unit with a pair of bullocks is very vulnerable to mischance. The relative merits of multiple households, co-operative household groups and farms run with the aid of paid labour cannot be decided *a priori* and they will not be the same in all areas. The really important point in this connection is not so much whether an attempt should be made to prevent the growth of a farm labouring class in connection with mixed farming in large units, but what rewards such workers are to receive. This will depend ultimately on the alternative demands for labour. With flourishing secondary industries and services, the large farmer who needs hired labour will have to provide conditions not merely as good but better than those at present enjoyed by the independent hand farmer. Without such alternative forms of employment, however, the risk of the growth of a depressed farm labouring class will be great.

The development of stock rearing for the fattening of cattle for the meat market and the increase of goat breeding for the sake of greater skin

* [the Emir of Bida is the Etsu Nupe, -Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpā* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals—

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

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235 There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are
438 kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most
[182] important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as house-
hold-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most
[267] desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make
[842] men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

231 About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders,
492 pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number
231 of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol
554 of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

231 Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital
471 in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic
433 stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,443	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

7; Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
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(*h*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :— 323
(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' 531
chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge.

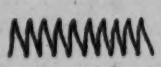

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

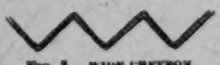

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

(*i*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, 323
about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests.

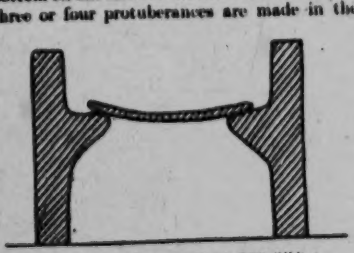

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323
(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now 531
finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and [386]
then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the [804]
pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black.

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]
(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

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134 Lemu, pure white sand is found, a much more fertile soil as far as I can judge, which makes the country in the eyes of the native 'more beautiful' —by which he really means 'more useful'. Lastly, the low broken hills of Nupe are ferruginous, and on their slopes iron ore is mined by the natives.

VEGETATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

137 The geographical position of Nupe country makes it a typical area of transition from the southern forest belt to the arid savannahs of the north. Narrow strips or patches of thick rain-forest-like vegetation accompany river valleys and watercourses; but then, inland, we find a country of thin forest, shrub, and 'orchard-bush', alternating with beautiful open park-land, such as round Bida and Agaie, where intensive cultivation has cleared bush and shrub. The plant-life, again, reflects the geographical position of Nupe midway between north and south. Nupe is one of the northernmost countries in which the oil-palm is found, and yam and the southern variety of maize are cultivated; it is, at the same time, the southernmost habitat of the date-palm, the shea-nut tree, and millet crops. The trees and plants which are important for Nupe production and diet are these, in the order of importance. In the drier inland areas we find the locust-bean tree (*Parkia filikoidea*), in Nupe *lonci*; the shea-nut tree (*Bassia Parkii*), *kocí*; the indigo tree or vine (*Lonchocarpus cyanescens*), *eci*, and indigo grass (*Indigofera arrecta*), *tsentse*; baobab (*Andansonia digitata*), *kuci* or *kuka*; silk-cotton tree (*Malvaceae*), *lembubu*; date-palm, *dobina*; and finally the mango, *mangoro*, a European importation. On irrigated land and in the thick groves near watercourses grow the oil-palm and other, less important, varieties of palm-trees, kola-nut tree (*Sterculia acuminata*), *ebì*, and banana, *yaba*. Only the kola-nut tree, the mango, and partly the banana are cultivated, all other trees growing wild. Nupe cultivation comprises the following kinds of crops and edible plants and roots: three millet varieties, bulrush-millet (*Pennisetum*), *mayi*, 'late millet' (*Spicatum*), *kpayi*, and guinea-corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), *eyi*; yam, *eci*; cassava, *rogo*; maize, *kábà*; ground-nuts, *gužya*; rice, *jenkafa*; sugar-cane, *kpâsanako*; and onions, *lubasa*, in the river marshes; further sweet potatoes, *duku*; beans and ground-beans, *ezo* and *edzu*; red pepper, *yaká*, and various kinds of greens which are eaten as vegetable. Of plants utilized commercially and in native industry cotton, *lulu*; henna, *lali*; hemp, *rama* or *egba*, 'rope'; and gourds, *ero*, are the most important.

241

241 In this enumeration of crops and plants of Nupe we have left the field of physical environment in the narrow sense. This rich and varied 177 system of cultivation reflects already a standard of civilization, technical achievement, and inventiveness of a people which has learned to master its environment. Some of the plants and crops mentioned have been adopted comparatively recently and introduced into Nupe from the north and south. As the Nupe names for hemp, henna, or cassava are borrowed from Hausa the plants themselves represent 'borrowed' cultural goods. The cultivation of onions was introduced into Nupe from

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Hausa, and partly from Bornu, in historical times.[1] Nor is the cultivation of yam an original cultural possession of the Nupe, which is proved by two facts: first, that the Nupe north and east of the Niger are unfamiliar with certain important ways of preparing yam common in all 'real' yam countries, e.g. the drying of yam; and second, that yam, though to-day an important staple food, has still no place in their sacrifices, ritual meals, and first-crop ceremonies: only corn and millet may be used for these ritual offerings.[2] Cassava, finally, has only been introduced in the last thirty years; thirty years ago, I was told by a missionary, it was almost unknown in Nupe. Thus communication and culture contact have helped to mould the physical environment of to-day. This manifold agricultural system, however, could not have been evolved if the natural conditions of the country had not been favourable. The meeting of south and north in the vegetation of Nupe, the coexistence of marsh-land and savannah country, the natural irrigation and the strips and patches of thick forest, all this was as essential to the development of the productive system of the country as was the inventiveness and stage of civilization of its people. We cannot attempt to decide which factor, environment or civilization, has had the larger share in this development. The rigid distinction between environment and culture has long been abandoned as misleading and futile. For our investigation it is irrelevant. We can well regard the environment as it appears at present, the natural resources as they are utilized by the people to-day, as a unitary complex of factors the effect of which, upon the life and well-being of the people, we have to examine.

CLIMATE

Nupe, lower lying than any of the neighbouring districts, with its two big rivers, their dry, blazing sand-banks in the dry season, and their vast swamps in the rains, is one of the hottest and at the same time most humid districts of Nigeria. The river valleys especially, and the hollow in which Bida is situated, are damp, airless, and unhealthy. The following figures give the average temperature, humidity, and rainfall in Bida for 1933:[3]

TABLE I

	Jan.	*Feb.*	*Mar.*	*Apr.*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug.*	*Sept.*	*Oct.*	*Nov.*	*Dec.*	*Annual total*
Minimum temp.	60	70	72	72	71	71	68	68	68	70	70	67	..
Maximum temp.	93	98	102	103	98	88	92	90	85	91	96	96	..
Humidity (per cent.)	60	30	66	71	78	92	92	92	85	76	75	62	..
Rainfall (in inches)	2·99	..	..	1·99	3·06	12·33	15·41	15·82	11·87	2·29	0·32	..	66·08

[1] It is still practised to-day by the Bornu settlers of Kutigi.

[2] There is one exception: Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, where yam is sacrificed at certain annual rites. But the exception proves the rule, for Mokwa is the gate for cultural influences from Yoruba.

[3] This table was copied from the readings taken regularly in Bida Middle School.

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other 423
respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'cor- 643
porate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this
we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town 423
walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esoži*, 643
where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the
land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esoži* is placed 241
under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of 567
the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esoži* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esoži* 423
has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from
the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with 241
the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* 643
Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the
communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch 427
with his *esoži*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esoži*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esoži* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil. [485]

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

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present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankd* arrangement. But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu* in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

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CHAPTER XII

AGRICULTURE: PRODUCTION

COUNTRY AND CROPS

BY far the largest proportion of the Nupe population work on the land. In the purely agricultural districts in Trans-Kaduna 9,000 out of a male population of 11,000 are farmers. Even in Bida town, the centre of crafts, industry, and trade, more than a quarter of the population earn their livelihood on the land.[1] This shows clearly the predominant position of agriculture in the productive system of the country. We have already spoken of the rich and complex character of Nupe agriculture, due both to the favourable configuration of the environment and to the advanced civilization of the people, who were always ready to adopt and introduce advantageous techniques of production from other groups. The wide scope and the complexity of Nupe agriculture enables the people to rely in their nutritive arrangements on a large variety of crops which, as we shall see, is well distributed over the year.

But these facts must be correlated with the facts of local distribution and specialization of agricultural techniques. The most important local specialization refers to marsh-land farming. The marsh-land comprises only perhaps one-tenth or less of the total land under cultivation. The intensive cultivation, however, and the concentration on certain specially valuable crops (above all rice) make it a most important factor in the productive system of the country. Other forms of specialization which, on a smaller scale, influence the productive and nutritive balance of Nupe, are due to differences in the quality of the soil and, indirectly, to population factors and conditions of landownership. Thus cotton and ground-nuts thrive specially in Trans-Kaduna, the most fertile region of Nupe. The comparatively poor selection of crops round Bida is due both to the more exhausted soil and the comparative scarcity of land in this most densely populated area. Less yam, for i[illegible], is grown round Bida than elsewhere, as yam demands a new plot every year (see p. 209). Nor is bulrush-millet grown near Bida, although in this case the reasons put forward by the people are different: it is no good, I was told, to try planting this early crop near a large town; the multitude of birds would devour the crop as soon as it appeared. The difference in the quality of the land in Beni country and in Trans-Kaduna is also reflected in the varying length of the period during which a plot can be kept under continuous cultivation. In Mokwa a plot is generally worked for four to five years; round Kutigi for six to seven years; in Doko, in Beni country, only for three to four years. In this last district, with its heavy population and its restricted land-resources, a rudimentary system of animal manure, with horse- and goat-dung, is practised by the people. Asked to explain why it was that only this one section of Nupe was practising animal manuring, the people said: 'Look for yourself; you will see that

[1] Of a total of 7,714 Bida men 1,664 are farmers. The figures mentioned here are taken from a local census taken in Bida Division in 1930.

[p.205]

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241 we have little land, much less than people in other parts of the country. We even have to make our farms up on the hill-side since there is no vacant land left in the valley.' This is true enough. When I visited Doko on my second expedition I saw that a few enterprising men had started farming on the steep stony hills at the back of the village—a thing nobody dreamed of doing when I stayed in Doko on my first expedition two years before.

241 The appreciation of manure has led in Beni country to an interesting
231 co-operation between the population of a village, or a certain landlord, and the groups of nomadic Fulani herdsmen who come down regularly in the dry season to find pastures for their herds. The Nupe landowners invite the head of such a nomadic group, and sometimes induce him by presents of food or assistance in the building of the camp, to make his camp on their fallow land. This procedure is repeated every year with a new plot of fallow land. The year after the land has been thus manured it is taken under cultivation. I have myself seen the enormous difference in the growth of the crops between a plot on which the Fulani had made their camp and other, ordinary farm-plots.[1]

241 Cultivation is also to some extent carried on inside the villages and
311 even inside Bida town. In the villages, where large open spaces separate the different *efu*, the cultivation inside the village is fairly extensive, and one grows there the main crops, millet, guinea-corn, ground-nuts, &c. In densely populated villages where there is little open space left, and in Bida town, the people still grow a few things. Something will be planted, in fact, wherever there is room, all along the town walls, round the compound wall, on any open space in front of the house and even inside the house. Here are grown chiefly greens and vegetables, beans, sorrel, red pepper, also sweet potatoes, cassava or maize, and hemp. As a rule the small plots in or near the house are planted with crops which are easy to tend, and this work is left to the old men who can no longer walk long distances and do heavy work. Even inside Bida there exists a certain specialization; on the small stretch of marsh-land that runs through the town, and in the thick groves on the banks of the two streams, typical marsh-land crops are grown: sugar-cane, rice, and bananas.

241 In this large variety of crops cultivated in Nupe not all are, of course, of equal importance from a nutritive or general economic point of view. Again, it is impossible to give a simple formula. The staple crops, the crops on which the food supply of the people primarily depends, are millet, sorghum, yam, and, to a lesser extent, rice. From the point of view of trade the most important crops are rice, ground-nuts, cotton, but also sorghum and yam and a few lesser crops. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes (grown inland) are of secondary importance only. This is shown clearly in the attitude of the Nupe farmer towards these crops. The pride of the farmer is always his millet, sorghum, and yam farm. Cassava and maize, the Nupe would say, grow anywhere, and anybody, farmer or no farmer, can grow them. A man who would rely on this

[1] Among the Bida landlords it is an accepted arrangement to place one's fallow land at the disposal of the Bororó previous to leasing it to a new tenant. The landlord can then obtain a much higher price for his land.

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type of cultivation only would lay himself open at once to the criticism of his fellow farmers. As regards cassava, it is known to have little nutritive value—'only yam or millet or sorghum make a man strong'. Both crops may, however, provide a useful stopgap for the time between the harvest of the main crops.

We have said earlier in this book that the complexity of the agricultural system of the Nupe is due partly to the close contact they have had with other cultures, in particular with neighbouring groups. We realize here that this was more than an occasional contact, and more also than some obscure process of diffusion. It was to a large extent part of that assimilation and cultural 'learning' that goes hand in hand with intensive political unification of long standing and all that it entails—regular intercourse, a wide net of transport and traffic, and an ever-extending economic co-operation. As the kingdom brought together peoples from the marsh-land and from the inland forests, farmers from the 'yam countries' and farmers from the 'millet districts', it made them learn from each other and at the same time utilize each other's special resources. Assimilation and specialization are both features of an expanding economic area. We have, in fact, a threefold correlation; for these two features involve another, third, factor: a large-scale system of organized distribution, that is, trade and marketing.

FARMING TECHNIQUE

Like most African tribes the Nupe practise hoe-agriculture. They use two kinds of hoes, a large heavy type called *zuku*, and a small type called *dugba*. The *zuku* has a heavy handle, about 16 in. long, bent somewhat like a hook, into the angle of which the broad shovel-like blade (8 in. long) is fitted. The *dugba* has a straight handle, 20 in. long, with a less broad, slightly bent blade inserted at the end. The heavy hoe is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, the lighter hoe mainly for weeding and other less heavy work. The Nupe also use a long bush-knife, *gada* (now mostly of European manufacture), for cutting grain stalks or digging out yam.

When using the heavy hoe the farmer stands across the ridge he is making, with legs wide apart, the body bent forward, and, gripping the handle of the hoe with both hands, he lifts it to the level of his head and shoulders and brings it down again between his legs, with one swing digging up the earth and throwing it behind him on to the mound or ridge he is preparing. When the mound or ridge has reached the proper height, he moves a few steps forward to repeat this action, until the ridge extends to the edge of the field. Having finished one ridge, the farmer turns round to throw up the next, parallel, ridge.

Nupe cultivation works both with large round mounds and low long ridges; the mounds are 2–3 ft. high and about 3 ft. in diameter, and are arranged in long rows; the mounds are spaced (measured from top to top) about 4–5 ft. in the same row and 6 ft. from row to row. The ridges are 1 ft. high and are drawn, more or less straight, right across the field in parallel lines about 3 ft. apart. The two types of cultivation are used

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241 for different kinds of crops. Ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and certain vegetables are always planted in ridges, yam always in mounds. As regards the other crops, the rule is that in a first cultivation, that is, on a plot planted for the first time after having lain fallow, mounds are thrown up; in the subsequent year the mounds are turned into ridges, as a result of the practice of 'shifting' the ridges and interplanting in the second half of the planting season. The throwing up of mounds is by far the heavier and longer work. 'Lazy' farmers—in the eyes of the people—thus sometimes prefer the easier job of making ridges even in a first year's cultivation.[1] Big trees are always left standing on the farms and cultivation is carried out round them. The Nupe farmers appreciate the shade of big trees during the heat of the day. Small trees on the farm-land which do not bear fruit are lopped or cut about 4 ft. from the ground. This becomes important in the period of lying fallow; for the tree-stumps and undergrowth which the farmer leaves standing on his fields help to put the fallow land under a growth of 'bush' rather than grass, thus assisting and speeding up the regeneration of the soil.[2]

241 The cultivation on the marsh-land farms is adapted to the conditions of a natural annual irrigation by the flooded rivers and watercourses.
3/2 The irrigated area is divided into square plots, approximately 6 ft. by 9 ft., each consisting of from four to six ridges running parallel and two ridges at right angles on the upper and lower end. The ridges are flat and narrow; they do not connect at the corners, but leave small channels open; by means of these ridges the water from the flooded river is distributed evenly on the cultivated plots, and at the same time kept standing there.

241 In the lay-out of the Nupe farms the aesthetic aspect is strongly pronounced. The farmers pay much attention to drawing their ridges nicely
517 parallel and as straight as possible, and to distributing their mounds symmetrically over the field. The nice rounding-off of the border of a field is specially appreciated. Frequently one finds ridges and cross-ridges arranged in a symmetrical and even conspicuously ornamental pattern. Similarly, the skill and keenness of the farmer is judged by the clean look of his farm, with all weeds, leaves, and brushwood cleared away. An overgrown, untidy looking farm invariably elicits the comment: *za-gá de kokari à*, 'that man makes no effort'.

ROTATION OF CROPS

242 The Nupe system of agriculture is based on shifting cultivation combined with a well-worked-out rotation of crops. Plots are kept under cultivation for from four to seven years (see p. 205), i.e. till the land 'grows tired', and then abandoned temporarily. The individual farmer does not, however, always wait until failing crops have warned him of

[1] The mounds represent the more thorough cultivation, utilizing a deeper and, I believe, also heavier layer of the subsoil. This is shown in the fact that yam, which demands a heavy and more humid soil, is always grown on mounds, while ground-nuts, for which light sandy soil is best suitable, are invariably grown on the low ridges. (Cf. Faulkner and Mackie, op. cit., pp. 147–8.)

[2] See op. cit., p. 44.

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The Agricultural Calendar of Nupe

As mentioned elsewhere (see Appendix, p. 411)[a] the Nupe peasant calendar counts 12 lunar months starting from the month which sees the beginning of the rainy season. It will be realized that the various dates given in this synoptic chart cannot be fixed exactly. To simplify the chart it is assumed that the rains start punctually on the 1st of April, and that the planting cycle thus begins with the first month in native counting. Needless to say that in practice the whole time-table will frequently be found to have moved forward or backward by as much as a fortnight or three weeks as the rains set in earlier or later than our key date. Besides, there occur certain other variations in the time sequence which are due to local conditions or the varying efforts of individual farmers; these variations have only partly been included in the chart. 241

Calendar		*Planting operations*			
Europ.	*Native*	*Inland farms (incl. irrigated plots)*	*Marsh-land farms*	*Trees*	*State of food stores*
April	1st month	Belated preparation of yam plots and planting of yams by farmers who have left it till the new season. Sowing of bulrush-millet and maize. Sowing of late millet and sorghum. Sowing of ground-nuts. Interplanting of okra, melon, and cassava.	Planting of cassava or sweet potatoes.	Fruit of locust-bean tree picked, also mango.	
May	2nd month	First weeding (takes 2–3 weeks). Short period of rest (5–7 days). Yam is sprouting leaves, bulrush-millet and maize 2 ft. high.		Locust-bean harvest finished.	
June	3rd month	Second weeding. Sowing of cotton. Planting of sweet potatoes, rice, and red pepper. Also of cassava grown on separate plots. Latest date for planting ground-nuts.		Shea-nuts picked and dried.	Yam and late millet begin to give out.
July	4th month	Harvesting of bulrush-millet and maize. Interplanting of ground-beans and late beans. First yam harvest. Picking of okra.	Harvesting of cassava and sweet potatoes; sowing of rice. Sowing of first maize crop.	Shea-nut harvest finished.	
	5th month	Third weeding, and 'shifting the ridges'. (This operation may be postponed by a months.)		Preparation of shea-butter.	Fresh sugar-cane. Scarcity of rice.
August		Beginning of first ground-nut harvest.			Fresh ground-nuts for food.
	6th month	Fourth weeding and transplanting of late millet and sorghum.			
September		Sweet potatoes and melons harvested.	Transplanting of rice.	Second mango crop.	Bulrush millet finished.
	7th month	Some farmers carry out the 'shifting of ridges' now instead of two months earlier. Harvest of early maturing rice.	Harvest of first maize crop.		Sorghum giving out in certain districts. New rice.

[a] [Erratum - should be p.419. — Analyst]

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Calendar		Planting operations		Trees	State of food stores
Europ.	Native	Inland farms (incl. irrigated plots)	Marsh-land farms		
October	7th month	Second yam harvest. Harvest of ground-beans, sweet potatoes, and cassava grown on separate plots.			New yam, from second harvest, for storage. New sweet potatoes and cassava.
November	8th month	Preparation of new yam-plots and planting of yam (may be postponed for 2 or 3 months). Second ground-nut harvest begins. Harvest of late millet.	Sowing of second maize crop.		Yam from first harvest finished. Sorghum giving out.
December	9th month	Harvest of sorghum. Picking of cotton and red pepper. Harvest of late beans.	Harvest of rice (late maturing crop).		Sorghum and late millet for storage.
January	10th month		Harvest of second maize crop.		
February	11th month	End of ground-nut harvest. Burning of farms. Some farmers prepare new yam plots now instead of 3 months earlier.		First mango crop begins, also harvest of locust-bean.	
March	12th month	Burning of farms goes on.			

Selection of Species and Varieties

Most of the crops enumerated in the chart occur in more than one variety. Yam is the only exception; although grown in a large number of different varieties in Southern Nigeria, it is known only in one variety among the Nupe, which is incidentally another proof that Nupe is not a 'real yam country'. Sorghum (*eyi*) was originally grown in Nupe in a number of varieties. I could collect names for three main sorghum varieties: *kuyi*, *dindirogi*, and *ekpā*. Of these three varieties *kuyi* has [386] disappeared almost completely, and *dindirogi* is fast disappearing. The latter variety was formerly specially valued for the black and red dye that was obtained from the stalk. The importation of European dyes has reduced considerably its importance, so that to-day *ekpā* is grown almost exclusively. *Ekpā* is also agreed to be the finest and best tasting of the three varieties; its survival thus appears to reflect a certain growing fastidiousness with regard to food, which may well have influenced market prices and demands, and thus indirectly the policy of the sorghum growers.

Two varieties of rice are grown: the 'sweet' rice, a six-months' crop, in the river marshes, and a variety which matures in ninety days, on the less well irrigated inland farms. Till six years ago only the native variety of maize was cultivated. To-day the American variety (brought from Europe), which is sweeter and has a softer husk, is more and more widely adopted by the natives. This new variety is easily recognized since it is grown as a separate crop, in separate ridges, while the indigenous variety is interplanted through millet and sorghum or yam. The two millet varieties, finally, bulrush and late millet, have been mentioned already.

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The proportion of maize and the various other millet and sorghum varieties in the productive scheme of one household is illustrated in the following typical example: on a farm which produced a total millet and sorghum crop of twenty bundles the different varieties were distributed as follows: 241

Bulrush-millet . .	2 bundles
Maize	2–3 „
Late millet . . .	8 „
Sorghum . . .	10 „

Sorghum and late millet are clearly shown to be the main staple crops as compared with bulrush-millet and maize, the importance of which, as we shall see later, lies in their subsidiary, 'stopgap', character.

Some enterprising farmers, and farmers in certain districts of Nupe, have added to this table of crops certain special, commercially valuable, plants or have given over a large portion of their farm-land to the cultivation of plants which normally would play only a secondary, unimportant, part. Thus we find henna (*lah*) cultivated in many parts; indigo (*eci*) is collected and prepared especially in the districts of Sakpe and Kutigi. Recently farmers in Lemu, north of Bida, have started the cultivation of red pepper (*yaki*) as a main crop, in the place of groundnuts. The first two kinds of produce have a considerable marketing value in the country, the last kind is meant for European export. [439]

Clearing

The dry season is not completely a season of leisure. Many Nupe farmers will visit their fields more or less regularly even during that time, perhaps once a week, to 'look over the farm' as they say, to see that animals have not done damage to ridges and mounds, or to collect brushwood for fuel, or leaves for which there is always use in the Nupe household.

In the dry season comes also the first agricultural activity of the year, the *nne tsaka*, the clearing and burning of the farms. On farms (fallow or virgin land) which are to be taken under cultivation for the first time, grass and shrubs are cut and afterwards the farms are burned. Old farms also are cleared summarily by burning the dead stalks, leaves, and undergrowth that have been left there from last year. Later the first rains will wash the ashes into the soil, thus completing the process of 'green manure', which the Nupe farmers consciously utilize (see p. 221). The burning of the farms takes place at any time between January and May; new plots, the clearing of which involves the heavier work, being as a rule burned earlier in the season, cultivated plots (on which the stalks and leaves are given ample time to dry and rot) towards the beginning of the rains. The heaviest and lengthiest work is the clearing of virgin land. If carried out early it will curtail seriously the short leisure season of the Nupe farmer, and if left till late will add to the work of an already very busy time of the year. Clearing virgin land is, in fact, considered so heavy and inconvenient work that the farmers, especially those who cannot count on the assistance of a large working group, make all efforts to avoid taking virgin land under cultivation.

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241 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[285] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [825] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [241] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from [482] the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water-gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [857] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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244 a new plot, and new ridges must therefore be prepared. The planting itself is also a slow process, the seeds are placed into the soil with the fingers and the earth then stamped down with the heel.

The planting of yams demands no less skill and patience. Yam is likewise planted on a fresh plot and involves the preparation of new mounds—the work of several days. The planting itself is also spread over a number of days, one man needing two or three days to plant one acre. Half a tuber is used as seed (called *ebu*). The planter carries the seed yams in a cloth tied round his waist; he inserts the tuber about 1 foot deep into the loose earth of the mound, and then pats the top of the mound back into shape either with his hands or with the light planting hoe. Having covered a section of the field, he goes over it again and places a grass cap over the top of each mound, weighting it down with earth; the grass cap protects the young plant from the sun and at the same time provides a convenient sign by which the planter can distinguish planted from unplanted mounds. About two months after planting stakes 4 feet high are put up on the side of the mounds, which will serve as support for the vine; sometimes a conveniently placed tree may be used for the same purpose.

241 Now, assuming that planting has started early in April, our time-table has taken us to the end of the month or the beginning of May. It is by then high time for the first weeding, which is to clear the ridges for the growing plant and to remove roots, leaves, and undergrowth which the burning of the farms has but imperfectly destroyed. Not until after this weeding, which takes the best part of three weeks, will the farmer be able to enjoy a short period of rest, between five days and a week. It reaches as a rule into June, and into the short break in the rains which is known as the 'little dry season'. The period of rest inaugurates a more leisurely period of work. In June many farmers work on their large farms only two days in succession, and rest on the third day, or devote it to the lighter work on the garden-plots round their houses. The 'second weeding', which takes from five to ten days, and is to clear the young millet plants of the high grass, is also a task allowing of comparative leisure, except when it coincides with the planting of cotton, a delicate and lengthy operation, which falls in the same time. Farmers who possess marsh-land plots are sowing rice in June; on inland farms cassava is planted—but cassava can be planted at any time, and needs little skill or attention: cuttings of the stem are simply put into the ground; one person can plant a half-acre field easily in a day. The beginning of July heralds a period of increased activity. It starts with the reaping of bulrush-millet, to be followed immediately by the sowing of beans and another, third, weeding. Let me illustrate the change from comparative leisure to renewed pressure of work by quoting a few entries from my diary for 1936.

Doko, 15 May.—Bulrush-millet 2–3 feet high. Yam vines fairly long. Yam stakes are being put up. Cassava and sweet potatoes are being planted.

Doko, 1 June.—The people have begun to sow cotton, and some farmers also rice. Grass on millet-sorghum farms very high. Weeding ('second weeding') in progress in many places.

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Kutigi, 5 June.—Cotton is planted, weeding of millet-sorghum farms going on at the same time.
Kutigi, 15 June.—Weeding still in progress.
Kutigi, 5 July.—Harvesting of bulrush-millet and maize begins.
Kutigi, 12 July.—Bulrush-millet harvest finished; crop all dried and stored. 'Third weeding' in progress. Beans are sown.
Kutigi, 18 July.—First yams dug out.

Weeding and Transplanting

Let us for a moment interrupt our description and examine in more detail the technique of weeding and certain related farming operations. The Nupe practise four main weedings or hoeings, each of which is known by a special name. The first weeding, called *gongi* ('small grass'?), is carried out three or four weeks after the first planting and serves, as mentioned already, to clear the ridges from roots and undergrowth left on the farms from last year. At the same time the ridges which have not been newly made this year are re-done and put in proper shape. The second weeding, *sucé*, follows about three weeks later, 'when the bulrush-millet is arm-high', and clears the millet plant of the newly grown grass. The third weeding or hoeing is called *sa wo gi*, 'making small ridges'; it combines a thorough cultivation with an operation best termed the 'shifting of the ridges'. Carried out shortly after the harvest of bulrush-millet, it consists in hoeing away the original mounds or ridges and throwing them up again on the side, in what used to be the furrows. Late millet and sorghum, which after the bulrush-millet harvest had been left growing from the flanks of mounds or ridges, are thus transferred to the new position, in the furrows between the new ridges. The *sa wo gi* is a delicate operation which may easily damage the growing plant. When it is carried out the original mounds are already much reduced in size by the rains, and when they have been shifted they have the appearance much more of long ridges than of separate mounds. The shifting of the ridges besides weeding the maturing plant provides fresh surface soil for the new ridges, which are then left, all prepared, for the next planting season.

The fourth weeding, called *su ya* ('pulling out'), consists mainly in a thinning out and at the same time transplanting of late millet and sorghum. It is carried out four or five months after sowing, when sorghum is about 4 feet high. From the eight to ten shoots which grow from the seed about half are pulled out, their leaves are cut and the shoots transplanted either to a separate plot, if sufficient farm space is available, or to additional ridges thrown up along the edges of the original plot. Another method is to interplant the shoots through the original ridges or mounds, which in this case have been spaced specially wide apart. The transplanted shoots soon surpass the mother-plant in growth. The rice planters in the river marshes, I may add, who cultivate the late maturing variety, also practise thinning out and transplanting, three months after sowing.

An operation somewhat akin to the 'shifting of the ridges', which, in fact, is often referred to by the people as a 'fourth hoeing', is the *sa ci wo*, the

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241 'making yam mounds'. Many farmers will try to prepare their new yam plots soon after the yam harvest, or at any rate before the beginning of the dry season.[1] They clear new plots, throw up the mounds, and plant the yams at once, thus having everything prepared for next year. In Nupe opinion one obtains bigger yams if one follows this practice, plants yam early, and leaves the seed yam in the ground through the whole dry season.[2]

The early preparation of ridges or mounds offers, on the other hand, two very concrete advantages: first, it means comparatively easy work, carried out as it is in the soft soil; second, it enables the farmer to start his planting without further delay as soon as the rains break. In the case of yam, particularly, this early planting removes one difficult crop from the already crowded time-table of sowing and planting.

Reaping and Harvesting

Our description of the agricultural activities of the year has taken us to the second phase in the farming cycle: harvesting. A fortnight after the harvest of bulrush-millet, following closely upon the third weeding, the first yam crop is dug up, and shortly afterwards the first ground-nut crop. There are two yam harvests. In July the farmers dig out yam for the first time, cutting one tuber from the plant and leaving the rest in the ground to sprout farther. This young yam is considered a delicacy; unlike the late yam it is eaten 'mashed'. Only a little of it is sold; most of it is consumed by the household. The fresh yam, however, lasts only a short time; the second yam harvest, in October–November, is the main harvest, at which the remaining tubers (three or four in each mound) are dug out.[3] Ground-nuts, too, are harvested twice. The first ground-nut crop is dug out between mid-July and the end of August, and used for [439] food only; the second ground-nut crop, dug out between the end of December and the end of January—a much drier crop than the first—is used exclusively for sale to the European trading companies.

There is hardly any pause between the end of the first yam harvest and the fourth and last weeding. After this, however—it is by then the end of August or beginning of September—there is a certain lull in the farming activities, at least if the time-table has been kept fairly strictly. Till the next big item on the list, the second yam harvest, the farmer can enjoy a short respite of three or four weeks, during which he can take his work more leisurely. Even so, he remains fully occupied: he is still going regularly to the farm to clear away leaves and brushwood; those who have planted rice or sweet potatoes as additional crops harvest them now; the women pick the melons which have been interplanted with yam or corn. Certain farmers who were pressed for time earlier in the year have postponed the important third weeding until now. The lull continues to some extent after the second yam harvest. Now is the time

[1] In Bida this operation is often postponed till January or February.

[2] I cannot say how far this opinion is substantiated by fact. Agricultural officers whom I consulted on this question were unable either to confirm or to refute this native theory.

[3] In Leaba, in the extreme north of Nupe, i.e. close to the line which marks the northern boundary of yam cultivation, yam is harvested only once.

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when 'keen' farmers prepare the yam plots for the next year, and re-hoe the yam mounds into ridges to be ready for next year's planting. 241

The harvest of late millet, which falls in November, is the signal that the last 'rush-period' of the year has begun. Let me first describe the harvesting of millet—the method is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. The millet and sorghum varieties cultivated in Nupe grow to a height of 6–8 feet. To reap the corn, the stalks are broken and cut close to the ground, and then laid in bundles in the furrows, where they are left for from five to seven days to dry in the sun (an exception is bulrush-millet, which may have to be dried artificially). Afterwards the heads of the plants are cut off with the bush-knife and carried home in large bundles, 50–60 lb. in weight, while the stalks are left on the fields. These bundles, called *epa*, are the Nupe unit of reckoning for calculating the yield, and also the standard 'load' (*kara*) used in the marketing of unthreshed grain. [804]

The harvesting of late millet almost coincides with the beginning of the second ground-nut harvest. A fortnight or so later sorghum is brought in. Then follows in rapid succession, frequently overlapping, the picking of red pepper, cotton, and beans, while the ground-nut harvest is still going on. Lastly, grass on fallow farms is cut; when the last batches of ground-nuts are dug out, at the end of January, the agricultural cycle is completed.

Let us return for a moment to the harvesting of millet and sorghum. I have mentioned above that the dead stalks of millet and sorghum are left on the farms. Some of the stalks are retrieved after a fortnight, and used for mat-making (see p. 239). The rest, however, is left lying in the fields, till they are destroyed later in the 'burning of the farms'. The same applies to the stalks of maize, the cut-off vines of yam, and the leaves or stems of other plants. Thus the dead plants are allowed to rot on the fields, and fertilizing substance is washed into the soil by the rains which may fall in the weeks or months between the harvesting and the following dry season. This is the native system of 'green manuring' to which I have referred before. The Nupe are well aware of this effect, and say that these stalks and leaves *ẹe taki*, 'become dung'.

The time-factor in reaping and harvesting is less sharply defined than in sowing and planting. Harvesting activities are spread more irregularly over a longer space of time. Certain crops, e.g. yam, cotton, sweet potatoes, and rice, are harvested in stages as the individual plants or batches of plants mature. During the (first) yam harvest, for example, I saw the farmer open two mounds only to close them again, having discovered that the fruit inside was not yet ripe. Again, the picking of certain crops, e.g. ground-nuts, cotton, red pepper, and beans, is a very long-drawn-out operation. But it may be speeded up—and a quick harvest of the 'cash crops' (cotton and ground-nuts) may be an urgent necessity in times of financial stringency—if outside help can be enlisted. The picking of beans, which involves no such motives, is often left till the very last, and carried out leisurely by the family after all the other crops have been brought in.

The harvesting that falls in the middle of the agricultural season, on the other hand, must be carefully fitted into this schedule of farm-work.

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241 For example, cassava and sweet potatoes grown on the marsh-land farms must be dug out quickly as rice is planted on the same plots almost immediately. The harvesting of bulrush-millet and the first yam harvest, if delayed, may interfere with the planting of cotton, and the third weeding. A quick harvest, for a different reason, is imperative also for late millet and sorghum; here it is the danger of monkeys and birds damaging the standing grain which forbids delay. The Nupe have various ways and means to combat this danger: they put up scarecrows and erect high platforms on the fields from the top of which boys try to scare off monkeys and birds, by shouting, throwing stones, brandishing long sticks, or swinging long ropes tied between the platform and a near-by tree. In districts where the danger is very great the farmers may have to spend the night on the farm shortly before the harvest to guard their fields from these unwelcome guests.

It is interesting to supplement this large-scale survey of the agricultural cycle with a view from closer range which could do justice to the varying individual arrangements. To illustrate this aspect of Nupe farming I have compiled the farming diaries of three Kutigi farmers for two typical weeks—one between the end of May and the beginning of June, when the work is temporarily easing off, and the second towards the end of June, when work is at its highest. These farming diaries show the scope of the individual variations of the general time-table. We shall see that they are fairly considerable—in details; but in general lines the activities of the three farmers conform closely to a common pattern. During the more leisurely season all farmers are ready to interrupt their work, and rest for two or three days in succession; but during the busy season only a very weighty reason will make them stay at home and leave their fields even for a day. Indeed at that time of the year you will find the Nupe villages deserted from early morning till about 3 or 4 in the afternoon, save for women, children, and old men. Another interesting fact emerging from the diaries is the disregard, under pressure of work, for the traditional day of rest, Friday. To work six days and rest [461] on the seventh is a common practice in Nupe (in fact a practice said to have been common already in the times before the spreading of Mohammedanism). But a farmer who knows himself behindhand with his work will disregard the rule. Finally, we see that in labour groups consisting of several people the family head may sometimes enjoy a short rest while the young men carry on the work; or that if one of the workers is called away, for example, by some social obligation, the work of the group goes on unimpaired. An arrangement of this kind is evidently impossible in the case of the farmer *K.*, who works on his own.

N.	*M.*	*K.*
Labour group: father and three sons	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
31.5.1936		
Goes out to farm about 8 a.m. Eats midday meal on the farm, and returns about 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm together with *N.*, whose farm is close to his own. Also returns with him.	Is away from Kutigi; went to a neighbouring village for the funeral of his sister.

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N.	*M.*	*K.*
Labour group: father and three sons	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
1.6.1936		
As previous day.	As previous day.	Returns in the evening.
2.6.1936		
Stays at home, together with sons.	Stays at home, and visits *N.* in the evening.	Goes out to farm about 10 a.m., and returns at 4 p.m.
3.6.1936		
Stays at home. Sons go out to farm in the morning, but are back at 2 p.m. in time to attend the market, which is held to-day.	Stays at home, works on garden-plots round the house. Son goes out to farm.	Stays at home; says he is tired from the journey.
4.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal; sons stay longer.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after midday meal.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after midday meal.
5.6.1936 (Friday)		
Stays at home, together with sons. Attends mosque in the afternoon.	Stays at home. Visits *N.* in the evening.	Stays at home. His brother, who lives in a hamlet, comes on a visit.
6.6.1936		
Stays at home, says he is tired. Works on garden-plots, but will go to farm to-morrow. Sons go out to farm.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal.
22.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns at 4 p.m. One son goes to Sakpe to attend wedding of a friend.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.
23.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal. He hurt his hand and cannot work properly. His sons stay on; one son still in Sakpe.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns for midday meal.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.
24.6.1936		
Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., but returns early as his hand hurts. Son who went to Sakpe returns in the evening.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Stays at home as he is tired and has stomach trouble.

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	N.	M.	K.
241	*Labour group: father and three sons*	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
25.6.1936			
	Stays at home, his hand not yet well. Sons go out to farm.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns after 5 p.m.
26.6.1936 (Friday)			
	Stays at home.	Stays at home.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.
27.6.1936			
	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns at 5 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 8 a.m., returns after 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., returns for mid-day meal.
28.6.1936			
	Stays at home because tax clerk of chief had summoned all elders. Sons go out to farm.	Stays at home for same reason as *N*. Son goes out to farm.	Goes out to farm at 7 a.m., but returns early to meet the tax clerk.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this chapter I have stressed the technical aspect of farming rather than its sociological context; I have laid particular emphasis on the time-factor. Nupe agriculture, complex and ambitious as is its scope, depends for its success on a very high degree of technical efficiency, both with regard to the organization of labour and individual skill and efficiency. The most conspicuous gauge of this efficiency lies in the successful use of the intricate and finely cut schedule of planting, weeding, and harvesting. This may not appear too easy: in Kutigi I learned—from the best farmers of the country—that the careful sowing of cotton may interfere with the second weeding, which is particularly important for late millet; this competition of two main crops for the attention of the farmer has often forced the planter to choose between them. Another complication in connexion with the growing of cotton is that the careful tending of cotton may hinder the yam harvest and the immediate preparation of the new yam-plots—an operation which appears preferable to many. But even the most rigid schedule of work must allow for a certain latitude. I have already given a few examples showing this. However, the essential point is that these deviations from the 'standard' times are recognized as such; there *is* a 'standard' schedule of farm-work and of its existence all farmers are equally aware, those who follow it as well as those who avail themselves of the latitude allowed in it. At every phase of farming operations a farmer will be able to tell whether or not he is 'on time'. The consciousness of the ideal time-table is clearly expressed in the common distinction between what 'good' and what 'bad' farmers do or are expected to do. The latitude which the ideal time-table allows carries its own corrective with it, be it merely

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moral or of a more concrete order. Ground-nuts, for example, may be planted at any time between the end of April and the end of May; but the late planter, as all agree, will be 'late for the tax money'. In Bida I watched farmers making new ridges for millet-sorghum in a field that had been already under cultivation the previous year rather late in the season; when I asked why they did not use the 'shifted' ridges, they explained that they had not performed the 'shifting of the ridges' the previous year, adding rather apologetically that they, the Bida people, were not as keen and efficient farmers as the country people, who as they well knew would rarely omit that operation.

Thus there is at least a moral premium put on the keeping of the delicate time-table and the overcoming of its various difficulties. Pride in farming achievements, publicly recognized and applauded, becomes a stimulus for attaining that high degree of efficiency on which Nupe agricultural production depends in so high a measure. Its final compensation lies, of course, in the concrete success of its ambitious scheme. Well carried out, it promises to satisfy the nutritive as well as the commercial demands of the community.

Here we are brought back to the third of the three conditions which appear to determine the Nupe farmer's agricultural planning and his choice between different crops and systems of rotation, namely, the consideration of the return—adequate return—which he may expect from his cultivation. If in his efforts to combine the cultivation of a certain number of crops the cultivator must take into consideration the efficiency of the labour at his disposal, he must, conversely, also consider how far the exercise of that highly efficient labour organization, or its direction to a particular task, is warranted by the prospects of an adequate return. The role played by considerations of this nature in Nupe agricultural economy is shown in the following examples. In 1934, the year of the 'slump', the majority of farmers in the ground-nut-growing districts declined to dig out the second ground-nut crop of this year as no sales were possible and it seemed hardly worth while to undertake the long and (since outside help would have to be called in) expensive task without the prospect of monetary compensation. Again, in 1936, a far better year, I learned that a number of Bida farmers who for various reasons had to carry out their farming single-handed were selling their harvest of ground-nuts together with the seed ground-nuts which they ought to have kept for the next planting season. The explanation was that one man alone could not grow any quantity worth selling. What they did therefore was to grow ground-nuts every second year only, and to buy seed ground-nuts in the intervening year, thus concentrating their modest 'labour-organization' on food crops and commercial crops alternately.[1]

[1] In figures this calculation works out as follows in the case of one of my informants: to have sold ground-nuts exclusive of the seeds would have brought him 1*s.* 6*d.*; instead of which he sold the lot for 4*s.*, and bought back ground-nuts for seeds the next year, from profits made on mat-weaving, for 2*s.* 6*d.* This might not look a very convincing calculation to us, but one must realize that 4*s.* was almost half the tax money in his house (9*s.* 6*d.*), while a sum of 1*s.* 6*d.* would only have been a negligible contri[illegible] towards that most important expense.

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241 It is natural, though from a certain point of view unfortunate, that today examples of this kind will almost invariably refer to modern commercial crops. The consideration of 'adequate returns' is thus given a narrower, and very specific, meaning. It cannot be denied that the extensive cultivation of these modern crops has accentuated the element of economic calculation in Nupe agricultural planning. Not only has the introduction of these crops considerably complicated the planting schedule, but it has also immensely emphasized the monetary aspect of the question of adequate returns. The 'all-or-nothing' viewpoint, or in the language of the economist, the 'marginal' considerations, which our examples have revealed, are no doubt due to its influence. I have said that these modern influences have 'accentuated' the element of economic calculation—they have not introduced it for the first time. To be satisfied with what the Nupe call, by a stereotyped formula, farming 'for the mouth only' is characteristic only of those sections which practise agriculture on the most modest scale, as a secondary occupation in addition to a craft, a trade, &c. We shall learn presently that even in its original form, before modern economic influences were brought to bear on it, Nupe agricultural production included a large measure of production for marketing and exchange.

DISPOSAL OF CROPS

Storage

251 343 We find both storage on the farm and in the house. Yam, sweet potatoes, cassava, and in some places the portion of millet and sorghum meant for sale are stored on the farm, either in the small huts (*evu*) which serve the farmers as temporary shelters, or in special store-huts (*kpyakpya*) built of sticks and branches put up, tent-like, against a tree and covered with leaves or grass. Inside, the fruits are heaped on a raised platform. The yam fruits are stored whole, and the fruits needed for food or marketing are collected from time to time, about twice a week, mostly by the men. The storing arrangement in this stick-and-branches structure is adapted to the need of the root crops for a drier and more airy storage than the clay granaries in the houses could provide. As regards the grain crops intended for sale, they are stored in these huts only for a short time, being disposed of very soon after the harvest. In the districts where little yam is grown, especially in the country round Bida, all crops, including yam, are stored in the house. Of cassava only small quantities are stored; as fresh cassava does not keep, it is first dried in the sun. But as the harvesting of cassava is not bound to any special season it is frequently dug out and used for food at odd times throughout the year; often in fact, dug out and eaten raw, it serves as a convenient 'quick lunch' to the farmers while they are working in the fields.

In the granaries in the house are stored millet, sorghum, maize (so far as this crop, grown in small quantities, involves any special storing), beans, ground-nuts, and all greens, each crop being kept in a separate granary. These granaries, called *edo*, are distributed between the living huts of the compound. Of egg-like shape, about 7 feet high and 4 feet in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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rice, and partly ground-nuts) or after it has undergone a rudimentary 'refining' process (such as the threshing and milling of grain, the shelling of ground-nuts, &c.). Side by side with this trade there exists an extensive local trade in the 'finished' product, which means various kinds of prepared food. I cannot attempt a detailed description of the intricate and varied art of Nupe cooking. I will only enumerate the more important products of this native 'food-industry', which, like most food preparation, is in the hands of the women. It is of considerable importance for the economy of the Nupe household. There are three main kinds of such prepared food which are sold everywhere in the markets and streets of the towns and villages of Nupe: (1) a gruel of millet or sorghum, made with water, and called *ekwa* in the more jelly-like and *zambú* in the more solid form. It is eaten for breakfast or lunch, and nicely done up in banana leaves, bought by labourers, canoe-men, travellers, and sometimes farmers going out to their fields—men who are unable to have their meals with their families or to have food brought out to them from home. (2) *Yisá* (Hausa, *fura*), bread-like balls made of late millet or sorghum and rolled in flour. Men and women attending markets are fond of buying this food and eating it with milk which they buy, there and then, from the Fulani women. (3) *Masa*, *kuli-kuli*, *bánkuru*, and *kara*—savouries of different kind, made of beans, sorghum- or millet-flour or ground-nuts, fried in shea-butter and prepared with various spices. They are eaten at any time of the day, practically by everybody who can spare an *amini* (a tenth of a penny).

To turn to the food crops proper. Our chart has established the even distribution of food crops over the year's cycle, a distribution which should, normally, leave every household well provided with food from harvest to harvest. Old yam should last till the new yam is dug out, sorghum and late millet till the new sorghum harvest—or at least till bulrush-millet—is reaped. I have found that June and July are the critical months: yam may begin to give out by the end of May or June, about six weeks or two months before the new yam harvest, and late millet and sorghum may become scarce by the middle of June. But bulrush-millet, which is harvested about that time, and maize, both from inland and marsh-land crops, make the transition easy.[1] So do also fresh ground-nuts, new potatoes, and partly the new rice, all harvested before the late main crops; I have mentioned already the 'stopgap' character of cassava.[2] A dry year, a late or failing harvest of early millet or first yam, may, of course, upset the balance temporarily in a district—till imports from the river area where yam matures earlier, or other districts which have fared better, set it right again.[3] But the nutritive balance of the country must always remain dependent on the contribution of trade and markets:

[1] See p. 213.

[2] Cassava-flour as a substitute for grain-flour appears on the Nupe markets only for about two months, during July and August. Corn-gruel, a daily food in many Nupe households, can be made with rice-flour instead of sorghum- or millet-flour, if the latter has become scarce. This substitute is more expensive than ordinary corn-gruel, and is also said to be less pleasant to the taste.

[3] In 1936 the first yams appeared on the river markets on 6 July, while inland the first yams were dug out a fortnight later.

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262 yam, maize, and early millet are not grown everywhere; special crops
438 are cultivated on marsh-land and inland farms; and besides, there is the
large population of Nupe which does not live on the land and can obtain
241 its food only from the markets of the country. The Nupe agricultural
system, as we have realized already, is adjusted essentially to a highly
developed system of exchange and marketing. The surprisingly small
number of crops grown exclusively for household consumption is
perhaps the most striking proof.

241 The degree to which the individual farmer, and the farmer in the
different districts of the country, adjusts his planting to the principle of
438 exchange economy varies considerably. In the marshes of Niger and
Kaduna almost the whole production of rice is intended for sale and
export. But at the other end of the scale we find farmers who, able to
cultivate a few crops only, have just enough to provide food for their
families. We have already examined some of the conditions determining
this changing balance between trade crops and food crops. Ultimately
it only reflects that greater fundamental balance that underlies Nupe
peasant economy: between the need of food for the group, and the need
of commodities which are obtainable only by means of exchange, that is,
money—which can itself be obtained only from the sale of farming
produce.

TREE CULTIVATION AND FRUIT INDUSTRY

245 As stated in the first chapter, most of the fruit-bearing trees in Nupe
are wild growing. Only two or three kinds are cultivated: the kola-nut
tree, *ebi*, and to much lesser extent the banana, *yaba*; to these two indi-
genous plants we must add to-day the European imported mango tree,
mangoro. In the case of trees the main productive activities refer there-
fore not so much to the planting and tending of the plants as to the
collection of the fruits and the preliminary manufacturing process of
the same order as that described in the preceding section. Only in a
few cases can the fruits of the trees be utilized directly—for food,
cooking, or marketing. Most fruits have to undergo a special 'refining'
process before they become marketable or ready for use.

Banana

Only in Bida, Patigi, and Laboži did I see real banana plantations. They
are small and of little importance, for bananas have little commercial
value in Nupe; they are sold for an extremely low price (a bunch of
about twenty for ½*d*. or less)—if they are sold at all. Bananas are eaten
raw, and play in Nupe a part comparable to our occasional eating of
fruit. In the banana plantations the plants are arranged in a circle of about
6 feet in diameter. The important thing is to plant them very deep in
the ground (from 3 to 4 feet), and the whole circle has thus to be ex-
cavated to that depth. It is this heavy and slow work—unprofitable work
from a commercial point of view—that, according to my informants, dis-
courages the Nupe farmer from growing bananas. In Bida, where the soil
is poor, the banana plot has to be manured with animal dung; in the bush
plantations and in the forest groves where the banana grows wild the

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easily turns into discouragement. In Kutigi and Sakpe I have spoken to many farmers who, discouraged by the increasing difficulties that appear to accompany cotton-growing, seemed determined to give it up altogether. We may, I think, draw a valuable lesson from this. If new agricultural schemes are to be introduced they must be brought in already well tried-out and fully adapted to the existing conditions. The adoption of a new crop or technique is to the native in itself a large-scale experiment; to make the people adopt a technique which has not been fully tried-out means to double this element of experimenting. It will prevent the new knowledge from being absorbed quickly in the 'body of Nupe farming-knowledge' on which the people feel they must be able to rely, and may eventually give them over to disappointment and discouragement. 242

BY-PRODUCTS OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and forest-cultivation produce as by-products certain raw materials which are used in Nupe home industries and handicrafts. Thus the grain-stalks which are left on the fields after the harvest are used for the making of fences, doors, and bedsteads: cut in fine strips, grain and maize stalks are used for mat-making; a vegetable dye, black and red, is gained from the stalk of a certain species of sorghum (*dindórogi*). Small trees which do not bear fruit are occasionally cut down by the owner of the field on which they stand and used as timber for house-repairs and suchlike. In all these cases it is the cultivator and his family themselves who use the plant or tree; the by-products of agriculture have no marketing value. This is different in the case of firewood and grass for thatching which, as I have mentioned already, is collected or cut by the Nupe women and marketed by the men (see p. 200). 241

It is frequently quoted as a characteristic feature of African agriculture that every part of a plant or tree that can be used in any way is actually utilized by the people. This is only partly true in Nupe. Only a small proportion, for example, of the grain-stalks is used in the various ways just described. A great many farmers are either unskilled in the craft which makes use of these by-products, or devote their spare time to other, to them more attractive or profitable, occupations. This comparative failure on the part of the Nupe farmer to utilize to the fullest possible extent the products of his land appears to be connected with the complexity and specialization of the productive system of the country. As we shall see later, only certain groups or individuals have specialized in mat-making, the making of bedsteads, or dyeing. The influence of specialization involving a clear-cut division between the agriculturist and the craftsman who utilizes the by-products of agriculture is most conspicuous in this case; big trees, when not fruit-bearing, may also be cut down and used as timber. But no farmer would ever attempt to cut a big tree himself for fear of bungling the job and being injured or even killed by the falling tree. He calls in the professional wood-cutter, who possesses both the necessary skill and experience and the special magic which alone can prevent the spirit of the tree from revenging himself on 241 463

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241 463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount 651 from 5*s.* 6*d.* to [illegible] or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as 322 ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving [323] will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already 325 an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted 171] down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

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CHAPTER XIII

AGRICULTURE: ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR

LABOUR organization in Nupe, in every field of economic activity, is characterized by a twofold principle: the distinction between individual work and family work or, in native terminology, between *bucá* and *efakó*. As the division of labour implied in this distinction also involves a corresponding division of income and property, our discussion of the organization of agricultural labour must at the same time be a discussion of the forms of property that obtain in relation to agricultural production. The terms *bucá* and *efakó* have, in fact, this wider meaning. Every kind of work done individually, its products and the income—individual income—derived from it, are *bucá*; and every work done jointly, in collective family work, producing output and income over which the family group or a section of the family group exercises joint rights, is *efakó*. Thus we find two different kinds of farm property: *efakó* farms which are owned and worked jointly by the family group, and *bucá* farms worked and owned by individuals. Similarly there are *efakó* granaries to hold the produce from the family farms, and *bucá* granaries to hold the produce which the individual members of the family group own and utilize. The family group or, more precisely, the section of the family group which forms the *efakó*-unit, owns from ten to twelve granaries which are as a rule placed close to the centre of the house. Every *bucá* owner has, besides, his own granary, which is usually found close to the wall of the compound. Obviously, in a system of labour based not on wages but on joint work and a share in the proceeds, the discussion of the labour organization cannot be treated separately from questions of ownership and land-tenure. On the other hand, a co-operative group consisting of a section of the kinship group cannot be described without constant reference to kinship organization. Frequent cross-references, and overlapping with other sections of the book, are thus unavoidable.

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INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WORK

Let me begin with the *bucá*, which can be briefly described. Every male member of the family owns a *bucá*, with the exception of the family head who being the administrator of the *efakó* has no *bucá* himself. For his personal requirements he is entitled to draw on the *efakó* income. Young boys of 8 or 10 already possess *bucá* farms of their own. *Bucá* farms vary considerably in size, and grow with their occupants. The largest *bucá* farm which I found was about one acre, i.e. about half the size of the plot of land which on the family possessions is proportionate to every adult worker. The average *bucá* yield I found to be between one-third and one-half of the individual adult's share in the yield of the family farm. The *bucá* owner can work on his farm only 'out of business hours', when he is not needed for *efakó*

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work. Two different arrangements exist. The one found more frequently is this: every man works on the *efakó* farm from early morning till 3 or 4 in the afternoon; after that he is free to work his own individual plot. The second, less frequent, arrangement requires married men to work five days in the week, and bachelors six days in the week on the *efakó*, and allows them one or two days—including the weekly day of rest, Friday—on the *bucá*. The selection of crops which are grown on the *bucá* is of necessity very much simpler than that grown on the *efakó*; moreover, no collective work, not even occasional help, is possible for *bucá* work. Thus farmers grow mostly only the staple crops, sorghum, millet, or yam, on their *bucá* farms but sometimes, though rarely, also cotton or ground-nuts. The income from the *bucá* farm is used entirely for personal expenses, for clothes and additional food which are not provided by the family, such as savouries or kola-nuts, beer or palm-wine; for contributions to parties of friends, certain personal gifts, and so forth.

Bucá farm-work is not practised everywhere, and not even in every farming community. *Bucá* work and income of some kind, however, always exists. In certain areas where other forms of production (e.g. certain handicrafts) are practised besides agriculture—mostly forms of production involving less heavy work and higher money-return—these additional productive techniques supply the *bucá* work to which the men turn 'after hours'. Thus we find in Kutigi, the centre of Nupe mat-industry, mat-working adopted as *bucá*; in Mokwa, indigo-dyeing; while on Jebba Island, which is inhabited by the mixed farming and fishing community of the riverain Gbedegi, fishing with the drag-net (carried out in the evenings, i.e. after the day's farm-work) replacing the farming *bucá*.

The joint work on the *efakó* farm is carried out by a section of the household group, i.e. by a section of the family group which lives together in the same 'house' or compound. Only once have I found an *efakó* group comprising individuals who were living in different compounds. It was a transitional arrangement which had occurred in the course of the expansion of one household group, a section of which had split off and was preparing to take new land, farther afield, under cultivation. The 'emigrants' had already built a house in the new locality but were still, for the time being, working with the rest of the original household group on the old land. The whole household group, with its twenty-five to thirty male members, has most probably never formed a single *efakó* group, although informants, here as in so many cases only too ready to idealize the past, will often give exaggerated accounts of the size of the groups that formerly used to work together. Their estimates vary widely, between thirty and a hundred. However, even reliable informants put the size of the *efakó* group in pre-British days at a figure considerably higher than that observed to-day, namely, at from ten to fifteen. The average *efakó* group to-day numbers only two or three adult members. There is no doubt, then, and this is borne out by the evidence of genealogies, that the size of the *efakó* group has been steadily decreasing for some time. These are the figures relating to

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the size of the *efakó* working group in the case of fifty Nupe households which I have analysed (non-adult members of the working group are ignored in the table):

Number of men working together	1	2	3	4	5	6	Over 6
Number of cases	17	13	11	6	2	1	..[1]

The smallest *efakó* group, of one man, has obviously lost all the essential characteristics which distinguish it from the *bucá* group. In these extreme cases the *bucá* itself disappears, and we have single individual holdings, worked by one man, helped only perhaps by his boys who will stay with him until they are grown up, when they too will demand farms of their own.

The normal *efakó* group consists of a number of close relations—brothers and sons who are either unmarried or only recently married, and have one or two small children—working under the headship of the senior man, a father, father's brother, or eldest brother. Older men who are childless may also remain in the *efakó* group. In larger *efakó* groups and especially in groups the head of which is an old man, the family head may not himself join in the actual farm-work. He supervises it, he makes frequent tours of inspection to the farm, and he lays down the arrangement and order of the work for the day. As a family head he stands more aloof, and is free to use his leisure in his own way. The team-work which the *efakó* implies is of two kinds: actual working together, or co-ordinated working on different plots performing different tasks. Actual working together on the same plot is practised in the tilling of the soil and the preparation of ridges, in transplanting and harvesting. In this team-work a strong stimulus is embodied: the more experienced workers set the pace, and the others follow as well as they can, always conscious of the element of competition and display of efficiency embodied in the joint activity. The leader of the team is not, as we have seen, the head of the *efakó* group himself but the member next in seniority, in the traditional arrangement usually the younger brother or eldest son of the family head. Sowing, ordinary weeding, and the regular tending of the plants may be done by one or two workers of the group only, while the rest may be assigned tasks on other plots or sometimes a different kind of work altogether, such as the task of helping in the house, or taking farm-produce to a distant market.

Whatever the actual division of work, the consciousness of the individual share in the common labour is strongly pronounced, and with it the competitive element in the co-operation. Every co-worker in the team is aware of the number of ridges, for example, which stand to his credit in the common tilling; similarly everyone, at least among the adults, is able to describe precisely his share in the yield produced on the

[1] The proportion of *efakó* groups comprising more than four adults is in reality much smaller than is indicated in the table. A more superficial census of over 100 households, designed specially to ascertain the occurrence of large *efakó* groups, produced the same three instances of households with *efakó*-units of five or six adults.

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common land. The system of individual *bucá* work which runs parallel to the family work no doubt fosters such reckoning; no doubt also that this form of reckoning, essentially competitive as it is, must enhance the energy devoted by the individual worker to the common task. But such an attitude must also foster the tendency to split up and eventually dissolve the working-unit. In a small hamlet near Bida I discovered an interesting form of transition between full co-operation, which yet recognizes the individual share in the common work, and complete dissolution of the working-unit into independent agents. In the case to which I am referring the *efakó* group was divided into two working-units, each being engaged permanently on different fields although the yield produced by the two sections was still collected as the common *efakó* yield. The *efakó* group was formed by a father—a man of over 50—and his two married sons—of about 25 and 30. The father was working one group of plots and the two sons, together, another. The two groups of plots incidentally produced equally large crops, which was due to the fact that the old man could enlist outside labour on his farms and thus equalize the difference in working capacity between himself and his two sons.

MAINTENANCE OF LABOUR

The produce of the *efakó* is handed over *in toto* to the family head. It is stored in the *efakó* granaries, and only the family head has the right to dispose of it. We shall discuss later in detail the various uses to which he may put it. But let me describe here one aspect of the employment of the *efakó* income, namely its use for the benefit of the *efakó* members themselves who helped to produce it, speaking more generally, for the maintenance of the labour organization. The question of maintenance of labour has, first, a strictly material aspect, namely, the supply of the means of production—the agricultural tools. The main agricultural instruments used in Nupe farming, as we have seen, are two kinds of hoe, bush-knife, and axe. They all have to be bought from the blacksmiths or, in the case of the bush-knife, from the European store, and must be repaired periodically—expenses which are by no means negligible. A heavy hoe costs between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*, a light hoe between 6*d.* and 1*s.*, axe and bush-knife between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*; repairs may amount to between 3*d.* and 4*d.* each time, that is, perhaps 1*s.* a year. Now, as long as the individual worker remains in the *efakó* group, the head of the group supplies new tools and pays for repairs. A man who leaves the *efakó* group to work on his own may take away the tools which he has been using—they have become 'his' tools—but from now on he must himself pay the cost of all repairs or the purchase of new tools.

The second, human, aspect in the problem of maintenance of labour is the maintenance of the workers themselves. They are housed, clothed, and fed by the family head. The head of the *efakó* group is responsible for all expenses that occur in connexion with the repair of the house and the huts in which his co-workers live; he provides their clothing and food—the section of the family group which is regularly

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eating together and constitutes one *ménage* coincides in fact with the *efakó*-unit. The *efakó* head further pays the tax for his co-workers and is also expected to make himself responsible for establishing them socially when they have reached full adulthood, i.e. he will enable them to get married, by paying their bride-price. By allotting to the co-workers from earliest youth an individual plot for *bucá* work or allowing them the time for other *bucá* enterprises, he also puts them in the position of earning an independent income. They use it, as I have said, for their personal wants over and above those catered for by the family head—what we may call the small luxuries of life. When they desire to leave the *efakó* group and set up for themselves the family head finally provides the members of his group with the necessary 'capital' in the form of the tools which they may take with them, food for the first year while their new land does not yet bear crops, and, above all, in form of the parcel of family land which he allots to them as their own property. In order to do all this the family head must be able not only to draw on regular supplies of agricultural produce from the family land but also to avail himself of certain commodities of exchange and that universal medium of exchange, money. He must plan his money expenditure and accumulate reserves which can alone enable him to pay the large bride-price (which is always in money) when the time comes. The resources of the family working-unit thus gain the significance of capital proper, invested in the maintenance of labour; without it, without the prospect of fulfilling all these economic obligations towards the members of the working-unit, the *efakó* group cannot be maintained satisfactorily.

Here we come back to the decline or disintegration of the family working-unit under modern conditions which we have outlined in the beginning of this section. Now, every co-operative group must to some extent reckon with a periodical and temporary disintegration, that is, with the necessity of periodically readjusting its body of workers, replacing those who have died or are too old or who for other reasons desire to leave the group and to admit new, young members in their place. This is done through the twofold mechanism of inheritance and succession, and of release with regard to members who leave the group to work on their own. We shall examine inheritance and succession later; here it will suffice to say that in the Nupe system of inheritance the family farm goes to the relation next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son (in the classificatory sense). As regards the release of members from the group, the rule used to be that junior members remained in the *efakó* until they had more than two wives and more than two or three children. In the last five to ten years, however, many large *efakó* groups were dissolved after the death of the family head, and the family land, instead of being worked jointly by the remaining members of the family under the new head, was divided up among the various individuals who now work independently each on his own land. Moreover, nowadays young men who have just married frequently decline to stay in the *efakó*-unit and demand to be given a separate farm. I have noted many cases of this kind, in all parts of Nupe, in which the dissolution of the *efakó* group occurred between six and ten years ago.

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241 592 178 How are we to explain this comparatively sudden change? Viewing it from the general economic point of view all the advantages seem to be on the side of a large labour-unit: our discussion of the agricultural technique of the country has taught us that a large labour group represents, in Nupe, the only means of cultivating a large variety of both useful and profitable crops. Moreover, a large *efakó*-unit assures a certain measure of leisure to the family head and the old men in general, by enabling them to leave a large proportion of the actual work to the younger generation. It assures also a better distribution of responsibility, counting more adults among its members than does the small working-unit. It utilizes more fully the important incentive of competition and is, finally, of great educational value; for only in large labour-units are the young boys likely to work regularly in the company of others of their own age.

241 592 178 461 But if from point of view of group efficiency and security the large working-unit appears superior to the small (say) one- or two-men 'group', it is not necessarily so when looked at from the viewpoint of the individual. Take the question of leisure and distribution of responsibility. In one of the instances in which I found a large *efakó*-unit having been dissolved recently (six years ago), after the death of the family head, I was given this as the reason of the change: the new family head, the eldest of five brothers, had availed himself liberally of the privilege of leisure which his position implied, and frequently went hunting while the others were working on the farm. Now, while they had accepted the same arrangement under the old family head, their father, they declined to accord this privilege to their eldest brother, and preferred to dissolve the whole unit and work each for himself. To-day, working on their own, the individual family members have a comparatively larger measure of freedom and leisure, which they are free to use as they like. They can use their own discretion in planning the farm-work: of the five brothers two have taken to spend their spare time in making mats, a leisure-time occupation which, they assured me, is financially very advantageous to them; one has left the village; and the family head himself can still spend part of his time in hunting. Against the considerations of group efficiency thus stand individual considerations of gain, which provide another, and in some respects very different, standard of appreciation by which to measure the value of the large labour-unit. The word 'gain' should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Freedom of movement, freedom to choose a different profession (we remember, for example, the openings which the political life of the capital offered to young men of adventurous spirit), even freedom to enjoy one's leisure independent of the dictates of family requirements—these spiritual values appear under certain circumstances as tempting to the younger generation as does the prospect of material gain.

The two standards of appreciation will coincide where the *efakó* group is in a position to guarantee the satisfaction of all needs and demands which the group-members might feel. Nupe family co-operation in farm-work, once apparently more satisfactorily adjusted, is now failing in this respect. This failure can be attributed to two different develop-

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ments: to an increase in the needs and demands on the part of the individual members with which the system of family co-operation failed to cope; or to a decline in the efficiency of the group to maintain its former standards of maintenance. The Nupe *efakó* system has, in fact, failed on both accounts. As regards the first, a large variety of new needs and wants, temptations and values have spread, primarily from the town, and have begun to transform the original peasant culture; as regards the second, the family head is to-day frequently unable to meet out of the family income two financial demands which are regarded as essential to the *efakó* concept, the payment of the bride-price and the payment of tax for the individual members of the *efakó* group.

Certain of the influences which have thus led to the decline of the large working-unit are no doubt due to factors of modern culture change. Yet it would be wrong to regard the change in the structure of the working-unit merely as a result of the outside influence of culture contact. The structural change forms part of a much wider phenomenon; it is the result of an intrinsic economic development, namely, the readjustment between productive organization and needs existing in the society. If the change were due exclusively to culture contact we should expect to find the larger working-unit preserved only in backward, 'unsophisticated', districts. This is not the case. The table on p. 243 showed that three households out of fifty had working-units composed of more than four adults. Of these three households only one belongs to a backward area—the household of the chief of Doko. The two other examples come both from one of the most progressive places in Nupe, Lemu, and from a group of farmers who, as mentioned before, have but recently undertaken the cultivation of a new commercial crop, red pepper, to replace another commercial crop, ground-nuts, which had not proved an economic success. A large working group is essential to the cultivation of this new crop. In these two households the young men have remained in the *efakó*, content with their position, while the family head, in turn, is able to provide bride-price and tax-money. Here, then, culture contact so far from being responsible for the dissolution of the large working-unit has on the contrary supplied a type of production which enables the large working-unit to maintain itself; paradoxically, culture contact has placed the *efakó*-unit in a position to satisfy those very demands and needs which culture contact has newly imposed upon the society. However, these instances from Lemu are exceptional: neither in Mokwa, the centre of ground-nut cultivation, nor in Kutigi, where cotton is grown on a comparatively large scale, has the large *efakó* group survived. The exceptional cases which I have discovered are too few to warrant a more far-reaching, systematic explanation. Moreover, whereas in this case attractions and temptations appealing to the younger generation are partly responsible for the social change, individual differences must play a considerable part. We can only tentatively point to a certain negative evidence: the absence of some of these 'temptations' in Lemu which have made the younger generation in Mokwa and Kutigi claim an early economic independence. Lemu is neither a centre of native trade, nor does a profitable alternative

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241 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-
592 time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the
178 town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supple-
476 mented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first
476 and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young
241 men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

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EFAKÓ WORK ON A FARM NEAR BIDA

FARMING *EGBE*

[FACING p. 248]

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working party follow the musicians, the rest meet later out on the farm. When all have assembled the young men start work. They work in a group of ten or twelve, starting on the same side of the field, leaving plenty of space between each other. Everyone is working his own ridge and, having finished one, he turns to the next with hardly any pause. The drummers and flute-players walk alongside the field abreast of the workers. Older men stand at the side, watching, criticizing, commenting. Often you can hear them call one of the workers by name, exhorting him to ever greater efforts, or shouting impatiently: 'Quicker, quicker!' When one field is finished some of the young men, the captains of the age-grade association among them, will execute a short dance, balancing their heavy hoes in the air and heavily stamping on the tilled field, while the drummers are arrayed behind them, beating the rhythm of the age-grade *take*.[1] Then workers and audience—and every *egbe* attracts a large audience—move on to another field, while some of the older men may stay behind to sow the newly tilled plot. On another occasion I saw the young men working in two groups of about equal strength, each under its own leader—one of the captains of the age-grade association. The groups started on opposite ends of the field, working towards each other. Now and again a worker would get up, survey with one glance the work which his group had been doing, and cry out in a long high-pitched yell; others were shouting with deep hoarse voices at every stroke of their hoe. The speed with which they worked, the whole atmosphere of the *egbe*—the constant drumming, the shouts from the audience—had something deeply exciting, almost feverish. I have seen a team of fifteen young men, the oldest between 19 and 20, the youngest 14, clear and till a farm-plot of one acre in two and a half hours.[2] The *egbe* work still more than *efakó* work is animated by an intense spirit of competition. The worker who has quickly finished his ridges will stand up and look round, proudly showing off his splendid work; he will chaff his fellow workers about their clumsy progress, their crooked ridges; he executes a little dance, singing, and shaking his hoe to show how leisurely he can work and still beat the others. When all the work is finished the whole party, musicians, workers, and onlookers, repair to the house of the owner of the farm. Here the feast which concludes the *egbe* is celebrated with plenty of food, corn-beer, and dancing, and much boasting and prancing of the young men, who are the heroes of the occasion. Nor is their boasting and prancing without significance. In the village communities where the traditional age-grade system is still practised, one of the important side-issues of the *egbe* is that it represents a regular test in which the young men establish their qualification as farmers. From *egbe* to *egbe*, every year, their skill and their achievements are watched, compared, and judged by the older people. In the last *egbe* of the season, or some other outstanding *egbe* (e.g. on the farm of the chief),[3] the results of this competition are made known and the young

[1] See p. 395.

[2] In another case I saw six young men clearing a densely overgrown bush-plot for yam-cultivation of about a third of an acre in one hour.

[3] An *egbe* of this kind near Bida at which new titles were bestowed was

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561 farmer who did best is given by his age-grade association the title *Sode*, the second highest title that can be bestowed on young men. A man who 476 is once made *Sode* keeps his rank until some other claimant snatches the 241 title from him, or if he had no competitors, until he joins the 'old men' 534 and retires from the arena of the *egbe*. In the urbanized age-grade associations of Bida this title and the whole usage have disappeared. In other large places which follow Bida fashion, the title *Sode*, though still in existence, has become a title of minor importance, a long way down the list of age-grade ranks.

241 The primary advantage of collective farm-work lies evidently in the 476 time-saving which it makes possible. The second weeding, for example, which normally takes from five to ten days, can be done by *egbe* in one day. But this valuable help must be paid for. The cost of an *egbe* of from fifteen to twenty workers—the cost of food and drink for the guests and the pay of drummers and musicians—is between 6*s*. and 8*s*. *Egbe* work, then, implies a calculation of investment and return, cost and profit. To-day, farmers try to lower the cost of *egbe*. In an *egbe* near Bida (the *egbe* just described, in which the workers were grouped in two teams) the owner of the farm contributed music and food for thirty people, but no beer or palm-wine. The fare was simple—no meat or fish—but plentiful: porridge cooked in palm-oil for the men, half a bowl per head (1 lb.), and corn-gruel for the women. This cheap *egbe* cost only 4*s*. yet proved still sufficiently attractive to make a large group of workers attend.

Yet there is one element of 'profit' in this calculation which cannot be put down in shillings and pence, and which is of utmost sociological significance. *Egbe* work is performed only on family farms, i.e. on the farms of family heads and old men in general. Younger people, whether they still work under the family head or have made themselves independent, are not entitled to the help of the *egbe*. Thus the *egbe* provides a twofold balance, in favour of the old men who cannot work as efficiently as the young, and in favour of the sociological head of the family group who, though perhaps no longer able to command the services of a large body of co-workers, can still command the assistance of collective farm-work.[1] How real this balance is was illustrated in the example given before (p. 244) of an old man, the family head, cultivating fields equal in size and yield to the fields worked by his two adult sons. With the splitting-up of families and the reduction of the *efakó* group, with the disappearance, that is, of the clear-cut distinction between family and individual farms, the significance of the *egbe*, too, must weaken. Information gained from a large number of independent witnesses testifies to the gradual loss of importance of *egbe* work in Nupe productive life. Once practised regularly on every farm it has now been

performed on the new experimental farm of the Agricultural Department which was tilled in collective work.

[1] Recognition of this privileged position of the sociological head of the group in a wider sense is expressed in the traditional rule, still valid in most peasant communities in Nupe, that the first *egbe* of the season is performed on the chief's land.

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reduced to a system of merely occasional assistance. According to my informants the change is due primarily to the high cost of the *egbe*, which to-day few farmers can afford. This is no doubt true if we understand 'cost' in the relative and not in the absolute sense. In the very closely balanced budget with which most Nupe farmers must reckon to-day the comparatively large single outlay for the *egbe* may prove an insuperable difficulty. But this is not the whole picture. A cost is high only measured on the profit it can realize. And here we have seen that one of the most essential kinds of profit—moral profit—which the *egbe* can realize, namely, its assurance of the economic balance between the generations, has itself lost much of its significance in the life of the community.

The second type of collective work, the *dzolo*, is less important than the *egbe*. It is practised only for harvesting of those crops which demand a large working team (ground-nuts, cotton, and beans) and consists in the arrangement among a number of farmers to work in turn on each other's farms. The host provides the meal after the work. But there is no drumming or dancing, nor is any competition involved in the work of the *dzolo*. Neither is the mechanism of the age-grade associations utilized for this collective work, which is carried out on a much smaller scale than the *egbe*, and only between friends, i.e. families whose heads are friendly with one another. In the *dzolo* the tie of friendship evidently supplies that incentive to collective work which, in the *egbe*, is entrusted to the appeal of music and dance and the stimulus of competition.

WAGE-LABOUR

Assistance in farm-work by means of paid labour plays on the whole (we must add as yet) an insignificant part in Nupe production at large. It is called *kantsú* in Nupe but is often referred to by the Hausa name *lada*, i.e. wages. It is employed by the owners of farms who are not themselves farmers or who for other reasons cannot themselves look after their land. Paid farm-labour is a new thing in Nupe. It has no place in the traditional system of land-tenure and *efakó* work. Characteristically, it is almost completely absent in the rural districts; it is employed mostly in the large commercial centres in which a considerable proportion of the population belongs to the well-to-do 'professional classes', such as Kacha, Jebba, and, above all, Bida.[1] Let me give you a list of the cases I recorded in which wage farm-labour was employed. The employers were a number of traders in Kacha who had bought some land a few years ago but did not work it themselves; a number of traders in Bida; two Mallams in Bida; a Mallam in Jebba whose health did not allow him to work on the land (he was employing wage-labour for the first time); Native Administration officials in Bida—a few policemen, and teachers at the Bida Middle School; and lastly, the village chief of Kacha (who is at the same time District Head) whose time is taken up by official

[1] One of my Bida informants, himself a well-to-do member of the 'intelligentsia', estimated that six out of ten farmers in Bida employ wage-labour. Though I should regard this estimate as much too high it is significant for the outlook of the urban *bourgeoisie*.

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work, and whose relations also assist him in this work as messengers and the like.

The labourers are all young men, mostly the sons of farmers, but occasionally also sons of impoverished *bourgeois* families (one of the labourers on my list was the son of a Mallam, another the son of a Bida *saraki*). Some labourers come from far away to the place where they expect to find employment: thus I found a young man from Lapai working in Jebba, and one from Bida working in Ilorin. Their working day is from early morning till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, the normal working day of the *efakó* worker. They get 2*d*. or 3*d*. a day and food; they work mostly for from four to ten days, some for a longer period, till they have collected a substantial sum of money. In no case has wage-labour in Nupe become a permanent, exclusive occupation. These young men seek only temporary employment and return after or in between their engagements to the family farm, where they carry on with the ordinary work of the season. Even a temporary absence of this kind may, of course, render the management of the family farm difficult and even precarious. For instance, the labourer from Lapai whom I have just mentioned, was working in Jebba as late as June, and could not return home before July when all the early planting and weeding would be completed. However, the need of money seems to outweigh all other objections. The main motive in undertaking wage-labour is invariably to obtain money for tax—either for oneself or as contribution to the parental household; next in importance is the motive to obtain money for bride-price.

It must be said in conclusion that though wage-labour represents a comparatively recent growth in Nupe society, the situation which created the need of wage-labour is not. Nor is the system of employed, i.e. non-family, labour the product of a recent development. Part of the social stratification of Nupe was, as we have seen, the creation of an upper class which owned land but did not work it. The labour which this class had to employ was of three kinds: slave labour, the labour of pawns, and, to a lesser extent, of clients. The first and the last kind of employed labour, both involving a social and political significance far beyond the aspect of labour, we have discussed already in a previous section. The second kind—labour of pawns—we will discuss later when analysing the concept of wealth.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (I)

The role which the women play in the agricultural production of the country lends itself to a simple formula. With very few exceptions the women do not perform any primary productive activity: they do no farm-work; they do not help in cultivation except occasionally when assisting the men in the harvesting of cotton or beans or the digging out of cassava—the easiest crop of all. Their sphere of work is, first, the 'refining' of agricultural produce to make it marketable, and secondly, the marketing itself. If the general formula is simple, the details of the division between 'primary' and 'secondary' productive activities, one

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511 large proportion of the produce, or selling it in a hurry, at unfavourable prices.

From nutritive wants we proceed to the wants involved in the 'primary
511 need' of shelter. The upkeep or building of houses represents a want
356 which, occurring at much longer and more irregular intervals, does not figure conspicuously in the annual household budget. In the village, upkeep and building of houses is mainly a question of co-operative labour, involving little or no money outlay. Smaller house repairs, above all thatching, become necessary every three to five years; more complete repairs, such as rebuilding of huts or of the compound wall, are reckoned to occur every ten to twelve years. The small repairs are carried out by the household group, and take rarely more than two or three days. For larger repairs the help of neighbours and relations must be enlisted on *egbe* scale; they last much longer, according to the body of workers that can be mustered, and the work may often have to be interrupted for a day or two if the workers have other tasks in hand. Most building work in the village is left till the beginning of the rains, when the ground (from which the clay for building is dug) is soft, the grass for thatching not too dry (such grass is said to last less long), and when the people are still free from more exigent farm-work. We may add that the building of more elaborate houses of the kind that is found in the town and also in certain villages entails the employment of expert labour, and thus money expenditure, which varies widely with the style and scale of the work.

Finally, we add the 'derived wants' involved in agricultural produc-
511 tion. Under this heading we include repairs and purchase of tools and
241 the financing of *egbe* work. In the same category falls the payment of a fixed land rent in kind which obtains in the area round Bida (as in our example C). I have only partly been able to include these wants in the household budgets. However, the widespread efforts to economize, for example, on the cost of *egbe* work, or the neglected appearance of many of the sumptuous Bida houses, reveal the difficulties which many households find to-day in coping with these wants.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

511 The next step in our inquiry is to ascertain the demands embodied in cultural standards which the Nupe peasant has to meet out of the surplus (if surplus there be) derived from his production. We can group these demands under three headings. (1) Demands implied in kinship duties. In so far as the household or kinship group coincides with the labour-unit these demands overlap with those we listed under 'maintenance of labour'. (2) Demands implied in duties towards the community—religious, political, or social. (3) Certain personal requirements which are regarded, by convention, as essential, and even indispensable.

Under the first heading we list the expenses of kinship ceremonies and feasts—the name-giving ceremony for a new-born child, wedding feasts, and burial and funeral ceremonies. These expenses are borne primarily

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and commerce have greatly benefited from the new development, the position of the peasants and craftsmen has not improved to the extent of enabling them to accumulate reserves and increase their resources to any considerable extent. The introduction of commercial crops, the cultivation of which is officially encouraged, represents a policy designed to open to the native cultivator the way to economic betterment. Yet the insecurity of these new resources may defeat their own ends. A more recent move to improve the economic position of the farmers was the launching of a policy to introduce mixed farming into Bida Emirate. Mixed farming, which had been adopted some years previously in certain northern Emirates, was started in Nupe towards the end of my second expedition. At that time only the demonstration farms of the N.A. and certain stretches of land belonging to the Emir, all worked by wage-labour, had been put under the new cultivation. While it is thus too early to describe actual results, it is possible to outline, from the study of the underlying principles, certain probable effects of this agricultural policy on the economic and social system of the country. They are sufficiently far-reaching to warrant here a more extensive examination.[1]

This policy envisages a gradual transformation of the whole of Northern Nigeria into arable country cultivated on Western lines, on the basis of individual landholdings. The working team should consist of one man and a boy. The 2 acres per head which have hitherto corresponded to an individual worker would be extended to 12, and eventually to 20 acres. The manure gained from the draught cattle would do away with the necessity of shifting cultivation and would allow practically unlimited cultivation of the same stretch of land. A four-field scheme of rotation is suggested, with one field manured, and the following crops grown on the different fields: sorghum and millet (on the manured field); cotton; ground-nuts; cassava and small crops. The most prosperous farmers in a district are to be persuaded to take up mixed farming first, thus giving an example which, it is hoped, many others will soon follow. The total cost of the draught cattle (two bullocks and one cow) and plough is £7 for an iron, and £5 for a wooden, plough. Farmers who are unable to buy the equipment outright will be given an advance on future profits of £1 to £1. 10s., or can pay an 'entrance fee' of approximately that amount, being expected to pay the rest, viz. repay the advance, in four yearly instalments which include a hiring charge of 5 per cent. The greatly increased yield should make these payments easy: it has been calculated that the farmer will be able to increase his production eightfold by the new method.

The scheme, admirable though its intentions are, may easily be wrecked if certain inherent dangers and difficulties are not carefully considered. Let us take the example of the most prosperous and progressive farmers of Lemu whose landholdings we have examined in an earlier chapter (see p. 212). We found that the total land under cultivation in the case of a working group of five and three men was 9½ and 6 acres,

[1] I am greatly indebted to the Superintendent of Agriculture in Bida for having allowed me access to the departmental files on mixed farming.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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respectively. The larger group possessed one, the smaller two, fallow fields of the same size as the field under cultivation. Their total landholdings, including both cultivated and fallow fields, thus amounted to 18 and 19 acres. Now, under the new scheme one individual would take under cultivation very nearly the whole landholdings of the family group. The other adult members of the family will have to obtain new land or (only too probably) they will give up farming. In Trans-Kaduna, with its large land supplies, new land might be found with no great difficulty from vacant or virgin village land. But even under these favourable conditions the fourfold increase of landholdings entailed in this development must lead, if not to actual land shortage, to serious competition for land. For one thing, farm-land for ploughing should lie closer together than it does now. The Nupe farmers will soon find it profitable to exchange their scattered ½ acre or 1 acre fields for larger and compact areas, an exchange which, involving a discriminative appreciation of land, must invariably lead to land purchase and land sale. In Cis-Kaduna, with its limited land resources, land sales are, as we have seen, already practised on a small scale. Here, in the country of the big landowners, land purchase and land sale will increase rapidly under the new scheme.

The redistribution of land resources will go hand in hand with far-reaching changes in the economic stratification of the country. The prosperous peasant who was able to take advantage of the new scheme will in a few years' time command considerable resources. No doubt, the obvious way to invest the newly won capital will be in more ploughs and more land.[1] The more unfortunate farmers who, for reasons of poverty or lack of enterprise, are not able to avail themselves early of the new scheme will be hopelessly outdistanced by the rapid development. The increased agricultural production, of which a half will be for internal consumption, must lower the price of food crops in the country. The small farmer, who relies on food crops more than on commercial crops, will be compelled to sell his produce at a price so low that he may be unable to pay his tax or to maintain his labour costs. Sooner or later he will succumb to the temptation to sell or let his land to those who, having benefited from the new scheme, will be anxious to acquire new land, and he will be forced eventually into the position of a landless labourer on the farms of the new landowning class. The Emir, on whose estate mixed farming has been established first, will be foremost among the new landlords of the country.

The levelling-down of economic inequality which accompanied the establishment of British rule in Nigeria will thus be replaced by a new, much more defined stratification. Poverty in the present productive system of the country is due, as we have seen, mainly to inadequate labour (disregarding here the factors of land shortage and tax), that is, to such factors as age, illness, misfortune, or ill-planned labour-

[1] This is not a mere hypothesis. The tendency to accumulate land is already noticeable in the northern Emirates where mixed farming was introduced earlier, and has led more than once to official attempts to keep landed property within certain limits.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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organization, all of which—in theory at least—can easily be remedied. Poverty in the new scheme will be due to a fundamentally different inadequacy, the inability to secure the necessary means of production. It is a permanent, and even progressive, inadequacy, which must get worse with the continued process of production. For the same process that leads to accumulation of capital (in the modern sense of the word) in the hands of the owner of the adequate means of production will render more and more remote the chances of their acquisition by the people who are as yet without them. Economic inequality in its most extreme form, *latifundia* existing side by side with a landless proletariat, will be the final result.

These grave consequences can be avoided, and the valuable elements in the new policy saved, I think, by slowing-up the transformation of the agricultural system of the country until a corresponding transformation of the labour organization can be achieved. The increase in the cost of the means of production must be met by widening the basis of the co-operative unit which makes itself responsible for the maintenance of labour in this sense into co-operative societies. Co-operative societies, which could buy the new means of production from common funds, and would jointly own ploughs and cattle, would enable also the less prosperous farmer to profit from the technical improvements. A co-operative society which would include, for example, all the owners of adjacent fields would also be able to utilize ploughing to the fullest advantage without incurring the danger of large-scale land-exchange. The increase in the extent of cultivation would be gradual and well controlled, and the traditional labour-unit not rendered useless overnight; it would still be useful for supplementary farm-work (in the traditional fashion) at times when plough and cattle are employed on the field of a fellow member of the farm co-operative.[1]

RISK AND INSURANCE

Every productive organization must include in its calculations the factor of risk and insurance against risk. Certain risks are over and above the normal in that they are due to accidents outside the productive system itself, and beyond the range of foresight which the producers

[1] When I discussed this question in a lecture given at the Summer School for Colonial Studies in Oxford, in 1937 (see the *Summary of Lectures*), I was attacked by a member of the audience for attempting to 'boost poverty'. Now, this is a serious charge. However, I hope to have made it clear that my attempt was not towards fostering poverty or pampering backwardness, but towards avoiding a development which would create, and make permanent, the most dangerous form of poverty and economic dependence. To organize the less prosperous so that they should not be left behind in economic progress does in no way imply putting obstacles in the way of the more enterprising. 'The rich', as the chairman, who came to my assistance in the discussion, put it, 'will look after themselves.' It is interesting to note in this connexion that when mixed farming was discussed at the Residents' Conference in 1936 one Resident suggested that it might be feasible to utilize the Hausa *gaya* (collective farm-work) for the new agricultural organization. I presume that he, too, had in mind a co-operative organization of the kind suggested above.

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

General

105 Most of the Nupe participate in a complex exchange-economy. Before the introduction of British money, cowrie shells were used as currency and are still used at funerals, and in reckoning marriage and other traditional payments.

The trans-Kaduna area and the country north of Bida (e.g., in Lemu), where land is fertile and plentiful, is the most prosperous. Wealth is greater where the household has a large labour unit or where a craft is practised in addition to farm work. Bida town exhibits greater extremes of poverty and wealth than the rest of the country but outstanding differences are not between individuals, but between groups, for example, urban and rural populations. It is said to be unusual to see badly-clothed men, women, or children, and under-nourishment is rare.

The traditional political offices are no longer inseparably linked with wealth, though high social status still attaches to them. Members of the *élite* can maintain their prestige fairly cheaply, as symbols of status (glazed turban or silver sword) are either heirlooms or not costly; the inherited house shows status even if in disrepair; polygyny is facilitated by the low marriage payment for "marriage in the family";[1] travelling can be sustained by claiming hospitality from relatives.[2]

Agriculture[3]

241 Nupe farming shows considerable technical knowledge and little magic or ritual is associated with it. Shifting cultivation is practised but plots are worked for 3–4 years (Doko), 4–5 years (Mokwa), and 6–7 years (Kutigi) before they are allowed to lie fallow for from 4 to 15 years. Rotation of crops is not generally practised, though Line reported it from the area round Jima, where three years of groundnuts were followed by two of guinea-corn. Intercropping is practised and two or three crops are often grown together. The size of a plot worked by one man is usually 2–2½ acres.

A large heavy hoe (*ruku*) is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, and a small hoe (*dugba*) for weeding and lighter work. A long bush knife (*gada*), nowadays of European manufacture, is used for cutting grain stalks and digging out yams.

Farms are cleared and burnt during the dry season. First-year cultivation after clearing is in mounds; those made for yams are 2–3 ft. high, 4–5 ft. apart, and in rows 6 ft. apart. Subsequent cultivation is in ridges 1 ft. high and 3 ft. apart. Groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and some vegetables are planted in this way. Marsh cultivation is carried out in small areas of 4–6 parallel ridges. Around Doko (Beni sub-tribe) manure is obtained from the cattle of nomad Fulani, who are invited to camp on fallow plots during the dry season.

184 241 In the area west of the Kaduna River the chief cash crop is groundnuts, and cotton also grows well there. The staple food crops are millet, sorghum, yams, and, to a lesser extent, rice. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes are less important. The most profitable commercial crops are rice, groundnuts, cotton, and shea-nut. There is a poorer range of crops round Bida town owing to the scarcity of land; fewer yams are grown there than elsewhere and there is no bulrush millet.

In the Nupe areas of Ilorin Emirate yams are not regarded as a Nupe crop but close contact with Yoruba farmers is said to have improved the Nupe methods of cultivation. In Share[4] each farmer has two farms, one for grain and the other for

[1] See below, p. 43.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 339–65; Line, 1947.
[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–14, 237–8; Line, 1947.
[4] Ancn. 1934–6.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[434] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[434 cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and
386] women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lah*), and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of 241 agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work 476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*ázolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

LIVESTOCK

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by [422] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262 / 49] No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are 554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947; Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 'colonies' or *tunga*. The *tunga* thus possesses land in its own right, but at
361 the same time pushes its territorial possessions further into no-man's-land.

Access to Village Land

621 There is no general rule for the distribution, within the area of village
423 land, of the farms belonging to the various family groups and individuals. Roughly one may say that the small individual plots (called *bucá*—a term to be explained presently) are situated near the village and the larger family plots (*efakó* plots) farther afield. When old men own plots of their own they, too, are given plots near the village so that they should not have to walk too far. The different plots which belong to the group of people living together in the same house (as a rule, a single family group), whether the plots are worked jointly or independently by the various household members, do not necessarily lie together, but are frequently scattered. Nor have the people who live together in the same *efu* their land on adjoining sites, or in the neighbourhood of the part of the village where they live. We may add that, again, there exist no special signs or boundary marks to distinguish the property of different farmers. A narrow path, a border of shrubs, or a tree, serve as landmark.[1] But the different cultivation that may be practised on the different fields, or the different stage of cultivation which the different fields may represent (fallow land, land that has been worked for one year, or two years, &c.), make these boundaries more obvious to the eye.

242 This irregular distribution of farm-plots appears to be due to a variety
423 of causes. To some extent it is entailed in the complex agricultural tech-
621 nique of the country, with its many different types of cultivation and its regular system of rotation of crops. Every farmer owns a certain number of fields—some under cultivation while others are lying fallow—which he tries to distribute over different sites so that he can utilize different types of soil, e.g. the marshy sites near watercourses for the cultivation of rice or sweet potatoes, dry sandy soil for ground-nuts, heavier soil for yam and cotton, and so forth. This arrangement also has the advantage of distributing more evenly the risks of failure. You often find farmers complaining that one site on which they have a farm is less good than another, or has perhaps suffered special injury that year through birds or through thieving baboons, or has been washed away by a flooded river. But the irregular distribution of farm-plots is also a result of the very method of Nupe settlement: it could not be otherwise with the farm-land lying in a circle round the large villages in which a numerous population is concentrated. There would not be room enough for all family groups in the village to have their lands arranged in compact blocks in equally favoured positions, both with regard to the distance from the village and to the quality of the soil. Moreover, some plots more heavily worked than others 'tire' sooner and must be replaced by virgin land lying farther afield; and growing families must provide more land for their

[1] A characteristic exception are a few marsh-land plots near Kacha, which are properly fenced in—'because of the many disputes' that arise over this kind of land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed 423
to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is 621
to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that 423
a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a 621
junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect 423
to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of 622
his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift [431]
to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The
annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid 423
to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the 622
chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three 651
bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nūsa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
241 owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family
643 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
427 land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankd* arrangement. But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu* [242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family
466] estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
313 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
438 rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
313 the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241 for different kinds of crops. Ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and certain vegetables are always planted in ridges, yam always in mounds. As regards the other crops, the rule is that in a first cultivation, that is, on a plot planted for the first time after having lain fallow, mounds are thrown up; in the subsequent year the mounds are turned into ridges, as a result of the practice of 'shifting' the ridges and interplanting in the second half of the planting season. The throwing up of mounds is by far the heavier and longer work. 'Lazy' farmers—in the eyes of the people—thus sometimes prefer the easier job of making ridges even in a first year's cultivation.[1] Big trees are always left standing on the farms and cultivation is carried out round them. The Nupe farmers appreciate the shade of big trees during the heat of the day. Small trees on the farm-land which do not bear fruit are lopped or cut about 4 ft. from the ground. This becomes important in the period of lying fallow; for the tree-stumps and undergrowth which the farmer leaves standing on his fields help to put the fallow land under a growth of 'bush' rather than grass, thus assisting and speeding up the regeneration of the soil.[2]

241 The cultivation on the marsh-land farms is adapted to the conditions of a natural annual irrigation by the flooded rivers and watercourses.
3/2 The irrigated area is divided into square plots, approximately 6 ft. by 9 ft., each consisting of from four to six ridges running parallel and two ridges at right angles on the upper and lower end. The ridges are flat and narrow; they do not connect at the corners, but leave small channels open; by means of these ridges the water from the flooded river is distributed evenly on the cultivated plots, and at the same time kept standing there.

241 In the lay-out of the Nupe farms the aesthetic aspect is strongly pronounced. The farmers pay much attention to drawing their ridges nicely
517 parallel and as straight as possible, and to distributing their mounds symmetrically over the field. The nice rounding-off of the border of a field is specially appreciated. Frequently one finds ridges and cross-ridges arranged in a symmetrical and even conspicuously ornamental pattern. Similarly, the skill and keenness of the farmer is judged by the clean look of his farm, with all weeds, leaves, and brushwood cleared away. An overgrown, untidy looking farm invariably elicits the comment: *za-gá de kokari à*, 'that man makes no effort'.

ROTATION OF CROPS

242 The Nupe system of agriculture is based on shifting cultivation combined with a well-worked-out rotation of crops. Plots are kept under cultivation for from four to seven years (see p. 205), i.e. till the land 'grows tired', and then abandoned temporarily. The individual farmer does not, however, always wait until failing crops have warned him of

[1] The mounds represent the more thorough cultivation, utilizing a deeper and, I believe, also heavier layer of the subsoil. This is shown in the fact that yam, which demands a heavy and more humid soil, is always grown on mounds, while ground-nuts, for which light sandy soil is best suitable, are invariably grown on the low ridges. (Cf. Faulkner and Mackie, op. cit., pp. 147–8.)

[2] See op. cit., p. 44.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the 'tiredness' of his farm-plot, but as a rule simply follows the general routine obtaining in his area, varying the standard period of cultivation occasionally by one year, in accordance with the special requirements of his farm-land. For the abandoned field a new plot is taken under cultivation, while the former is left to lie fallow, until eventually it will again be fit for cultivation. The period of lying fallow, dependent as it is on local conditions of land-tenure and individual land-holdings, varies much more widely than the period of cultivation—between four and fifteen years.

During the period of cultivation a strict rotation of crops is observed. There exists a comparatively large number of different types of rotation, of which I shall mention only the most important. The rotation depends on the crop which is planted first on a plot taken under cultivation. The following chart illustrates the most common types of rotation:

Table of Four-Year Rotation

	A	*B*	*C*	*D*
1	Yam	(Bulr.-mill.) late millet and sorghum	Ground-nuts (and cassava)	Cotton
2	Maize and sorghum or bulr.-mill.; late millet and sorghum	,, ,,	(i) bulr.-mill., (ii) maize, late millet, and sorghum	Bulr.-mill., late millet, sorghum
3	Bulr.-mill., late millet and sorghum	,, ,,	,, ,, ,,	,, ,,
4	,, ,,	,, ,, or fallow, or cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans	Cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans	Cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans

The main rules in this rotation are these: yam, cotton, and ground-nuts are 'one-year crops', i.e. they are invariably the first crops in the cycle of rotation and are not as a rule planted a second time on the same plot. On the contrary, it is well known that millet and sorghum do particularly well planted as a second year's crop after cotton, ground-nuts, or—in a less common rotation—red pepper. Where the rotation starts with millet and sorghum bulrush-millet is sometimes left out in the first year and added later, as it does not do very well as a first crop on a new field, especially if the rains happen to be late. Also it is sown mostly only where there are a number of neighbouring fields under cultivation; on isolated fields the danger of birds picking the crop is too great. On the other hand, land on which the two millet kinds and sorghum are planted in succession may 'tire' sooner than land planted with varying crops and thus have to be abandoned after only three years. The alternative choice, finally, after a first crop of ground-nuts (C (i) and (ii) in the table) depends mainly on the energy and keenness of the farmer; the crops listed under (i), i.e. the combination millet-sorghum,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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242 though more valuable, involve the heavier work, namely, a complete re-hoeing of the ridges.

Jebba Island, which is half marsh-land, is the only area where I found yam planted twice on the same plot. This type of cultivation necessitates a different system of cropping: between two yam crops sorghum alone is planted, without the additional two millet crops, which is said to exhaust the soil far less than does the mixed cropping. Even so, the field supports only three successive crops, and is left fallow after the three years. Before the second yam crop, i.e. after two years' cultivation, the operation of 'shifting the ridges' takes place, which we shall describe later in detail, and which, in the normal rotation, has to be carried out every year. As an alternative the people of Jebba Island practise a five or six years' rotation with four or five sorghum crops succeeding a first year's yam crop, the 'shifting of the ridges' being again inserted after two or three successive crops.[1]

The table shows further that certain crops are planted together on the same plot. This combined cultivation is much more extensive and much more varied than is shown in the table. The practice of 'interplanting' certain crops between others is one of the most characteristic features of the intensive and economical farm technique of the Nupe. The people speak, in fact, in connexion with this interplanting of *ewo banza*, 'useless ridge', meaning here the furrow between ridges or mounds; it is the 'useless ridge' that is utilized in the interplanting. This combined cultivation constitutes at the same time one of the most complicated aspects of Nupe farm technique because of the wide range of variations which it permits. These are the main combinations:

Simultaneous Interplanting. In the purely agricultural districts the two millet kinds and sorghum are planted together on the same mound, sorghum on the top and bulrush-millet and late millet on the flanks of the mound. The three crops are not planted quite simultaneously, bulrush-millet being sown a little before the other two crops (see chart, p. 213). The farmers near Bida practise various other combinations, e.g. late millet-sorghum, maize-sorghum, or late millet-sorghum with ground-nuts interplanted in the furrows.

Yam and okra are frequently planted together, yam on the top of the mound and okra at the foot.

Ground-nuts and cassava may also be planted together, ground-nuts on the top of the ridge and cassava in the furrow between the ridges. The same arrangement obtains with sweet potatoes and cassava.

Successive Interplanting. After the reaping of bulrush-millet or maize beans are sown in their place, i.e. on the same ridges or mounds, between the still growing late millet and sorghum plants.

Melons are frequently planted irregularly between various crops.

Cassava may be interplanted with any crop, e.g. yam or millet and sorghum, and at any time.

On the farm-plots close to the compounds, which are manured with the refuse from the house, no rotation is practised. Nor does such complicated rotation exist on the irrigated marsh-land farms. Here the same

[1] In Yoruba country, where the soil is much richer, three or four successive yam crops are said to be the rule.

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plot can be cultivated for ten years or even longer. The cultivation follows every year the same pattern: two alternating root-crops, cassava and sweet potatoes, and, after they have been harvested, on the same plot, rice. On certain marsh-land farms in the Kaduna valley two successive crops of maize are grown. Other marsh-land farms again (on the rivers Gbako and Kaduna, and on a smaller scale near Kutigi) are devoted to the cultivation of onions and partly sugar-cane. Farmers in inland areas who possess a field close to a watercourse plant rice in addition to the usual inland crops. 242

To return to inland cultivation. Of the four types of rotation listed in our table (A B C D) the farmer selects a certain combination. Most farmers, as we shall see presently, cultivate two or three crops at the same time, the most frequent combination being ABC, ABD, and AAC (D), i.e. a rotation which includes the maximum proportion of staple food crops, millet, sorghum, and yam, together with one or two commercial crops. By a judicious overlapping arrangement, starting the different series of crops in successive years, the farmer secures an even distribution of these crops. This is an example from Mokwa, recorded in 1936.

	Plot 1	*Plot 2*	*Plot 3*	*Plot 4*	*Plot 5*	*Plot 6*
1935	..	Yam	Sorghum, millet	..	..	..
1936	Yam, ground-beans	Maize, sorghum, beans	Sorghum, millet	..	Ground-nuts	..
1937	Maize, sorghum	Sorghum, millet	Sorghum, millet	Yam	Cassava	Ground-nuts
1938	Sorghum, millet	Sorghum, millet	(?)	Maize, sorghum	Cassava	Cassava
1939	Sorghum, millet	..	..	Sorghum, millet	?	Cassava
1940	..	..	..	Sorghum, millet	..	Cassava

The main problem in determining a suitable system of rotation are the 'one-year crops'. It can be seen that, allowing for a minimum period of four years for lying fallow, a farmer must have at least four different plots under cultivation in order to obtain one of the one-year crops in every year of the rotation, or eight plots, in order to secure a continuous, uninterrupted, cultivation of these crops. Where such an extensive subdivision proves impossible, the number of one-year crops will vary from year to year, in accordance with the progressive stages of the rotation. In 1936 I found that of thirty-seven farms on which one or more of the three 'one-year crops' were grown only two farms combined all three, six combined the cultivation of yam and ground-nuts, seven of yam and cotton, and of the remaining twenty-two the cultivation was restricted to one of these three crops.

The selection of crops on which the farmer eventually decides and the cycle of rotation which he will accordingly adopt will thus depend primarily (ignoring here the question of the quality of the land) on the size of his farm-land and the possibility, or profit, of subdividing it into plots for different cultivation. Evidently, land cannot be subdivided indefinitely to make room for a large variety of crops. I have found that

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the farms under cultivation in Nupe varied in size from 2 to 10 acres, according to the number of men who are working together; the average size of farm corresponding to one able-bodied male adult is from 2 to 2½ acres. A farm of this size (i.e. a one-man farm) can still be subdivided into two or three plots, for the cultivation of different crops; larger farms can be subdivided into three or four different plots for cultivation. In addition to the field cultivated at a given time the farmer as a rule possesses from one to three fallow fields of the same size to which he turns when it becomes necessary to take a new field, or new plots on this field, into cultivation.[1] The following examples, which were collected in Lemu, a prosperous village north of Bida, may illustrate the relation between size of farm and selection of crops. These examples represent, of course, only stages in the four-year rotation, which explains the reason for the absence of certain one-year crops in the selection of crops which were grown that year.

1. Five men working together; total land under cultivation approx. 9½ acres. Grain (millet and sorghum), 6 acres (half of this plot was under yam cultivation the previous year); red pepper (formerly ground-nuts), 1½ acres; cotton, 2½ acres.

2. Three men working together; total land under cultivation 6 acres. Grain, 5½ acres; rice, ½ acre.

3. Two men working together; total land under cultivation over 4 acres. Grain, 2 acres; yam, 2 acres; ground-nuts, ¼ acre.

4. One man working; total land under cultivation under 2 acres. Grain, 1½ acres; rice, ¼ acre; red pepper, ¼ acre (¼ acre under yam cultivation the previous year).

5. One man working; total land under cultivation over 2 acres. Grain, 1 acre; yam, 1 acre; rice, 200 sq. yds.

6. One man working (a young man, recently married); total land under cultivation 1 acre. Grain, ¾ acre; red pepper, ¼ acre.

These examples bring us to a further condition determining the selection of crops and type of rotation, namely, the size of the working group at the disposal of the farmer, and the efficiency of its organization; on its co-operation depends the carrying out of the complicated and at times overlapping schedule of planting, weeding, &c., without any of the crops being neglected. Finally, the selection of crops is also determined by the prospect of return, i.e. by the satisfaction of specific wants which the farmer may expect from the different forms of cultivation. We will for the present ignore this last point and concentrate on the second condition. In order to understand fully we must study more closely the agricultural calendar of the country. In the attached chart I have tabulated the schedule of Nupe agricultural activities. It will be best if I supplement it with a description of the more important agricultural activities as I have observed them in actual cases. First, however, a few comments are necessary.

[1] It can be calculated that for the continuous cultivation of two one-year crops, e.g. yam on 1 acre and ground-nuts on ¼ acre, in addition to an ordinary crop, e.g. grain on 1 acre, a total land possession, i.e. worked as well as fallow land, of 9–10 acres is necessary. The figures quoted above show that actual practice falls considerably short of this standard.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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to check the attempts to extend kola plantation in Nupe. Whether or not it will check other attempts at agricultural innovations one cannot say.[1]

Often in discussions of this kind the reluctance of a native group to adopt a certain innovation is summarily dismissed as being due to the inveterate, almost proverbial, 'conservatism' of the native races. Clearly, such an explanation does not meet the case. As regards the Nupe we should have to contrast their alleged 'conservatism' with respect to trees with the readiness with which they adopt new crops and agricultural techniques. Evidently, to adopt a new crop which shows results in a year's time, and which is easy to tend, often easier than the traditional crops (as in the case of maize or cassava), and to take up the difficult work of planting trees which may not bear fruit for six or seven years, is an entirely different thing. One can be easily fitted into the framework of established agricultural activities while the other involves a complete readjustment of the productive system. The Nupe are, within limits, extremely progressive people, and keen on trying out new things. These limits are determined by two factors: first, by the time that an ordinarily crowded working year could allow for additional tasks; other work, or precious leisure time might have to be given up for the sake of the innovation—a change that may or may not appear worth while to the Nupe farmer. The second factor is the measure of change which a readjustment of the native production would entail in this closely knit economic system, with its exact balance of specialization and exchange. Every radical change in the production, such as the adoption of tree-cultivation in a district, may upset this balance; it may, in other words, make the innovation less profitable. The fact that the Nupe farmer is go-ahead with respect to certain farm techniques and 'conservative' with respect to others is not due to any tribal or racial 'conservatism', but reveals itself as a clear instance of the working of free economic choice.

TECHNIQUE AND KNOWLEDGE

So advanced a technique and so conspicuous a standard of husbandry must involve a body of theoretical knowledge which goes far beyond the counsels of peasant lore, and could avouch statements of very nearly scientific authority. This is no doubt the case in Nupe farming. The understanding of the basic principle of manuring, the fixed rules with regard to rotation and lying fallow, the practice of thinning-out the growing plants, which is correctly explained as being intended to give the plant more space, they all confirm this.[2] Moreover, while in many African

[1] Rev. Ira W. Sherk, the head of the U.S. Mission at Mokwa, has been successful in making the people of a small neighbouring village adopt the cultivation of grapefruit. This innovation, carried out on a very small scale, and involving hardly any difficult readjustment of the native productive organization, bears out what is said later in the text about the limits that are set to all such innovations.

[2] I must record that one of my Bida informants, an experienced farmer, denied the value of ashes and the burning of fields as manure. He held that animal manure (with the regular use of which he as a Bida farmer was well acquainted) was the only effective manure. This critical attitude only emphasizes the element of empirical knowledge in Nupe farming technique.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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2+2 communities rulings on agricultural technique and the organization of agricultural labour appear in the guise of magic devices and rituals, there is none of this in Nupe agriculture, which remains matter-of-fact and consciously based on empirical knowledge.[1]

In a productive organization of this kind special emphasis must be laid on the position of authority of the old and experienced farmer. It can be studied in action whenever groups comprising both older and younger men co-operate in farm-work. In family work as well as in non-family co-operation the older men always lead the work or supervise the [868] work of the younger men; they point out mistakes to them and teach them the important rules of farm-work. I have frequently seen men scold boys for damaging a plant when weeding, or for planting seeds too close. Boys are made to work on the farms from the age of 6 or 7, first with toy-like light tools, later with the real heavy hoe, in order to learn through practice and under constant supervision. In Nupe farming very little is left to chance. I have, for example, never heard of anyone starting farm-work too early or too late in the season and thus wasting the seeds—a mistake not uncommon among more primitive agriculturalists. The quasi-scientific aspect of Nupe agriculture is made most evident in the 'theoretical' rulings which the people themselves are always ready to lay down. Thus informants formulated the following rule: there exist two kinds of rice, one taking 90 days, the other 180 days to mature; or this: the latest date for the planting of ground-nuts is the beginning of the third month (counted from the beginning of the planting season). Not all such rules are fully convincing to the European agriculturist—we remember the rule about planting yams before the dry season in order to make them grow bigger. But, on the other hand, there is plenty of evidence to show that the existing body of native farm-knowledge admits of experiment, and is constantly assimilating newly gained experiences. There is, for example, the new 'rule' about cotton and red pepper being excellent first crops before millet and sorghum. Experiment has besides been forced upon the native cultivator by the introduction of modern crops or varieties. Thus the people have tried with varying success to grow cotton on different kinds of soil; cotton-growing has also caused new difficulties with regard to the distribution of agricultural work, which can be solved ultimately only by experiment.[2]

Long experimenting, however, which does not lead to the incorporation of the new experiences into that solid body of farming-knowledge

[1] The one exception is the magic linked with the cultivation of kola-nut trees, which itself represents an exceptional form of cultivation. Apart from this magic there exist only the annual fertility cults which set the spiritual framework for farming activities in general, and certain varying, unsystematic forms of magic—charms applied to hoes, or a specific magic performed over a field—which are to ensure success in individual cases.

[2] In 1936 the Agricultural Officer of Bida Division travelled round the district to instruct personally the cotton-growers in the more important centres about the proper date for planting cotton—information which, coming many years after cotton-growing had been introduced in this area, only confirmed a point of technique which the people had already discovered for themselves.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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easily turns into discouragement. In Kutigi and Sakpe I have spoken to many farmers who, discouraged by the increasing difficulties that appear to accompany cotton-growing, seemed determined to give it up altogether. We may, I think, draw a valuable lesson from this. If new agricultural schemes are to be introduced they must be brought in already well tried-out and fully adapted to the existing conditions. The adoption of a new crop or technique is to the native in itself a large-scale experiment; to make the people adopt a technique which has not been fully tried-out means to double this element of experimenting. It will prevent the new knowledge from being absorbed quickly in the 'body of Nupe farming-knowledge' on which the people feel they must be able to rely, and may eventually give them over to disappointment and discouragement. 242

BY-PRODUCTS OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and forest-cultivation produce as by-products certain raw materials which are used in Nupe home industries and handicrafts. Thus the grain-stalks which are left on the fields after the harvest are used for the making of fences, doors, and bedsteads: cut in fine strips, grain and maize stalks are used for mat-making; a vegetable dye, black and red, is gained from the stalk of a certain species of sorghum (*dindórogi*). Small trees which do not bear fruit are occasionally cut down by the owner of the field on which they stand and used as timber for house-repairs and suchlike. In all these cases it is the cultivator and his family themselves who use the plant or tree; the by-products of agriculture have no marketing value. This is different in the case of firewood and grass for thatching which, as I have mentioned already, is collected or cut by the Nupe women and marketed by the men (see p. 200). 241

It is frequently quoted as a characteristic feature of African agriculture that every part of a plant or tree that can be used in any way is actually utilized by the people. This is only partly true in Nupe. Only a small proportion, for example, of the grain-stalks is used in the various ways just described. A great many farmers are either unskilled in the craft which makes use of these by-products, or devote their spare time to other, to them more attractive or profitable, occupations. This comparative failure on the part of the Nupe farmer to utilize to the fullest possible extent the products of his land appears to be connected with the complexity and specialization of the productive system of the country. As we shall see later, only certain groups or individuals have specialized in mat-making, the making of bedsteads, or dyeing. The influence of specialization involving a clear-cut division between the agriculturist and the craftsman who utilizes the by-products of agriculture is most conspicuous in this case; big trees, when not fruit-bearing, may also be cut down and used as timber. But no farmer would ever attempt to cut a big tree himself for fear of bungling the job and being injured or even killed by the falling tree. He calls in the professional wood-cutter, who possesses both the necessary skill and experience and the special magic which alone can prevent the spirit of the tree from revenging himself on 241 463

184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[434 386] cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

7: Forde E-4 (no date) 1946 MS12 Hausa MS12
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likely to require a concomitant programme of technical training and capital provision for the development of secondary industries. At the same time there is no lack of other needs which can be met by the diversion of labour freed from farming into other activities. The staffing of schools, medical services, co-operative organisations, transport services and more specialised marketing systems will all make considerable demands. If the promise of the initial phase is fulfilled and a fifty per cent increase in agricultural output above existing levels were achieved, the full development of mixed farming at present standards would permit the release of about a quarter of the existing farming population for other forms of economic activity.

The point referred to above is particularly important in connection with fears that have been expressed lest mixed farming may lead to a system of *latifundia* and the growth of a class of depressed landless farm labourers. There is indeed the likelihood in certain areas, especially near big markets and where considerable landed estates are retained by the nobility of the emirates, that the opportunities offered by mixed farming techniques for commercial agriculture and capital investment in land and farm equipment will be taken. The Emir of Bida*is, for example, one of the leading mixed farmers. Moreover, the tendency to *de facto* sale and purchase of personal rights to land is likely to grow in closely settled and productive areas and a new class of landlords will emerge.

N [232 242]

Steps to limit the acquisition of land beyond the limits needed by the farmer to run his mixed farm with household labour and local co-operation are already being taken in some areas. On the other hand, mixed farming is a more exacting technique and one that involves the maintenance of more capital equipment than the traditional hand farming. The optimum size of the mixed farming unit can hardly be said to have been settled yet, but the isolated one- or two-man farm unit with a pair of bullocks is very vulnerable to mischance. The relative merits of multiple households, co-operative household groups and farms run with the aid of paid labour cannot be decided *a priori* and they will not be the same in all areas. The really important point in this connection is not so much whether an attempt should be made to prevent the growth of a farm labouring class in connection with mixed farming in large units, but what rewards such workers are to receive. This will depend ultimately on the alternative demands for labour. With flourishing secondary industries and services, the large farmer who needs hired labour will have to provide conditions not merely as good but better than those at present enjoyed by the independent hand farmer. Without such alternative forms of employment, however, the risk of the growth of a depressed farm labouring class will be great.

H [425 656]

The development of stock rearing for the fattening of cattle for the meat market and the increase of goat breeding for the sake of greater skin

* [the Emir of Bida is the Etsu Nupe. - Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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gourd or his straw hat, keeping a ready supply in his left hand. In his right he carries the light hoe used for planting. With it he scratches the top or flank of the mound, while with his left, almost simultaneously, he throws the seeds into the newly made hole. The hole is then flattened out with the back of the hoe. Thus the farmer proceeds from mound to mound and row to row, working with amazing speed and ease: one man is able to sow about one acre in from five to six hours, with hardly any rest. This is the method used for sowing on mounds; sowing on ridges is even easier and quicker. No hoe is used, and the farmer can make use of both hands for the sowing, the seeds being pressed into the soft soil with the heel. The distance kept between two plants is a little over 2 feet. The sowing of one field with millet or sorghum is invariably done in a day or two, and is nearly always carried out single-handed. Where normally a larger group would be working together—brothers or a father and sons—the rest of the team would be occupied on another field, carrying out ridging, i.e. work for which co-operation is more urgently required. But when for one reason or another a farmer falls behindhand with his planting, ridging and sowing may have to be done at the same time. Once I saw a man and his two sons of 10 or 11 years carrying out this combined and hurried work: the boys were hoeing, preparing the ridges; the father followed in their tracks, sowing. After every ridge they had completed the boys waited for the man to catch up with the sowing. The ridges were crooked, irregular. 243 [857]

In these first days of the planting season the Nupe keep short days: they start comparatively late, about 8 a.m., and rarely return later than 2 or 3 o'clock. As the season wears on their working day extends. They start at daybreak and often do not return till 5 or 6 in the afternoon. They have their midday meal out on the farm, some bringing their own food, others having it brought out to them by their wives or daughters. At that time of the year, when fresh leaves and herbs are plentiful on the farms, the men rarely return home without a fair supply of various kinds: broad leaves which the Nupe women like for wrapping food in, or a special kind of aromatic leaf which the women use for their bath, or occasionally medicinal herbs used for various purposes. The men tie the leaves round their straw hats, and thus pleasantly and ornately attired wander home. A bath, a change of clothes, and afterwards the evening meal concludes their day. 243 512 [824]

To return to sowing. A day or two after bulrush-millet has been sown, maize is planted in very much the same fashion, again mostly in one day. Then one has to wait for another heavy rainfall before the next crops on the list, late millet and sorghum, can be sown. As a rule all four crops are sown within a week or ten days. These voluntary or involuntary waiting periods have their use: for often it becomes necessary to get one's tools repaired, perhaps a new blade fixed to the hoe, or to find new tools for the young boys who will, this year, join their fathers for the first time in the farm-work. By the time sorghum is planted the rains fall fairly regularly, and there is no need for further waiting. 243

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244 a new plot, and new ridges must therefore be prepared. The planting itself is also a slow process, the seeds are placed into the soil with the fingers and the earth then stamped down with the heel.

The planting of yams demands no less skill and patience. Yam is likewise planted on a fresh plot and involves the preparation of new mounds —the work of several days. The planting itself is also spread over a number of days, one man needing two or three days to plant one acre. Half a tuber is used as seed (called *ebu*). The planter carries the seed yams in a cloth tied round his waist; he inserts the tuber about 1 foot deep into the loose earth of the mound, and then pats the top of the mound back into shape either with his hands or with the light planting hoe. Having covered a section of the field, he goes over it again and places a grass cap over the top of each mound, weighting it down with earth; the grass cap protects the young plant from the sun and at the same time provides a convenient sign by which the planter can distinguish planted from unplanted mounds. About two months after planting stakes 4 feet high are put up on the side of the mounds, which will serve as support for the vine; sometimes a conveniently placed tree may be used for the same purpose.

241 Now, assuming that planting has started early in April, our time-table has taken us to the end of the month or the beginning of May. It is by then high time for the first weeding, which is to clear the ridges for the growing plant and to remove roots, leaves, and undergrowth which the burning of the farms has but imperfectly destroyed. Not until after this weeding, which takes the best part of three weeks, will the farmer be able to enjoy a short period of rest, between five days and a week. It reaches as a rule into June, and into the short break in the rains which is known as the 'little dry season'. The period of rest inaugurates a more leisurely period of work. In June many farmers work on their large farms only two days in succession, and rest on the third day, or devote it to the lighter work on the garden-plots round their houses. The 'second weeding', which takes from five to ten days, and is to clear the young millet plants of the high grass, is also a task allowing of comparative leisure, except when it coincides with the planting of cotton, a delicate and lengthy operation, which falls in the same time. Farmers who possess marsh-land plots are sowing rice in June; on inland farms cassava is planted—but cassava can be planted at any time, and needs little skill or attention: cuttings of the stem are simply put into the ground; one person can plant a half-acre field easily in a day. The beginning of July heralds a period of increased activity. It starts with the reaping of bulrush-millet, to be followed immediately by the sowing of beans and another, third, weeding. Let me illustrate the change from comparative leisure to renewed pressure of work by quoting a few entries from my diary for 1936.

Doko, 15 May.—Bulrush-millet 2–3 feet high. Yam vines fairly long. Yam stakes are being put up. Cassava and sweet potatoes are being planted.

Doko, 1 June.—The people have begun to sow cotton, and some farmers also rice. Grass on millet-sorghum farms very high. Weeding ('second weeding') in progress in many places.

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262 yam, maize, and early millet are not grown everywhere; special crops
438 are cultivated on marsh-land and inland farms; and besides, there is the
241 large population of Nupe which does not live on the land and can obtain its food only from the markets of the country. The Nupe agricultural system, as we have realized already, is adjusted essentially to a highly developed system of exchange and marketing. The surprisingly small number of crops grown exclusively for household consumption is perhaps the most striking proof.

241 The degree to which the individual farmer, and the farmer in the
438 different districts of the country, adjusts his planting to the principle of exchange economy varies considerably. In the marshes of Niger and Kaduna almost the whole production of rice is intended for sale and export. But at the other end of the scale we find farmers who, able to cultivate a few crops only, have just enough to provide food for their families. We have already examined some of the conditions determining this changing balance between trade crops and food crops. Ultimately it only reflects that greater fundamental balance that underlies Nupe peasant economy: between the need of food for the group, and the need of commodities which are obtainable only by means of exchange, that is, money—which can itself be obtained only from the sale of farming produce.

TREE CULTIVATION AND FRUIT INDUSTRY

245 As stated in the first chapter, most of the fruit-bearing trees in Nupe are wild growing. Only two or three kinds are cultivated: the kola-nut tree, *ebi*, and to much lesser extent the banana, *yaba*; to these two indigenous plants we must add to-day the European imported mango tree, *mangoro*. In the case of trees the main productive activities refer therefore not so much to the planting and tending of the plants as to the collection of the fruits and the preliminary manufacturing process of the same order as that described in the preceding section. Only in a few cases can the fruits of the trees be utilized directly—for food, cooking, or marketing. Most fruits have to undergo a special 'refining' process before they become marketable or ready for use.

Banana

Only in Bida, Patigi, and Laboži did I see real banana plantations. They are small and of little importance, for bananas have little commercial value in Nupe; they are sold for an extremely low price (a bunch of about twenty for ½*d*. or less)—if they are sold at all. Bananas are eaten raw, and play in Nupe a part comparable to our occasional eating of fruit. In the banana plantations the plants are arranged in a circle of about 6 feet in diameter. The important thing is to plant them very deep in the ground (from 3 to 4 feet), and the whole circle has thus to be excavated to that depth. It is this heavy and slow work—unprofitable work from a commercial point of view—that, according to my informants, discourages the Nupe farmer from growing bananas. In Bida, where the soil is poor, the banana plot has to be manured with animal dung; in the bush plantations and in the forest groves where the banana grows wild the

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leaves are allowed to fall off and rot on the ground—an efficient system of natural fertilization, though not, apparently (unlike the 'green manuring' practised in agriculture), applied consciously. 246

Kola-nut

We have had occasion already to speak of the Kusopa, the kola-nut planters in the forest groves of Laboži. The Kusopa of Laboži and the neighbouring districts devote the larger part of their agricultural work to the cultivation of the kola-nut tree, growing little else besides—only a little millet and sorghum. The method of kola-nut cultivation is interesting. The trees are planted at the beginning of the rains. They flower for the first time after five years, about July, and after six years bear fruit, towards the end of October. The fruit is picked in February. From every harvest a gourdful of nuts is kept to be used as seeds, for nearly every year new trees are planted to replace old and barren ones. When planting a new tree the seed is buried hand-deep in the ground. To protect the seed the place where it was planted is covered with twigs; moreover, four banana plants are planted around it, in a square, about 6 feet by 6 feet. As the banana grows faster than the kola-nut the four banana plants provide shade for the tender young tree, and at the same time secure the necessary distance between newly planted trees. When the kola-nut tree reaches a certain height and no longer needs the shade of the banana plants, the latter are dug out and removed. The tending of the young kola-nut tree involves constant weeding—in which no hoe is used; only the 'bush-knife', so as not to hurt the delicate plant—and much watering. During the dry season the seedlings must be watered every four days. The need for humid soil explains the fact that the kola thrives only in the most humid part of Nupe, in the thick forest groves of Kusopa country.

This environmental factor is fully understood by the people. The failure of kola-nut cultivation in other districts of the Emirate (on which we shall have more to say presently) is partly attributed to the less favourable soil. But the traditional monopoly of kola-nut planting in Laboži is not, in their eyes, fully explained on such empirical grounds. A legend that has grown up round the cultivation of the kola-nut tree which tells about the discovery, by a Laboži woman, of the secret of kola-nut planting, supplies another explanation more convincing to their way of thinking. Let me quote this legend in full.

A woman was threshing grain for beer when a Hausa from Borgu, on his way back to his country, happened to pass. He crossed the threshing-ground and put down the load he was carrying. The woman went into the house to fetch water and to cook porridge for the guest. She brought the food and gave it to the Hausa. He ate the porridge and liked it very much. He opened his load, took out two kola-nuts, and gave them to the woman to thank her for the food. At that time there were no kola-nuts anywhere in Nupe country. The woman took the kola-nuts and put them on the threshing-ground. Later, when she took the grain into the house, she forgot the kola-nuts and left them lying there on the threshing-ground. One day, when she came out to the threshing-ground again, she saw these kola-nuts. She said: 'Look, the nuts which the Hausa gave me have come 245 539

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245 539 up.' She went and told the men of the house. They all came and looked. They cleared the ground around the young plants; they had two kola-nut trees then. After three years the trees bore fruit. The men picked the fruits and took them home. They broke the nuts open and ate them. They picked out the kernel, took it into the bush and planted it. When the kola-nut trees bore fruit again the men picked the fruits and took them to the king. This was the beginning of the kola-nut in Nupe. When they had taken the fruits to the king, he said: 'They are very nice indeed.' But the following year the trees did not bear fruit. So the men went to see the soothsayers. They said that the trees would not bear fruit again unless they sacrificed a human being. So the men went and told the king, and said: 'If we do not sacrifice a human being our trees will never bear fruit again.' Therefore the king gave them permission to take a human being and sacrifice it. They did so, and the trees bore fruit again. This was the beginning of human sacrifices in Nupe, with the permission of the king.

245 As the legend explains the origin of kola plantation in the country of the Kusopa, certain magic rites which are practised by that group—and by that group only—emphasize the unique position of the kola-nut planters. Only with the knowledge of that special magic can the success of the difficult and precarious cultivation be assured. The Laboži people practise two kinds of this professional magic. At the time when the kola trees are in bloom every planter will collect the dead leaves on his plantation, place them in a mortar, and pound and then burn them on the plantation. There is no spell or special ritual linked with this act, but by it, as by a magic act, the planter believes he will ensure a rich harvest. The second magic connected with kola-nut planting is performed for the whole group by the *Majī Tsuba*, the Master of Threshing (in the legend the first kola-nuts were growing from the threshing-ground), the village priest of Laboži. Annually, about two months before the picking of the [182] kola-nuts, he performs a sacrifice in front of the hut in which, as the legend has it, the woman lies buried to whom the Kusopa owe the knowledge of kola-nut planting. To-day a white ram and cock are sacrificed, the blood together with some beer is poured on the threshold of the hut, and *Sokó*, God, is invoked that he may let the kola trees thrive. Formerly this sacrifice is said to have demanded a human victim. (See p. 90, n. 2.)

This connexion between planting technique and mythical and magic ideas, common all the world over, needs no special explanation. But in the case of the kola-nut planters it gains an additional significance. The special nature of the rite, its infrequent occurrence, correspond to the special monopolized technique. In the eyes of the people who, not kola-nut planters themselves, accept the existence of these special rites, it confirms and endorses the exceptional position of the Kusopa as the masters of a unique craft. About fifteen years ago the Administration planned to introduce the cultivation of kola-nuts into the other districts of Nupe. A few expert planters from Laboži were sent round to teach the farmers in places where the soil looked promising the almost secret art of kola planting. These efforts met with but meagre success. Local conditions were to a large extent responsible: the soil in the other districts seemed capable of producing only the inferior kind of kola, and

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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return. 245

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwã*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top. [386] [243] [412]

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to 345 252

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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

249 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a
larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe,
438 which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—
[438] as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

388 As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

[i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
185 who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing
177 trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquieseent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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to check the attempts to extend kola plantation in Nupe. Whether or not it will check other attempts at agricultural innovations one cannot say.[1]

Often in discussions of this kind the reluctance of a native group to adopt a certain innovation is summarily dismissed as being due to the inveterate, almost proverbial, 'conservatism' of the native races. Clearly, such an explanation does not meet the case. As regards the Nupe we should have to contrast their alleged 'conservatism' with respect to trees with the readiness with which they adopt new crops and agricultural techniques. Evidently, to adopt a new crop which shows results in a year's time, and which is easy to tend, often easier than the traditional crops (as in the case of maize or cassava), and to take up the difficult work of planting trees which may not bear fruit for six or seven years, is an entirely different thing. One can be easily fitted into the framework of established agricultural activities while the other involves a complete readjustment of the productive system. The Nupe are, within limits, extremely progressive people, and keen on trying out new things. These limits are determined by two factors: first, by the time that an ordinarily crowded working year could allow for additional tasks; other work, or precious leisure time might have to be given up for the sake of the innovation—a change that may or may not appear worth while to the Nupe farmer. The second factor is the measure of change which a readjustment of the native production would entail in this closely knit economic system, with its exact balance of specialization and exchange. Every radical change in the production, such as the adoption of tree-cultivation in a district, may upset this balance; it may, in other words, make the innovation less profitable. The fact that the Nupe farmer is go-ahead with respect to certain farm techniques and 'conservative' with respect to others is not due to any tribal or racial 'conservatism', but reveals itself as a clear instance of the working of free economic choice.

TECHNIQUE AND KNOWLEDGE

So advanced a technique and so conspicuous a standard of husbandry must involve a body of theoretical knowledge which goes far beyond the counsels of peasant lore, and could avouch statements of very nearly scientific authority. This is no doubt the case in Nupe farming. The understanding of the basic principle of manuring, the fixed rules with regard to rotation and lying fallow, the practice of thinning-out the growing plants, which is correctly explained as being intended to give the plant more space, they all confirm this.[2] Moreover, while in many African

[1] Rev. Ira W. Sherk, the head of the U.S. Mission at Mokwa, has been successful in making the people of a small neighbouring village adopt the cultivation of grapefruit. This innovation, carried out on a very small scale, and involving hardly any difficult readjustment of the native productive organization, bears out what is said later in the text about the limits that are set to all such innovations.

[2] I must record that one of my Bida informants, an experienced farmer, denied the value of ashes and the burning of fields as manure. He held that animal manure (with the regular use of which he as a Bida farmer was well acquainted) was the only effective manure. This critical attitude only emphasizes the element of empirical knowledge in Nupe farming technique.

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241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

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242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

● 245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and
[439] women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.
386]

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks[1] consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and 771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees." 775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its [245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

[1] [i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
185 who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing
177 trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

249 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a
438 larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe, which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets
[438] only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

388 As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

[i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa. 388 [177]

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men. 249 386

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who 386 439

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

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241 It is natural, though from a certain point of view unfortunate, that today examples of this kind will almost invariably refer to modern commercial crops. The consideration of 'adequate returns' is thus given a narrower, and very specific, meaning. It cannot be denied that the extensive cultivation of these modern crops has accentuated the element of economic calculation in Nupe agricultural planning. Not only has the introduction of these crops considerably complicated the planting schedule, but it has also immensely emphasized the monetary aspect of the question of adequate returns. The 'all-or-nothing' viewpoint, or in the language of the economist, the 'marginal' considerations, which our examples have revealed, are no doubt due to its influence. I have said that these modern influences have 'accentuated' the element of economic calculation—they have not introduced it for the first time. To be satisfied with what the Nupe call, by a stereotyped formula, farming 'for the mouth only' is characteristic only of those sections which practise agriculture on the most modest scale, as a secondary occupation in addition to a craft, a trade, &c. We shall learn presently that even in its original form, before modern economic influences were brought to bear on it, Nupe agricultural production included a large measure of production for marketing and exchange.

DISPOSAL OF CROPS

Storage

251 343 We find both storage on the farm and in the house. Yam, sweet potatoes, cassava, and in some places the portion of millet and sorghum meant for sale are stored on the farm, either in the small huts (*evu*) which serve the farmers as temporary shelters, or in special store-huts (*kpyakpya*) built of sticks and branches put up, tent-like, against a tree and covered with leaves or grass. Inside, the fruits are heaped on a raised platform. The yam fruits are stored whole, and the fruits needed for food or marketing are collected from time to time, about twice a week, mostly by the men. The storing arrangement in this stick-and-branches structure is adapted to the need of the root crops for a drier and more airy storage than the clay granaries in the houses could provide. As regards the grain crops intended for sale, they are stored in these huts only for a short time, being disposed of very soon after the harvest. In the districts where little yam is grown, especially in the country round Bida, all crops, including yam, are stored in the house. Of cassava only small quantities are stored; as fresh cassava does not keep, it is first dried in the sun. But as the harvesting of cassava is not bound to any special season it is frequently dug out and used for food at odd times throughout the year; often in fact, dug out and eaten raw, it serves as a convenient 'quick lunch' to the farmers while they are working in the fields.

In the granaries in the house are stored millet, sorghum, maize (so far as this crop, grown in small quantities, involves any special storing), beans, ground-nuts, and all greens, each crop being kept in a separate granary. These granaries, called *edo*, are distributed between the living huts of the compound. Of egg-like shape, about 7 feet high and 4 feet in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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343 diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-
251 like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid. [358] At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

251 Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These
251 ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of
354 millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

The seed plants are as a rule at once divided up from the crop. The
251 seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

[1] This is actually the almost universal method of grain storage in Northern Nigeria. An indirect testimony to its efficacy I chanced to obtain from Hausa settlers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whom I had occasion to visit in 1939. Chiefly for lack of proper building material for the construction of the Nigerian type of clay granary, these settlers have adopted the Sudan method of storage, i.e. storage of threshed grain. They all agreed that this method was inferior to the Nigerian, and preserved the grain much less satisfactorily.

[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the [177] Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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● 251 of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used
[231] as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

251 The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list
439 complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not
[415] for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

251 Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural
438 produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

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rice, and partly ground-nuts) or after it has undergone a rudimentary 'refining' process (such as the threshing and milling of grain, the shelling of ground-nuts, &c.). Side by side with this trade there exists an extensive local trade in the 'finished' product, which means various kinds of prepared food. I cannot attempt a detailed description of the intricate and varied art of Nupe cooking. I will only enumerate the more important products of this native 'food-industry', which, like most food preparation, is in the hands of the women. It is of considerable importance for the economy of the Nupe household. There are three main kinds of such prepared food which are sold everywhere in the markets and streets of the towns and villages of Nupe: (1) a gruel of millet or sorghum, made with water, and called *ekwa* in the more jelly-like and *zambú* in the more solid form. It is eaten for breakfast or lunch, and nicely done up in banana leaves, bought by labourers, canoe-men, travellers, and sometimes farmers going out to their fields—men who are unable to have their meals with their families or to have food brought out to them from home. (2) *Yisá* (Hausa, *fura*), bread-like balls made of late millet or sorghum and rolled in flour. Men and women attending markets are fond of buying this food and eating it with milk which they buy, there and then, from the Fulani women. (3) *Masa*, *kuli-kuli*, *bánkuru*, and *kara*—savouries of different kind, made of beans, sorghum- or millet-flour or ground-nuts, fried in shea-butter and prepared with various spices. They are eaten at any time of the day, practically by everybody who can spare an *anini* (a tenth of a penny).

To turn to the food crops proper. Our chart has established the even distribution of food crops over the year's cycle, a distribution which should, normally, leave every household well provided with food from harvest to harvest. Old yam should last till the new yam is dug out, sorghum and late millet till the new sorghum harvest—or at least till bulrush-millet—is reaped. I have found that June and July are the critical months: yam may begin to give out by the end of May or June, about six weeks or two months before the new yam harvest, and late millet and sorghum may become scarce by the middle of June. But bulrush-millet, which is harvested about that time, and maize, both from inland and marsh-land crops, make the transition easy.[1] So do also fresh ground-nuts, new potatoes, and partly the new rice, all harvested before the late main crops; I have mentioned already the 'stopgap' character of cassava.[2] A dry year, a late or failing harvest of early millet or first yam, may, of course, upset the balance temporarily in a district—till imports from the river area where yam matures earlier, or other districts, which have fared better, set it right again.[3] But the nutritive balance of the country must always remain dependent on the contribution of trade and markets:

[1] See p. 213.

[2] Cassava-flour as a substitute for grain-flour appears on the Nupe markets only for about two months, during July and August. Corn-gruel, a daily food in many Nupe households, can be made with rice-flour instead of sorghum- or millet-flour, if the latter has become scarce. This substitute is more expensive than ordinary corn-gruel, and is also said to be less pleasant to the taste.

[3] In 1936 the first yams appeared on the river markets on 6 July, while inland the first yams were dug out a fortnight later.

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184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[439 cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and
386] women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

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rice, and partly ground-nuts) or after it has undergone a rudimentary 'refining' process (such as the threshing and milling of grain, the shelling of ground-nuts, &c.). Side by side with this trade there exists an extensive local trade in the 'finished' product, which means various kinds of prepared food. I cannot attempt a detailed description of the intricate and varied art of Nupe cooking. I will only enumerate the more important products of this native 'food-industry', which, like most food preparation, is in the hands of the women. It is of considerable importance for the economy of the Nupe household. There are three main kinds of such prepared food which are sold everywhere in the markets and streets of the towns and villages of Nupe: (1) a gruel of millet or sorghum, made with water, and called *ekwa* in the more jelly-like and *zambú* in the more solid form. It is eaten for breakfast or lunch, and nicely done up in banana leaves, bought by labourers, canoe-men, travellers, and sometimes farmers going out to their fields—men who are unable to have their meals with their families or to have food brought out to them from home. (2) *Yisá* (Hausa, *fura*), bread-like balls made of late millet or sorghum and rolled in flour. Men and women attending markets are fond of buying this food and eating it with milk which they buy, there and then, from the Fulani women. (3) *Masa*, *kuli-kuli*, *bánkuru*, and *kara*—savouries of different kind, made of beans, sorghum- or millet-flour or ground-nuts, fried in shea-butter and prepared with various spices. They are eaten at any time of the day, practically by everybody who can spare an *aniṣi* (a tenth of a penny).

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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return. 245

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwã*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top. [386] [263] [412]

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ehó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to 245 252

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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

244 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a
438 larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe, which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets
[438] only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

388 As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

[i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later. 462

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking for the household. In our general description we have reached the point when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuka* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook. 462 592 252 592 [432]

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women 462 592 443

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467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

441 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpā, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpā and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5s. to 15s., according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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rice, and partly ground-nuts) or after it has undergone a rudimentary 'refining' process (such as the threshing and milling of grain, the shelling of ground-nuts, &c.). Side by side with this trade there exists an extensive local trade in the 'finished' product, which means various kinds of prepared food. I cannot attempt a detailed description of the intricate and varied art of Nupe cooking. I will only enumerate the more important products of this native 'food-industry', which, like most food preparation, is in the hands of the women. It is of considerable importance for the economy of the Nupe household. There are three main kinds of such prepared food which are sold everywhere in the markets and streets of the towns and villages of Nupe: (1) a gruel of millet or sorghum, made with water, and called *ekwa* in the more jelly-like and *zambú* in the more solid form. It is eaten for breakfast or lunch, and nicely done up in banana leaves, bought by labourers, canoe-men, travellers, and sometimes farmers going out to their fields—men who are unable to have their meals with their families or to have food brought out to them from home. (2) *Yisá* (Hausa, *fura*), bread-like balls made of late millet or sorghum and rolled in flour. Men and women attending markets are fond of buying this food and eating it with milk which they buy, there and then, from the Fulani women. (3) *Masa*, *kuli-kuli*, *bánkuru*, and *kara*—savouries of different kind, made of beans, sorghum- or millet-flour or ground-nuts, fried in shea-butter and prepared with various spices. They are eaten at any time of the day, practically by everybody who can spare an *anini* (a tenth of a penny).

To turn to the food crops proper. Our chart has established the even distribution of food crops over the year's cycle, a distribution which should, normally, leave every household well provided with food from harvest to harvest. Old yam should last till the new yam is dug out, sorghum and late millet till the new sorghum harvest—or at least till bulrush-millet—is reaped. I have found that June and July are the critical months: yam may begin to give out by the end of May or June, about six weeks or two months before the new yam harvest, and late millet and sorghum may become scarce by the middle of June. But bulrush-millet, which is harvested about that time, and maize, both from inland and marsh-land crops, make the transition easy.[1] So do also fresh ground-nuts, new potatoes, and partly the new rice, all harvested before the late main crops; I have mentioned already the 'stopgap' character of cassava.[2] A dry year, a late or failing harvest of early millet or first yam, may, of course, upset the balance temporarily in a district—till imports from the river area where yam matures earlier, or other districts, which have fared better, set it right again.[3] But the nutritive balance of the country must always remain dependent on the contribution of trade and markets:

[1] See p. 213.

[2] Cassava-flour as a substitute for grain-flour appears on the Nupe markets only for about two months, during July and August. Corn-gruel, a daily food in many Nupe households, can be made with rice-flour instead of sorghum- or millet-flour, if the latter has become scarce. This substitute is more expensive than ordinary corn-gruel, and is also said to be less pleasant to the taste.

[3] In 1936 the first yams appeared on the river markets on 6 July, while inland the first yams were dug out a fortnight later.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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262 yam, maize, and early millet are not grown everywhere; special crops
438 are cultivated on marsh-land and inland farms; and besides, there is the
241 large population of Nupe which does not live on the land and can obtain its food only from the markets of the country. The Nupe agricultural system, as we have realized already, is adjusted essentially to a highly developed system of exchange and marketing. The surprisingly small number of crops grown exclusively for household consumption is perhaps the most striking proof.

241 The degree to which the individual farmer, and the farmer in the
438 different districts of the country, adjusts his planting to the principle of exchange economy varies considerably. In the marshes of Niger and Kaduna almost the whole production of rice is intended for sale and export. But at the other end of the scale we find farmers who, able to cultivate a few crops only, have just enough to provide food for their families. We have already examined some of the conditions determining this changing balance between trade crops and food crops. Ultimately it only reflects that greater fundamental balance that underlies Nupe peasant economy: between the need of food for the group, and the need of commodities which are obtainable only by means of exchange, that is, money—which can itself be obtained only from the sale of farming produce.

TREE CULTIVATION AND FRUIT INDUSTRY

245 As stated in the first chapter, most of the fruit-bearing trees in Nupe are wild growing. Only two or three kinds are cultivated: the kola-nut tree, *ebi*, and to much lesser extent the banana, *yaba*; to these two indigenous plants we must add to-day the European imported mango tree, *mangoro*. In the case of trees the main productive activities refer therefore not so much to the planting and tending of the plants as to the collection of the fruits and the preliminary manufacturing process of the same order as that described in the preceding section. Only in a few cases can the fruits of the trees be utilized directly—for food, cooking, or marketing. Most fruits have to undergo a special 'refining' process before they become marketable or ready for use.

Banana

Only in Bida, Patigi, and Laboži did I see real banana plantations. They are small and of little importance, for bananas have little commercial value in Nupe; they are sold for an extremely low price (a bunch of about twenty for ½*d*. or less)—if they are sold at all. Bananas are eaten raw, and play in Nupe a part comparable to our occasional eating of fruit. In the banana plantations the plants are arranged in a circle of about 6 feet in diameter. The important thing is to plant them very deep in the ground (from 3 to 4 feet), and the whole circle has thus to be excavated to that depth. It is this heavy and slow work—unprofitable work from a commercial point of view—that, according to my informants, discourages the Nupe farmer from growing bananas. In Bida, where the soil is poor, the banana plot has to be manured with animal dung; in the bush plantations and in the forest groves where the banana grows wild the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Household E

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Lemu. Labour unit: father and four sons, two of them married. Family of ten

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	50 loads	20 loads	30 loads for 15*s.*	Family head: trade in rams and sheep. Total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a.
Late millet	30 ,,	10 ,,	20 loads for 10*s.*	
Sorghum	40 ,,	20 ,,	20 loads for 13*s.* 6*d.*	Sons: *buca* farm-work. Total earnings approx. 4*s.* p.a.
Beans	6 ,,	All	..	
Yam	?	A little	8 loads for 4*s.*	
Cassava	?	Eaten at once	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	,, ,,	..	
Cotton	10 loads	..	All, for 15*s.*	
Red pepper	4 ,,	..	All, for 8*s.*	
Locust-beans	6 ,,	..	All, for 4*s.*	

		£	s.	d.
Income from farm produce		3	9	6
Total income	approx.	4	0	0
Money expenditure: Tax		2	7	0
Egbe work			6	6
Name-giving ceremony for grandchild			8	0
First instalment of bride-price for younger son			17	0

511 The construction of these household budgets is designed to show the main division of resources into those which are utilized in kind, i.e. for food consumption, and those utilized for exchange, i.e. for the acquisition of commodities and the satisfaction of other, non-nutritive, wants. We have said that the latitude in satisfying wants beyond the 'minimum level' gives us the standards of living and economic stratification.

Now, it is characteristic that Nupe society, which is so conscious of its
511 class stratification, is equally conscious of its economic stratification and
262 the varying standards of living. Even the principle of the 'minimum point' of the scale of values, the existence of a minimum cost of living, is clearly understood and, what is more important, generally accepted. I have worked out questionnaires referring to this minimum standard of living and collected answers from twenty men in Bida and the villages, of different classes and different degree of wealth. They all were in agreement on the essential points. Expressed in agricultural produce, i.e. staple food crops, calculated for a small family of four, the minimum annual cost of living amounts to 12 to 15 bundles of grain (of any variety) or 90 loads of yam, if the household relies on one of the two staple food crops; or, if both are combined, 6 to 8 bundles of grain and 40 to 50 loads of yam. Expressed in money, 1½*d.* per day is the lowest cost of living per adult. But this food, as my informants added, will hardly be nutritive, it would only 'make the belly swell'. With more nutritive food, the lowest cost of living is 3*d.* per day. Even this is not yet a high standard, for it excludes *na ma re na*, things 'that taste nice', e.g. sweetmeats, savouries, and suchlike. For a family of four or five I was given

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the following daily 'menu' corresponding to a standard of living slightly above the minimum:

Morning meal:	corn-water or gruel with 'bread' (*fura*)	1½*d.*
Midday meal:	cassava, beans, or rice	3*d.*
Evening meal:	corn porridge	1½*d.*
Total cost		6*d.*

If fats, shea-butter, or palm-oil are added in form of sauce, the bill increases by another 1½*d.*; meat or fish, the addition of which would raise the meal to a much higher 'standard of living', cost 6*d.* a day extra. For example:

Morning meal:	corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	1½*d.*–2*d.*
Midday meal:	corn porridge	1½*d.*
	palm-oil, greens, and spices	1–2*d.*
	fish	3*d.*
Evening meal:	rice	4*d.*
	palm-oil, &c. (partly left over from midday meal)	0·3*d.*
	meat or fish	2–3*d.*
Total cost		1*s.* 1·3*d.*–1*s.* 3·8*d.*

Calculating the cost of food for a family of this size for a week and taking into account that the morning meal often consists of food left over from the previous day, and that meat, fish, and certain savouries are only bought occasionally, we arrive at the sum of 8*s.* 9*d.* per week, or 1*s.* 3*d.* per day.

These figures refer to the cost of living in Bida, where the majority of the population have to buy their whole food. But in the village, food other than the staple crops—including fats, fish, and meat—has also to be bought for money. On the other hand, cost of living in the villages is slightly cheaper, as is shown in the following example, which is again calculated for four or five persons, and corresponds to a fairly high standard, comparable to the elaborate Bida 'menu' just quoted:

Morning meal:	corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	0·8*d.*
Midday meal:	corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices	4*d.*
Evening meal:	the same	4*d.*
Total cost		approx. 9*d.*

The standards of living in the village are also lower than in Bida: an average standard in the village would correspond to a low standard in Bida. Dried fish rather than meat is the main item on the menu, meat being eaten not more than once a week or, in poorer households, once in several weeks. Rice, which appears fairly regularly on the Bida menu, is rare in the village; sorghum-beer, on the other hand, which may replace a regular meal in the village, does not figure on the menu of Bida households. But if the very high standard of living characteristic of the Bida upper classes does not occur in the peasant households, the same is true of the other extreme, the very low standard of living; for although I have found many households in or near Bida which live on the very minimum level, these very low standards seem absent in the village.

Let me give a few concrete examples to illustrate the food economy in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 typical Nupe households. They are taken from four households in Bida (Nos. 1 and 2) and in the country (Nos. 3 and 4). 'Menu' No. 1 is that of 262 a wealthy noble household, No. 2 that of an average trader's household, No. 3 that of a prosperous peasant household in Kutigi (household D in the list of household budgets given above), and No. 4 that of an average peasant household in the same village. All four examples were obtained about the same time, the end of May and beginning of June. B = morning meal (i.e. 'breakfast'), M = midday meal, E = evening meal.

No. 1

19.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Rice and fish.
E. Rice and meat with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Rice and meat with shea-butter, onions, and spices.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and chicken.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with greens and spices.

22.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and fish.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

23.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

25.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

No. 2

18.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

19.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Cassava with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.
B. Beans cooked in thick palm-oil, with salt and pepper.
M. Boiled cassava, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.
B. Bean-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, &c.—left over from previous day.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

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22.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil and spices.

23.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.
B. Hot corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Sweet potatoes and palm-oil.
E. Corn porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

Note that ground-nut cakes, though eaten repeatedly for the morning meal in this household, are absent in Menu No. 1. In the latter household it was explained to me that ground-nuts were 'out of season', and no longer good for making cakes—a culinary distinction which the less well-to-do (and less sophisticated) households do not follow.

No. 3

31.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

1.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

2.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Corn-porridge and meat, from previous day.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

3.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Boiled yam with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

4.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Beans with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

5.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

6.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Boiled yam, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

No. 4

13.6.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Cassava.
E. Porridge and fish, with palm-oil (no greens).

14.6.1936.
B. Corn-porridge, from previous day.
M. Corn-porridge, left over from morning meal.
E. Fresh corn-porridge with greens (no fish).

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15.6.1936.
B. Corn-porridge and very little fish (bought for 0·1*d.*), with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
M. Sorghum beer.
E. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.

16.6.1936.
B. Nothing.
M. Raw cassava.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

17.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

18.6.1936.
B. Hot corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Corn-porridge.
E. Corn-porridge, left over from midday meal.

19.6.1936.
B. Cold corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Cassava boiled in water.
E. Corn-porridge and palm-oil (no fish).

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In examining the budgets from the viewpoint of food economy, we find that in this one domain of wants they are already representative of widely varying standards of living. Measuring the produce available for food consumption in the various households against the standard of 12 to 15 bundles (loads) of grain per family of four, or 3 to 4 bundles of grain per head, we obtain the following relations:

Household A: family of four—13 loads, or over 3 loads per head.
Household B: family of three—12 loads, or 4 loads per head.
Household C: family of four—1 load, or ¼ load per head.
Household D: family of seven—43 loads of grain (also yam), or over 6 loads per head.
Household E: family of ten—50 loads, or 5 loads per head.

In other words, we find poverty, i.e. 'insufficiency of means', a certain marginal sufficiency, and also ample and prosperous, standards of living.

We can correlate the prosperity in this sense with certain other social factors.[1] The most prosperous households are found in Trans-Kaduna and in the country north of Bida (e.g. Lemu) where land is fertile and plentiful. Households with a large labour-unit are invariably more prosperous than households with a small labour-unit. The budget which expresses real poverty and insufficiency (C) comes from Bida, and from a small labour group whose efficiency was abnormally reduced: one of the two men who formed the labour unit was old and past work in age, and the other an invalid. I have spoken on different occasions of the detrimental effects upon production of the spreading dissolution of the large labour-unit. That a situation such as this could occur, that this prima facie inefficient productive arrangement which leads an old man and

[1] It will be understood that in this as in similar general statements I am referring not only to the selected examples, representative though they are, but to the whole material which I have examined.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events.

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed.

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú;* Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[422 butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
[492 which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

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with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call
on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [604]
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of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as
he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone.
Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms
according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries,
which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam
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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return. 245

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwã*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kasũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top. [386] [263] [412]

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to 245 252

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved. 621 622 182 631

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country. 621 622 182 794 565 [273]

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil 621 182

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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431 with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and
437 adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its [273] own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

436 How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated?
454 One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

454 Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

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WANTS AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Let me repeat that all these wants and incentives which are realized in the social *élite* also represent common incentives of the society at large, and of every social stratum, unattainable though they may appear in actuality. They remain 'ideals', and the inability to realize them is regarded as a failure, a shortcoming in the socio-economic system. There exist, however, certain exceptions: instances of that divergence, or rift, in the appreciation of certain wants and incentives which divides town and country. Though few in number, they occur in widely different domains of social life—nutrition, recreation, sex morality.

Certain instances concern the form of a want, the conventionalized taste in which it appears, rather than its essence. I have spoken in an earlier context of the different taste in intoxicants typical of town and country. The Bida people prefer palm-wine to the sorghum-beer which is drunk commonly in the village. Palm-wine is the native drink in the oil-palm countries of Southern Nigeria; we also find it, side by side with sorghum-beer, in certain riverain districts of Nupe where the oil-palm is cultivated. Bida itself imports palm-wine from these districts and the south. The adoption of this, as it were, alien drink by the people of Bida was explained to me as being due to the demands of Islam, which forbids fermented drinks like sorghum-beer, but permits palm-wine—at least in the eyes of the Nupe followers of the Prophet. I do not know how far this vindication of palm-wine will pass muster with Mohammedan scholars. But I think we may accept the negative feature of this interpretation, namely, the condemnation on religious grounds of sorghum-beer, which, as we shall see presently, represents a drink closely associated with pagan religious rites. Or I might quote the instance of the different styles of dance and music appreciated in Bida and in the peasant districts: in the town we find the dance of professional women-dancers who are watched by an appreciative audience; in the village the dance of peasant men and women who are performers and public in one.

In other tastes and wants town and country differ fundamentally. Let me quote two striking examples: the attitude towards sexual licence (about which I need say no more here),[1] and the attitude towards travelling. What I have said above about the appreciation of travelling in the social *élite* of the country could be extended to apply to the whole of Bida. To have travelled widely, to have 'seen the world', helps to establish the social standing of the townsman. The interest in travels even outweighs other, similar, interests. When I was collecting Nupe folk-lore I met with almost complete failure in Bida, although the villages had proved a most fruitful field. And this was the explanation which my Bida informants gave me: 'You must go to the villages to hear folk-tales. We Bida people have forgotten them all. No one wants them now. Why? Because when we tell stories, in the evenings, we like to hear about travels, and about other towns; we listen to the people who

[1] See Chaps. IX, XIX.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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15. Vendor of medicines

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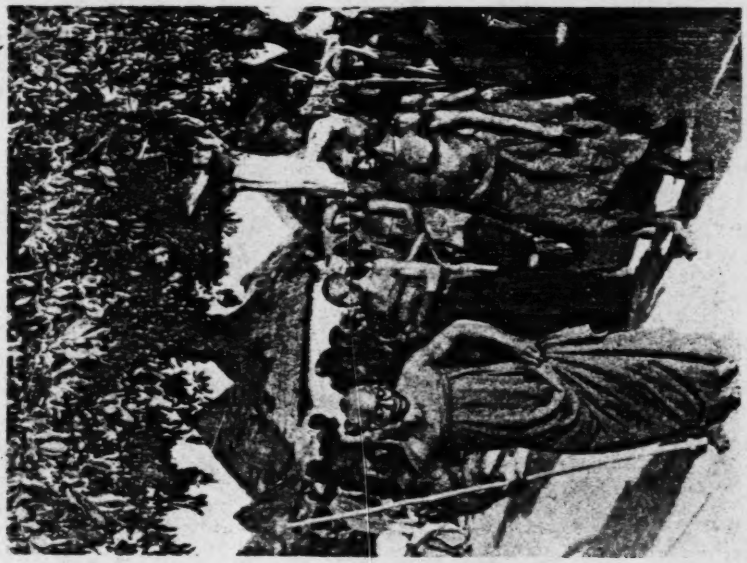

14. *Dzakó* dance

[p. 86(B)]

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the second for the chief, who was worried by the numerous cases of illness in the village; and the third for a young man who sacrificed a fowl so that his wife might bear a child. We note that the *tídzana* is appealed to for much the same reason as the *ketsá*; let me note also that the third suppliant came of a family which 'owned' a particular medicine reputed to cure sterility, even though he himself had invoked the sacred chain instead. In his case as in all others the sacrifice had been indicated by the diviners, who are the final judges of the appropriate supernatural remedy.

I mentioned before that the Chain of Tsoede formerly also served as an ordeal of deadly efficacy and as an instrument of execution.[1] It may seem puzzling that a tool of death should be believed to restore health and fertility. Yet even as a tool of death the Chain of Tsoede is a *kuti*; indeed, it is used to kill because it has the supernatural power also to purify the executioner and sanctify the deed. And as the *kuti* is always a force, divine in origin and unspecific in nature, so it can, by definition, be made to do many things.

We may add the ritual *ndáduma* to this list of movable rites although it figures equally among the fixed ceremonials. In its movable form, it is concerned with the rise and fall of the river and is performed when the seasonal floods are late or of threatening dimensions (though not sufficiently grave to warrant the performance of the *ketsá*). The name of the ritual, 'Father Niger', refers to a whole species of spirits inhabiting various localities on the river. The most powerful of these river spirits is said to live at Bazumagi, a small village up-river from Jebba. Here the local priest performs a special version of the ceremonial, which takes place only when ordered by the *Kuta* of the Kede. In the course of this ceremonial the priest wades into the river and throws a stone ashore, the place where the stone drops being believed to show that year's highwater mark. In Jebba, the ritual is in the hands of the *Tswanya*, who sacrifices a white cock, some beer, and a little honey (a favourite food of all river spirits). I did not witness the movable ritual but only the fixed version, which is the last in the cycle of rites falling in the ninth month; it was performed on 5th December, succeeding the ritual *dzakó* by two days. The actual observance, however, is the same in both rituals, though the fixed form bears not only on the river floods, but also, more generally, on health, prosperity, and childbirth in the village. In neither case can the *ndáduma* be made to serve the private interests of individuals or

[1] See above, p. 32.—The name *tídzana* is said to mean 'head (*eti*) of Dzana', Dzana being the name of the legendary first victim of this method of execution.

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V

MEDICINE

I. RATIONAL AND MYSTICAL PROCEDURES

755 757 THE term 'medicine' has been adopted mainly because it is simple and convenient without distorting too much the meaning of the Nupe word *cigbe*. The English equivalent, however, does not quite render the implications of the vernacular concept; for though the latter includes typical remedies, that is, materials applied for a strictly therapeutic purpose (as the Nupe see it), it equally includes materials whose alleged efficacy goes far beyond the treatment of ailments. In this latter sense *cigbe* is a substance or object which exercises remote and miraculous effects upon the efficacy of other objects, for example, tools or weapons, upon the outcome of human efforts of all kinds, and upon human fate in general. The correct though clumsy translation, then, would be 'efficacious substance' or 'force-in-substance' (as *kuti* meant 'force-in-ritual').

755 757 278 Indeed, the important thing about *cigbe* is that it is always a substance, compounded of natural materials which anyone in possession of the recipe can collect and process by relatively simple procedures such as pulverizing, boiling, mixing, or charring. Most Nupe, incidentally, maintain that the essential ingredients of *cigbe* are always roots of trees.[1] It is tempting to conclude that here the empirical knowledge of the processes of plant growth has led to the assumption of some inherent but communicable force stored up in the roots of plants and trees. Which assumption would fit in well with the idea that all forms of illness connote a weakening of the life soul. But no one theorizes on these lines. Altogether, Nupe medicine shows little concern with theory, metaphysical or otherwise. As regards the alleged importance of roots, the various *cigbe* recipes show that herbs, grasses, the leaves of trees, or animal matter are employed as often. The power of *cigbe*, then, lies in materials of almost any sort if suitably processed and combined, and the knowledge of *cigbe* is precisely this skill of 'using ingredients'.[1]

[1] Two informants, in fact, assured me that the very word *cigbe* was a contraction of *cigbā gbere*, 'tree root'.

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755 Let me summarize. By our criteria of rational and mystical
757 intent the whole range of non-therapeutic *cigbe* together with a
813 good portion of the therapeutic ones would fall in the category of transcendental practices (religious or 'magical'); while only the rest of the cures proper, good, bad, and indifferent, would belong on the side of reason or near-reason. And since a great many of the cures in the former category are 'objectively' as futile or absurd as the non-therapeutic variety, it may be said that the Nupe tend to treat as 'magical' what is, by all standards, magical and to aim at miraculous effects by means openly designed for miracles.

2. PHARMACOPOEIA NUPEANA

757 It seems convenient to insert here a fuller description of Nupe
278 medicines and medical (or pseudo-medical) treatments. Their
759 therapeutic or non-therapeutic character will become clear from the description, as will also the share of 'irrational' or mystical observances. We must, however, anticipate the various classes of medicine experts and briefly state their respective specialities. First, we have the guild of barber doctors, who are all Mohammedans and whose craft is entirely therapeutic and would-be empirical; a few minor instances of 'ritualization' do not contradict the generally rational intent. Secondly, there is the corresponding and predominantly pagan order of *cigbeciłi* or *bociłi* ('medicine-men'), whose practice, both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, invariably betrays mystical intent. Thirdly, there are a few individual experts who belong to neither organization and may employ any kind of *cigbe*. Lastly, we shall meet with the owners of hereditary medicines, vested in the lineage or (in Nupe parlance) 'house'; these are both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, and always conspicuously mystical. In one isolated case a conspicuously 'mystical' medicine is owned by a whole community. Let me also recall that some medical practitioners are diviners at the same time, though there is no firmer link between the two professions.

757 These are some of the remedies known to the barber-doctors of
278 Bida. Stomach trouble is treated by means of various potions: one consists of the infusion of a certain swamp plant; another, of the infusion of the charred bark of the oil-palm, sheanut tree or locust-bean tree, mixed with natron;[1] a third, of the pounded roots of a certain tree, mixed with powdered eggshell, dried in the sun and then taken with water. Light headache is cured by burning a certain common plant and making the patient inhale the fumes,

[1] The 'natron' is natural carbonate of soda from Lake Chad which is on sale in all Nupe markets.

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or by preparing a potion from bits of earth extracted from a 757
termite mound. For severe headache one applies an ointment to
the eyes, compounded of the dried kernels of a fruit tree, the bark 278
from the roots of another, cloves, and powdered antimony. Sometimes headache is treated quasi-surgically, by a species of bleeding; the barber makes a number of fine incisions into the patient's forehead and then rubs a paste of dried locust-beans and natron into the cuts. The counter-irritation thus induced may well offer a temporary relief, though the bleeding itself is probably too slight to have any effect; the cure, however, has an odd conclusion, the patient's head being knocked gently three times against the wall.

Ulcers and wounds are treated with powdered bark or roots, 752
used either dry or damp, and left on the wound for two to three 278
days. Broken limbs are first massaged with a salve made of palm-oil and the dried and powdered leaves of a certain tree (another remedy including dirt from a hen house and charred earth from a termite mound), after which one applies a ligature of rope, using four sticks as splints. The ligature is removed after three days, but the massage with the ointment is continued. If the fracture does not heal, this treatment is followed up with a 'stronger' one, to wit, a massage with snake poison. For smallpox one gives a potion 757
made of the pods of a certain vine growing in the bush. There is 278
also a 'prophylactic' treatment, applied when an epidemic is
threatening; it consists either in drinking an infusion of the [751]
bark of the locust-bean tree, boiled together with some grains of sorghum or millet, or in fumigating the house, at night, by burning certain herbs. Pounded hibiscus seeds, taken like snuff, are given to patients suffering from asthma. For fever accompanied by rigor (malaria?) one drinks the boiled juice of the pawpaw mixed with natron; a more 'magical' cure consists in inhalations of the fumes from three ingredients burned together in an old, broken pot (never a new one)—a powdered herb, the swamp plant mentioned before, and twigs taken from a vulture's nest. We shall meet again with this predilection for old pots when discussing the medicines of the *cigbeci* experts; the vulture plays a part also in another remedy of the barber-doctors, applied to sore eyes: they are bathed in ash-water mixed with a pulverized vulture's leg. Other herbal concoctions are used in the treatment of gonorrhœa (called *tuwashi*), syphilis (called *tunjeri*), and sleeping sickness; these remedies are similar in that the first two are said to increase the typical secretion until 'the whole disease leaves the body', while the last brings on diarrhœa, the germs of the disease being passed with the stool. Lunacy of a non-violent nature may be treated by means of inhalations, repeated several times day and night, or by

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757 means of a potion. For the inhalation one uses leaf-tips of the oil-
palm, hair of a she-goat, and the pulverized genitals of a he-goat,
278 all burned together in a pot; the potion is made of the sap of a
certain 'male' shrub (that is, the fruitless variety, called *darabagi*,
'male *dara*'), the charred bark of another, mixed with natron. The
patient, having been treated in this fashion, is said to calm down
and eventually to recover, though the cure can never be certain.
For violent and dangerous attacks there is no agreed cure. The
barber-doctors, in fact, do not treat this form of insanity at all,
but other people sometimes know a treatment, though it is always
said to be difficult and uncertain. Thus one informant suggested
that the patients must be made to fast until they calm down; and
another recommended flogging (a treatment apparently widely
applied in Yoruba country).[1]

757 A final group of medicines bears on conception and virility.
278 Dried cocoyam, the charred bark of the '*savi* tree, and onions,
842 pounded and taken in water, are said to constitute a powerful
[832] aphrodisiac. Fertility of women is ensured by a potion, drunk the
morning before cohabitation, made of an infusion of leaves of the
tamarind tree mixed with natron. Delivery is facilitated by rub-
bing the womb with three herbs after they have been soaked in
water for a night. There are also two 'contraceptive' medicines,
one having a temporary effect only, the other believed to cause
permanent barrenness. The former consists of two powdered herbs,
mixed with bits of grass from a termite mound, and taken with
water; the latter, of the charred stalk and leaves of a young cassava
plant, mixed with henna root and natron, boiled in water, and
drunk. The knowledge, incidentally, of the permanent 'contrace-
tive' is claimed to be purely platonic; the Bida practitioner at
least has no chance of applying it in practice, not because he is
reluctant to do so or because the Bida women avoid these shameful
practices, but because they would not risk their reputation by thus
openly consulting a 'doctor' in the town. Instead, my informants
assured me, they go to 'medicine-men' in the villages, where they
are unknown and their secret will be safe. A secret in fact it is;
and here we meet with a first, though fairly mild, instance of
reprehensible medicines, employed for immoral ends.

757 This list is far from complete, omitting, especially, the many
variants of the same kind of cure.[2] The barber-doctors do not be-
759 lieve in specifics in the strict sense of the word; rather, there are
several treatments for each ailment, and different practitioners

[1] The informant in question came, in fact, from Shari, a village on the border of Nupe and Yoruba.

[2] I recorded altogether thirty-four remedies known to barber-doctors, which number is probably fairly exhaustive.

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will often know and apply different ones. Also, some specialize in 757
potions or in poultices and lotions; others prefer treatment by
means of inhalations, which the Nupe call *turare* (a Hausa word, 759
meaning 'scent' or 'fumigation'). Certain more versatile experts know several remedies for the same illness, which they would try out one after the other. The position is summed up in this statement of a famous Bida 'doctor': 'Sometimes one medicine proves sufficient; but there is only one way of discovering the right one—to experiment and trust in God.' Certain barber-doctors, too, are specialists in particular diseases and are known as such. Thus only two men in Bida knew how to treat lunacy and only one Bida barber (whom I met in Ibadan, where he was staying at the time) knew how to treat sleeping sickness; similarly, there were specialists for venereal diseases, for eye complaints, and so forth. For certain ailments there are no treatments; their list includes blindness, idiocy, leprosy, elephantiasis, deafness, 'incurable syphilis'; and, oddly enough, the common cold; my informants made it quite clear that the last was too trifling a complaint to deserve the attention of 'doctors'.

As we have seen, surgical treatments are almost entirely absent, [752]
and the use of splints in fractures is considered no more important
than the application of some 'strong' salve or ointment. The 757
barbers, in fact, herbalists at heart, deprecate the 'use of the knife' and emphatically deny its value. Said the head of the barbers' guild: 'The knife begets pain; how could it cure?' Though the same few herbs or plants appear in the majority of remedies, this does not mean that they alone have curative properties. On the contrary, it is considered that all plants contain some medicine, even if its nature or extraction are not known. It is considered equally certain that this medical knowledge, far from being static, is growing all the time, so that the barbers today possess medicines unknown even a short time ago. Once more, this is a question of experimenting 'with the help of God', and there are certain rough rules how to proceed. One tries first the bark of a plant or tree not hitherto used; if this proves worthless, one tries the roots, and finally the leaves or fruits. As to why certain parts of plants should contain *cigbe* and others not, there is no answer; or rather the usual answer is '*cigbe u de 'tsu a*', 'medicines have no king' (that is, follow no proclaimed law): God has made them so, and men can only hope to learn by trial and error or by accepting the wisdom of others.

A strikingly large number of remedies employ plant parasites 757
(called *etú*), and their special medicinal properties are strongly
emphasized. If the alien growth of the parasites once suggested to 278
the people some affinity with the nature of diseases and hence a

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757 possible application of the principle 'like cures like', no one today
278 is aware of this notion. Nor are there any 'theories' as regards such abstruse ingredients as eggshells, the excreta of fowls, twigs from the nest of vultures, or grass from inside an ant-heap. Yet it is also difficult to see how the precept, 'experiment with the help of God', can have led to these peculiar discoveries. If they are 'superstitions', they are not, like other superstitions, the degraded offspring of more elaborate mystic or cosmological speculations. The treatment of lunacy, with its 'male' and 'female' ingredients, seems to suggest something of the kind; but there is no clear link between this cure and that other idea, that lunacy is a residue of 'male' sleeping sickness.[1] And in all the other fantastic remedies their intellectual antecedents are simply not traceable, not even to legends or folk-tales. Perhaps the remedies have been adopted, more or less blindly, from other groups and countries, on some of those informative travels of which the barber-doctors boast. As they stand, they are merely crude and absurd attempts at 'empirical' treatment, instances of that 'blundering' I spoke of before.

278 Any of the medicines just described might equally be the pro-
755 duct of the *cigbeciži*, and a number are in fact identical. But unlike
[759] the barber-doctors, the *cigbeciži* also employ the fully irrational, non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, and even their remedies proper, salves, potions, and the like, are much more often based on recipes of an incongruous and abstruse kind.[2] Thus a 'strong' potion taken for intestinal troubles includes the fluid extracted from the gall-bladder of snakes, a potion alleged to cure smallpox contains a boiled lizard tail, and an ointment for rheumatic pains is composed, among other things, of powdered potsherds which must be obtained from old pots found lying about with the broken side up, any other position rendering the remedy worthless.

While these recipes seem as random and arbitrary as the more abstruse examples of the barber-doctors' art, others betray some underlying 'theory', some vague and often uncertain reasoning from analogy or from the principle 'like cures like'. Thus one
[842] expert had a cure for impotence consisting of a potion whose ingredients included, besides various roots and two kinds of pepper, also the powdered genitals of a he-goat.[3] A contraceptive credited with lasting effect is concocted from the roots of the

[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Of the twenty-two *cigbeci* medicines I recorded fifteen belonged to that category, while the corresponding proportion in the case of the barbers' remedies was six in thirty-four.

[3] I have this incongruous evidence for the efficacy of the treatment. My servant, who was with me when I visited the expert, at once bought and drunk the potion to increase his virility. The next day I had to doctor him for severe indigestion.

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tamarind tree, leaves of baobab, sorghum stalks, and the skin of a fish said to 'die at once when you hold it in your hand', the last ingredient being the most important. Another, temporary, contraceptive is prepared with grass taken from an ant-heap which must have three round mounds and must be broken open with the heel. The magic belt mentioned before, said to prevent pregnancy, is made of leather into which these two ingredients are sewn—hair from the tail of a mule and seeds from locust-beans 'forgotten' (i.e. overlooked) at the harvest. The reasoning from analogy is fairly obvious in the recipe for impotence and in the last appliance. In the lasting contraceptive the underlying 'theory' seems to rest upon this argument: since a freshly caught fish stands for fertility (in dream interpretation), a fish that 'dies at once' might plausibly be identified with its destruction. And of ants, which figure in the temporary contraceptive, it is said that 'one does not know their father and mother'; so that a medicine derived from ants would seem to promise precisely what its users desire. The former 'theory' is my own inference, while the latter, as we shall see, is explicitly mentioned. But it is incomplete apart from being abstruse; for it fails to account for the three mounds that are required and for the peculiar method of opening the ant-heap; nor yet does it state why grass taken from an ant-heap should, in other remedies, serve quite a different purpose.

The moral attitude of the *cigbeciki* towards such dubious practices as facilitating contraception and sterility differs considerably from that of the barber-doctors. While the latter simply claim that they have no chance of dispensing these remedies and shift the blame on their pagan colleagues, these both admit dealing in them and try to justify their actions. They maintain that they dispense these medicines only rarely and in deserving cases. At least, this is true of the medicine alleged to procure permanent sterility; the expert in question assured me that he had given it only once, out of pity, to a woman whose husband was forcing her to sleep with him while her first-born had not yet been weaned. In the case of the temporary expedients the conscience of the *cigbeciki* is more easily satisfied; they merely put up the price for frivolous clients, that is, for 'rich people who do not want children'. As a corrollary, the medicine for impotence is similarly expensive (costing as much as ten shillings), not only because it is difficult to prepare, but because it is something of a luxury; for the expert argued that since this remedy did not 'save people from death' but afforded them 'enjoyment' it was worth paying for. He was fairminded enough to add that he would lower the price in the case of poor clients.

As regards the non-therapeutic medicines, they are credited

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757 and neighbours first before consulting the accredited experts. One
[431] does not pay in money for this kind of assistance, but only offers a small return gift of kolanuts or food. The household remedies are mainly laxatives, or cures for toothache, headache, and slight wounds or bruises, though they include also certain crude treatments to induce abortion or prevent pregnancy—by sucking frogs or drinking the blood from the afterbirth. Normally, one uses infusions of common plants, ash-water or natron (both known as laxatives), ointments made of palm-oil or sheanut-butter, or damp earth (applied to cuts and the like); the more complex herbal concoctions and the use of bark and roots, which make up the *cigbe* proper, are entirely absent.

Certain individuals, are known to possess this more 'professional' knowledge as well. Like the barbers, they apply therapeutic treatments in a profane and would-be rational manner, and like the *cigbeci*, practise the non-therapeutic variety with more or less conspicuous mystical intent. Their skill extends to remedies alleged to increase virility and facilitate pregnancy, though contraceptives are outside the scope of the individual practitioner. 'Fantastic' treatments, however, are not. We already mentioned one such cure meant to remove rheumatic pains through 'drawing them from the body'. Two further treatments are of special interest, one because it is empirically sound, the other because it is surgical as well as daring and involves a clear apprehension of the symptoms of a relatively obscure disease. The first example con-
• [278] cerns the use of the severely toxic *datura stramonium*. Many Nupe are aware of the effect of the seeds or powdered leaves which produce stupor and insensitiveness, and the experts prescribe small doses, taken in water, as a cure for pains; with less justification, they also recommend the external application of the leaves, soaked in ash-water and mixed with sheanut butter, for aching limbs. The
757 second example is an alleged cure for sleeping sickness, which must
752 be applied in the early stages of the disease, recognized by the swelling of the neck glands. I only met one expert who knew of this treatment, a man from Mokwa, whose repute had spread far and wide. The surgical treatment involves a deep incision in the skin above the glands, charred leaves of a bean variety being rubbed into the wound; the leaves are said to have a caustic effect so that, when the treatment is repeated twice daily for a week, the glands themselves can be removed. As an after-treatment the patient is given an infusion of bark and roots to drink, and a coarse grass and fish to eat. The expert did not claim that his cure was always effective: it would still depend on 'God's will'; but he showed me a man, bearing the scars of the operation, who, he claimed, had completely recovered.

[i.e., simple medicinal treatments. - Analyst]

CULTS[7]

Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

794 782 The Ebe have a *Ikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konú of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *nddduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsá* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[8]

794 793 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility, crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnuhó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[9]

278 789 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–5; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–3; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[8] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[9] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–42 and *passim*.

278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciži*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciži*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the
789 barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciži* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciži* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[16] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[24]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[16] See below.
[24] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 36–67.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

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Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

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[23] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[24] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–9; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 288–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

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'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and 651
tunga which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwakí*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the [436]
egba; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 [285]
mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order 632
in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the 642
right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, 631
relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These 651
fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king 534
after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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285 the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for
435 from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

434 If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household
463 groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and
592 houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s*. to 15*s*., the material costing 5*s*.; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d*. and 3*d*. This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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22. The *Sagi* of Kpatsuwa

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23. *Gugu* dance of the Yoruba

[p. 134 (B)]

467 286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[23] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 467 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[24]

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[24] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[25] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–9; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[26] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 296–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 634
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never
marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do
so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [186]
permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida,
whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [481]
and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285]
Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771]
rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. [782]
The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker [427] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became [357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and 28½ there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven [804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except 443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

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cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucd*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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AN OLD POTTER WOMAN

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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organised in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).[31]

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudaculi*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[32]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three "wards" of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a "closed" craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[33]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for "copper"), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[34]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *ede'uciki*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[31] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[32] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[33] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[34] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

467 286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 467 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

323 467 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 467 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or [285] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the [282] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 759 467 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 535 467 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–9; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

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467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[50]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[51]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[352] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konni* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[52]

41 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[53]

[50] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[51] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[52] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[53] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" — A Bida brass spinning toy.

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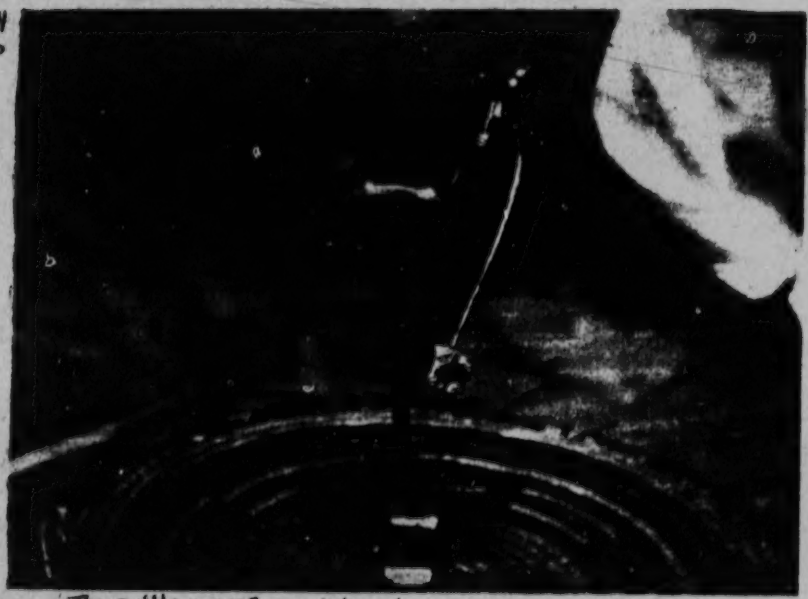

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The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

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This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

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This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

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The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciši*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker
[927] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became
[357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and
28½ there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven
[804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except
443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucd*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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288 apprentices. This source of income, formerly quite considerable, disappeared when weaving became less profitable. Young boys of about 10 years, mostly sons of farmers, were the pupils; they stayed with the weaver for from four to five years, and the work which they produced during the time of their apprenticeship belonged to their master; when their training was completed the parents of the pupil would bring one bundle of corn as payment.

The loose organization of the labour-unit has its counterpart in the organization of the profession at large. Among the weavers no co-operation on a larger scale exists. We have even seen that individuals are quite ready to abandon the profession for other, more attractive, work—an attitude unprecedented among blacksmiths or glass-workers. Yet the symbols of guild organization, the guild ranks, are still preserved. Each group of weavers has its titled guild-head: the head of the Salu (Yagba) weavers is called *Majī*, and the head of the Yoruba weavers *Leshe*. He is also regarded as the head of all *konú* weavers in Nupe, and used to receive from them small annual gifts or tributes. But this common allegiance and co-operation reflects less the professional union than the tribal and cultural unity of these scattered Yoruba groups in Nupe country. The head of the Nupe group of weavers in Bida has no official title but is called simply *Ndakó*, Grandfather. The position of the group-head carries to-day none of the influence and authority which characterizes the guild-heads of other crafts; he neither receives gifts from the fellow craftsmen nor is he expected to advise or help them in their work. As in all other guild-organized crafts the official position of the guild-heads of the weavers was based originally on their role as intermediaries between the king and the craftsmen of Bida. But this role has lost very early all practical importance—earlier than it did in the other Nupe crafts. To quote the guild-head of the Yagba weavers: '*Etsu* Masaba still used to come to our workshops and order cloth personally from the *Majī*. But *Etsu* Umaru, who came after him, already bought what he needed on the market, and so did all the later kings of Nupe.'

BEADWORKERS

As a last example of guild-organized industries I will describe the organization of the beadworkers in Bida. Their craft shows certain specific features which make it specially interesting and distinguish it from the other crafts of Nupe. Beadworking represents, first of all, a typical refining industry, which involves a system of re-exportation comparable only to the most complex forms of economic enterprise found in Western civilization. It involves further the use of money capital and credit operations on a scale unparalleled in Nupe industry. It is, finally, a pure luxury industry, producing more expensive goods than either glass- or brass-work. These various factors have contributed to making the beadworking industry of Bida extremely vulnerable; it has suffered more than the other crafts from the economic stress of the recent years and, a significant result of this, presents the picture of a complete disintegration of co-operative production.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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TWO VILLAGE CHIEFS

[facing p. 46]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 chiefly political, economic, occupational, and educational.[1] But so is the widest constellation defined on the basis of similarity or diversity of conduct—culture. The essence of social class lies in the specific fashion in which these various factors appear combined. To understand it fully we must view social class under two aspects. The first is that of firmly established and comparatively permanent differences in actual conduct—differences in standards of living, in habitual behaviour, occupation, and moral values.[2] The second aspect is that of the social agency which attaches to these differences of conduct the index 'inferior' or 'superior', and makes them reflect different grades on a common scale of values. Were we dealing only with differences of the first order we should be describing merely different cultural groups in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different customs are observed and different values valid. What turns mere cultural differences into differences of conduct typical of social class is the loss or absence of their self-contained and largely unconscious nature. Their permanence is no longer, as it were, self-chosen. The 'cultural' differences are now conceived of as results of unequal advantage and opportunity, and they are never allowed to lose their significance as different grades in the 'common scale'. It lies in the nature of things that this common scale, which depends essentially on the demonstrability of unequal opportunities, should rest above all on political and economic factors. The essence of class (as of any group) lies in the consciousness of group membership; the consciousness of class is the consciousness of this 'common scale of values'.

Let us examine first the social mechanism which maintains and propagates the consciousness of the common scale. It is essentially an educational mechanism (in the widest sense of the word). While perpetuating the various cultural traits characteristic of social class it perpetuates at the same time the common perspective from which these traits are set off as traits valued more or less highly by the society. One of the most efficient instruments of this mechanism is the convention of class symbolism and class etiquette, which not only regulates the intercourse between the classes, but also serves to demonstrate the reality of class barriers.

Nupe society is plentiful in such symbols of class distinction. The collective name for nobility, *rowni*, 'turban', marks already one of these outward signs of class: it refers to the turban of glazed blue cloth which only members of the nobility may wear. Another prerogative of rank is the right to carry a sword, or rather, have it carried by one's swordbearer, the *zagi* (lit. 'little person', i.e. 'page'), and to appear on horseback on all official occasions. With regard to these emblems of rank the Nupe have kept abreast of the times: a novel symbol of status is an alarum clock, put in a little wooden case, which body-servants of men of rank carry after their masters.

[291]

[1] M. Ginsberg, *Sociology*, 1934, p. 162.

[2] Cf. M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 159: 'To the outward observer class is primarily a matter of behaviour, speech, dress, education, and especially habits of social intercourse.'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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COURT HOUSE IN BIDA

THE *ALKALI* OF MOKWA

[Facing p. 170]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[805] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [825] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [841] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from [842] the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [857] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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EFAKÓ WORK ON A FARM NEAR BIDA

[134]

FARMING *EGBE*

[Facing p. 248]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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MAT-WEAVERS ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE FARM

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A MACHINE TAILOR

[facing p. 290]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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AN OLD POTTER WOMAN

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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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ONE OF THE *ETSU*'S *KAKATI* PLAYERS

A PROFESSIONAL SINGER WITH HER BAND

[facing p. 300]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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A BIDA MALLAM AND ONE OF HIS PUPILS

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AN AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATION DANCE

[facing p. 382]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

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7. *Nddduma* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]

6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(R)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

20. A noted medicine expert and 'wise man' from Jebba

21. The dance of the *ndakó gboyá*

[p. 134 (a)]
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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

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22. The *Sagi* of Kpatsuwa

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23. *Gugu* dance of the Yoruba

[p. 134 (B)]

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: TRIBAL MARKS: DRESS

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

BIRTH

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

CIRCUMCISION

304 Circumcision (*zuy'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually, between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–16
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 116.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

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Bangles and bracelets of metal and glass,
soap spoons of aluminium, all made in Bida

Glass-makers of Bida

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Workers in brass and silver. The goat-skin bellows are similar to those of the glass-makers

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516
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[P. 142]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

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Punching designs on brass bowls.
No trace of the pattern is made before the punch work starts

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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778

FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GBEBE, ONE OF THE LNDU VILLAGES.

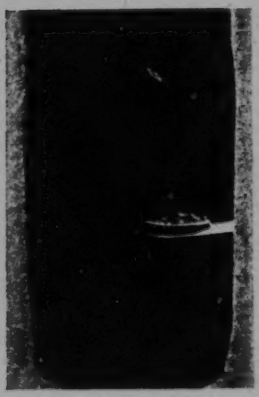

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TROKIB."

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FIG. 3. THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES AT JEBBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH *Ikoi* TROKIB.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

[Facing page 129]

Tiv FF57
Fulani MS11
Kanuri MS14
Nupe FF62

H
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516

T
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291
482

K
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N
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FIG. 11—Hausa villagers, Zaria Province. The Hausa are numerically the major tribal group in the Region; racially, they show a predominance of savanna Negro elements.

FIG. 12—A pagan hunter of the Jos Plateau. These primitive people appear to have some Negrito elements.

FIG. 13—Nupe villagers, Niger Province. This group from one small village reflects racial complexity of parts of the Region—all savanna Negro, rocky forest Negro, and persons of Arab descent.

FIG. 14—Tiv of Benue Province. The Tiv, predominant people of the Middle Belt, appear to have racial affinities with the peoples of the southeastern forest rather than with the peoples of the northern plains.

FIG. 15—A Kanuri of Borno Province. The Kanuri are a hybrid group, of mixed Negro-Caucasian origin.

FIG. 16—Fulani of the Bauchi region. Fulani ancestry is Caucasian, reflected in brown skin, wavy hair, and narrow nose. Today they show results of intermarriage with Negro neighbors.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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THE *ETSU* NUPE

[facing p. i]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. 852
The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is 304
the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen.

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial 585
is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into
three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or [292]
'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and [302]
don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests.

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother 585
and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her
future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the 797
sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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THE *ETSU* NUPE

[facing p. i]

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One piece of

cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material 443
is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* 435
a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the
cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold 434
for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a
profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing 294
together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-
length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into 443
caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) 435
each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five 434
days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*,
are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of
the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.*
and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last
kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand,
is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, [554]
my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for
trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order
to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolu-
tion of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the
group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards
the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the
ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed 286
cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material
costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth 435
that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a 434
cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same
kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content
with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for
2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.*
instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village
weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The
village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye
instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this
inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving.
They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida
craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this
cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy
customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than
the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive
work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or
Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-
woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of sup- 288
porting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group prac- 592
tised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this
additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take 467
part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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294 They make as much as 1s. or 2s. on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4s. Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d*. to 4*d*. a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-
[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2
435 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-
294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his
593 mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never
[431] more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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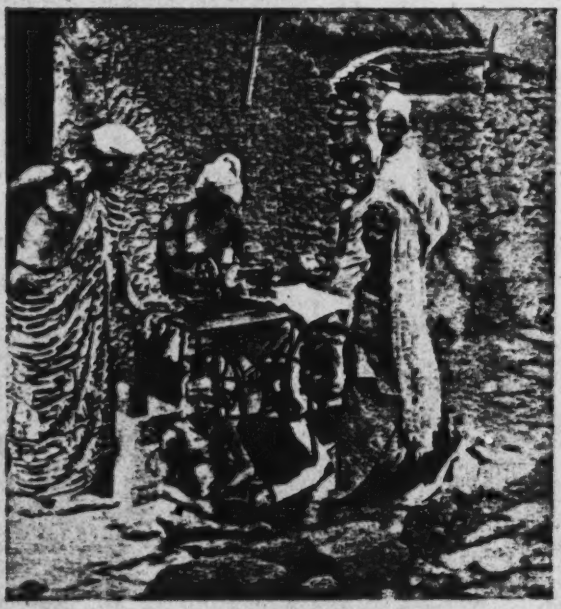
MAT-WEAVERS ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE FARM



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A MACHINE TAILOR

[facing p. 290]

467
286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists
467 of the " refining " of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

323 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the
467 guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same house-
467 hold may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a " shape " of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a " lazy " occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or
[285] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the
[282] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut
759 the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger
467 nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a " closed " craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also " *medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system
535 of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for
467 ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s*. in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d*. per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s*. will fetch 10*s*. as the finished article; 2*d*. to 3*d*. go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s*. 8*d*. (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s*. 2*d*. on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bangles and bracelets of metal and glass, soup spoons of aluminium, all made in Bida

Glass-makers of Bida

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1956

FF52 Nupe FF52

Bida

"King of the dancers"—
a Bida brass spinning toy

Making a glass bangle. The bellows man sits behind the central furnace

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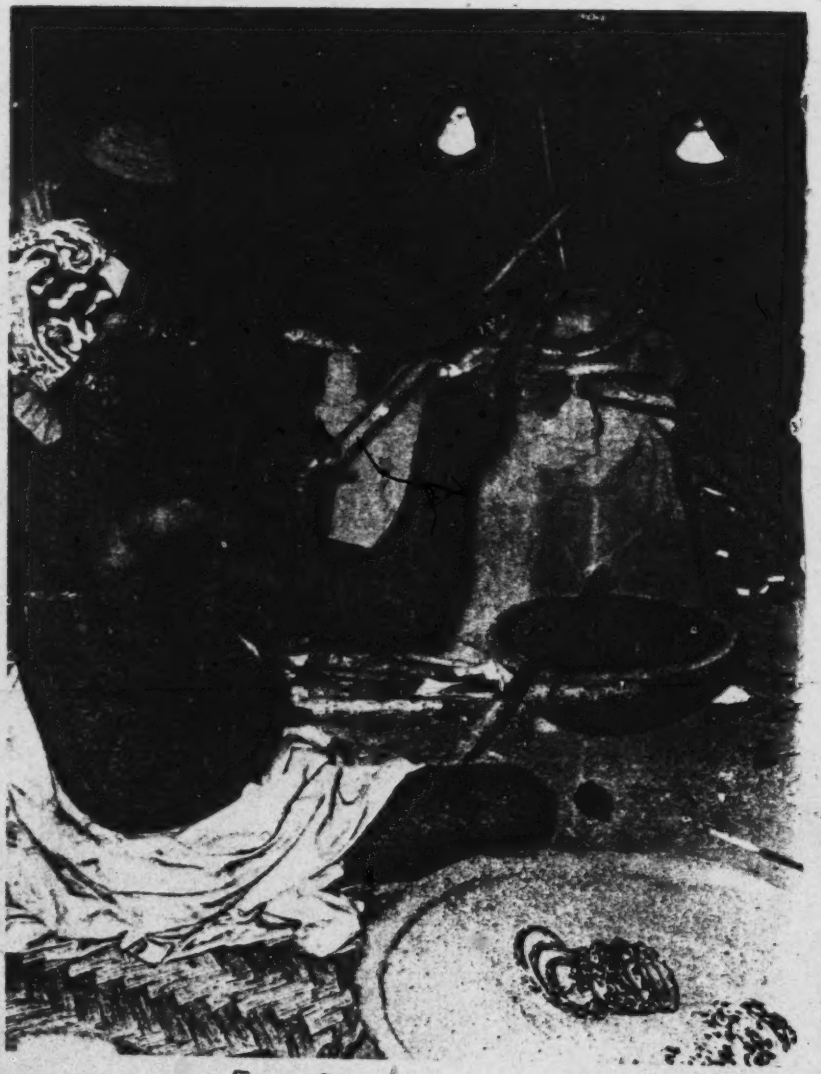

[p. 140]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries.

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323 with the hands, in an up-and-down movement, for minutes on end with the speed and beat of a slow-running Diesel. The strength and stamina required for this job in the small, round entrance-houses to Bida compounds where these craftsmen work, must be colossal.

The glass-maker himself, a senior craftsman, throws a few handsful of dried wood into the furnace, the pump-man pumps, and soon a metal rod is brought to white heat. The end of this rod is then stuck into a few pieces of broken bottle which are then held in the flame until they begin to melt and become a shapeless but easily-workable mass.

Two rods are then used to separate a small lump of the half-molten glass. The lump is pierced and then waved round and round, still in the flame, until a jointless, glass bangle has been made. White patterns in the glass are made by the addition of white, liquid clay early in the spinning process.

[Text continues on p.142 -- Analyst]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization. 852 553

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services 852 553 305 [302 304]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen. 852 304

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests. 585 [292] [302]

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step. 585 797

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably so, that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, 184 are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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619 in fact, doubtful if a tribe not backed by any political organization could make proselytes on any larger scale.) Later we shall see more clearly
563 how it happens that tribe and kingdom become, for the people, one and the same thing. But the mark of the 'theoretical' tribal distinction is not obscured completely. It is visible in the qualified adoption of these new 'naturalized' sections. They 'have become Nupe'; but they are still called 'Gbari slaves' or Yoruba-Nupe. And perhaps now, since the expanding Nupe kingdom no longer exists, there will be no thirteenth sub-tribe of Kakanda-Nupe, after all.

THE SUB-TRIBE

184 The fact of common origin which is excluded from the concept of the tribe becomes an essential element in the definition of the sub-tribe. The sub-tribe is thus not a 'tribe' on a smaller scale; it differs essentially from the wider unit of the tribe. If the Nupe tribe possesses no external symbols, costumes, or body markings, such emblems exist to some extent for the sub-tribe. The Nupe practise body and face markings, [304] *etsa*, 'patterns', which are cut into the skin of newborn babies, male and female, and which differ in the different sub-tribes.[1] The sub-tribe, too, has its ideology in which the conception of unity and differentiation from other groups is expressed. The ideological criteria are two: one we have just discussed, the unity of origin and of historical continuity. The other is, again, the criterion of cultural unity. But the physical fact of the smallness of the group as compared with the tribe makes 'culture' here a more concrete, so to speak more concentrated reality. No Nupe term which corresponds to our 'sub-tribe' or 'section' exists. The Nupe refer to the various sub-tribes as to 'lands', they speak of *kin* Beni, land of the Beni, or *kin* Kusopa, land of the Kusopa, and even of *kin* Kyedye, land of the Kyedye, a 'land' which consists of a narrow strip of territory running across river banks and islets. The sub-tribe is thus, like the tribe, a territorial unit. But again the fact of physical size changes the meaning of the concept. The smaller locality is, in fact, more of one 'land'; it implies a more unified environment. This is partly expressed already in the names of the sub-tribes, some of which refer to the nature of the environment in which the group lives and to the nature of the occupation by which it earns its livelihood. The Bataci or Marsh Dwellers are a group of marsh-land farmers and fishermen whose hunting-grounds are the pools and backwaters of the Niger. The Kusopa or Forest Tenders work the famous kola-nut plantations of Laboži and

king of Nupe), or explained the development as due to the fact that '*one Etsu* established his rule (or law) over the whole country'.

[1] I must add, however, that even here these external symbols of group unity are not quite unequivocal. Fashion is changing the markings to-day—and there is no reason to assume that this has not always been so. I have seen fathers and sons whose faces bore different markings. The markings of the Bida people, like other fashions associated with the capital of the kingdom, have been adopted by the people of the districts. And the modern Bida and Beni markings are in turn said to have been adopted originally from the Yoruba, whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found 'nicer' than their own crude slashes. (See Appendix II.)

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565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpā* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciśi* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciśi* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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APPENDIX II

TRIBAL MARKS OF NUPE SUB-TRIBES

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BENI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks
(i.e. Bida marks): and

BENU sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

'NUPE ZAM' of Kutigi:
Traditional marks: and

Modern marks:

KUSOPA sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

DIBO sub-tribe: and

GBEDEGI sub-tribe:

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KYEDYE sub-tribe:

EBAGI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: very mixed. Have adopted Bida and Kutigi marks.

BASSA NGE sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

and also Bida marks.

KAKANDA tribe:
Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

APPENDIX III

HISTORICAL CHART OF NUPE RULERS

173

A.D.	
1463?	Birth of Tsoede.
1493	Tsoede taken as slave to Iddah.
1523	Tsoede's flight from Iddah.
1531	Tsoede established himself as king of Nupe in Nupeko.
1591	Tsoede's death.
1591–1600	*Etsu* Shaba.
1600–25	*Etsu* Zavunla.
1625–70	*Etsu* Jigba.
1670–9	*Etsu* Mamma Wari.
1679–1700	*Etsu* Abdu Waliyi, foundation of the capital Jima.
1700–9	*Etsu* Alyu.
1710–13	*Etsu* Ganamace or Saci.
1713–17	*Etsu* Ibrahim.
1717–21	*Etsu* Idirisu.
1721–42	*Etsu* Tsado.
1742–6	*Etsu* Abubakari Kolo.
1746–59	*Etsu* Jibiri, the first Mohammedan king of Nupe. He was driven from his kingdom after thirteen years' reign. Died in exile in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen.
1759–67	*Etsu* Ma'azû's first reign. Power of Jima at its height. He resigned the throne and left Nupe to live in Yauri.
1767–77	*Etsu* Majiya I.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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796x

[535]

12. *Dzakó* dance

[304
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415]

13. Cutting of tribal marks

[p. 86 (A)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization.

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services

852 of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers
553 and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gather-
[305] ing and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests, will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptu-
553 ous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered
619 to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem
● 304 to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal
[619] throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several
[834] other puzzling features. It is called *zũ 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-
[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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16. Circumcision operation

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17. A bridal procession

[p. 118 (A)]

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their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen. 852 304

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests. 585 [292] [302]

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step. 585 797

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events.

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed.

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zuy'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–18.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 582] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

041 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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77 offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however,
626 losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

97 The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the
634 following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

634 The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the
[304] name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba
[304] Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in
[41] Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks[1] consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and 771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees." 775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its [245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

[1] [i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, 634
who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held 771
and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but 776
is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, 634
having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was 776
founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants 634
from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they 304
have adopted the Nupe language. 197
167

[1] [i.e. The Kasopa subtribe.--Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XVI
FREE PROFESSIONS

463 IT is not surprising that a rich and complex culture like Nupe should possess its clearly defined *artes liberales*—its professional scholars, scientists, and artists, or, in a terminology more akin to the native conception, its Mallams, barber-doctors, and drummers and dancers. I will leave the discussion of the profession of Mohammedan scholars for the chapter on education, and deal here with the last two of these 'free professions'.

BARBER-DOCTORS

'Free professions' in the sense in which we are using the term here does not necessarily mean 'individualistic' professions or professions unattached to any organization or co-operative unit. If what I have said in the preceding chapter about the meaning of guild-organization is correct, we may expect to find it developed also in the field of these native *artes liberales*. In fact, we do find it, adjusted to the new field of activity, in the barber-doctors of Nupe. We can no longer speak here of home industry; nor is the element of co-operation and mutual assistance the same as in the industries. But the other factors that tend to call into being a closely co-operative organization are clearly visible: we find again the necessity of long, specialized training, even to the degree of adoption into a trade secret; we also find the existence of a constant 'market' for the products and services of the craft; and lastly, we find a close relation between the group of craftsmen and the political system of the country.

305 757 As in medieval Europe and the Orient, the barber of Nupe, *gozan*, is also doctor and surgeon. His activities are numerous: he cuts the hair of men, women, and children; he shaves the head and cuts the tribal marks of newborn babies at the name-giving ceremony. For a tenth of a penny he cuts finger- and toe-nails: a few barbers have specialized in tattooing. The barbers also dispense medicines (mostly worthless[1] infusions and charred powders made of herbs) for every known disease; they perform certain minor surgical operations—circumcision or blood-letting—and administer the *turare*, a potent inhalation of the smoke from certain medicinal herbs. Certain barbers know the secret of contraceptive medicines, others know cures against barrenness; others, again, are experts in the treatment of lunacy. This far-reaching competency is the most characteristic feature of the craft of Nupe barber-doctors. Leaving aside the ordinary routine work of the barber and certain simpler operations such as the cutting of tribal marks, we may say that every barber

[1] This judgement is based on an analysis in the Wellcome Research Laboratory in London, for which I am greatly indebted to this institution, of certain drugs made by the Nupe barber-doctors which I had brought home from Nigeria. The discussion of the more specifically medical questions I must leave for a future publication.

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpã* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciźi* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciźi* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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larger group, the guild section or guild). The work of the barbers is organized on the familiar lines of *efakó* and *bucá*. Although their work does not entail actually working together, a certain kind of work is regarded as a concern of the family group as such and as falling under the rules of *efakó*. The *efakó* principle itself is interpreted in an unusual sense. In the work of the barbers orders or summons do not usually reach the individual barber directly, but come to him via the head of the household, who allots the various tasks to the different family members. The proceeds from all work carried out on these lines are divided among the whole *efakó* group, in accordance with a certain schedule which takes into account the seniority of the different family members. The tasks which come under *efakó* rule are the most highly paid jobs: the shaving of the hair and the cutting of tribal marks at the name-giving ceremony, and the circumcision of boys. The first task is performed at the occasion of an important household feast, and the barber-doctors rarely fail to benefit from the generosity that goes with festal mood. These simpler operations are executed by the younger men of the family, but the family head and the older men will also be present, as guests quite as much as in their professional capacity—which latter may reveal itself in no more than an occasional hint thrown out to the young colleague. The barbers will all sit together, and in front of them there will be a bowl into which every visitor is expected to drop a coin, the largest contribution coming from the parents of the newborn child. Let us follow the fate of a shilling dropped into this bowl of the barbers at a name-giving ceremony in a Bida house: 2*d.* is retained by the grandmother, who held the infant during the operation; 1*d.* goes to each of the five junior members of the *efakó* group (including the young man who performed the operation); 1½*d.* each to two older men of the family, the family head and his younger brother; and 2*d.*, finally, to the head of the guild section.

All other work of the barbers is regarded as *bucá*: ordinary haircutting and shaving as well as medical treatment.[1] The latter, more lucrative, work is a prerogative of the older men, who alone know herbs and drugs and can perform the *turare*. The younger men will be taught these craft secrets when they reach a certain age. And thus another principle of family work is realized in the organization of the Nupe barber-doctors, namely, the balance in favour of senior family members which we have observed in the organization of farm-labour and native industries.

We have seen that in the distribution of *efakó* income a certain contribution goes to the head of the guild section. This, then, is a first instance of economic co-operation of the large professional unit. This co-operation is visible also in another, external, feature of this professional organization. In each of the three day-markets of Bida there is a special barbers' 'hall', a spacious open hut, where all the barbers (specially the family heads) meet in the afternoon, and sit and wait for clients and summons. This hut is built and kept up from a common fund. The existence of this common fund is itself evidence of a close co-operation in the financial field. Into this fund, which is called *dashi*, every barber

[1] The barbers are usually paid in money; but when the Bida barbers tour the country villages they often take firewood or food in lieu of payment.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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305 759 467 pays a small amount of money at regular intervals; the fund is administered by the guild-head; he deducts from it money for possible common expenses, and pays out the rest in full to every member of the guild section in turn, after every pay-day. This financial arrangement is fairly common in Nupe, specially among traders and labourers, and we shall discuss it in more detail later. The barbers, however, are the only professional group which has embodied it in its professional organization and utilizes it as a system of mutual financial assistance vested in the craft-guild.

The guild organization is restricted to Bida town. In the villages, even in the larger places, ~~one or two~~ barbers are sufficient to meet the normal demand. Besides, the medicine-man of the pagan districts would constitute a serious competition to the Bida doctors. But so far as barbers and barber-doctors are wanted in the country, the organization in the capital supplies them, either permanently or temporarily. Certain Bida barbers, for example, have settled in villages; others tour the country regularly, stopping in this or that place for longer or shorter periods. Even in these tours of the country districts round Bida, the barbers keep to the territory of 'their' royal house, i.e. the royal house on whose land in Bida their home stands. Although it clearly cannot be said of the barber-doctors that they 'serve the state' in the same way as blacksmiths or leather-workers, this arrangement is a striking evidence of the fact that their association with the political structure of the country is as strongly marked, and that they, again, are in certain respects the 'king's craftsmen'.

DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

533 467 The drummers in Bida, true to the more 'advanced' urban conception of art, are individualists; in the village, where the art of drumming belongs not only to the recreational side of social life, but also forms part of the organization of ritual and ceremony as well as production (we remember the part drumming plays in the farming *egbe*), it is less an 'art' in the modern sense of the word than a 'craft', working for well-defined institutionalized demands, and charged with responsibilities of a graver order. Drumming in the village thus moves in the framework of a close organization on guild lines. In every larger Nupe village we find a special group of drummers and musicians who, though belonging to different families and houses, yet recognize the authority of a common head, the *Etsu Dzã*, the King of the Drummers. Certain other, subordinate titles, are distributed, in guild fashion, among the other members of the craft. The art of drumming remains in the family and is handed on from father to son. You may see small boys practising [868] drumming on ~~little toy-like~~ instruments under the eye of the father. They will go with him wherever he is called to perform, watching him and, when they are sufficiently advanced, accompanying him on their own drums. Sometimes boys from other families desire to become drummers. Their father will then get in touch with the head of the drummers, and give him his son as apprentice. The young apprentice will visit the drummer's house every day for his lesson. In the beginning

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization. 852 553

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services 852 553 305 302 304

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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852 of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers
553 and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gather-
ing and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests,
[305] will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptu-
553 ous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered
619 to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem
304 to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal
[619] throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several
[834] other puzzling features. It is called *zû 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-
[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

467
286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[24] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists
467 of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[25]

323 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the
467 guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same house-
467 hold may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or
[285] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the
[282] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

●305 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut
759 the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger
467 nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system
535 of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for
467 ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[24] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[25] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–9; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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288 apprentices. This source of income, formerly quite considerable, dis-
592 appeared when weaving became less profitable. Young boys of about
467 10 years, mostly sons of farmers, were the pupils; they stayed with the weaver for from four to five years, and the work which they produced during the time of their apprenticeship belonged to their master; when their training was completed the parents of the pupil would bring one bundle of corn as payment.

288 The loose organization of the labour-unit has its counterpart in the
467 organization of the profession at large. Among the weavers no co-operation on a larger scale exists. We have even seen that individuals are quite ready to abandon the profession for other, more attractive, work—an attitude unprecedented among blacksmiths or glass-workers. Yet the symbols of guild organization, the guild ranks, are still preserved. Each group of weavers has its titled guild-head: the head of the Salu (Yagba) weavers is called *Majī*, and the head of the Yoruba weavers *Leshe*. He is also regarded as the head of all *konú* weavers in Nupe, and used to receive from them small annual gifts or tributes. But this common allegiance and co-operation reflects less the professional union than the tribal and cultural unity of these scattered Yoruba groups in Nupe country. The head of the Nupe group of weavers in Bida has no official title but is called simply *Ndakó*, Grandfather. The position of the group-head carries to-day none of the influence and authority which characterizes the guild-heads of other crafts; he neither receives gifts from the fellow craftsmen nor is he expected to advise or help them in their work. As in all other guild-organized crafts the official position of the guild-heads of the weavers was based originally on their role as intermediaries between the king and the craftsmen of Bida. But this role has lost very early all practical importance—earlier than it did in the other Nupe crafts. To quote the guild-head of the Yagba weavers: '*Etsu* Masaba still used to come to our workshops and order cloth personally from the *Majī*. But *Etsu* Umaru, who came after him, already bought what he needed on the market, and so did all the later kings of Nupe.'

BEADWORKERS

306 As a last example of guild-organized industries I will describe the organization of the beadworkers in Bida. Their craft shows certain specific features which make it specially interesting and distinguish it from the other crafts of Nupe. Beadworking represents, first of all, a typical refining industry, which involves a system of re-exportation comparable only to the most complex forms of economic enterprise found in Western civilization. It involves further the use of money capital and credit operations on a scale unparalleled in Nupe industry. It is, finally, a pure luxury industry, producing more expensive goods than either glass- or brass-work. These various factors have contributed to making the beadworking industry of Bida extremely vulnerable; it has suffered more than the other crafts from the economic stress of the recent years and, a significant result of this, presents the picture of a complete disintegration of co-operative production.

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market. 306 [437] [301]

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*. [592]

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same 306 442 439 [465] [435] [434]

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306 time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
442 the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
439 with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Aràb trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
306 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
442 in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'mainten-
ance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide
467 the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Majī*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the
[434] *Majī* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

306 All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
467 the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
178 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry. With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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has also disappeared. The result is a complete disintegration of the guild system. The guild-head, no longer able to act as financier and contractor, has lost his position of authority; as his contribution to the productive organization of the group was concerned exclusively with these financial and credit operations, the very *raison d'être* of a guild-head has disappeared. This is evident in the manner in which the *Majī* is treated by the other craftsmen; no one pays the slightest attention to him. Since he is too old now to earn money, he is supported by his son —but this is entirely a family matter, and in no way concerns the professional group at large. He receives no gifts or shares in the profits, not so much as an occasional present of kola-nuts, which even in the greatly weakened guild organization of the weavers still marks the privileged position of the guild-head. If I have called this change in the productive organization of the beadworkers a decline and disintegration, it is also felt as such by the people themselves. To them, it appears as the sad decline of a once highly respected and well-organized craft: as one of them said, 'the beadworkers to-day live from hand to mouth; their *Majī* has no longer any authority; theirs is an unlucky trade' (*gwa ẓi*, lit. an unlucky hand).

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286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists
467 of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

323 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the
467 guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same house-
467 hold may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or
[285] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the
[282] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut
759 the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger
467 nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system
535 of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for
467 ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciši*, and two kinds of individual
306 practitioners.

The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciši*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the
789 barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciši* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciši* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[11]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 36–67.

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241 we have little land, much less than people in other parts of the country. We even have to make our farms up on the hill-side since there is no vacant land left in the valley.' This is true enough. When I visited Doko on my second expedition I saw that a few enterprising men had started farming on the steep stony hills at the back of the village—a thing nobody dreamed of doing when I stayed in Doko on my first expedition two years before.

241 The appreciation of manure has led in Beni country to an interesting co-operation between the population of a village, or a certain landlord, 231 and the groups of nomadic Fulani herdsmen who come down regularly in the dry season to find pastures for their herds. The Nupe landowners invite the head of such a nomadic group, and sometimes induce him by presents of food or assistance in the building of the camp, to make his camp on their fallow land. This procedure is repeated every year with a new plot of fallow land. The year after the land has been thus manured it is taken under cultivation. I have myself seen the enormous difference in the growth of the crops between a plot on which the Fulani had made their camp and other, ordinary farm-plots.[1]

241 Cultivation is also to some extent carried on inside the villages and even inside Bida town. In the villages, where large open spaces separate 311 the different *efu*, the cultivation inside the village is fairly extensive, and one grows there the main crops, millet, guinea-corn, ground-nuts, &c. In densely populated villages where there is little open space left, and in Bida town, the people still grow a few things. Something will be planted, in fact, wherever there is room, all along the town walls, round the compound wall, on any open space in front of the house and even inside the house. Here are grown chiefly greens and vegetables, beans, sorrel, red pepper, also sweet potatoes, cassava or maize, and hemp. As a rule the small plots in or near the house are planted with crops which are easy to tend, and this work is left to the old men who can no longer walk long distances and do heavy work. Even inside Bida there exists a certain specialization; on the small stretch of marsh-land that runs through the town, and in the thick groves on the banks of the two streams, typical marsh-land crops are grown: sugar-cane, rice, and bananas.

241 In this large variety of crops cultivated in Nupe not all are, of course, of equal importance from a nutritive or general economic point of view. Again, it is impossible to give a simple formula. The staple crops, the crops on which the food supply of the people primarily depends, are millet, sorghum, yam, and, to a lesser extent, rice. From the point of view of trade the most important crops are rice, ground-nuts, cotton, but also sorghum and yam and a few lesser crops. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes (grown inland) are of secondary importance only. This is shown clearly in the attitude of the Nupe farmer towards these crops. The pride of the farmer is always his millet, sorghum, and yam farm. Cassava and maize, the Nupe would say, grow anywhere, and anybody, farmer or no farmer, can grow them. A man who would rely on this

[1] Among the Bida landlords it is an accepted arrangement to place one's fallow land at the disposal of the Bororó previous to leasing it to a new tenant. The landlord can then obtain a much higher price for his land.

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342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated
[631] with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the
361 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
[354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

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241 for different kinds of crops. Ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and certain vegetables are always planted in ridges, yam always in mounds. As regards the other crops, the rule is that in a first cultivation, that is, on a plot planted for the first time after having lain fallow, mounds are thrown up; in the subsequent year the mounds are turned into ridges, as a result of the practice of 'shifting' the ridges and interplanting in the second half of the planting season. The throwing up of mounds is by far the heavier and longer work. 'Lazy' farmers—in the eyes of the people—thus sometimes prefer the easier job of making ridges even in a first year's cultivation.[1] Big trees are always left standing on the farms and cultivation is carried out round them. The Nupe farmers appreciate the shade of big trees during the heat of the day. Small trees on the farm-land which do not bear fruit are lopped or cut about 4 ft. from the ground. This becomes important in the period of lying fallow; for the tree-stumps and undergrowth which the farmer leaves standing on his fields help to put the fallow land under a growth of 'bush' rather than grass, thus assisting and speeding up the regeneration of the soil.[2]

241 The cultivation on the marsh-land farms is adapted to the conditions of a natural annual irrigation by the flooded rivers and watercourses. 312 The irrigated area is divided into square plots, approximately 6 ft. by 9 ft., each consisting of from four to six ridges running parallel and two ridges at right angles on the upper and lower end. The ridges are flat and narrow; they do not connect at the corners, but leave small channels open; by means of these ridges the water from the flooded river is distributed evenly on the cultivated plots, and at the same time kept standing there.

241 In the lay-out of the Nupe farms the aesthetic aspect is strongly pronounced. The farmers pay much attention to drawing their ridges nicely 517 parallel and as straight as possible, and to distributing their mounds symmetrically over the field. The nice rounding-off of the border of a field is specially appreciated. Frequently one finds ridges and cross-ridges arranged in a symmetrical and even conspicuously ornamental pattern. Similarly, the skill and keenness of the farmer is judged by the clean look of his farm, with all weeds, leaves, and brushwood cleared away. An overgrown, untidy looking farm invariably elicits the comment: *za-gá de kokari à*, 'that man makes no effort'.

ROTATION OF CROPS

242 The Nupe system of agriculture is based on shifting cultivation combined with a well-worked-out rotation of crops. Plots are kept under cultivation for from four to seven years (see p. 205), i.e. till the land 'grows tired', and then abandoned temporarily. The individual farmer does not, however, always wait until failing crops have warned him of

[1] The mounds represent the more thorough cultivation, utilizing a deeper and, I believe, also heavier layer of the subsoil. This is shown in the fact that yam, which demands a heavy and more humid soil, is always grown on mounds, while ground-nuts, for which light sandy soil is best suitable, are invariably grown on the low ridges. (Cf. Faulkner and Mackie, op. cit., pp. 147–8.)

[2] See op. cit., p. 44.

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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family
241 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the
643 modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family
427 estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankd* arrangement.
But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become
his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the
old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu*
[242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family
estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and
466] demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work
carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own
fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the
produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is
used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which
clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-
building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore
smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All
these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like
the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the
ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they
313 need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
438 rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of
the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *esìnegi* (the Hausa *asabari*);
other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-
making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are
found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen
who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the pro-
curing of the raw material thus gains independent commercial signifi-
cance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men
who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of com-
parative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to
collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a
little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a
313 slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of
land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpã* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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mined and smelted in the country. The production of native iron ore has been greatly reduced in recent years. To-day a large proportion of the crude iron is bought from the European stores—the Nupe call it *kansana*, 'dry iron', to distinguish it from the native mined *nyenkpa žiko*, 'black iron'. The competition of cheap European iron has made the upkeep of the large native foundries unprofitable; many have been abandoned and allowed to fall in disuse, and even where they are still in use only two or three out of perhaps six furnaces are still workable. But in the busy season, shortly before the rains, when everybody needs hoes and axes, the supply of European iron frequently runs out, and the resulting shortage has to be relieved by calling on the supplies of native-mined iron ore. Nupe iron-smelting can, in fact, no longer meet heavier or more regular demands, although many Nupe farmers still prefer a hoe made of native-mined iron—it is stronger, and lasts better, they say; European iron is fit only for repairs, for patching hoe-blades, &c. The tools of the blacksmiths and, above all, the anvil, are invariably made of native-mined iron. 326

The iron-ore miners, called *edudaciži* (meaning 'workers in the deep'), form a professional group distinct from the blacksmiths, although some of them are blacksmiths as well as iron-ore miners. The mining is done on the slopes of the low flat-topped ferriferous hills of the country. I have heard of five different mining places: near Mokwa, near Shari, near Patigi, near Kutigi, and near Pichi (about 8 miles from Bida). I have seen only two; one in work, though on a reduced scale (near Pichi), and one abandoned (near Shari). The iron-ore foundry near Pichi is the largest in existence. Like the blacksmith groups in the districts round Bida the iron-ore miners of Pichi submit to the authority of the guild-head of the blacksmiths in Bida. His authority goes so far that, five years ago, he could order two additional furnaces to be built in order to increase the Bida supply of iron ore; these new furnaces, however, are no longer in use. 316 326

The ore is scratched off the surface of the hill or dug out of shallow pits. Close to the hill-side are the furnaces in which the iron ore is smelted. Three furnaces are placed side by side under a large grass roof which protects workers and 'machinery' from sun and rain. It will be best to describe the very elaborate arrangement by means of two diagrams, the first of which represents a bird's-eye view of the furnaces, and the second a vertical section through a furnace. We have first, a large pit, 6 feet square and 6 feet deep. On one side a pot for water is let in the ground; on the other the furnace proper is erected. It consists, above ground, of a kind of chimney (*a*) made of thick clay, 5 feet high, built over the mouth of an airshaft (*b*) which serves both as ventilator and as opening for the fuel and the iron ore. On the other side of the chimney are the two bellows (*c*), clay tubes formed somewhat like horns, the wide mouth of which is covered with goatskin. The narrow bottom ends of the bellows tubes are joined, under ground, with a long straight clay tube (*d*), a little over 5 feet long, which is fixed in position by means of wooden wedges. It opens into a cave-like space which forms an extension of the square pit. On the bottom of this space the iron ore is 325

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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464 attitude has still survived: when I trekked through the country round Sakpe in 1936 I found myself in the same predicament, and although it [482] was in the dry season and farming was at a standstill, I had eventually to agree to women carrying my loads as men were not available for this task. That the appeal of paid labour as a seasonal occupation for peasants is rapidly gaining ground cannot be doubted. The stopgap occupation can, in fact, be said to satisfy a definite want in present-day peasant economy.[1] The strength of its appeal still varies greatly locally. The large majority of the peasants whom I found employed as labourers in the construction of Badeggi bridge were local men or men from the neighbourhood of Bida. Of 19 labourers 14 came from Badeggi itself, 3 from hamlets near Bida, 1 from Kacha, 1 from a village farther afield (Jima), and none from Trans-Kaduna. The local selection does not merely reflect varying degrees of progressiveness or 'sophistication'; it also reflects the varying urgency of the wants for the relief of which paid labour is undertaken. The nature of these wants we shall discuss in detail later.

[1] To-day many Nupe peasants are ready to try any kind of paid labour, but will abandon it quickly if it falls short of their expectations of a regular and substantial income. Thus the Nupe of Leaba tried their luck in gold-washing, which [316] is carried out on a considerable scale in that district. They had heard from Hausa labourers that one could make as much as 9*d*. or 1*s*. a day in this work. They had not realized, however, that the payment was not per day, but depended on the amount of gold which the individual worker can produce. As the Nupe were rather clumsy and slow, unlike the experienced Hausa labourers, their pay was small and irregular, and, gravely disappointed, they soon gave up gold-washing.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro,
323 Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the
438 river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagd*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagd fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagd* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu. 89 121

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found. 323 [96] [99] [98]

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuje* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dakū-sputū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunwi*—MAN 1931, 186). [415]

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated— [317] [443] [435]

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo. [415]

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any [412] [439]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241/463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount 651/ from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as 322 ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving [323] will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already 325 an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted 171] down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy himself a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the woodworkers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

10: Hassan & Shuaibu I-4, 5 (ca. 1940)1952
MS12 Hausa MS12
Abuja
Nupe FF52

H 241 476 times the place is turned into a playground, with frequent presents going to the drummers and Beggars[1] to encourage them also.

Formerly, unmarried youths did not seek help in this way on their little individual farms but they would call two or three friends to help them; and if all of them needed help, they would go round in turn, one day to each, until all was finished; but they could do none of this until work on the general farm had ended.

Women also help each other by working together when they have a floor of beaten earth to lay inside the house or before the entrance.

OTHER OCCUPATIONS

H 241 The majority of the people are farmers, and so they do not consider any other occupation to be of equal importance; the master of a compound in the old days did not trouble to put his sons or his slaves to any business except farming, but he would always have a general farm for his people and allow them individual farms for themselves.

H 461 326 Only after the farming is finished do most people turn to other matters, for when the guinea-corn harvest is in, then the heaviest work is over. Iron ore is melted in the Bwari and Kawu districts, and so it is the men of those places who, together with those of Abuja, are the best blacksmiths, making knives and hoes and all the other tools for the farm.

N H 322 The Gwarin Genge are the best at working wood, and they make the pestles and mortars for the kitchen, and also tobacco pipes. The Nufe in the Emirate are the best at making small canoes, door frames, stools for women, and clogs. The farmers themselves cut the handles for their hoes and axes; they choose one man to spend the day making the handles for them, and then they go together to his farm and do a day's work there to repay him.

H 286 294 In most towns and villages there are weavers of white cotton cloth; others make narrow strips with threads of black and light blue, closely woven, and women weave the heavy patterned cloth, white, with stripes of different colours, which is much used for night-wraps. The Hausa are the best tailors of the long wide robes, but many other people can make the shorter and smaller kinds; the Hausa, the Gwarin Genge, the Ganagana and the Koro of Zuba are all good dyers.

H 342 282 The Hausa are the best builders and thatchers, too, though there are builders in all the tribes; and they are best, too, at leather work.

H 285 323 Three different kinds of mats are woven by the different tribes; the Gwarin Genge are the best at weaving produce bags; string and twine are made everywhere. Gwari women make the clay cooking vessels, and besides this and their weaving, it is the women who make sweets and savoury foods to sell.

H [533] [1] the Ma-roka, or professional beggars, praise-singers and, generally, musicians—who are the principal feature of all Hausa celebrations.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241 463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which
467 had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny.
431 The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the
467 whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after
173 them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

323 The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of
438 raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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certain type of glass, black in colour and of rather crude texture, which is bought widely in Nigeria, is made exclusively by the traditional method. I have had opportunity of studying this traditional technique of glass-making—a technique which is kept a secret by the glass-workers and which has never yet been recorded. Several writers on Nigeria, in fact, maintain that it has long since fallen into disuse and is even no longer remembered by the people. This native glass is called *bikini*, as against the glass gained from smelting down bottles, the name for which is *kallaba*, 'bottle'. The process of glass-making is long and complicated; it takes from three to five days according to the quantity of glass made. The glass can be made in the ordinary glass-maker's workshop, but the furnace must be re-dug especially for the purpose, since the furnaces used normally for glass-smelting are too wide and too shallow. The same men who ordinarily work in the workshop also carry out the making of glass. The glass-maker's workshop is built somewhat like the Nupe smithy, but has only one round furnace in the centre of the hut. For the purpose of glass-making the furnace is dug 5 feet deep and 2 feet wide. Throughout the process its mouth is covered with pot-sherds and broken calabashes which leave only a narrow passage for the smoke. As good Mohammedans, the *masagá* invariably start their glass-making on Friday afternoon, after their return from the mosque. The various ingredients have been collected and arranged inside the workshop: earth (the same earth that has been dug out of the furnace),[1] soda (*kanwa*) of the kind that is brought by Hausa caravans from Lake Chad, water in pots, and a vast quantity of firewood. The soda, which has been pounded to a fine powder, is mixed with sand and a little water till it gains a mud-like consistency. The mixture is placed on the bottom of the furnace, with firewood and a layer of grass for the lighting of the fire on top. The fire is lit, and the furnace is kept ablaze, day and night, till the process is finished. The men work in shifts so that there are always four workers tending the furnace; adding fuel, and occasionally probing the bottom of the furnace with long iron rods. The heat is so intense that the workers have to put up mat screens as protection. Six or seven hours after the lighting of the furnace large quantities of water are added, together with a handful of slag from a blacksmith's forge. After another twelve hours the substance in the furnace becomes liquid, *ke nuwā na*, 'like water', and after eight hours again the process is completed. The glass, a red-glowing semi-liquid mass, is fished out with long iron sticks and left to harden and cool on the sand outside. The cooling takes five to six hours, after which time the glass is ready for use in the other furnaces, where the finished products—bangles and beads—are manufactured. The colour of the raw glass is a deep glossy black. The *masagá*

[1] The sand is called *jíkana*, which is the Nupe name for ordinary sand. The glass-workers informed me that the sand everywhere in the locality was suitable for glass-making. When I returned from Nigeria I brought with me samples both of the Nupe glass and the ingredients used in glass-making. Thanks to Professor Seligman the Courtauld Institute in London undertook to test the glass and the glass manufacture, by attempting to produce glass from these ingredients. The attempt was fully successful. For a fuller report on this experiment, and also on the technique of Nupe glass-making, see *Man*, 1940, 107.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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323 have never possessed the art of colouring their glass. They have to do it indirectly, by mixing it with coloured bottle-glass. They also ornament their dark glass with dots, lines, and circles in various bright colours: the red colour is obtained by smelting down thin iron sticks, other colours by smelting down coloured glass or coloured glass beads (Venetian beads mostly).

Glass is, as a rule, made only in one workshop at a time, while the other workshops carry on the ordinary routine work. Men from other workshops who need new glass contribute soda and sometimes also firewood (or else pay in money for their share in firewood), and receive a proportionate quantity of raw glass. They pay the men who were tending the furnace in kind, returning to them a small quantity of the newly made glass.

The further treatment of the raw *blkini* glass corresponds in every detail to the treatment of bottle-glass, except that the latter has to be crushed into small pieces before being used. It is smelted down, again, over the ordinary furnace, until it is semi-liquid and can be formed into beads and bangles of different shape and size. This finished glass is called *karuwa*. The furnace in which the raw glass was made is later rebuilt and adapted for this new work. It is made a little wider, banked up with a mud wall 1 foot high, and provided with bellows.

Nupe glass-making implies a strict organization of work and a well-planned distribution of the various tasks among the whole community of glass-makers. The assignment of tasks varies from day to day, according to when a particular workshop has completed the work in hand. The *masagá* quarter numbers thirteen workshops, and each workshop performs its assigned tasks. In one hut you may perhaps find the making of *blkini* glass going on, while in another molten glass is formed into black bangles; in a third workshop coloured bangles are manufactured, or small black beads; another workshop, again, may specialize in blue and red beads that day, and so forth. The workers, four to six in number, sit round the furnace. One of them, as a rule a small boy, is blowing the bellows. The raw glass is thrown into the furnace, where it is left to liquefy. The glass-worker sticks small lumps of the semi-liquid glass upon the point of a long thin iron rod. Gripping the rod in his right hand, he holds it over the mouth of the furnace and, while the glass liquefies further in the heat, he rotates the rod rapidly, throwing the glass lump with quick, calculated movements into any shape he wants. A second rod, held in the left hand, helps in the process, and is used to produce the width of the bangle or to tap a bead into shape. In the single workshop the work is, again, carefully divided up: while one worker prepares the liquid glass, another shapes it into bangles or beads, and another adds the coloured ornaments.

The scheme of collaboration may change from day to day; every worker, frequently even including the man or boy at the bellows, is, in fact, a fully fledged all-round craftsman. The trained worker performs his tasks with ease and rapidity and, thanks to the smooth co-operation between the workers, the whole workshop equally maintains a very high speed of production. It takes one worker between three and four

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles. 323

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen. 323 444 439 [527]

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production, 323 471 592 474 [465]

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the
323 river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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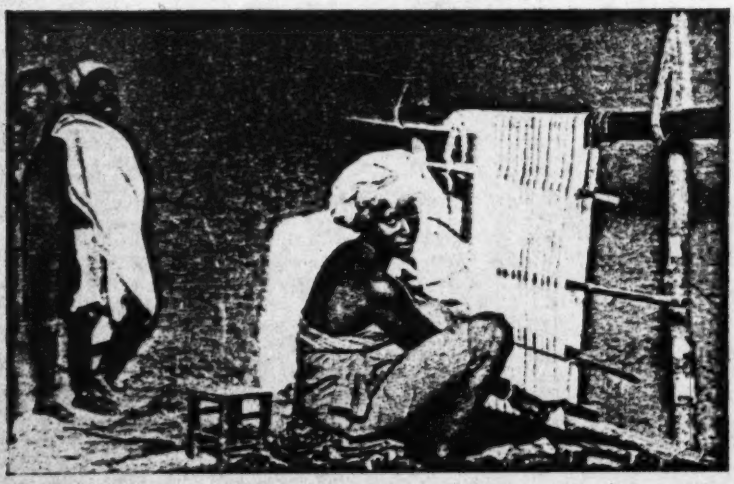
AN OLD POTTER WOMAN



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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s.* to 15*s.*, the material costing 5*s.*; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d.* and 3*d.* This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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Ilorin, Oshogbo, or Ibadan. Another method is that the wholesale 438 trader who buys up the smoked fish at the local riverside markets also trades them directly to Bida, Ilorin, &c.; certain enterprising traders with plenty of capital may also charter canoes and, travelling from place to place, buy up the local produce before it comes to the riverside markets.[1]

438 I have emphasized on various occasions the close correlation between markets and specialization of production. Here is the place to state the 477 case once more. Generally speaking, trade and transport which bring the products of one area within reach of another involve competition, and through competition the elimination of inferior forms of production. Trade and transport must thus tend to foster (as they are in turn fostered by) local specialization. Certain developments in the agricultural and industrial production of Nupe reveal the effectiveness of these influences also in that culture. The people of Jebba, for example, do not grow sugar-cane or onions on their land, although on a similar type of land in Rabá and Ogudu these crops are cultivated. They explain this situation as being due to the fact that they are farmers on a less extensive scale, spending much time on fishing and (formerly) hunting; they prefer to import onions and sugar-cane from these other places. For certain handicrafts our evidence is even more striking, for here competition owing to an expansion of trade has only comparatively recently replaced an indigenous craft by imports from another area. The women of Leaba [323] formerly practised pottery; but when the regular canoe traffic, which used to stop farther down the river, was brought up to Leaba, and pots made in Jebba and Gbajibo reached Leaba market, the Leaba women gave up their craft; their own pots, they explained, were inferior in quality to the imported product, owing to the inferior potter's clay found locally.

443 In small villages no trade is done, and markets are deserted, on days other than market-days. In large villages the markets do a little trade—in food only—also on ordinary week-days. On the day after a market there is often quite considerable trade in goods which did not find a buyer the previous day. On market-day the people begin to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The market is in full swing by noon, and from 1 to 3 is the busiest time. After 4 the attendance begins to scatter, and soon after that the traders remove their goods, and the market is left empty. Every kind of trade and craft is represented even in the smaller village markets. In the roofed booths which every market possesses the more valuable goods are displayed—products of native industries as well as European goods. Tailors and leather-workers work in open huts. In the open square framed by these booths and huts agricultural produce, food-stuffs of every kind, live stock, pots, and tools are offered for sale.

[1] Lately the wives of the fishermen have attempted to break down the 'relay system' and to dispense with the services of middlemen, having begun to market their fish directly in Ilorin and Ibadan. A place like Ogudu, on the road from the river to Ilorin, which formerly formed an important exchange place, has now lost this transit trade in fish. The chief of Ogudu, to whom I owe this information, remarked regretfully that the women have 'begun to understand' (lit. 'have seen light').

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286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists
467 of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

323 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the
467 guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same house-
467 hold may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or
[253] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the
[252] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut
759 the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger
467 nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system
535 of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for
467 ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[20]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[21]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[22]

41 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[23]

[20] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[21] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[22] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[23] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1956
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Bida

Crafts of Bida

●323 177 IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

326 177 The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

326 Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

[Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

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[p. 139]

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"King of the dancers"—
a Bida brass spinning toy

Making a glass bangle. The bellows man sits behind the central furnace

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415
301

[p. 140]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" — A Bida brass spinning toy. FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

524
326

326 The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery
[933] made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

326 This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental
178 changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine
[286] hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

● 323 The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

Text continued on page 143

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956

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Bida

Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries.

301

323 with the hands, in an up-and-down movement, for minutes on end with the speed and beat of a slow-running Diesel. The strength and stamina required for this job in the small, round entrance-houses to Bida compounds where these craftsmen work, must be colossal.

The glass-maker himself, a senior craftsman, throws a few handsful of dried wood into the furnace, the pump-man pumps, and soon a metal rod is brought to white heat. The end of this rod is then stuck into a few pieces of broken bottle which are then held in the flame until they begin to melt and become a shapeless but easily-workable mass.

Two rods are then used to separate a small lump of the half-molten glass. The lump is pierced and then waved round and round, still in the flame, until a jointless, glass bangle has been made. White patterns in the glass are made by the addition of white, liquid clay early in the spinning process.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON p.147 -- Analyst]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956

FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

323 Beads are made similarly, small amounts of molten glass being allowed to fall fixed distances to determine size and shape much as round shot used to be made in Europe.

323 This trade is suffering badly now. The products are very cheap, but
439 they are in direct competition with more sophisticated, imported products.

One type of Bida bead is *not* cheap. It is very rare and is said to be made from "a sort of stone found a thousand miles away in the desert, only at one place. It is brought here only by women traders who go to Kano and Zinder to buy it from the desert people and very few know how to work on it". Accurate details are very difficult to come by, but this type of bead is very scarce and still greatly prized.

326 The brass workers fashion all but their most involved shapes on small anvils, beating rhythmically with a very small hammer. The patterns are made with a punch without any preliminary drawing of the intended pattern. As may be expected, the results vary but many are remarkably symmetrical and precise.

Much of the work is carried out in "silver", correctly coloured but bearing about as much likeness to real metal as does the average silver coinage. The Maria Theresa dollar, one of the traditional sources of
[439] silver in the North, has been used as far south as Bida but the supply seems to be running out. In some places, craftsmen may be seen making Maria Theresa dollars . . .

Bida metal work is both interesting and disappointing at the same time. The folklore of the Nupe people makes many references to great skill in bronze casting and the Jebba bronzes are there to support the tale (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 43). There appears to be no casting now, though there remains an ability to make thin and very ductile metal sheet in a variety of alloys which can be worked over and over again without harm. Many of these metals have a quite surprising capacity to conduct heat, as anyone casually using a brass ash tray may quickly learn.

There is among the surviving guildsmen of Bida a reservoir of craftsmanship and familiarity with working glass, metals, leather and similar traditional materials. Without outside help, their skills will be lost and their young men will turn to other jobs. Perhaps there can never be an adequate, expanding market for their present products; but with a little help and advice, they could still be of greater value to their town and to Nigeria.

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dakū-ugū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunyu*—MAN 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick: it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

suitable piece of the local sandstone or ironstone which may be found is used as beater without artificial shaping.

(*b*) when the pancake becomes sufficiently thin it is placed on the bottom of a small inverted pot and beaten again with the hand-beater to make it slightly convex.

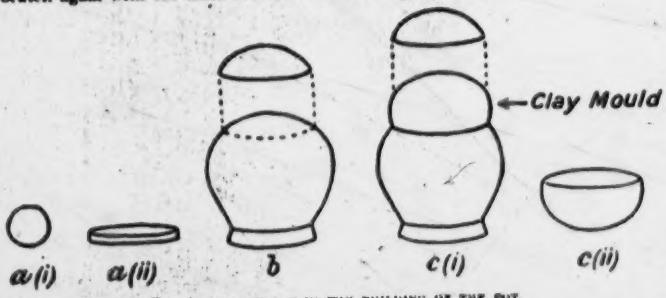


FIG. 1. STAGES A–C IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*c*) A clay mould is then placed upon the inverted pot and the clay beaten over this until it is shaped like an inverted bowl (*c* (i)).

It is then removed, turned over and put on one side to dry (*c* (ii)), and is eventually used as one half of the finished article.

(*d*) Processes (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are repeated and a second bowl identical in size with the first is made to form the second half. When both halves have been allowed to harden a little, one is inverted and superimposed on the other so that the edges coincide. The operator cements the two halves together by smearing clay round the line of junction so that a hollow ball, like a flattened sphere, is produced without any orifice.

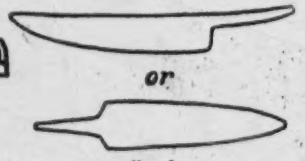


FIG. 2.

(*e*) A small hole, 2 inches in diameter, is cut in the centre of the top with an iron knife.

(*f*) To put the mouth on the pot, the operator takes a thin roll of clay and fits it to the edge of the hole by manipulation with the right hand while the pot is rotated by the left. The lip is shaped between the thumb and finger of the right hand and polished with a wetted rag.

(*g*) A thin roll of clay is then kneaded on to the pot to form a shoulder and the polishing with the wet rag continued.

(*h*) One or two handles are now attached; the operator takes a roll of clay of suitable length, attaches it first to the body of the pot, gives it an outward curve and attaches the other end to the mouth.

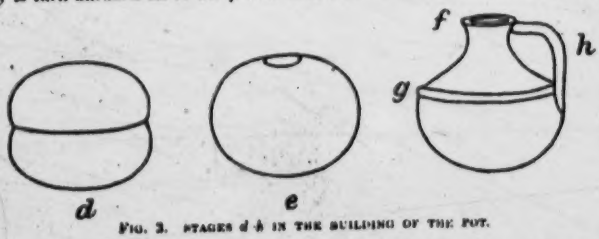


FIG. 3. STAGES *d*–*h* IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*j*) The exterior of the pot is polished by rubbing with a smooth, water-worn pebble (? of quartzite) and a piece of wetted rag.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :—

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge. 323 531

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

(iii) The sharp end of a (? small) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests. 323

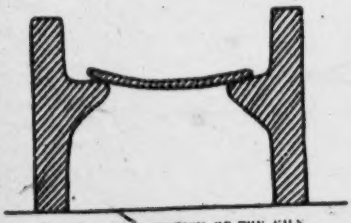


FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323 531

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [384] [804]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]

(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

[p. 73]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241/463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 651/322 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[323 325 177] [1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

mined and smelted in the country. The production of native iron ore has been greatly reduced in recent years. To-day a large proportion of the crude iron is bought from the European stores—the Nupe call it *kansana*, 'dry iron', to distinguish it from the native mined *nyenkpa žiko*, 'black iron'. The competition of cheap European iron has made the upkeep of the large native foundries unprofitable; many have been abandoned and allowed to fall in disuse, and even where they are still in use only two or three out of perhaps six furnaces are still workable. But in the busy season, shortly before the rains, when everybody needs hoes and axes, the supply of European iron frequently runs out, and the resulting shortage has to be relieved by calling on the supplies of native-mined iron ore. Nupe iron-smelting can, in fact, no longer meet heavier or more regular demands, although many Nupe farmers still prefer a hoe made of native-mined iron—it is stronger, and lasts better, they say; European iron is fit only for repairs, for patching hoe-blades, &c. The tools of the blacksmiths and, above all, the anvil, are invariably made of native-mined iron. 326

The iron-ore miners, called *edudaciži* (meaning 'workers in the deep'), form a professional group distinct from the blacksmiths, although some of them are blacksmiths as well as iron-ore miners. The mining is done on the slopes of the low flat-topped ferriferous hills of the country. I have heard of five different mining places: near Mokwa, near Shari, near Patigi, near Kutigi, and near Pichi (about 8 miles from Bida). I have seen only two; one in work, though on a reduced scale (near Pichi), and one abandoned (near Shari). The iron-ore foundry near Pichi is the largest in existence. Like the blacksmith groups in the districts round Bida the iron-ore miners of Pichi submit to the authority of the guild-head of the blacksmiths in Bida. His authority goes so far that, five years ago, he could order two additional furnaces to be built in order to increase the Bida supply of iron ore; these new furnaces, however, are no longer in use. 316 326

The ore is scratched off the surface of the hill or dug out of shallow pits. Close to the hill-side are the furnaces in which the iron ore is smelted. Three furnaces are placed side by side under a large grass roof which protects workers and 'machinery' from sun and rain. It will be best to describe the very elaborate arrangement by means of two diagrams, the first of which represents a bird's-eye view of the furnaces, and the second a vertical section through a furnace. We have first, a large pit, 6 feet square and 6 feet deep. On one side a pot for water is let in the ground; on the other the furnace proper is erected. It consists, above ground, of a kind of chimney (*a*) made of thick clay, 5 feet high, built over the mouth of an airshaft (*b*) which serves both as ventilator and as opening for the fuel and the iron ore. On the other side of the chimney are the two bellows (*c*), clay tubes formed somewhat like horns, the wide mouth of which is covered with goatskin. The narrow bottom ends of the bellows tubes are joined, under ground, with a long straight clay tube (*d*), a little over 5 feet long, which is fixed in position by means of wooden wedges. It opens into a cave-like space which forms an extension of the square pit. On the bottom of this space the iron ore is 325

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

FF52 Nupe FF52

325

FIG. 1

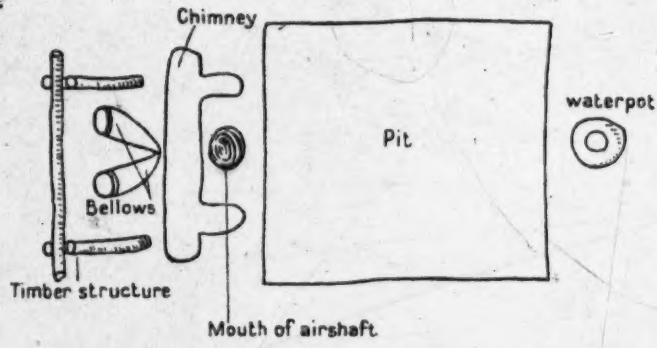
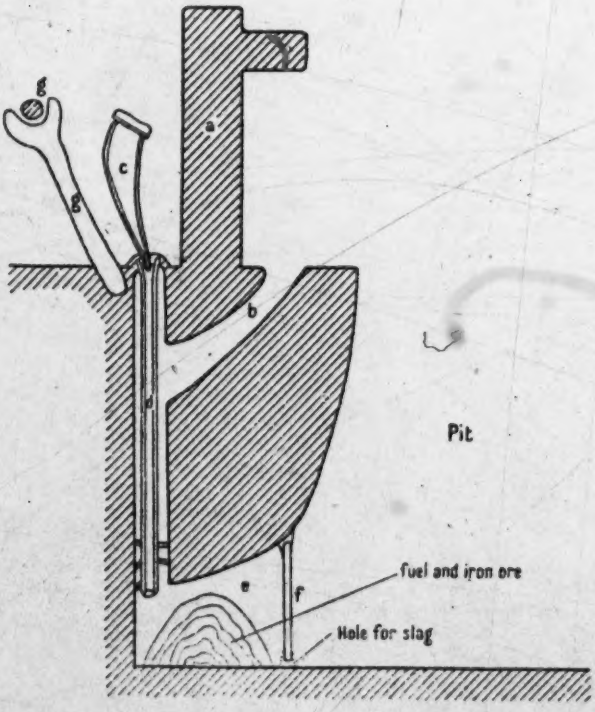


FIG. 2



[p. 262]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work. 325

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit. 326 467 592

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out. 326 592 [257]

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).[21]

467 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuši*. The mines are on the slopes of the low,
325 flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[22]

467 *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two work-
326 shops in every village, and three "wards" of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives
[463] in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a "closed" craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[23]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for "copper"), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[24]

467 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciši*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts
286 of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[21] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Line, 1947.
[22] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[23] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[24] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

530 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crook and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[325] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

793 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Gbere and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Bussa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Gbere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Rába, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 7 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rettangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

696 [681] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Gbere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Bussa legend, Edegi was chief of Gbere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys. When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutsin Edegi.

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[For information on the efakó-group (cooperative labor group), particularly in the craft guilds, also see category 467--Analyst]

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The co-operative organization of efakó work also enables the group to

train its adolescents and to bring them gradually into the system of co-operation. Young boys are employed first in easy auxiliary work, such as working the bellows in blacksmith and glass-work, or the spooling of cotton thread in weaving; sitting all day long in the workshop they learn a good deal from watching; when they are old enough they are given more serious work, which they carry out under the guidance and tuition of the *efakó* head till, eventually, they become fully fledged members of the labour-unit. In most cases the *efakó* work is supplemented by special individual, *bucá*, work. The relation between the two varies widely, with the specific nature of the craft and its productive technique.

BLACKSMITH WORK

The blacksmiths are called *tswata* in Nupe, or sometimes *tswata gbagba*, 'heavy smiths', to distinguish them from the *tswata muku*, the brass- and silversmiths. Nearly every village in Nupe possesses at least one or two blacksmith workshops. In Bida we find three groups of blacksmiths, whole blacksmith 'wards' in fact, each with its cluster of workshops, and each situated in a different *ekpã* of the town. According to tradition the three blacksmith groups are of different origin. One, in the old centre of Bida, *ba nîn*, claims descent from the original group of blacksmiths which was established in Bida when it was still a Beni village. At that time the head of this group, the *Majī Tswata*, the Master of the Blacksmiths, is said to have held authority over all the blacksmiths of Beni country. The blacksmiths living in the *Etsu* Massaba quarter, the smallest of the three groups, came to Bida comparatively late, from Trans-Kaduna. The largest blacksmith group in Bida, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, traces its descent to the blacksmiths of Rabá, the former capital of the kingdom. They came to Bida together with the king and court when Bida became the new capital of Fulani Nupe. As we shall see later, this last group has established itself as the supreme guild authority over the blacksmiths of Bida and all Nupe. The craftsmen of this group call themselves *dokodzaži*, after their head, who bears the title *Dokodza*.[1]

Technology

The blacksmith wards of Bida are of very different size; the smallest contains two workshops, the largest seven. In some cases the entrance-hall of the compound in which the families of the craftsmen are living serves also as workshop or forge. But usually the forge is in a separate hut which stands by itself a small distance from the compound; with its three or four wide doors, and the many small window-holes let into the wall to serve as passage for the smoke from the forge, the workshops can be easily identified. Inside are two furnaces, each screened in by an angular mud wall, about 3 feet high. On the inner side of the screen, facing the open fire, sits the blacksmith himself; on the other side of the

[1] It is interesting to note that the modern Emirate of Patigi, where the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty are reigning to-day, also possesses its group of 'royal blacksmiths', under another *Dokodza*. They came to Patigi together with the family of the present rulers, from Gbara, the ancient residence of this branch of the Nupe dynasty.

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326 screen another man is sitting, who works the bellows. The bellows are of the split-bag type common in Northern Nigeria; they are made of two bags of goatskin which end in a clay tube and are worked with sticks fixed on the top of each bag. The clay tube is buried in the ground and, passing underneath the screen, ends in the shallow furnace on the other side. In this furnace charcoal is burned, which the blacksmiths make themselves. They also forge their own working tools (apart from a few European tools, hammers and files, which have strayed into some of the blacksmiths' huts): a club-shaped hammer, a long pair of tongs, and a few chisels and pointed rods. The anvil, too, is of their own production; it is a solid piece of iron, shaped like a toadstool, the foot of which is buried in the ground. Of other working implements there is a bowl of water in which the red-glowing iron is tempered, and a heap of fine ashes in which the finished product is left to cool.

The technical process is simple. The bulk of crude iron is held over the fire until it becomes red hot and pliable. It is then placed on the anvil and gradually hammered into shape. The change from furnace to anvil is repeated several times, until the object has been given its final shape. Sometimes it is finished off with the help of files and chisels. The main products of the Nupe blacksmiths to-day are blades for hoes, bush-knives and crude axes, big nails and hooks for the big plank doors of the Nupe houses, and small brackets used in canoe-building. Sometimes the blacksmiths also make the wooden handles for hoes and axes; sometimes the customers prefer to buy only the blade and to make their own handles. One man, I found, can produce two hoe-blades a day, working from 9 a.m., with a pause for the midday meal, till 4 p.m., when the Nupe working-day finishes.

Iron-work thus involves four subsidiary forms of production: the manufacture of the bellows, of charcoal, of the tools, and finally of the raw material used in blacksmith work, i.e. the mining of iron ore. With the exception of the last all are undertaken by the blacksmiths themselves. The blacksmith buys the goatskins on the market and sews them together into the skin-bags used as bellows; he also produces the mouthpiece of clay for the bellows. Ordinary tools, such as hammers and tongs, are made by every worker individually; should it become necessary, however, to replace the anvil, the whole group of blacksmiths in the quarter (forty in all) would have to work together.

326 In charcoal-burning two or three men who share the same workshop
372 work together, and produce a store which is to last the whole workshop for some time. Charcoal is burned in a clearing in the thick bush at some distance from farms and habitations. Wood of two different kinds may be used. Pieces of timber of about arm's length are piled 3 feet high. A thick layer of grass is placed on the top, and the whole heap is covered with sand, leaving only a small hole open. A dry piece of wood is lit and pushed into the opening to kindle the fire inside, after which the hole, too, is covered up, and the heap is left to burn for five or six days.

326 The production of the raw material of blacksmith work deserves special description. Formerly all iron used in blacksmith work was

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mined and smelted in the country. The production of native iron ore has been greatly reduced in recent years. To-day a large proportion of the crude iron is bought from the European stores—the Nupe call it *kansana*, 'dry iron', to distinguish it from the native mined *nyenkpa žiko*, 'black iron'. The competition of cheap European iron has made the upkeep of the large native foundries unprofitable; many have been abandoned and allowed to fall in disuse, and even where they are still in use only two or three out of perhaps six furnaces are still workable. But in the busy season, shortly before the rains, when everybody needs hoes and axes, the supply of European iron frequently runs out, and the resulting shortage has to be relieved by calling on the supplies of native-mined iron ore. Nupe iron-smelting can, in fact, no longer meet heavier or more regular demands, although many Nupe farmers still prefer a hoe made of native-mined iron—it is stronger, and lasts better, they say; European iron is fit only for repairs, for patching hoe-blades, &c. The tools of the blacksmiths and, above all, the anvil, are invariably made of native-mined iron. 326

The iron-ore miners, called *edudaciži* (meaning 'workers in the deep'), form a professional group distinct from the blacksmiths, although some of them are blacksmiths as well as iron-ore miners. The mining is done on the slopes of the low flat-topped ferriferous hills of the country. I have heard of five different mining places: near Mokwa, near Shari, near Patigi, near Kutigi, and near Pichi (about 8 miles from Bida). I have seen only two; one in work, though on a reduced scale (near Pichi), and one abandoned (near Shari). The iron-ore foundry near Pichi is the largest in existence. Like the blacksmith groups in the districts round Bida the iron-ore miners of Pichi submit to the authority of the guild-head of the blacksmiths in Bida. His authority goes so far that, five years ago, he could order two additional furnaces to be built in order to increase the Bida supply of iron ore; these new furnaces, however, are no longer in use. 316 326

The ore is scratched off the surface of the hill or dug out of shallow pits. Close to the hill-side are the furnaces in which the iron ore is smelted. Three furnaces are placed side by side under a large grass roof which protects workers and 'machinery' from sun and rain. It will be best to describe the very elaborate arrangement by means of two diagrams, the first of which represents a bird's-eye view of the furnaces, and the second a vertical section through a furnace. We have first, a large pit, 6 feet square and 6 feet deep. On one side a pot for water is let in the ground; on the other the furnace proper is erected. It consists, above ground, of a kind of chimney (*a*) made of thick clay, 5 feet high, built over the mouth of an airshaft (*b*) which serves both as ventilator and as opening for the fuel and the iron ore. On the other side of the chimney are the two bellows (*c*), clay tubes formed somewhat like horns, the wide mouth of which is covered with goatskin. The narrow bottom ends of the bellows tubes are joined, under ground, with a long straight clay tube (*d*), a little over 5 feet long, which is fixed in position by means of wooden wedges. It opens into a cave-like space which forms an extension of the square pit. On the bottom of this space the iron ore is 325

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placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work. 325

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit. 326 467 592

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out. 326 592 [857]

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

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326 592 the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

326 434 435 Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s.*; this quantity is sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at the price of 6*d.* and 1*s.* a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d.*). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d.* and 3*d.* In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d.* in the dry season fetches 8*d.* in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s.*

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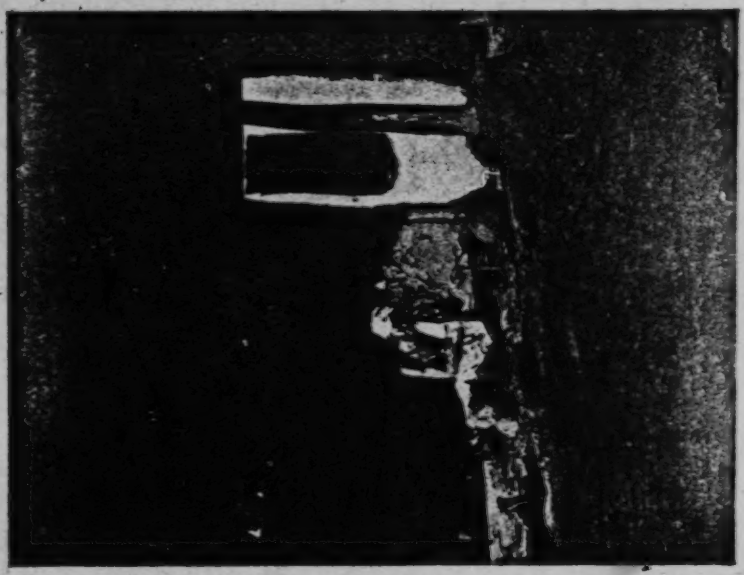
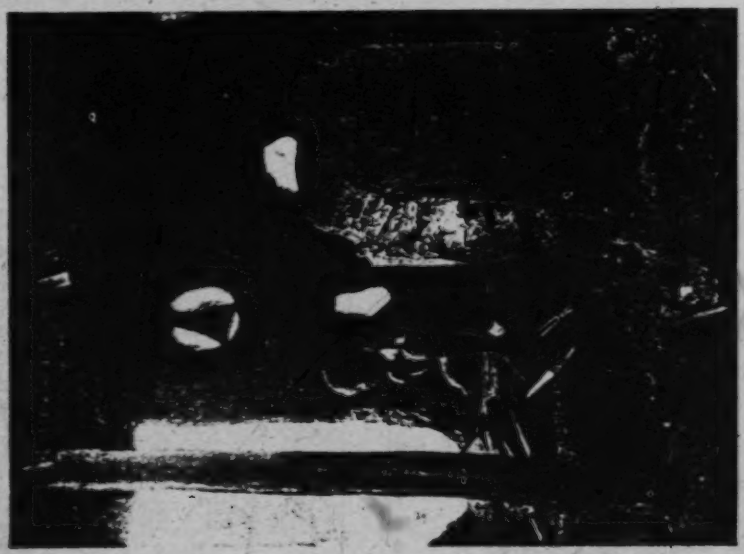


SILVERSMITH



BLACKSMITH

[facing p. 264]

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
[437] Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

326 The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
467 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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326 467 the allegiance to a common head, the master of the *Dokodza* section in Bida. As this group of Bida blacksmiths is associated, historically, with Nupe kingship its head also holds his rank and position by appointment of the king of Nupe. The *Dokodza* claims that the blacksmiths in the whole of Nupe 'must obey him' in all matters concerning the profession. As an external expression of this allegiance he receives annually, at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*, a gift of crude iron ore from the various blacksmith groups of the country. Although this gift has now been abandoned the village blacksmiths still acknowledge (at least in theory) the supreme position of the guild-head in the capital, and never fail to pay their respects to him when they are in Bida. In return they count on his help and influence if they are in need of official intervention in the capital or at the court. The closeness of the co-operation under the guild-head, and the efficiency of his control over his fellow craftsmen, increases with the nearness to Bida, till, in the town, it takes the form of guild organization in the strict sense of the word.

The most effective unit, however, is not the guild at large, but the single guild section. The people of each group are of one *dengi*, one kinship group, related both by descent and frequent intermarriage. Every male born into the group is expected to become a blacksmith—'how can he become anything else', said my informants; 'we know no other job'. But, on the other hand, they would maintain that no man from outside could become a blacksmith. When I asked the *Dokodza* people why this should be so, they answered with a laugh: 'How can anyone who was not born a blacksmith become one?' Nevertheless, in another part of the town I discovered a man who, born of a family of traders, had adopted the profession of a blacksmith. He seemed to have been a rather more unruly youth than the rest of the family; for he had firmly declined to become a trader, like them; he had first studied the Koran and thought of becoming a Mallam, but later changed his mind, and decided to become a blacksmith: he 'liked it better' than either trading or studying. Certain maternal relations of his were Beni blacksmiths in a village near Bida. There he went, stayed with them for some years till he had learned the trade, and then returned to Bida, where he is now keeping a little workshop of his own in the entrance hut of the house of his paternal relations. Among the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I was told that formerly apprentices were taken regularly. The pupils came mostly from villages near Bida, and returned to their home as fully fledged craftsmen. The training took from three to five years, during which time the apprentice lived in the house of his master. No money was taken for the tuition, but after the completion of the apprenticeship the parents of the pupil sent a present of food and kola-nuts. Adoption into the profession went hand in hand with adoption into the guild, and the new craftsman would regard himself as a member of the guild section in which he was apprenticed. However, there have been no adoptions into the craft for many years now.

Each guild section has its own titled head and, besides, one or two other ranks which are bestowed on the family heads of the other large family groups in the section. The position of the head of the guild

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section is taken in rotation by these families, the 'second-in-command' succeeding to the position of the head at his death. Among the *Dokodza* people we find a threefold elaborate hierarchy which settles the succession even to the rank of the 'second-in-command': *Dokodza*, *Dokpa*, and *Shaba Dokpa* (lit. Successor of *Dokpa*). The smaller blacksmith section of the Bida Beni possesses two ranks: *Majī Tswata* and *Shaba Tswata*. The blacksmith groups in the villages, and also the groups of iron-ore miners, have similar rank systems.[1] The heads of the blacksmith groups, and to a lesser extent the other guild ranks, are respected, and their orders are obeyed by all co-workers. The main significance of their position lies in the fact that it is their task to organize all co-operative work within the group.

Co-operation and mutual assistance within the section takes many different forms. If the people of one workshop, for example, are unable to fulfil a certain order, they pass it on to another workshop; or if the occupants happen to be absent when a customer calls, their neighbours will always be ready to take the order on their behalf. When the workshops ran short of iron ore, the guild-head used to send messengers to the iron-ore miners to bring back a sufficient supply for the whole group; this form of co-operation, however, no longer exists, and to-day each workshop procures its own raw material. Co-operation of a more far-reaching order is concerned with the various tasks which we have placed under the heading of 'maintenance of labour'. We have already seen that these tasks involve co-operation and mutual assistance on a scale which transcends in varying degree the *efakó*-unit. Thus the division of labour in the preparation of charcoal implies co-operation of the whole workshop group. When it becomes necessary to forge and put up a new anvil an even larger group must co-operate in active work. We may add that the upkeep of the workshop itself, or the building of furnaces—especially the large furnaces used by the iron-ore miners—demands a co-operation much larger than that which the *efakó* group can provide. In none of these cases is the co-operation recompensed with a share in the profits (as is the case in *efakó* co-operation); nor is this co-operation organized on the basis of collective work of the *egbe* type; nor can it be explained, finally, by the fact that the co-workers may belong to the same family and household. Rather is it a co-operation based on membership of the same professional union—the guild or guild section—and mobilized by the appointed head of the group.

The head of the guild section is also responsible for maintenance of labour in a wider sense. His professional advice may be sought by all workers in the group if they have some difficult or unusual work in hand. He will also occasionally lend his people money if they need it for professional purposes (e.g. the purchase of crude iron ore), in other words, he provides them with the necessary working capital. Certain similar services towards the group are vested in the position of the *Dokodza* alone, that is, of the head of the guild at large. He arbitrates in all internal disputes among the blacksmiths of Bida, and is thus able to

[1] See chart of Village Ranks, p. 57.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 467 prevent friction in his body of workers. He is also the agency through which important large orders reach the group. On a smaller scale this task also falls to the heads of the other blacksmith groups. But in the case of the guild-head it gains special significance; for these 'royal blacksmiths' worked for the largest customer of the country, the Nupe court. They could be certain of a constant large demand, e.g. for tools for the farm-hands working for the king, or various iron implements needed in the royal household, for horse bits and stirrups for the king's horses, or flint-locks for the guns of the bodyguard. These orders are given by the king or court officials to the *Dokodza*, who then distributes the work among the craftsmen of his group according to their capacity and skill, or, if the order proves too large, among the workers in other guild sections as well. The *Dokodza* also receives the payment for this work, and keeps the largest share; the rest of the money is divided equally among the whole guild section, whether they have been working on this particular job or not.[1] These royal orders have been greatly reduced recently, not only because many of the implements needed are obtained nowadays from the European stores, but also because many of the requirements of the royal household are now catered for by the Public Works Department in Bida. But when the present *Etsu* built his new house, in 1935, he ordered nails and brackets for all doors from the *Dokodza* people.

326 467 178 The part played by the guild-head (and to a lesser extent by the sectional heads) in providing labour and capital for his group explains the authority which he exercises over his fellow workers, and also his ability to act in certain circumstances as their 'financier'. On the other hand, the close co-operative organization of the guild section reveals itself as a device to meet these regular demands upon the production of the group. Here we can attempt to explain why the smaller guild sections in Bida (and similarly the village groups of blacksmiths) have suffered more severely under modern economic changes than did the *Dokodza* group. The size of the groups is itself significant. Only the privileged group of the 'royal blacksmiths' evolved a large-scale professional organization; the other groups, which did not have the same access to constant large-scale demands upon production, remained small, and more loosely organized. Now, we can assume that these smaller groups also obtained formerly a sufficient demand for their products from various sources. It may also be that their sources have failed sooner, and more completely, than the source with which the *Dokodza* people could reckon—the continued orders from the royal household are evidence of this. But these unequal changes are less significant in their direct effect upon production (which may be negligible)[2] than in their indirect effect,

[1] How, on the other hand, the authority of the guild-head can be adapted to new situations is illustrated in the following instance. When I went to inspect the furnaces of the iron-ore miners near Bida, I had to obtain a guide through the *Dokodza*. On our return to Bida the guide at once showed the money which I had paid him to the guild-head; though he was allowed to keep it he could not have done so without first informing the guild-head, who could have deducted a part of the money.

[2] The order for nails and brackets for the royal house which we mentioned above brought in only 2s. and a gift of food.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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through the medium of labour organization. The royal orders, though at present small and irregular, still mobilize the group organization of the *Dokodza* people in the traditional way. The general weakening of the guild organization brought about by recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild-head and sectional heads, has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller, and already weaker, guild sections. In their case the group organization has, in fact, been reduced beyond the margin of safety. We have seen that Nupe blacksmith work demands comparatively large group co-operation for a successful maintenance of labour (in all its aspects). In a weakened organization, a markedly reduced co-operative group, maintenance of labour becomes increasingly difficult. This is what happened in the case of the smaller blacksmith groups. And this difficulty, while not sufficient in itself to disrupt the labour organization, would yet weaken its resistance to the effects of economic change—a decline in trade, the competition of European goods—effects which (at least for the time being) have passed by the larger and more strongly organized section.

We can quote several instances of this: the division of labour which enables a workshop, say, of four men, to continue work while two of the men prepare charcoal is impossible in a small working unit, and a valuable working day, possibly in the busiest time of the year, must be sacrificed. Or a workshop may have to interrupt its work when iron ore runs out and new raw material has to be fetched from the iron-ore miners—a task which, in large-scale co-operation, can be performed by one man for a number of workshops without deranging the work of the group. I have even witnessed cases in which work had been interrupted, or reduced to small repairs, because the workers had no money to buy raw materials; in a large co-operative group money would have been found more easily, especially with the help of the guild-head. In Kutigi I saw one of the two local blacksmith workshops left dilapidated for a whole year because the workers could not muster sufficient labour. The most conspicuous example of all is that of the iron-ore miners who had let their means of production, their furnaces, fall into disuse.

BRASS- AND SILVERSMITHS

The Nupe brass-smiths—*tswata muku*—reside almost exclusively in Bida. The only place outside Bida where brass-smiths have settled is Kacha, the rich trading-place, where these craftsmen from Bida hoped to find a profitable market. There are two groups of brass-smiths in Bida, one in the quarter of *Etsu* Masaba and one in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. The latter has lost its former importance. In technical skill both groups are equal, as I could test for myself; as regards work and design of the traditional type the group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter seems the more efficient. Yet its decline, unmerited though it was, is not difficult to understand. It was partly due to political factors. The group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter flourished during the régime of *Etsu* Bello, who was of the dynasty associated with this part of the town, and also under *Etsu*

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 Mohamadu before him, whose royal residence was not far from the brass-smiths' quarter. Here, as in many other instances, the invaluable royal patronage was extended primarily to the craftsmen living in the part of the town traditionally associated with the dynasty. With the change of the dynasty the royal patronage changed also, and under the late *Etsu* Saidu, of the house of Masaba, the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter captured the largest and most lucrative trade. A contributory cause lies in the lay-out of modern Bida. The motor-road to the centre [361] of Bida and the big market leads through the street of the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter, while the other brass-smiths' group is situated in an obscure corner of Bida, away from roads and markets. Now, the brass- and silver-ware manufactured in Bida consists to a large extent of ornaments for men and women and other 'luxury' objects. A large pro- [339] portion is intended for export, and certain goods are even made specially for tourists and European 'curio'-hunters. In either case the nearness of the big trading centre and the main thoroughfare of the town, with its opportunity for display and for attracting customers, must prove an advantage which is denied to the other, almost inaccessible, group of craftsmen.

The character of this luxury industry also explains its concentration in Bida. Its products find their way to villages and peasant districts as well. But a constant and large-scale demand exists only in the capital. Moreover, the concentration of this industry is, in sophisticated Nupe, a trade-mark of refinement and value, and a guarantee that its products express the latest fashions.

The technical equipment of the workshop of the brass-smiths differs 326 in certain important details from that of the blacksmiths. The work- 531 shops of the brass-smiths, with their smaller and less smoky furnace, are more often housed in the compound itself, i.e. in the entrance hut. The tools are less heavy and adjusted to the finer technique. European hammers, chisels, and files are used to a much larger extent. The main products of the Nupe brass industry are sword-hilts and daggers,[1] horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles of various kinds, made mostly of beaten brass or copper; bangles and rings, which are cast in open clay moulds of bars of brass or silver or (nowadays) aluminium and then bent and twisted into shape; also hairpins and silver chains. Artistic decoration, especially ornamentation of the surface of these various objects, plays an important part. From old Nupe brass- and silver-work preserved in Bida and in European museums we learn the different styles in decoration which have succeeded each other in the course of the last hundred years. The style in fashion to-day is ornamentation in *pointillé* technique.[2]

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

[1] The blades are old, mostly of German or Austrian manufacture, and have been traded for centuries to Nigeria and Nupe, across the desert, from North Africa.

[2] The oldest style appears to be a fluted design which I have seen on certain brass bowls; a later style which flourished at the end of last century, consisted in embossed ornaments which made special use of the flower motif. The *pointillé* style appears to have come in about 1910.

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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one-er 326

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and such-like. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgiži*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s*. for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d*. apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d*.; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d*. Silver bangles are sold for 12*s*. a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s*., and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d*. to 1*s*. Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s*.; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s*. 6*d*., and the profit per

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326 434 435 day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

326 Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relations work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

326 467 The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

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especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny. The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuši*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[32]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three " wards " of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a " closed " craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[33]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for " copper "), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[34]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciši*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[32] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[33] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[34] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[34] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1956
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Crafts of Bida

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IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

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The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

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Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

[Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

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6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
" King of The dancers " — A Bida brass spinning Toy.

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The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

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This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

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The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

Text continued on page 143

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Workers in brass and silver. The goat-skin bellows are similar to those of the glass-makers

326
516
291
415

[p. 142]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

291
326
531

Punching designs on brass bowls.
No trace of the pattern is made before the punch work starts

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956

FF52 Nupe FF52

Bida

323 Beads are made similarly, small amounts of molten glass being allowed to fall fixed distances to determine size and shape much as round shot used to be made in Europe.

323 This trade is suffering badly now. The products are very cheap, but
439 they are in direct competition with more sophisticated, imported products.

One type of Bida bead is *not* cheap. It is very rare and is said to be made from "a sort of stone found a thousand miles away in the desert, only at one place. It is brought here only by women traders who go to Kano and Zinder to buy it from the desert people and very few know how to work on it". Accurate details are very difficult to come by, but this type of bead is very scarce and still greatly prized.

326 The brass workers fashion all but their most involved shapes on small anvils, beating rhythmically with a very small hammer. The patterns are made with a punch without any preliminary drawing of the intended pattern. As may be expected, the results vary but many are remarkably symmetrical and precise.

Much of the work is carried out in "silver", correctly coloured but bearing about as much likeness to real metal as does the average silver coinage. The Maria Theresa dollar, one of the traditional sources of
[439] silver in the North, has been used as far south as Bida but the supply seems to be running out. In some places, craftsmen may be seen making Maria Theresa dollars . . .

Bida metal work is both interesting and disappointing at the same time. The folklore of the Nupe people makes many references to great skill in bronze casting and the Jebba bronzes are there to support the tale (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 43). There appears to be no casting now, though there remains an ability to make thin and very ductile metal sheet in a variety of alloys which can be worked over and over again without harm. Many of these metals have a quite surprising capacity to conduct heat, as anyone casually using a brass ash tray may quickly learn.

There is among the surviving guildsmen of Bida a reservoir of craftsmanship and familiarity with working glass, metals, leather and similar traditional materials. Without outside help, their skills will be lost and their young men will turn to other jobs. Perhaps there can never be an adequate, expanding market for their present products; but with a little help and advice, they could still be of greater value to their town and to Nigeria.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER X

GOVERNMENT IN MODERN NUPE

OFTEN in the foregoing description I have used the present tense as if the Nupe kingdom of pre-British days still existed. True, this was to a large extent an historical chapter; yet it described a development the results of which are still valid and still mould society to-day as they moulded it thirty, fifty, or even a hundred years ago. I was not merely reconstructing dead events and past phases. The Nupe kingdom and its society still exist, not only very vividly in the memory of the people but to a very large extent in concrete reality. This is not denying the force of social changes, but stressing the tenacity of a social structure that survives although its contents have changed materially. The recent economic and political changes have affected fundamentally the 'contents' of the social life of the country, the main interests and incentives round which it revolved. There are no more wars, raids, and conquests; slaves and feudal fiefs exist no longer. But ranks and titles and state offices linked with ranks and titles, still exist. Slaves have turned into *bara* or Native Administration officials; fiefs into administrative districts in the charge of royal princes. That the framework of the political organization could survive almost unchanged is in large measure due to the Administration of Nigeria under Indirect Rule and its tendency to utilize as far as possible the traditional social system. But a stronger proof of the tenacity of the Nupe social system is the fact that where the Administration had departed from it and tried to make way for a new development the old trend broke through, undeflected.

Two years ago the Administration built a new official residence for the *Etsu* Bida, with a brick wall, an imposing tower, a garage, and a flower garden—an emblem of modern Nigeria. Incidentally, for all its modernity the new house is but a replica of the hereditary palace of the Nupe kings, with special *katamba* for the *ena Ndeji* and *ena Maiyaki*, for *gitsidi* and *bara*, the *ena mazdi*, the men of the *Etsu Dogari*, and the commoners who come to wait on the *Etsu*. Now, this new house was built on 'neutral' ground, outside the town gates, as a symbol of the Government's intention to break with the division into three royal houses, which the Government considered harmful to the unity of the country.[1] The Administration believed itself to have overcome successfully the opposition of the late *Etsu*. An old and sick man, he was reported to have said—and his words were all over Bida—that he had agreed to the new site only because he knew he would not have to live in the new house. Which was true enough—he died before the building was finished. But the new *Etsu*, who willingly took up his residence in the splendid new house, one day surprised the District Officer by demanding that his 'proper house' in Bida, in his 'own' part of the town, should be put in repair at the expense of the Native

[1] See p. 93.

[p. 157]

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

133
501
778

FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GUSHE, ONE OF THE LEKU VILLAGES.

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF THORNS."

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941
532
291

FIG. 3. THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES AT JEBBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH *kuli* HORNS.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

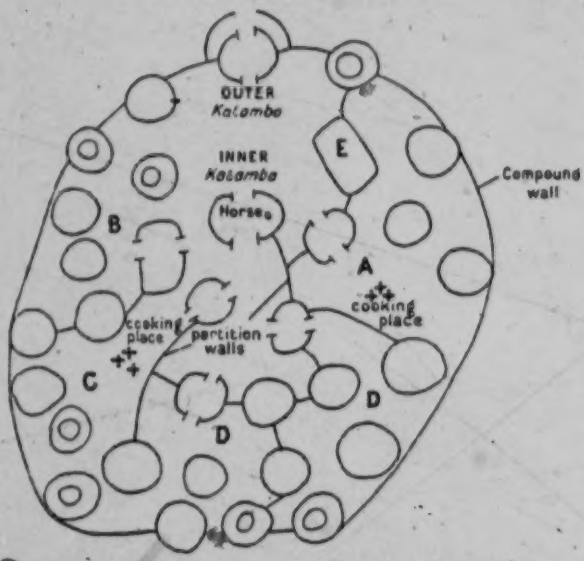
[Facing page 129]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found dis-
596 tributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the subdivision of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[372]



○ Sleeping huts ⊂⊃ Kolamba A... partition of family head. B... partition of unmarried sons. C... partition of unmarried daughters. D... partition of married sons and younger brothers. E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

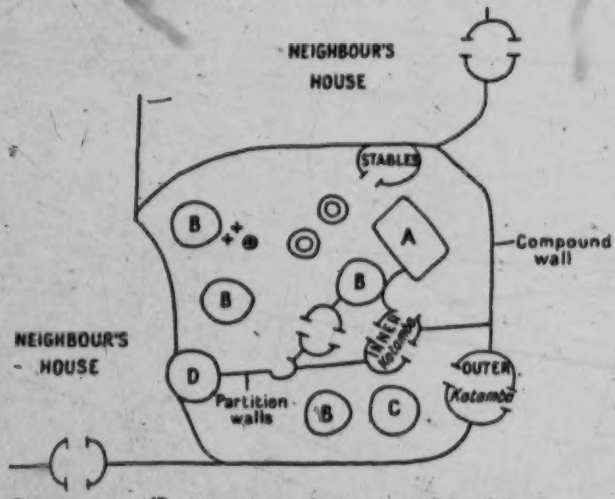
Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discus-
[621] sions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kinship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

The family has been regarded by many anthropologists as a typical *bilateral* unit—a group in which the transmission of rights and duties follows both the paternal and maternal line. We know now that such family structures are extremely rare, and that in most societies succession in paternal and maternal line supplement each other and are assigned different spheres of validity, certain rights and duties being transmitted in the paternal and others in the maternal line. For the Nupe family we

HOUSE OF A BIDA NOBLEMAN OF LOW RANK



○ *Sleeping huts* ⟲ *Kotomba*. A... *Sleeping hut of Family head*.
B... *Sleeping huts of his wives*. C... *Sleeping hut of unmarried son*.
D... *Sleeping hut of unmarried daughter*. ● *Well*. ◎ *Granaries*.

can say that rights and duties which are transmitted through the father greatly outweigh in scope and importance those transmitted through the mother. Kinship membership itself and the access to the political and religious rights vested in it are determined by paternal descent. As women in Nupe neither own nor work land, this most important property is also inherited through the father. The rights to certain forms of financial support (e.g. for the payment of bride-price or support in old age) are equally derived from descent in the father's line. As Radcliffe-Brown has shown, the genealogical division into paternal and maternal succession depends also on the nature of the rights and duties that are transmitted from individual to individual, some being transmitted more satisfactorily through men (i.e. the father) and others through women (i.e. the mother).[1] Thus the personal property of the Nupe women is inherited by their daughters—as the personal property

[1] R. A. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

342
361

COMPOUNDS IN KUTIGI

JEBBA ISLAND

[facing p. 36]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

621 also explains why *tunga* settlements rarely (if ever) develop into real 'towns'. The factor of size and numbers, too, plays its part. In order to provide that self-contained social and political life that is typical of the Nupe 'town', and in order to afford its inhabitants the political security which is part of the *raison d'être* of that form of settlement, a much larger concentration of people is necessary than the village *tunga* is likely ever to achieve in a sparsely populated country with so low a birth-rate. But the attitude of the people is as important: they cannot conceive of a *tunga* becoming an *eẓi*—a rival settlement to their mother-town. The village *tunga* has no social life of its own: it possesses no market, no independent political organization, often no age-grades of its own, and celebrates its feasts and ceremonies with the 'mother-town'. 'Towns', on the other hand, are independent, self-contained units, which have little in common with each other, and often know nothing of their next-door neighbours. To become a 'town' would thus mean for the *tunga* to deny the very essence of its social identity.

Every village then counts, 'owns' as the Nupe say, a certain number of colonies, which surround it in a radius of six to seven miles, right up to the point where the area of the next village begins. Kutigi, for example, possesses six *tunga* settlements founded between 1860 and 1910. Five were founded by people from the two largest *efu* of Kutigi, one by people from Etsú, a neighbouring 'town', who preferred to settle on the more open and fertile land of Kutigi. Doko, a much smaller village but situated in a more densely populated area, owns nine large *tunga* settlements and a number of smaller, secondary, dependencies. Two of the large *tunga* settlements were founded by people of the Cekpã sub-tribe who fled from their homes during the Yoruba wars and settled in more peaceful Beni country. The other seven are village colonies proper. Interspersed between these colonies of Doko are four 'private' *tunga* settlements, founded by slaves and other dependants of Bida landlords.

The following examples may illustrate the organization of two comparatively recently founded *tunga* settlements:

Zaboru, a *tunga* near Sakpe, consisting of two compounds, was founded by the man Zaboru, together with his elder brother, the present Village Head of Sakpe, about thirty years ago. The two men went out together to find a place with new farm-land, and built first temporary, later permanent huts. The elder brother returned to Sakpe after the death of their father to assume his position as the new head of the family. In his place a third, youngest, brother, who had just married, went out to the *tunga*, about ten years ago, where he is still living.

Shebe Woro, belonging to the 'town' Shebe and consisting of two compounds, was founded in 1933, when a certain Kolo left Shebe 'because the place was too full'. Together with some relations and two friends he occupied a new place, about three miles away, deeper in the bush, and founded there the settlement now called Shebe Woro, which means, New Shebe.

342 361 Let us now go inside a Nupe village. I have described already its typical lay-out—the scattered *efu* and the walled compounds or 'houses'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

342 361 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated [631] with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one 346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred 778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the 361 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are 361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From [312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which [354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the 347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It 571 is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

FF52 Nupe FF52

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531

A VILLAGE *KATAMBA*

A *KATAMBA* IN BIDA

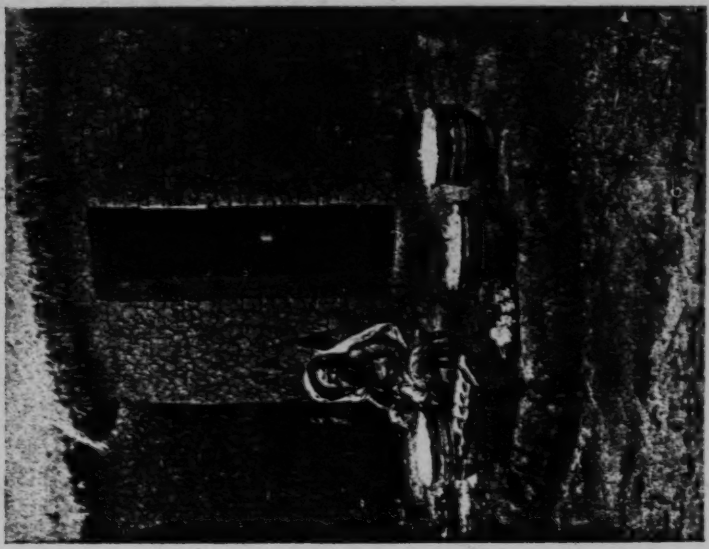
[facing p. 38]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52



A WOMAN TRADER SELLING HER HUSBAND'S SILVERWARE

342
415
443

A FOOD MARKET

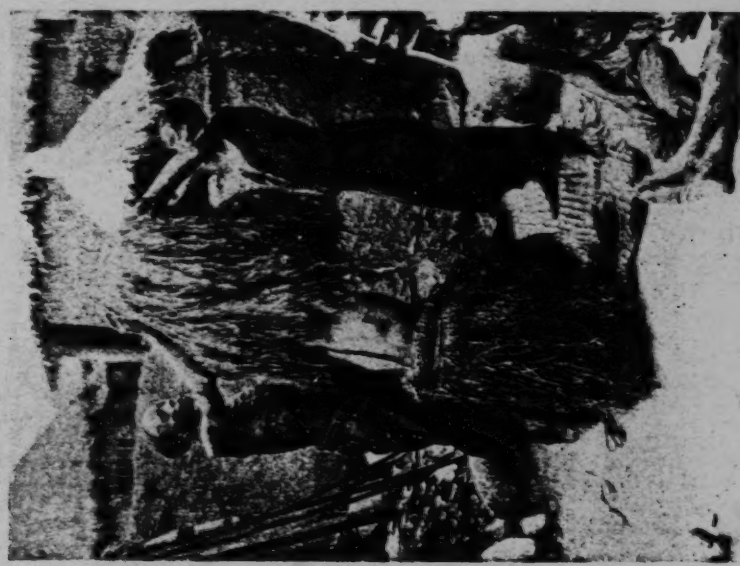
482
443

[facing p. 330]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

× 796
795
● 342
361



11. Dressing the *mamma* masks

10. The *zumácikà* medicine shrine in Jebba

[778]

[p. 70(a)]

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in
342] the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*fiazo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

652 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference
592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-
354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying
[423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndahó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa MS12

Nupe FF52

N 342 351

FIG. 28—This scene in Bida, capital of the Nupe people, Niger Province, illustrates the rural character of many Nigerian towns.

H 342 531

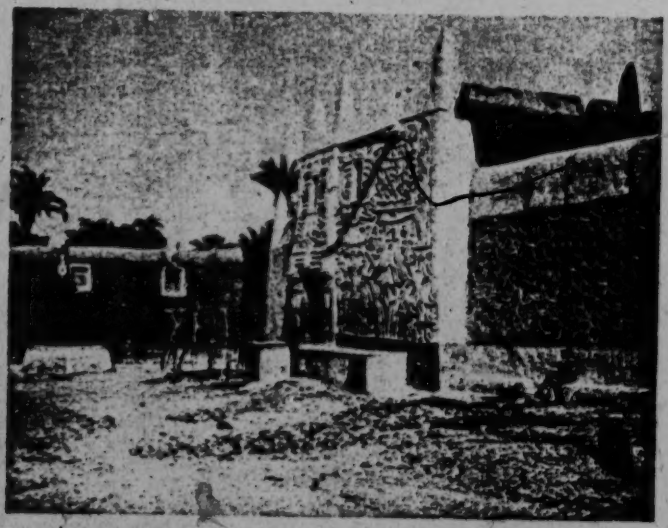


FIG. 29—A traditional dwelling in Kano. The complicated ornamentation in relief is characteristic of urban architecture in the Sudan zone. Date palms in background.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna. 425 427

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*lati*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cikã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'. 621 423

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village 621 361 [343]

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociźi wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-o*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241 It is natural, though from a certain point of view unfortunate, that today examples of this kind will almost invariably refer to modern commercial crops. The consideration of 'adequate returns' is thus given a narrower, and very specific, meaning. It cannot be denied that the extensive cultivation of these modern crops has accentuated the element of economic calculation in Nupe agricultural planning. Not only has the introduction of these crops considerably complicated the planting schedule, but it has also immensely emphasized the monetary aspect of the question of adequate returns. The 'all-or-nothing' viewpoint, or in the language of the economist, the 'marginal' considerations, which our examples have revealed, are no doubt due to its influence. I have said that these modern influences have 'accentuated' the element of economic calculation—they have not introduced it for the first time. To be satisfied with what the Nupe call, by a stereotyped formula, farming 'for the mouth only' is characteristic only of those sections which practise agriculture on the most modest scale, as a secondary occupation in addition to a craft, a trade, &c. We shall learn presently that even in its original form, before modern economic influences were brought to bear on it, Nupe agricultural production included a large measure of production for marketing and exchange.

DISPOSAL OF CROPS

Storage

251 We find both storage on the farm and in the house. Yam, sweet potatoes, cassava, and in some places the portion of millet and sorghum
● 343 meant for sale are stored on the farm, either in the small huts (*evu*) which serve the farmers as temporary shelters, or in special store-huts (*kpyakpya*) built of sticks and branches put up, tent-like, against a tree and covered with leaves or grass. Inside, the fruits are heaped on a raised platform. The yam fruits are stored whole, and the fruits needed for food or marketing are collected from time to time, about twice a week, mostly by the men. The storing arrangement in this stick-and-branches structure is adapted to the need of the root crops for a drier and more airy storage than the clay granaries in the houses could provide. As regards the grain crops intended for sale, they are stored in these huts only for a short time, being disposed of very soon after the harvest. In the districts where little yam is grown, especially in the country round Bida, all crops, including yam, are stored in the house. Of cassava only small quantities are stored; as fresh cassava does not keep, it is first dried in the sun. But as the harvesting of cassava is not bound to any special season it is frequently dug out and used for food at odd times throughout the year; often in fact, dug out and eaten raw, it serves as a convenient 'quick lunch' to the farmers while they are working in the fields.

In the granaries in the house are stored millet, sorghum, maize (so far as this crop, grown in small quantities, involves any special storing), beans, ground-nuts, and all greens, each crop being kept in a separate granary. These granaries, called *edo*, are distributed between the living huts of the compound. Of egg-like shape, about 7 feet high and 4 feet in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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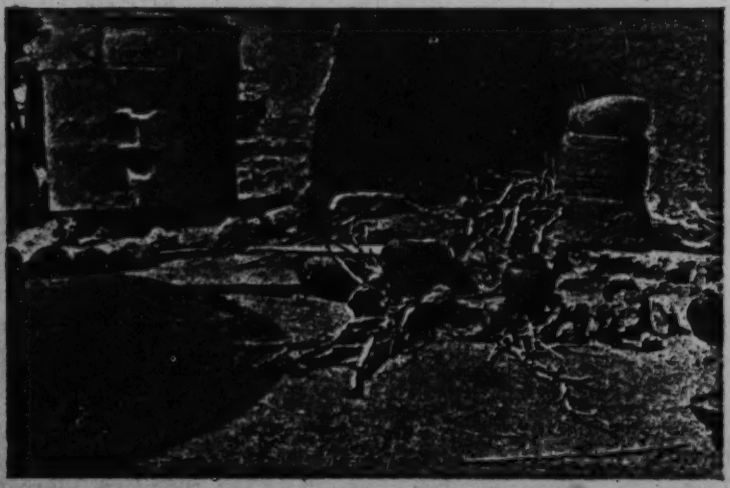
A FAMILY HEAD REPAIRING HIS GRANARY



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GRANARY AND COOKING PLACE IN A VILLAGE COMPOUND

[facing p. 226]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

343 diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-
251 like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid.
[358] At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

251 Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These
251 ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of
354 millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

The seed plants are as a rule at once divided up from the crop. The
251 seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

[1] This is actually the almost universal method of grain storage in Northern Nigeria. An indirect testimony to its efficacy I chanced to obtain from Hausa settlers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whom I had occasion to visit in 1939. Chiefly for lack of proper building material for the construction of the Nigerian type of clay granary, these settlers have adopted the Sudan method of storage, i.e. storage of threshed grain. They all agreed that this method was inferior to the Nigerian, and preserved the grain much less satisfactorily.

[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the
[177] Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *esi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in
344 the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *esi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *esi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *esi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *esi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *esi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference
592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

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[423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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THE PALACE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF MASABA

THE PALACE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF USMAN

[facing p.42]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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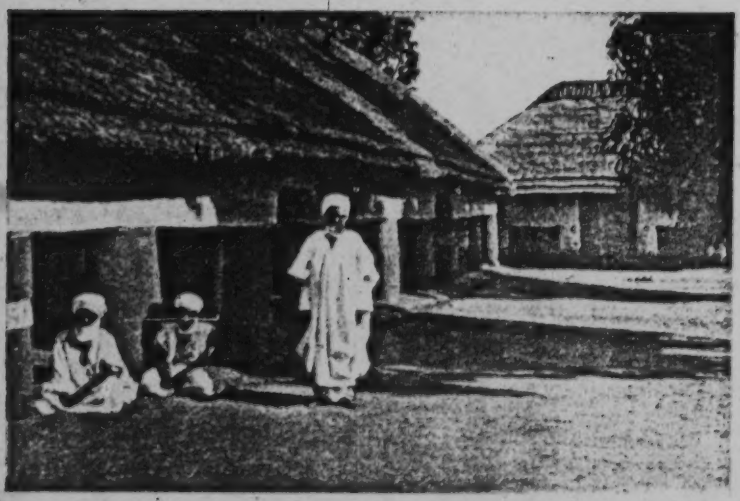

COURT HOUSE IN BIDA

THE *ALKALI* OF MOKWA

[Facing p. 170]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated
[631] with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the
361 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
[354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where [346] the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along 361 the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, 443 stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It 438 starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

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30. The Nupe quarter in Lagos

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31. The oldest mosque in Bida

[p. 230(B)]

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

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[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa MS12

Nupe FFS2

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FIG. 28—This scene in Bida, capital of the Nupe people, Niger Province, illustrates the rural character of many Nigerian towns.

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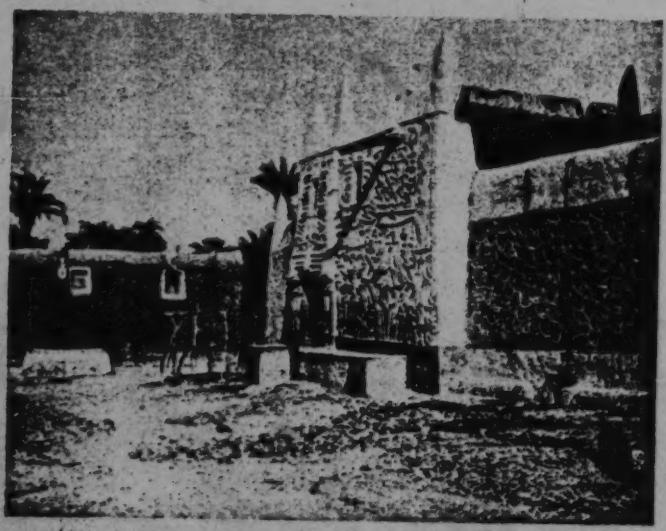

FIG. 29—A traditional dwelling in Kano. The complicated ornamentation in relief is characteristic of urban architecture in the Sudan zone. Date palms in background.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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AN OLD POTTER WOMAN

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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

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415

3. Wall paintings in a Nupe house

[p. 22(B)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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343 diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-
251 like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid. [358] At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

251 Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These
251 ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of
354 millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

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251 seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

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[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the [177] Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in
344] the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference
592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-
● 354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying
[423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 large proportion of the produce, or selling it in a hurry, at unfavourable prices.

From nutritive wants we proceed to the wants involved in the 'primary 511 need' of shelter. The upkeep or building of houses represents a want 356 which, occurring at much longer and more irregular intervals, does not figure conspicuously in the annual household budget. In the village, upkeep and building of houses is mainly a question of co-operative labour, involving little or no money outlay. Smaller house repairs, above all thatching, become necessary every three to five years; more complete repairs, such as rebuilding of huts or of the compound wall, are reckoned to occur every ten to twelve years. The small repairs are carried out by the household group, and take rarely more than two or three days. For larger repairs the help of neighbours and relations must be enlisted on *egbe* scale; they last much longer, according to the body of workers that can be mustered, and the work may often have to be interrupted for a day or two if the workers have other tasks in hand. Most building work in the village is left till the beginning of the rains, when the ground (from which the clay for building is dug) is soft, the grass for thatching not too dry (such grass is said to last less long), and when the people are still free from more exigent farm-work. We may add that the building of more elaborate houses of the kind that is found in the town and also in certain villages entails the employment of expert labour, and thus money expenditure, which varies widely with the style and scale of the work.

Finally, we add the 'derived wants' involved in agricultural produc- 511 tion. Under this heading we include repairs and purchase of tools and 241 the financing of *egbe* work. In the same category falls the payment of a fixed land rent in kind which obtains in the area round Bida (as in our example C). I have only partly been able to include these wants in the household budgets. However, the widespread efforts to economize, for example, on the cost of *egbe* work, or the neglected appearance of many of the sumptuous Bida houses, reveal the difficulties which many households find to-day in coping with these wants.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

511 The next step in our inquiry is to ascertain the demands embodied in cultural standards which the Nupe peasant has to meet out of the surplus (if surplus there be) derived from his production. We can group these demands under three headings. (1) Demands implied in kinship duties. In so far as the household or kinship group coincides with the labour-unit these demands overlap with those we listed under 'maintenance of labour'. (2) Demands implied in duties towards the community—religious, political, or social. (3) Certain personal requirements which are regarded, by convention, as essential, and even indispensable.

Under the first heading we list the expenses of kinship ceremonies and feasts—the name-giving ceremony for a new-born child, wedding feasts, and burial and funeral ceremonies. These expenses are borne primarily

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
582 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker
[427] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became
[357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and
286 there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven
[804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except
443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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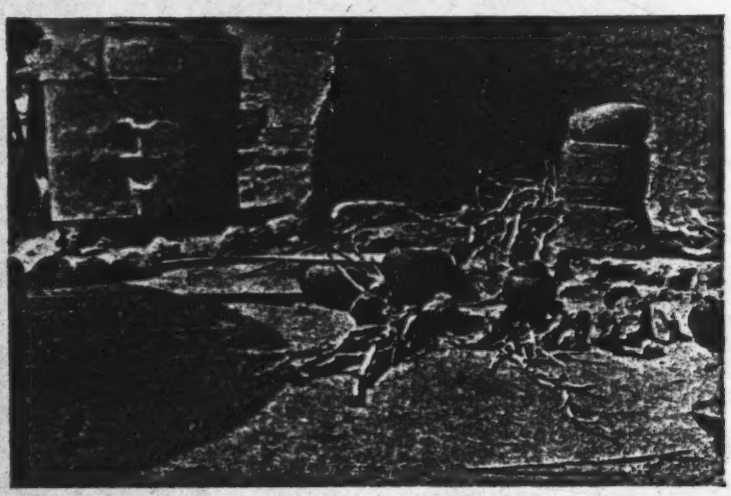
A FAMILY HEAD REPAIRING HIS GRANARY



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GRANARY AND COOKING PLACE IN A VILLAGE COMPOUND

[FACING p.226]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNITY: VILLAGE AND TOWN

621 THE description of 'areas of common life' must start with the description of the external arrangement, that is, forms of settlement. ~~The Nupe live in large villages or towns.~~ They have only one word for both, *eži*, thus defining the essentially identical nature of the two forms of settlement. There exists another Nupe word, *tunga* or *kangi*, which is applied to very small settlements. But this name refers not so much to the size as to the different sociological nature of the settlement; for the *tunga*, unlike the *eži*, does not represent an independent local unit but a 'daughter-settlement', a 'colony' of a village or town.

The size of the *eži* varies considerably. Nupe Emirate counts three 621 ~~villages with a population of over~~ or near a thousand: Doko with 800 361 inhabitants; Mokwa with 2,000; and Kutigi with 3,000. But there exist also smaller 'towns', villages the population of which had been reduced by emigration and which may be, in size, hardly bigger than a large *tunga*. The local arrangement of the Nupe village, large or small, is nearly always the same: clusters of compounds scattered comfortably over an area, each 'cluster' consisting of a number of walled compounds, 'houses' in native terminology, and forming what the Nupe call an *efu*, or ward. These village wards are separated by stretches of open land, spacious cultivated fields, studded with clumps of trees. More rarely the *efu* stand close together and are separated only by narrow thoroughfares between the walls of neighbouring compounds. This latter arrangement is typical of many riverside villages where, in narrow space, house presses upon house and compound upon compound. Each *efu* has its own name, derived either from a topographical peculiarity, e.g. Takogi, [103] meaning 'the one below', or Kpacinefu, 'the river bank *efu*', or from a sociological feature, namely, the rank or profession of the people living in the *efu*, e.g. *efu* Žitsu, '*efu* of the chief', or *efu* Tswata, '*efu* of the blacksmiths', and so forth; or, finally, the name of the *efu* may refer to the origin of its inhabitants, betraying them as immigrants from another village or tribe, e.g. Yafu (abbr. for Eyagi-fu), 'Yoruba *efu*', or *efu* Daži, '*efu* of (the people of) Daži'.

The Nupe *eži* with its scattered *efu* clusters is encircled by a large town wall, or more correctly, used to be encircled by a town wall. It exists no longer, but its ruins can still be seen in many places, and all the people insist that formerly all 'towns' were protected by such walls. These crumbled ruins of the old town wall provide us with a piece of important historical evidence, which tells us, I think, why the Nupe have chosen just this type of settlement, in large populous 'towns', and not, for example, settlement in loosely linked, scattered homesteads; it allows us to grasp at least one of the motives behind this social development: the dangers of war.[1] Large villages represent in a country of

[1] The other motive is economic and is entailed in the organization of the Nupe system of production and exchange. (See p. 366.)

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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constant warfare the only safe method of settling. The small outlying settlements could quickly seek the protection of the walled town; a large concentrated population meant comparative security from raids, comparative safety in unsafe times. We have more historical data to support

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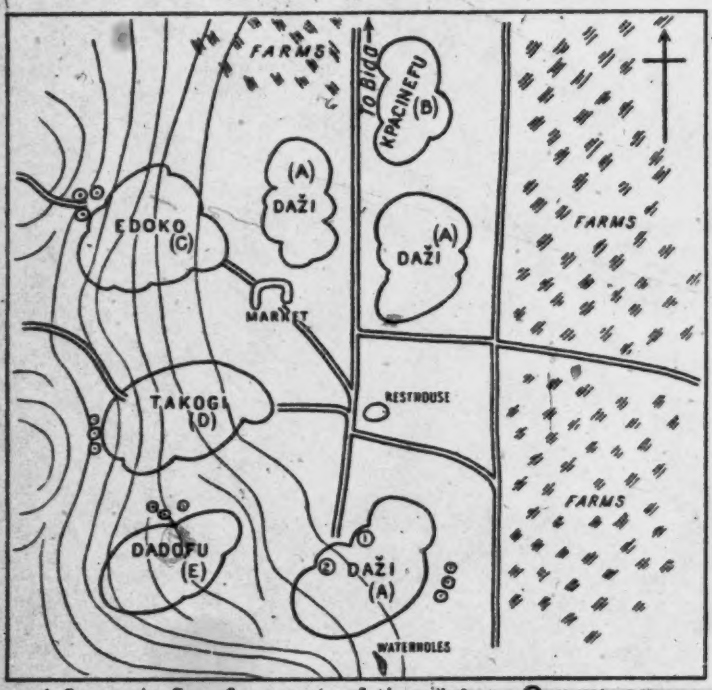
SKETCH MAP OF DOKO



A–E are the five *efu* or wards, of the village. ⊙...roast ovens.
①...house of chief (*Etsu Daži*). ②...house of village priest (*Žigi*).

this interpretation. One or two Nupe villages have sprung from the amalgamation of small groups, and in one significant case this fusion of component groups into a single large 'town' can definitely be traced to the time of the Fulani wars. What is to-day the village of Doko originated then out of the fusion of a small hill-side village, called Edokó, with a village situated originally about two miles away, in the plain, by the name of Daži. To escape from the Fulani raiders the people of Daži moved to Edokó, into the protection of the hill-side. The new twin-town was called Doko, with Edokó and Daži as two of the five *efu* which form the village to-day; and the chief, who comes from the stock of the Daži people, still takes the title *Etsu* Daži, king of Daži.[1] We possess also

[1] How far a development such as this, with a large village growing out of the fusion of two or more component groups, is typical of Nupe settlement in general

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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negative evidence to show that with the pacification of the country the reverse process has set in: Jima, once a capital of Nupe kingdom, a huge town to judge from the ruins of its town walls, is reduced to-day to a tiny village; most of its people have moved outside, and the eight former town-wards, still known by their old typical *efu*-names, are to-day scattered outposts, village 'colonies'—*tunga*.

The origin of the *tunga* settlements of Jima represents an unusual development. Normally the *tunga* reflects the expansion rather than the breaking up of the 'mother-town'. But the term *tunga* is not unequivocal. It refers to three different types of settlement. The first, the release of small groups for the foundation of 'daughter-settlements', is a direct consequence of the concentration of a large population in a single town. A growing population in the village, the need of new land, may lead to small groups moving into the uninhabited bush, to occupy virgin land and to found new settlements. A small section of one family at first, a few young men with their wives and children, the *tunga* may grow to a small hamlet embracing two or three large family groups. Or immigrants from another part of the country may choose to settle on the land which belongs to a certain village, and under its political protection: this settlement, too, will then be called *tunga*. Finally, the big landlords of Bida have settled their slaves and dependants on the land all round the capital, in small hamlets, called again *tunga*. But these settlements are in a different category, they represent not colonies of villages or towns but private property, farm settlements of individual landlords. A *tunga* is thus easily identified, for it is always referred to as a *tunga*, a 'colony', *of* a certain village or, in the case of private settlements, *of* a certain landlord. *Tunga* settlements seldom grow beyond three family groups. Should the population expand further, the *tunga* would again release some of its members who would leave the old settlement and found a new colony near-by. But it seems to have happened very rarely that a *tunga* grew into a 'town' proper—Gbangba, a prosperous village north of Bida and to-day the seat of a District Head, is the only example I can quote. Gbangba, however, was not a village colony but a *tunga* founded by people from Bida. On the other hand, I have seen several cases of *tunga* settlements which have grown out of each other, dependencies of dependencies. The *tunga* is itself a much more mobile settlement than the village proper. A *tunga* is often abandoned, and the people move to a new place, if there have been two or three bad harvests, or repeated cases of illness.

We understand the mobility of the *tunga* when we realize that these small farm settlements, founded by younger branches of families, can have none of the spiritual bonds—religious and ancestral—that would tie the 'real' village more permanently to the locality.[1] The same factor

I will not examine here. I may say that I have found two other typical instances; one I have described in *Man*, 1938, 85. There may be many more, of which the traces have become much more obliterated.

[1] An exception is provided by certain cults which are linked with individual families and not with the village as such; a sacred shrine of this kind may thus be carried to a *tunga*. The *tunga* Shebe Woro, for example, harbours the sacred chain and the shrine of Tsoede—two paraphernalia of the *ndaki gbeyi* cult.

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COMPOUNDS IN KUTIGI

JEBBA ISLAND

[facing p. 36]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 also explains why *tunga* settlements rarely (if ever) develop into real 'towns'. The factor of size and numbers, too, plays its part. In order to provide that self-contained social and political life that is typical of the Nupe 'town', and in order to afford its inhabitants the political security which is part of the *raison d'être* of that form of settlement, a much larger concentration of people is necessary than the village *tunga* is likely ever to achieve in a sparsely populated country with so low a birth-rate. But the attitude of the people is as important: they cannot conceive of a *tunga* becoming an *eẽi*—a rival settlement to their mother-town. The village *tunga* has no social life of its own: it possesses no market, no independent political organization, often no age-grades of its own, and celebrates its feasts and ceremonies with the 'mother-town'. 'Towns', on the other hand, are independent, self-contained units, which have little in common with each other, and often know nothing of their next-door neighbours. To become a 'town' would thus mean for the *tunga* to deny the very essence of its social identity.

Every village then counts, 'owns' as the Nupe say, a certain number of colonies, which surround it in a radius of six to seven miles, right up to the point where the area of the next village begins. Kutigi, for example, possesses six *tunga* settlements founded between 1860 and 1910. Five were founded by people from the two largest *efu* of Kutigi, one by people from Etsú, a neighbouring 'town', who preferred to settle on the more open and fertile land of Kutigi. Doko, a much smaller village but situated in a more densely populated area, owns nine large *tunga* settlements and a number of smaller, secondary, dependencies. Two of the large *tunga* settlements were founded by people of the Cekpã sub-tribe who fled from their homes during the Yoruba wars and settled in more peaceful Beni country. The other seven are village colonies proper. Interspersed between these colonies of Doko are four 'private' *tunga* settlements, founded by slaves and other dependants of Bida landlords.

The following examples may illustrate the organization of two comparatively recently founded *tunga* settlements:

Zaboru, a *tunga* near Sakpe, consisting of two compounds, was founded by the man Zaboru, together with his elder brother, the present Village Head of Sakpe, about thirty years ago. The two men went out together to find a place with new farm-land, and built first temporary, later permanent huts. The elder brother returned to Sakpe after the death of their father to assume his position as the new head of the family. In his place a third, youngest, brother, who had just married, went out to the *tunga*, about ten years ago, where he is still living.

Shebe Woro, belonging to the 'town' Shebe and consisting of two compounds, was founded in 1933, when a certain Kolo left Shebe 'because the place was too full'. Together with some relations and two friends he occupied a new place, about three miles away, deeper in the bush, and founded there the settlement now called Shebe Woro, which means, New Shebe.

342 361 Let us now go inside a Nupe village. I have described already its typical lay-out—the scattered *efu* and the walled compounds or 'houses'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its
186 centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

361 Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded
162 by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

361 And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

361 Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross,
363 from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

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361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where [346] the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along 361 the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, 443 stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It 438 starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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548 dark and quiet. After 9 o'clock the market-place and the streets are almost deserted.

But let us return to our daylight inspection of the town: we were 361 standing at the crossing of the four main streets of Bida. Turn to the 363 north, and you come to *Idlemi*, the strangers' quarter of Bida, where Hausa and Yoruba are living in houses and huts built in their own tribal style and fashion. They are traders by profession, and shops and stalls line the long road to the north gate—shops in which you can buy everything at every hour of the day, from native food to a European wristwatch, from the powders and amulets of the Hausa medicine-man to brass buttons or bicycle spare parts offered for sale in a Yoruba man's shop. The road to the east bridges a stream and a stretch of marsh-land that runs across the town, with its fields of rice and sugar-cane; it runs past another quarter of brass-smiths, skirts the quarter of the *masagá*, the Bida glass-makers, and leaves the town by the Badeggi gate, so called [446] after a village thirteen miles from Bida on the small rickety railway line (the oldest railway line in Nigeria) which links Baro on the Niger with Minna on the main line of the Nigerian Railway. The south road crosses another stream, with yellowish, dirty water in which children are bathing, grooms watering horses, and women washing their clothes and cleaning pots and pans. It runs on through a thickly populated part of the town, past a beautiful old mosque perched precariously on the edge of a deep trench; another day-market, and another royal residence. Another weavers' quarter, and another group of blacksmiths. Old Bida and New Bida mix for a while: still inside the town walls are Prison and Hospital; on the other side the Native Administration Workshops and the Middle School. And beyond this, the European Reservation, the Government Offices, and then open fields and farms.

This, then, is Bida. Like all large towns it is both more and less than 361 one community. More, in that contacts, communications, and forms of intercourse stretch far beyond the town boundaries; and less, in that within the town walls of Bida there exists a vast number of different, almost independent, strata and 'areas of common life'. Some, perhaps the weakest and least tenacious, are defined by tribal origin. The social differentiation of rich and poor, of social status and political rank, create others—strata in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different values are valid and different patterns of behaviour accepted as normal. But we have also observed the division of the town into three large districts, almost exact copies of each other, each with its day-market, its quarter of craftsmen, and its royal residence. The three districts are separated, geographically, by the two streams which run through Bida, and they are spoken of as three *ekpā*, 'banks', and given the name of the royal house that stands on their ground. Here we deal with units of a different order: they represent political factions, organizations of partisanship and patronage, which cut across the other social, cultural, and tribal strata. They reflect specific political and economic interests, they are vested, ultimately, in that paramount political organization, the state. But that we shall understand more clearly as this description proceeds.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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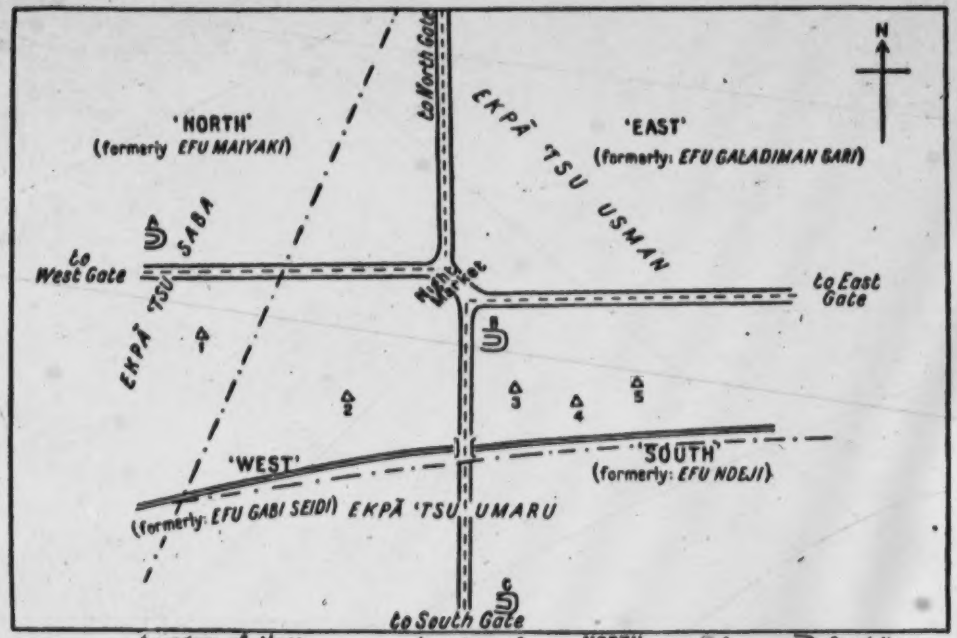

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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna. 425 427

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*latí*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cihã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'. 621 423

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village 621 361 [343]

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpdtá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociźi wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-e*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 'colonies' or *tunga*. The *tunga* thus possesses land in its own right, but at
361 the same time pushes its territorial possessions further into no-man's-land.

Access to Village Land

621 There is no general rule for the distribution, within the area of village
423 land, of the farms belonging to the various family groups and individuals. Roughly one may say that the small individual plots (called *bucá*—a term to be explained presently) are situated near the village and the larger family plots (*efahó* plots) farther afield. When old men own plots of their own they, too, are given plots near the village so that they should not have to walk too far. The different plots which belong to the group of people living together in the same house (as a rule, a single family group), whether the plots are worked jointly or independently by the various household members, do not necessarily lie together, but are frequently scattered. Nor have the people who live together in the same *efu* their land on adjoining sites, or in the neighbourhood of the part of the village where they live. We may add that, again, there exist no special signs or boundary marks to distinguish the property of different farmers. A narrow path, a border of shrubs, or a tree, serve as landmark.[1] But the different cultivation that may be practised on the different fields, or the different stage of cultivation which the different fields may represent (fallow land, land that has been worked for one year, or two years, &c.), maké these boundaries more obvious to the eye.

This irregular distribution of farm-plots appears to be due to a variety
242 of causes. To some extent it is entailed in the complex agricultural tech-
423 nique of the country, with its many different types of cultivation and its regular system of rotation of crops. Every farmer owns a certain number
621 of fields—some under cultivation while others are lying fallow—which he tries to distribute over different sites so that he can utilize different types of soil, e.g. the marshy sites near watercourses for the cultivation of rice or sweet potatoes, dry sandy soil for ground-nuts, heavier soil for yam and cotton, and so forth. This arrangement also has the advantage of distributing more evenly the risks of failure. You often find farmers complaining that one site on which they have a farm is less good than another, or has perhaps suffered special injury that year through birds or through thieving baboons, or has been washed away by a flooded river. But the irregular distribution of farm-plots is also a result of the very method of Nupe settlement: it could not be otherwise with the farm-land lying in a circle round the large villages in which a numerous population is concentrated. There would not be room enough for all family groups in the village to have their lands arranged in compact blocks in equally favoured positions, both with regard to the distance from the village and to the quality of the soil. Moreover, some plots more heavily worked than others 'tire' sooner and must be replaced by virgin land lying farther afield; and growing families must provide more land for their

[1] A characteristic exception are a few marsh-land plots near Kacha, which are properly fenced in—'because of the many disputes' that arise over this kind of land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 Mohamadu before him, whose royal residence was not far from the brass-smiths' quarter. Here, as in many other instances, the invaluable royal patronage was extended primarily to the craftsmen living in the part of the town traditionally associated with the dynasty. With the change of the dynasty the royal patronage changed also, and under the late *Etsu* Saidu, of the house of Masaba, the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter captured the largest and most lucrative trade. A contributory cause lies in the lay-out of modern Bida. The motor-road to the centre [361] of Bida and the big market leads through the street of the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter, while the other brass-smiths' group is situated in an obscure corner of Bida, away from roads and markets. Now, the brass- and silver-ware manufactured in Bida consists to a large extent of ornaments for men and women and other 'luxury' objects. A large pro- [339] portion is intended for export, and certain goods are even made specially for tourists and European 'curio'-hunters. In either case the nearness of the big trading centre and the main thoroughfare of the town, with its opportunity for display and for attracting customers, must prove an advantage which is denied to the other, almost inaccessible, group of craftsmen.

The character of this luxury industry also explains its concentration in Bida. Its products find their way to villages and peasant districts as well. But a constant and large-scale demand exists only in the capital. Moreover, the concentration of this industry is, in sophisticated Nupe, a trade-mark of refinement and value, and a guarantee that its products express the latest fashions.

The technical equipment of the workshop of the brass-smiths differs 326 in certain important details from that of the blacksmiths. The work- 531 shops of the brass-smiths, with their smaller and less smoky furnace, are more often housed in the compound itself, i.e. in the entrance hut. The tools are less heavy and adjusted to the finer technique. European hammers, chisels, and files are used to a much larger extent. The main products of the Nupe brass industry are sword-hilts and daggers,[1] horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles of various kinds, made mostly of beaten brass or copper; bangles and rings, which are cast in open clay moulds of bars of brass or silver or (nowadays) aluminium and then bent and twisted into shape; also hairpins and silver chains. Artistic decoration, especially ornamentation of the surface of these various objects, plays an important part. From old Nupe brass- and silver-work preserved in Bida and in European museums we learn the different styles in decoration which have succeeded each other in the course of the last hundred years. The style in fashion to-day is ornamentation in *pointillé* technique.[2]

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

[1] The blades are old, mostly of German or Austrian manufacture, and have been traded for centuries to Nigeria and Nupe, across the desert, from North Africa.

[2] The oldest style appears to be a fluted design which I have seen on certain brass bowls; a later style which flourished at the end of last century, consisted in embossed ornaments which made special use of the flower motif. The *pointillé* style appears to have come in about 1910.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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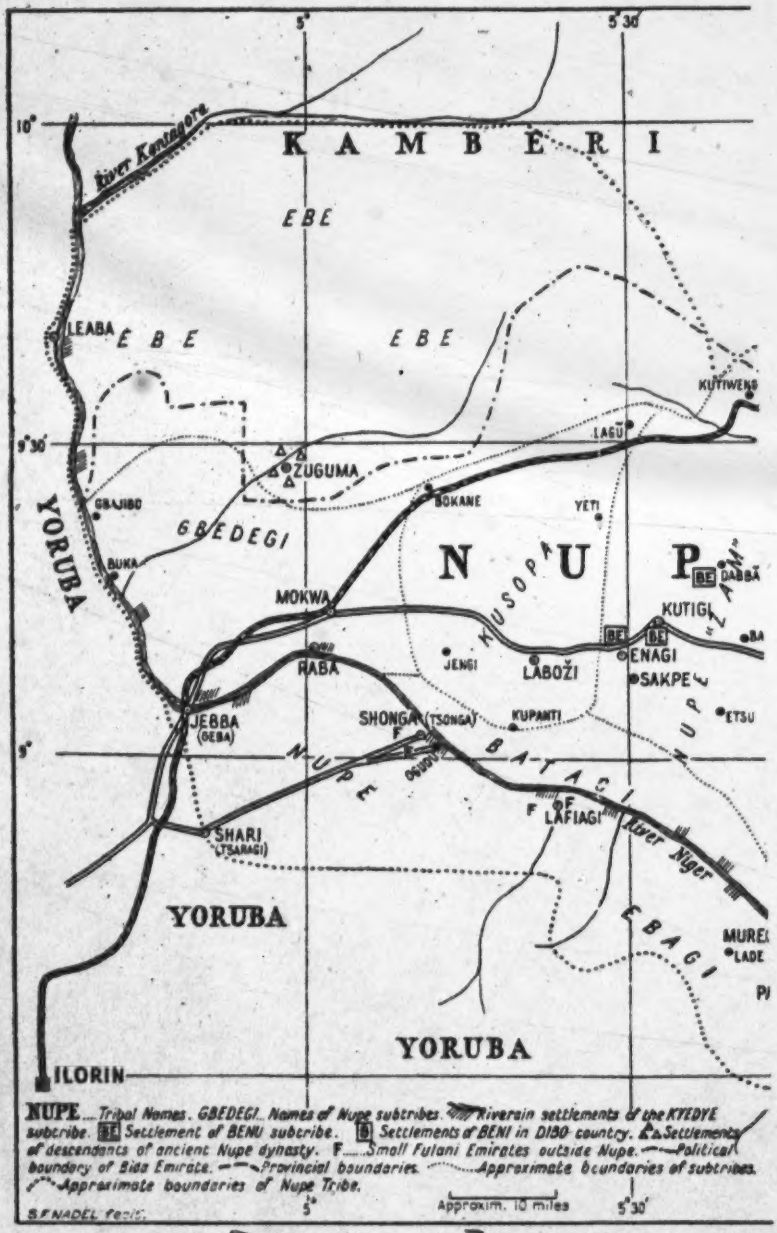

NUPE ... Tribal Names. GBEDEGI ... Names of Nupe subtribes. Riverain settlements of the KYEDYE subtribe. BE Settlement of BENU subtribe. B Settlements of BENI in DIBO country. Settlements of descendants of ancient Nupe dynasty. F ... Small Fulani Emirates outside Nupe. Political boundary of Bida Emirate. Provincial boundaries. Approximate boundaries of subtribes. Approximate boundaries of Nupe Tribe.

S.F. NADEL fecit.

Approxim. 10 miles

[End Map I (A)]

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MAP OF NUPE

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[End Map I (B)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

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BIDA CITY

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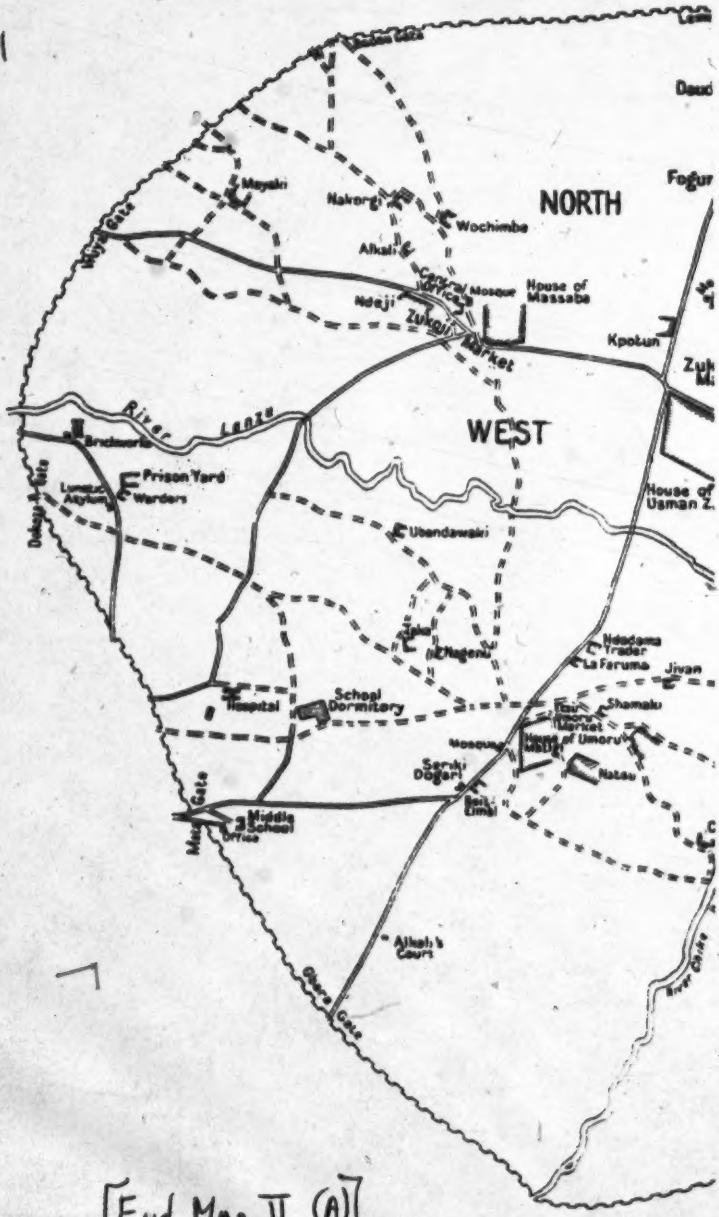

[End Map II (A)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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BIDA CITY

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[Exd Map II (B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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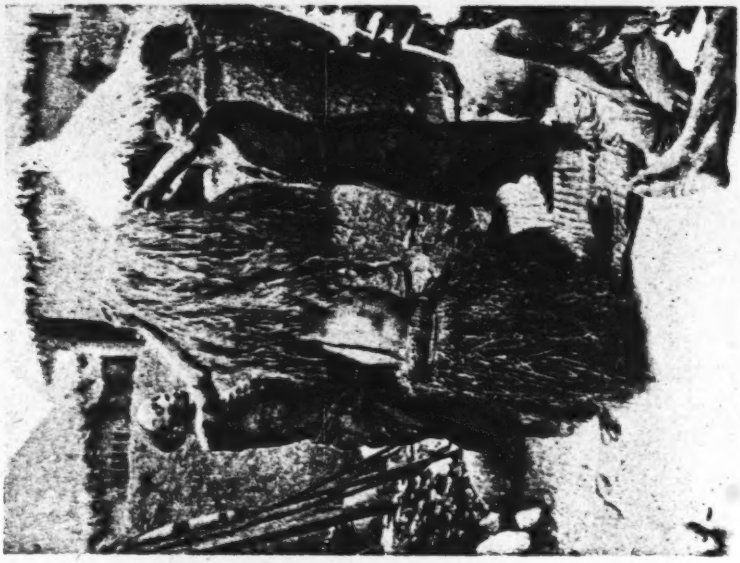
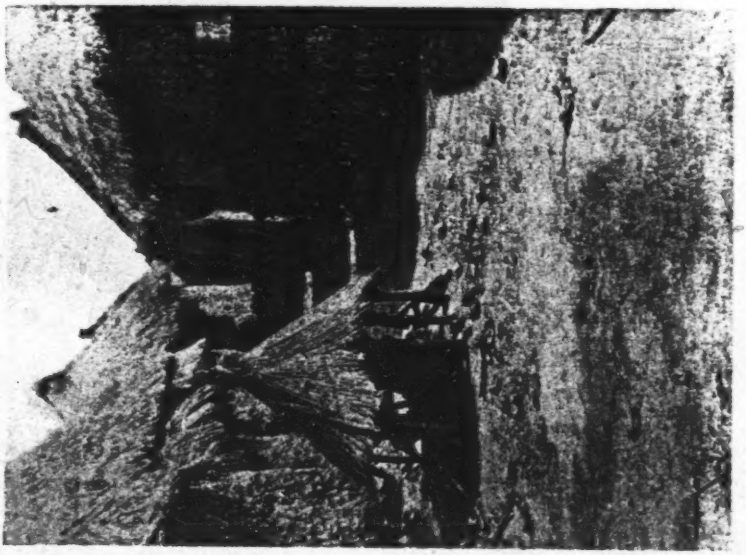


11. Dressing the *manma* masks

[778]



10. The *zumácikà* medicine shrine in Jebba

[p. 70(B)]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

Local and Kinship Grouping

611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man,
592 his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the "house" (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* ("owner of the house"), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or "clans,"
614 for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified "first ancestors."

Forms of Settlement: House Types[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*esi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 25–33.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–33, 34, 36– , 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 334; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in
344 the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference
592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-
354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying
[423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child 348 428
inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 261
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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505 484 trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

361 505 634 Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

173 We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

173 361 According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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till their villages covered the Niger Valley between Eggan and 173
Jebba. At the time when the first European travellers appeared 361
in Nupe country, we find the Kede already firmly entrenched in this part of the Niger Valley. Now, of the ten main villages of the Kede which exist to-day only one represents an independent, purely Kede settlement—the Kede capital, Muregi. It is a well-built village, with solid houses of sun-dried mud bricks, each compound walled in in Nupe fashion, with a big mosque and an imposing chief's house. It is, as I have said, a pure Kede town, a town inhabited entirely by the 'ruling race'—'*u de talakazi a*', say the Kede ('it contains no poor'—meaning persons belonging to the subject groups). All other Kede settlements, without exception, are built on or near the site of a village of 'original inhabitants'. In most cases the Kede settlement occupies the river bank itself, and the 'native' village the stretch of country immediately behind; in a few cases we find the Kede settlements on an island off the bank occupied by the 'native' village or on the opposite side of the river. The result is something like a twin-village, half 'native' and half Kede. The scene of Kede tradition, a tribal home and emigrant settlements, seems indeed visible in the present-day organization of Kede settlement, with its one all-Kede town and its many 'twin-villages' along the river valley.

The more recent history of Kede settlement remains true to this picture of a gradual territorial expansion. We know that towards the end of last century the Kede settled for the first time on the Kaduna River. Later, under the Royal Niger Company, the Kede were encouraged to extend their settlements still farther on Niger and Kaduna. It is easy to trace these new settlements, which were founded near the European trading posts and other places which had similarly gained commercial importance. Only some thirty years ago the Kede founded their latest 'colony'—on Jebba Island

The villages differ greatly in appearance: some villages boast 361
solidly built permanent houses, while others consist largely 184
of more flimsy buildings, grass-walled huts, suggestive of temporary occupation rather than permanent settlements. The habitations of the Kede reflect the flexible, mobile nature of their system of settlement. The degree of permanence attempted in the buildings at the same time betrays the age of the settlement as well as its (past or present) importance as an economic or

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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361 184 political centre. The Kede settlement at Raba is a typical instance of the more solidly built settlement. It was founded about 1840, when Raba was the capital of Nupe Emirate. The first settlers were five men with their families from Muregi, who belonged to one 'house'; to-day the Kede colony at Raba (which now also possesses a Niger Company storehouse) numbers seven 'houses'.

The Kede settlement at Katcha is an example of the other, poorly built, type, which gives the impression as if the settlers had not yet found time, or had not yet quite decided, to build themselves permanent quarters. The present Kede settlement dates back to 1905–10, at which time a group of Kede who had settled previously at Eggan, on the main river, abandoned this colony for Katcha, attracted by the opportunities of the place. Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, owed its rise to importance to the introduction of steamer traffic on the Niger and the building of the first Nigerian railway from Baro, through Katcha, to Minna. Its five or six 'houses' of original Kede settlers have now increased to seventeen.

Our list of Kede settlements would not be complete without the mention of the purely temporary riverside camps, meant to last for one season or a few weeks only, which the Kede put up in the larger villages where they are wont to stop on their journeys up and down the river. During the main trading season, Jebba, Patigi, Wuya, or Katcha are crowded with these lightly built shelters, grass-huts, tent-like structures of grass-matting or —crudest of all—the wattle-and-matting awnings of the canoes simply pulled ashore. Kede settlement has not yet come to a standstill. Places which are gaining in importance still attract new groups of immigrants; and the seasonal shelters in a busy trading centre may at any time be turned into permanent quarters, as, indeed, it has happened repeatedly in the course of time.

361 166 Reviewing the history of Kede settlement, we find its dependence on economic factors fully confirmed. We may conceive of it as of a progressive realization of the dictates of the productive system of the country. The Kede, as we have seen, did not occupy new, uninhabited country, but settled in places where an existing population had already established a certain level of social and economic life. In the choice of places for settlement and in their subsequent development, the Kede were invariably guided by commercial considerations. They were, moreover, not satisfied

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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with the position of immigrants who are dependent on the good- 361
will of their hosts, but claimed with the territory in which to settle 166
also the political rule over it. If they are thus not 'colonists' in the strict sense of the word, not caring for settlement in new, virgin country, they are 'colonizers' in a more special, political sense, being settlers, immigrants, and representatives of a ruling race in one.

Here a final point remains to be cleared up: the exact relation 361
between the elastic territorial expansion of the tribe and the 166
necessarily more inert and rigid expansion of political domina- 634
tion. From the history of modern Kede settlement we learn that there is a certain time lag between the first occupation of a new place by Kede immigrants (the nucleus stage of the seasonal camp) and its eventual rise to the status of a political outpost. The Kede, as a rule, attribute the founding of their various colonies to particular chiefs. The initiative taken by the Kede chief in the colonial enterprise refers both to the early growth and the final political incorporation of the new colony. He might himself send out settlers from Muregi to a new place which looked a likely centre for Kede activities (Raba is an instance of this), or he might direct settlers from other places to a promising new settlement (as was the case in Katcha). But not until a settlement was firmly established and numbered several families would he delegate an official representative of his to take charge of it, thus proclaiming the political incorporation of the new Kede dominion.

We learn, further, that Kede territorial expansion did not proceed step by step, in continuous stages, but rather in a series of leaps, which may leave gaps between outpost and outpost, or mother-country and new settlement. Thus there are 'uncolonized' spaces on the Kaduna River between Gbara and Wuya or Gbara and Muregi—that is, stretches of country with native villages which (unlike the interspersed *kintsozi* villages in the 'old' Kede country) have not been absorbed politically by the Kede. We may assume that the early growth of the Kede community followed the same line of development. If this was so, the compact political unit in the 'old' Kede country proves that political rule was later brought up to the new outpost, and the territorial gaps eventually absorbed in the extending political unit. To-day the firmly fixed boundaries of provinces and districts forbid, of course, a similar sequel to the founding of new settlements. The new economic

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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361 development of the country, moreover, has attracted Kede
166 emigration to places far outside the orbit of their political organiza-
634 tion: thus at the busy trading-place on the confluence of Niger and Benue, Lokoja, a large and prosperous Kede colony has grown, which combines all the 'stages' of Kede settlement, permanent and semi-permanent houses in which Kede families have made their home as well as a large encampment on the river bank for the Kede canoemen from the north. But it seems that even in pre-British times the territorial expansion of the Kede had to leave certain 'gaps' in its network of settlements and political outposts. Thus the large Nupe town of Eggan on the right bank of the Niger, flanked to the north and south by (presumably old) Kede settlements, remained a powerful, independent political unit, placed directly under the King of Nupe. It is this characteristic scheme of Kede expansion which allows for territorial gaps and the founding of (at least temporarily) isolated outposts that justifies our speaking of Kede 'colonies' and 'colonization'.

V. Political Organization

634 The political system of the Kede corresponds in all important points to the concept of the State. On its small scale, it fulfils the essential conditions of State organization: its dominion is territorial and non-tribal (or inter-tribal); its administration is centralized; its machinery of government is monopolized by a special *ad hoc* appointed or selected body, which is separated from the rest of the population by certain social and economic privileges.[1] The first of these three features we have discussed already; as regards the second, we have learned that Muregi, the traditional home of the tribe, is at the same time the political centre of the country; and as regards the last point, we have seen that in a broad sense the Kede themselves represent, corporatively, the ruling group of the country. But among the Kede we find another, more precisely defined 'privileged group', in whose hands the government of the country is concentrated. This ruling group, in a narrow sense, consists of the Kede chief and his titled councillors and emissaries.

[1] With regard to this definition of the State, see *Africa*, vol. cit., and my forthcoming Nupe book. R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (1927) (chaps. iii and iv), recognizes territorial sovereignty and centralized authority as essential to the structure of the State; the factor of the special 'ruling group' has been elaborated by F. Oppenheimer, *The State* (1926).

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'!

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolise river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralized political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *addáwa*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361] Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [487] were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (AFRICA, VIII, 3).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its
186 centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

361 Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded
162 by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nîn*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

361 And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

361 Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross,
363 from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

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548 dark and quiet. After 9 o'clock the market-place and the streets are almost deserted.

But let us return to our daylight inspection of the town: we were 361 standing at the crossing of the four main streets of Bida. Turn to the 363 north, and you come to *lálemi*, the strangers' quarter of Bida, where Hausa and Yoruba are living in houses and huts built in their own tribal style and fashion. They are traders by profession, and shops and stalls line the long road to the north gate—shops in which you can buy everything at every hour of the day, from native food to a European wrist-watch, from the powders and amulets of the Hausa medicine-man to brass buttons or bicycle spare parts offered for sale in a Yoruba man's shop. The road to the east bridges a stream and a stretch of marsh-land that runs across the town, with its fields of rice and sugar-cane; it runs past another quarter of brass-smiths, skirts the quarter of the *masagá*, the Bida glass-makers, and leaves the town by the Badeggi gate, so called after a village thirteen miles from Bida on the small rickety railway line [446] (the oldest railway line in Nigeria) which links Baro on the Niger with Minna on the main line of the Nigerian Railway. The south road crosses another stream, with yellowish, dirty water in which children are bathing, grooms watering horses, and women washing their clothes and cleaning pots and pans. It runs on through a thickly populated part of the town, past a beautiful old mosque perched precariously on the edge of a deep trench; another day-market, and another royal residence. Another weavers' quarter, and another group of blacksmiths. Old Bida and New Bida mix for a while: still inside the town walls are Prison and Hospital; on the other side the Native Administration Workshops and the Middle School. And beyond this, the European Reservation, the Government Offices, and then open fields and farms.

This, then, is Bida. Like all large towns it is both more and less than 361 one community. More, in that contacts, communications, and forms of intercourse stretch far beyond the town boundaries; and less, in that within the town walls of Bida there exists a vast number of different, almost independent, strata and 'areas of common life'. Some, perhaps the weakest and least tenacious, are defined by tribal origin. The social differentiation of rich and poor, of social status and political rank, create others—strata in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different values are valid and different patterns of behaviour accepted as normal. But we have also observed the division of the town into three large districts, almost exact copies of each other, each with its day-market, its quarter of craftsmen, and its royal residence. The three districts are separated, geographically, by the two streams which run through Bida, and they are spoken of as three *ekpā*, 'banks', and given the name of the royal house that stands on their ground. Here we deal with units of a different order: they represent political factions, organizations of partisanship and patronage, which cut across the other social, cultural, and tribal strata. They reflect specific political and economic interests, they are vested, ultimately, in that paramount political organization, the state. But that we shall understand more clearly as this description proceeds.

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363
167

30. The Nupe quarter in Lagos

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31. The oldest mosque in Bida

[p. 230 (B)]

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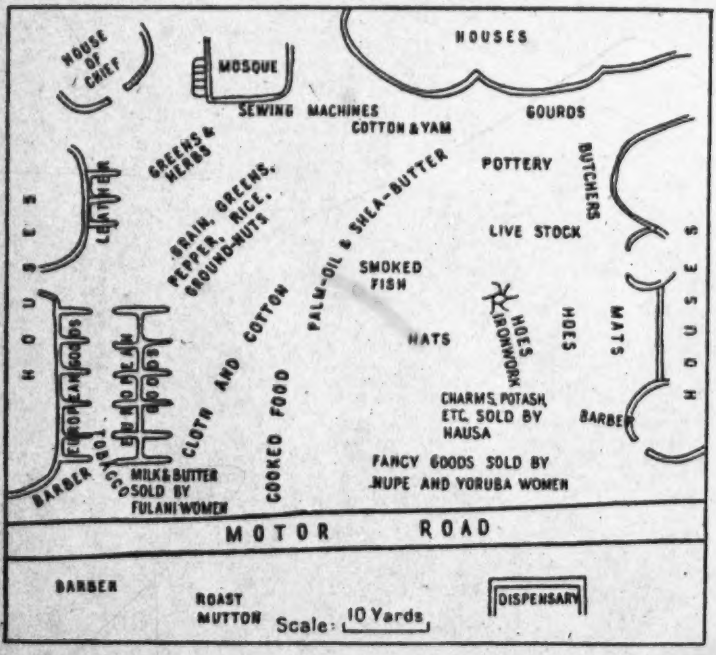
In one corner of the market barbers put up their open-air shop. In another corner butchers sell their goods, a drummer endlessly repeating the same rhythmical *motif*—the signal that the butchers have slaughtered that day—to attract the attention of the crowd. 443

SKETCH-MAP OF KUTIGI MARKET



[366]

Markets in the wider sense of the word, places for exchange and trade, grow spontaneously with the needs of the country. But markets of the kind just described, with permanent buildings, booths, and stalls, have to be built and laid out specially. Moreover, provision must be made to guarantee the protection of the large attendance, especially of the traders from other districts and countries. The element of planning is clearly visible. The villages which decide to have a market of this kind will go to work methodically; formerly, they appealed first, through the royal delegate in their district, to the king, who would designate some of his private slave police to take charge of the supervision of the market. In the Mohammedan and semi-Mohammedan villages a well-known Mallam would be summoned to consecrate the market and thus ensure its prosperity. This practice is said to be still in use. Certain markets become, in fact, known by the name of the Mallam who dedicated them. [625]

A sketch-map will best illustrate the well-planned arrangement of a typical village market—the market of Kutigi, to which I have referred

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I have described already at some length the markets of Bida so that there is little to add here. Bida possesses six markets, three main day markets close to the 3 royal houses, two small day markets—one near the west gate, one in the strangers' quarter—and one night market. In the distinction between day and night market the village distinction between the restricted trade on ordinary week-days and the extensive trade on market-days is in some respects repeated.[1] Multiply by ten the largest village market, and its attendance and the quantity and variety of goods displayed, and you have the Bida night market. Its average attendance has been estimated at 6,000, and as regards the goods which are bought and sold, I can only repeat that there is practically nothing that cannot be obtained there, from kola-nuts to beams for roofing, and from native-tanned goatskins to watches, scissors, or bicycle spare parts. Besides, there are scribes who will write letters for you, Yoruba money-changers (who charge a commission of one penny in the shilling), cooks who roast small pieces of mutton over the fire and sell the meat on wooden skewers to passers-by, drummers, barbers, tailors, loungers, not to forget the policeman who regulates the traffic and keeps watch (not always a sinecure) on disturbances of the peace.

In certain respects, however, marketing and trade in Bida differ essentially from their counterpart in the village. A first difference concerns the local distribution of marketing. Bida possesses, in addition to its four markets, also more or less regular shops which are open all day, such as the wayside shops in the street of the brass-smiths, where the womenfolk of brass- and silversmiths display the goods manufactured by the men, or the permanent shops in *lálemi*, the crowded strangers' quarter. Many traders, moreover, who will attend the night market keep during day-time little wayside stands on cross-roads or busy thoroughfares. The wide local distribution of shops corresponds to the typical demands of a large, decentralized town, in which the groups of potential customers are concentrated in widely scattered localities. At the same time it expresses a keener spirit of competition, and that doctrine of 'seeking out the customer' which is familiar to all more advanced systems of marketing. Two new stands which have only appeared during my stay in Bida will illustrate what I mean. One wayside shop established itself opposite the workshops of the Public Works Department, and its customers were the labourers, who would come out to buy food, sweets, and cigarettes; the other was installed close to the Bida Middle School, and catered for the occasional wants of schoolboys and teachers. In both cases two or three young women had joined forces and were keeping shop together. These wayside shops and stands do not pay rent; street corners and cross-roads are free to everyone; nor have any quarrels over claims to a particular spot arisen—as yet. But this is essentially a fluid process; and it is not unlikely that quarrels or litigation of this kind might arise in the future if competition becomes

[1] The day markets reflect the different needs of the large town as compared with the village markets. Firewood, for example, which is never seen on village markets as the women collect their own firewood on family farms, appears in large quantities on the day markets of Bida.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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more severe and the advantageous positions secured by the enterprising first-comers are threatened by later recruits of the 'seeking-out-the-customer' movement. 443 366

Wayside shops also line the road leading from the north gate to the two large European stores—'canteens' in the popular idiom. Here the inventiveness of Bida traders has seized upon a new device to attract and 'seek out' the customer. Many peasants from backward villages who come to Bida to buy certain essential European articles, such as salt or sugar, either want to buy them in very small quantities—smaller quantities than they could obtain at the store—or are too shy and frightened to enter the stores themselves. These are the customers of the little stands outside the 'canteens': for here the peasants can buy the same articles in the smallest quantities and without having to undergo the ordeal of a purchase in the unfamiliar, forbidding, store.[1]

MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

The last example brings us to another essential difference between the marketing system in Bida and in the village. The large volume of native trade in European goods and the close business connexion between native traders in Bida and the stores of the trading-companies have introduced certain completely new factors into Nupe marketing. They are visible in local trade on the smallest scale as well as in the large-scale enterprises of wealthy Bida merchants. Trade in certain European goods allows a more rapid turnover and more certain profits than any branch of native economy. The native trader or middleman can, as we have just seen, turn to his profit the fact that he can make certain essential and highly valued goods accessible to the consumer by retailing them in such small quantities that their price (though relatively high) is low enough to be within the means of peasants and small craftsmen. It is, for example, a regular practice of Bida women traders to buy tins of 50 cigarettes at the 'canteen', and to sell them singly (or even cut in half); to buy boxes of matches, and sell them in little bundles of five; packets of sugar, and sell the sugar a piece or two at the time; or to buy 4-gallon tins of paraffin, and sell it in pint bottles. It is hardly surprising that the profits, though absolutely small, are relatively high, up to 100 per cent.[2] 443

[1] This fear is really a compound of shyness and suspicion—one is suspicious just because one is shy and unfamiliar with the ways of these modern institutions. A most characteristic instance, concerning a Bida man who, one would think, would hardly need to be shy or afraid, is the following: a Bida Mallam with whom I was very friendly came to see me one day and asked me if I would do him a favour and order spare tyres from the 'canteen' for a lorry belonging to a friend of his. His friend, he explained, disliked ordering them himself, for he knew he would be cheated and given the wrong kind of tyres. What had happened was that his friend had some time previously ordered tyres without, however, knowing that it was necessary to quote the exact size. He had been given tyres of the size most frequently found on the lorries running in the country, but unfortunately they did not fit his lorry. 157

[2] One tin of 50 cigarettes costs 1*s.*; one cigarette is sold for 0·3*d.*, allowing a profit of 3*d.* in 1*s.* One box of matches, containing approximately 50 matches, costs 1*d.*; five matches sold for 0·2*d.* give a profit of 0·8*d.* in the penny. One 435

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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brideprice). Since few can afford the high fee, the membership, at least in the higher grade, is perforce restricted. 754x

As will have been seen, the organization of the *ndakó gboyá* society shares certain features with that other 'closed society', the order of the *cigbeciži*. I knew of no case, incidentally, in which the same individual belonged to both. But there are certain relevant differences. The *ndakó gboyá* society rests upon a network of lodges and centres of ritual collaboration, not upon a number of scattered individuals; it is much more highly centralized as well as closely knit; and its growth is restricted not only by the high initiation fees but also by the rule, unknown among the medicine-men, that not every member can recruit new ones. It is interesting that no new initiations have taken place in the lifetime of the present generation. My informants could offer no explanation for this. The spread of Islam is certainly not responsible: the various Masters received their rank from Moslem Emirs, and the present incumbents, at least, consider themselves good Mohammedans.[1] Also, the increasing wealth of the country should have made entry into the *ndakó gboyá* easier, not more difficult. I suspect that the Masters of the society, or perhaps their royal protectors, stopped further recruitment precisely in order to prevent the society from growing too large and unwieldy; for as we shall see, its very power, its efficiency under centralized control no less than its financial success, would seem to depend on the smallness of the group which shares in the secret activities.

These activities fall into three groups. The first, of more personal character, concerns only the heads of lodges and follows the familiar pattern of ritual observances entailed in the 'ownership' of 'Great *cigbe*' or of a *kuti* priestship. Thus the head of the lodge will perform all his ancestral sacrifices over the *cigbe* vessel and the other cult objects, which are always kept together in a special hut. He performs a similar sacrifice also as a fixed annual rite (in the 7th or 12th month), now on behalf of the local community, to ensure its well-being and the fertility of the womenfolk. On such occasions one mask will also appear and dance in the village, which performance has no bearing on witchcraft or the punishment of witches. The funerary rites for the Elder of the lodge again include this sacrifice and masked dance.

The second group of activities consists in the performance of the masked dance upon request, that is, when the society is called in by some village in the area, either because it is celebrating the annual *gunnu* or because it feels itself threatened by witches. It is on such occasions that the masks will cleanse the village of witchcraft by 'frightening' the women or bringing an individual witch

[1] The tiny hamlet of Kusogi, for example, includes a small mosque.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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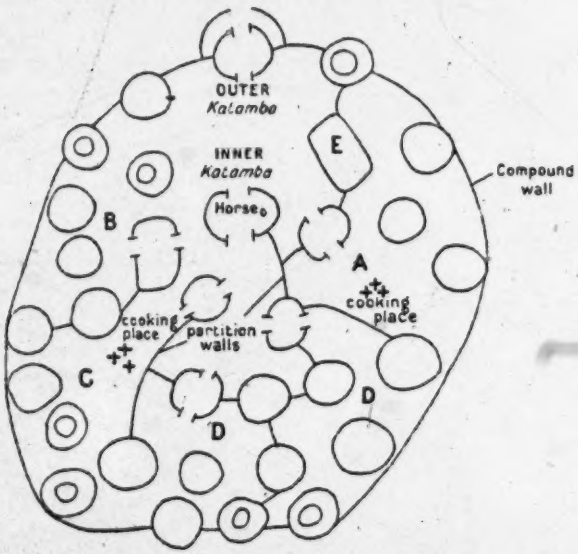
592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found dis-
596 tributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the subdivision of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[342]



○ Sleeping huts (;) Katamba A... partition of family head. B...partition of unmarried sons. C...partition of unmarried daughters. D...partition of married sons and younger brothers E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discus-
[621] sions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kinship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
● 369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

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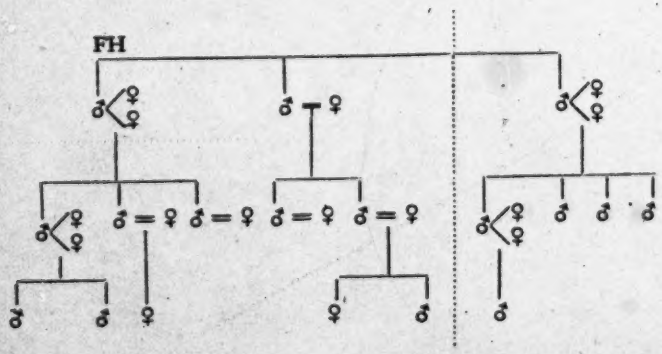
single *efu*, and the family section inhabiting one house is reduced to the smallest size. Moreover, independent economic position and independent, possibly even divergent, political interests and connexions cause adult family members to leave the paternal home and to set up households of their own. Even the wider local unit, the *efu*, is no longer based on kinship, but is largely replaced by a local unit the composition of which is determined by the factor of political allegiance and partisanship. 592 596 369

The size of the house-group varies widely: the largest group which I encountered numbered about sixty individuals, including men and women, adults and children. The smallest groups are found in Bida, and may comprise not more than six or eight people.

The effective kinship unit—the 'house' in the abstract sense of the word—expresses itself conspicuously in the recognition of a common family head, who is called, significantly, *emitsó*, Owner of the House. We shall learn later of the political, religious, and economic prerogatives vested in the person of the family head. Here I will only add that where a section of the house-group splits off from the main body and establishes itself in a new, separate, house it cannot claim to be at once recognized as a new unit, entitled to a separate *emitsó*, but continues to acknowledge the old family head. In the course of time the head of the new group may gain the position of an independent *emitsó*. The following diagram illustrates a case of this kind. The members of the family group placed to the right of the dotted line separated from the main family body in 1934 and moved to a newly built house in another part of the village (Kutigi). The reason given was that the old house had become 'too crowded'. The head of the new group expected to be recognized as *emitsó* after the death of the old family head (marked FH in the diagram). 596



The 'house' is subdivided into a number of family sections, each of which inhabits a division of the compound. The single section represents an even more effective unit than the house-group and its members enter a more intensive co-operation: they keep house together, eat together, and also form a common productive or labour-unit. No special

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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A comparison between sex morality in the town and in the villages will bring the final proof of our interpretation of the social causes of moral laxity and publicly condoned sexual licence. For in the villages, where the political and economic factors to which we have attributed this development are much less conspicuous than in Bida, sexual licence in this sense is absent also. The same informants who declared that there were no 'good women' left in Bida maintained that the opposite was true of the country. Within limits, this is correct. Semi-professional prostitution is absent and adultery is far less frequent than in Bida. Above all, it is not glossed over for fear of publicity and ridicule: it leads to quarrels and frequently to divorce. Nor are illegitimate amorous adventures applauded and bandied about. The more closely knit village life renders sexual promiscuity both more difficult and more risky, and the danger of provoking serious conflicts forces it into the sphere of clandestine and disreputable activities. The ideal of the Bida Lothario is absent in the Nupe village.

It is largely true to say that among the peasant women also the Bida ideal of the glamorous 'fast' woman finds no following. Or, more correctly, it finds no following among the peasant's wives and daughters who have chosen village life. For especially in the larger trading-places there is a certain (increasing) minority of women who leave the village to join the army of 'loose' women traders. However, they do not introduce their ways into village life itself. To quote again from my informants: 'Peasant women are on the whole better wives than our women in Bida. You see it when you come to a village: you will not find women with whom you can sleep. But who would want to sleep with them? They are badly dressed, they do not wash, use no scent, and smell of sweat. There are a few exceptions, though, for example the women in the house of the chief of K.'—referring to a village in which the chief's family was in many ways emulating the standards of Bida life. There is good sense in these cynical (though not cynically meant) remarks. Hard work, lack of leisure, the inability to afford nice dresses or the help of cosmetics, make the peasant woman comparatively unattractive; she ages more quickly than her more fortunate sister in town. It is not surprising that she should come short of the sophisticated urban standards of taste. If the peasant woman thus succumbs less to temptation, it is also true that less temptation comes her way. Having chosen peasant life she can but choose peasant morality also. The different sexual morality in town and village is thus essentially an expression of differences in economic conditions and of inequality of wealth and status.

It is tempting to dwell on this relation between economic and political factors and the attitude of the society towards the problems of sex and morality. There has been the tendency in recent anthropological writings to regard the elaboration of the sex theme in different cultures, the temperamental and personality traits which, in a society, appear associated with sex, as the expression of some ultimate quality in culture itself —the genius or *ethos* of a culture. That women in one society are 'gentle' and 'aggressive' in another, that one culture regards them as masculine workers and another as feminine mothers or partners in love,

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whose patronage they seek. Often the patron may order special compositions from 'his' drummers, for example, a personal drum signal, called *take*, for a new acquired nobility rank, or a song of praise on himself, or a friend or relation. 533 545

Between these different groups there is no co-operation. Each group is, economically, a closed unit. All earnings are divided equally among the members. This division of the income has no bearing on factors of family or household organization. Individual group-members may contribute to the expenses of their own families; but the 'company' is purely a professional association, to which the categories *efakó* and *bucá* do not apply. Professional and family concerns are, in fact, kept strictly separate, occasionally the two overlap, and we find a woman singer and a drummer of the same 'company' who are man and wife; but just as often a drummer has a wife, and the woman singer a husband, who are not members of the 'company', nor even of the profession.

Drumming in Bida is a full-time occupation (sometimes a drummer practises a little farming besides, but this is very infrequent). Each company regularly adopts new members as old ones retire. The novices serve their apprenticeship as minor performers of the 'company', until they become fully fledged members of the craft. Sons of drummers mostly follow the paternal profession; but many singers and dancers do not come from families whose women have practised this profession previously. Music and dancing in Bida is a vocation rather than a profession. The free competition of talent and individuality rather than family tradition determines professional success, and thus the professional association in which the craft organizes itself. Indeed the profession of Bida musicians and drummers represents the only instance in the economic organization of the country of a free association purely on a business basis, and without the support of the framework of kinship and hereditary tradition.

With regard to the profession of drummers and musicians town and country have exchanged roles: we find the closed and hereditary professional group (though of much smaller scale than guild organization proper) in the village, and the detached individual groups of craftsmen in Bida. But the principle of hereditary craft organization has remained essentially the same. We need only read village chief for king, and village community for state, and we understand the new situation. For the drummers, as we have seen, are as essential to the corporate life of the village as are the craftsmen proper to the political life of the state. In town-life, on the other side, drummers and musicians have no traditional duties assigned to them which concern the common interests of the group at large. Indeed the more varied social life of Bida, and the appreciation of new fashions and special styles typical of the cosmopolitan town, foster that spirit of originality and inventiveness which here as in all craft-work counteracts efforts at a closer co-operative organization. 533 545 369

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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can change one's profession and try new means of livelihood, these 'minimum' wants can be studied most profitably in the individuals who have abandoned their original occupation in order to better their standard of living. When discussing with labourers the reasons for their change of profession, I was given this as a typical reply: 'We are Bida people, not peasants; we are not satisfied to live as peasants do. We are not content with one gown and one cap; we want to go to the evening market and spend money; we want to make presents at the feasts in the houses of our friends, and we also want women.' Over half of these men were unmarried. Although their wages were comparatively high (7*s.* a week), they could not save enough for the bride-price—'our money disappears at once', they said.

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The examples of household budgets from Bida which I have given above must then be interpreted with these viewpoints in mind. I will add here two more examples, of typically urban households, i.e. non-farming households, one of a weaver, and the other of a hat-maker, in Bida. The scope and money surplus of these budgets does not differ essentially from that of the peasant households. But even where the surplus seems larger, in figures, it is in effect more restricted. Note that the more prosperous of the two men, the weaver, is as yet unmarried. The less fortunate of the two, the hat-maker, had moreover given up hat-making this same year, and had become a labourer. It is not a paradox to say that the poor in Bida are poorer than the poor in the rural districts.

Household F

Bida. Profession: weaver, aged 30, unmarried

Output	*Income*	*Additional income*
48 pieces of cloth p.a., sold for 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.*	Profit per cloth 8*d.* to 1*s.* 2*d.*	Farming on garden-plots close to the house, producing about a quarter of the annual food consumption.

Total earnings . . £2. 8*s.* p.a.

Money expenditure:	£	*s.*	*d.*
own tax		11	0
contribution to tax of father (shared with brother)		2	6
contribution to costs of food and clothing of father		4	0
minimum cost of living for himself		8	0
Total	£1	5	6

Household G

Bida. Profession: hat-maker, aged 35, one wife

Output	*Income*	*Additional income*
Approx. 50 hats p.a., sold for 8*d.* each	Profit 5*d.* per hat.	Borrowed 2*s.* from wife

Total earnings . . £1

Money expenditure:	£	*s.*	*d.*
tax		9	6
minimum cost of living		12	0
Total	£1	1	6

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511 369 It is impossible and unnecessary to reduce to £ *s. d.* the multitudinous forms of expenditure which fall under the heading of 'cultural requirements'. We have already seen that most often the surplus which can be derived from the main occupation is not large enough to cover them all. The various attempts to reduce or avoid expenditure, or to discover additional sources of income, are convincing evidence of this. To us, the most essential question is the selection and order of preference of expenses on which the hard-pressed household decides to economize. Individual differences play, of course, a certain part. In the quarter of the Bida beadworkers, for example, I saw among a number of dilapidated and neglected houses one whose excellent condition and nicely ornamented *katamba* spoke of the care which the inhabitants devoted to its upkeep. The financial position of the different families in the quarter was the same, yet one, to use the familiar Nupe expression, had 'made an effort' while the others had let things drift. Nevertheless, individual variations appear to be of little account in the general picture. The main differences occur, not between individuals, but between groups, that is, between the urban and rural population. I have just spoken of the young men of Bida who will forgo marriage (involving the bride-price) rather than the pleasures of town-life; they will spend money on dresses and feasts rather than contribute to the cost of the repairs of the family home. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this attitude was the utterly neglected state of the house of the guild-head of the carpenters and builders. Although the family numbered eight adult men apart from the old family head (two of whom had jobs in the workshops), and although house repairs were their profession, the men did not devote more than the absolutely necessary time and labour to the upkeep of the house, keeping the sleeping-huts in repair but letting compound wall and entrance hut go to rack and ruin. With a little money in hand, most Bida men will insist on a sumptuous marriage feast or naming ceremony for child or grandchild rather than save it for other expenses. I have twice attended such lavish feasts in neglected houses, in families whose income I knew to be small and precarious. But even the men with large and secure incomes will live above their means. Certain highly paid officials of the N.A. were heavily in debt to local traders and the European stores, having spent lavishly on dresses, luxuries, gifts to friends, and various forms of entertainment.

If in Bida expenditure on ostentatious display and on social obligations conforming to the standards of living which spread downward from the top of the social scale takes precedence of the more sober demands of bride-price, maintenance of the house, or saving in general, the villagers take the opposite view. In a small pagan village, for example, an annual ceremony had been postponed for three months for lack of money; in another case the same ceremony had been performed for three years in succession on a very small scale, owing to 'bad times'. Economies of this kind occur even in prosperous households: in the family whose budget I have quoted above under E the marriage feast of the eldest son had been postponed for one year so that it could be celebrated together with the naming ceremony of the first child, thus

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

[1] It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.

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WANTS AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Let me repeat that all these wants and incentives which are realized in the social *élite* also represent common incentives of the society at large, and of every social stratum, unattainable though they may appear in actuality. They remain 'ideals', and the inability to realize them is regarded as a failure, a shortcoming in the socio-economic system. There exist, however, certain exceptions: instances of that divergence, or rift, in the appreciation of certain wants and incentives which divides town and country. Though few in number, they occur in widely different domains of social life—nutrition, recreation, sex morality.

Certain instances concern the form of a want, the conventionalized taste in which it appears, rather than its essence. I have spoken in an earlier context of the different taste in intoxicants typical of town and country. The Bida people prefer palm-wine to the sorghum-beer which is drunk commonly in the village. Palm-wine is the native drink in the oil-palm countries of Southern Nigeria; we also find it, side by side with sorghum-beer, in certain riverain districts of Nupe where the oil-palm is cultivated. Bida itself imports palm-wine from these districts and the south. The adoption of this, as it were, alien drink by the people of Bida was explained to me as being due to the demands of Islam, which forbids fermented drinks like sorghum-beer, but permits palm-wine—at least in the eyes of the Nupe followers of the Prophet. I do not know how far this vindication of palm-wine will pass muster with Mohammedan scholars. But I think we may accept the negative feature of this interpretation, namely, the condemnation on religious grounds of sorghum-beer, which, as we shall see presently, represents a drink closely associated with pagan religious rites. Or I might quote the instance of the different styles of dance and music appreciated in Bida and in the peasant districts: in the town we find the dance of professional women-dancers who are watched by an appreciative audience; in the village the dance of peasant men and women who are performers and public in one.

In other tastes and wants town and country differ fundamentally. Let me quote two striking examples: the attitude towards sexual licence (about which I need say no more here),[1] and the attitude towards travelling. What I have said above about the appreciation of travelling in the social *élite* of the country could be extended to apply to the whole of Bida. To have travelled widely, to have 'seen the world', helps to establish the social standing of the townsman. The interest in travels even outweighs other, similar, interests. When I was collecting Nupe folk-lore I met with almost complete failure in Bida, although the villages had proved a most fruitful field. And this was the explanation which my Bida informants gave me: 'You must go to the villages to hear folk-tales. We Bida people have forgotten them all. No one wants them now. Why? Because when we tell stories, in the evenings, we like to hear about travels, and about other towns; we listen to the people who

[1] See Chaps. IX, XIX.

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184 can tell us about Kano, Zaria, or Lagos.' The widespread familiarity
● 369 with travelling, indeed the love of travelling, which characterizes the
484 Bida people, has no counterpart among the peasants.[1] We have heard
517 that even journeys to another district are rare and of little appeal to the villagers.

184 How are we to explain this negative form of culture contact? Why did
369 cultural assimilation stop short of these few traits while so many other incentives and wants are spreading from the capital to the rural districts? When we examined, in a previous chapter, the different sex morality in town and country, we discovered its close functional interrelation with other social facts. Behind the divergent attitude we perceived the effectiveness of political and economic factors. This also points out the answer of the present problem. Sex morality can change only together with those other social determinants. Let me recall the main facts. Negative facts, such as the absence in the village of the 'double morality' of the capital, and also the absence of a large floating population which proved one of the incentives for the creation of semi-professional prostitution in the town. Positive facts, such as the more closely knit village life, which forbids the open and condoned matrimonial laxity characteristic of Bida; the efforts of peasant family heads to provide bride-price for an early marriage of the men, and thus to maintain the labour-unit; the conditions of labour in peasant households which tend to preclude sexual promiscuity among the women. The 'negative' culture contact which we are observing does not, then, represent a failure of assimilation in certain specific domains of culture, but the inertia of a cultural whole which cannot suffer changes in these domains without undergoing far-reaching changes itself.

The same is true of the incentive of travelling. In Bida, travelling serves the political interests of the ruling group; it is helpful to the productive enterprises of the town population; and it follows the political interests converging in the capital of the kingdom. None of these factors exists in the village. On the contrary, productive organization, political and religious life, move in a narrow compass beyond which the community affords no protection or promise of attachment.

In the case of the other, minor, instances of cultural divergence, which refer only to the form which a particular satisfaction takes, one might argue that the essential similarity of the wants themselves must tend to retard a more complete assimilation. But here again we must view the situation under the aspect of the cultural whole and the close integration within the whole even of apparently ephemeral traits. The appreciation of a certain kind of drink or a certain style of dance is indeed built firmly into the framework of village culture. Thus all religious rituals involve a libation of beer. The temptation to replace it with palm-wine would have to break down, not only an existing nutritive habit, but also, partly, the spiritual background against which the people (consciously or unconsciously) must regard their traditional beverage. The alternative solution of admitting palm-wine, and having different drinks for ritual and profane purposes, would involve an equally radical change in other

[1] See p. 39.

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respects: not only in the productive arrangements which, in these circumstances, would no longer supply the ritual beverage as a matter of course, but also in the psychological attitude, which would have to admit a ritual beverage largely emptied of what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'social value', i.e. which would be nothing but a ritual beverage, completely removed from the habits of ordinary life. The village dance, again, is an expression of group co-operation and coactivity in the recreational sphere. Like the traditional occasions themselves on which it is performed—kinship feasts, *egbe* work, religious ceremonies, and so forth—the dance mobilizes and intensifies group sentiments. We might even go so far as to say that the unitary nature of the group which is thus mobilized forbids a division into neutral performer and aloof lookers-on. The correlation between professionalized performance and differentiation within the group is indeed clearly visible in Bida. An aloof aesthetic appreciation of professional dancers and musicians appears to represent the only form of entertainment acceptable to a society in which class prejudices and motives of status and prestige dominate all gatherings and festivities. Class prejudice has fostered a conception of dignity set against public exhibitions of this kind. The explanation is, I believe, that it would obliterate, even though only temporarily, the demarcation of rank and status. It is, in fact, quite inconceivable for a man of status to join in a dance, even in his own house, for example, at a family feast—to dance, that is, together with, and in front of, people who must invariably include persons of lesser station. Yet in the villages old men, even titled elders, commonly join in the dances of the younger folk, without danger to their dignity. To assimilate, then, the village dance to the performances which appeal to the 'sophisticated' people of Bida would mean assimilating the complete social organization.

For the sake of the theoretical argument I have stated the case of this negative form of culture contact a little more strongly than is warranted by actual conditions. Throughout this book we have found evidence of the gradual closing of the rift, and of the advancing assimilation even in these domains of culture. But indeed our argument is supported by this development. For the assimilation does not advance by the narrow channels of confined, specific, cultural changes. Rather these changes are carried by the tide of a far-reaching cultural adjustment which is transforming the whole productive system and the organization of labour as well as the social life at large in the Nupe village. The breaking up of the family labour-unit, and the appearance, in the country, of professional Bida musicians as spokesmen of what I have called the 'propaganda for the kingdom', are two convincing instances.

WEALTH AND STATUS

Hitherto we have been using the terms 'status' and 'prestige' as meaning one and the same thing. It becomes important now to distinguish between them. By 'status' we understand a more or less fixed place on the social ladder; 'prestige' represents a more fluid form of social recognition, gained by certain services or deeds in accordance with the

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561 young man belongs to one or the other age-grade association, the age-grades are not a compulsory organization. No coercion is used to induce individuals to join the association, but failure to do so would be regarded as unusual, and under certain circumstances even suspicious. The constitution of the *ena gbarúfuži* is based essentially on the agreement of a group of individuals who, with clear knowledge of the purpose and the rules of the organization, form themselves into an age-grade association. Sociologically, then, our translation of *ena* as association is fully justified.

561 The description of the age-grade system of Nupe is complicated by the large number of variations that occur. There exist, above all, certain 369 essential differences between the age-grade association in Bida and in the village; we shall, in fact, have to contrast the two throughout this discussion. The rules governing the internal organization of the age-grades are elastic: much more so in Bida than in the village. In the village association, too, minor differences occur, sometimes even between certain local associations in the same village. Thus, the age-factor itself is not rigidly defined, and the entrance age and age-limits of the different grades vary widely. Nor is the duration of the single age-grade fixed universally or permanently. In the village we find a more rigid arrangement: in Kutigi, for example, all age-grades last six years, in Jebba four years. In Bida the term of the age-grade association varies from four to ten years, and the duration may vary in different grades, in accordance with the wishes of the members.

In the village each grade is represented by one *ena* only, and age-grade associations ascend as a rule *en bloc* from grade to grade. Changes in the membership, so far as they occur, as the *ena* advances to higher grades, take the form of a slight decrease caused by death or emigration. In Bida each grade is represented by a number of associations, and prospective members have the choice of alternative associations. The rules of membership are more flexible in Bida. One may skip a grade—'rest', as the people say—one may start in a higher instead of the bottom grade, or one may leave the association before it advances to the highest grade, even before its term comes to an end. In two villages age-grade associations of which I examined the membership, which was 17 and 18 in the highest grade, had remained almost unchanged through the three grades of which the age-grade association is composed. In Bida there is much coming and going. In two *ena*, for example, the highest grade of which numbered 26 and 30 members, respectively, only 7 and 15, respectively, had gone through all three grades, 16 and 10 through two grades, and 3 and 5 had joined the highest grade without having passed through the lower grades.

561 The most common and, in the eyes of the people, normal type of age-grade association comprises three grades, which are numbered from the top downward: the senior grade is called First Grade, the middle grade, Second, and the junior grade, Third Grade or *ena dzakangíži*, Children's Grade. We shall deal, in what follows, with this most typical three-grade organization. The average age in the senior grade is 20 to 30, in the second 15 to 20, and in the junior grade 10 to 15. The age-limit for

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561 would have remained unaware of these changes, which were regarded as a purely 'internal' matter of the age-grade association.

561 Let us now see how an age-grade association starts its life. We will begin with the Bida *ena*. Here the procedure is the same both in the
369 foundation of a new *ena* and in its promotion to a higher grade. A number of boys or young men who have become well acquainted with one another in various walks of life, possibly when participating in a previous *ena*, decide to form themselves into an age-grade association. They meet in the house of one of them, a group of only six or seven members at first, and discuss how many more members they can muster. Each of the founders of the prospective *ena* then enlists other friends and acquaintances of the same age, till eventually the membership reaches the required number, twenty or twenty-five. The first thing now is to find a 'captain' and a 'president' for the new association, or, in native terminology, an *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* (lit. Grandfather of the *Etsu*). The *Etsu* is a member of the age-group itself, as a rule one of the original founders, who is elected by the group.[1] The *Ndakotsu* must be of senior age: in the junior grades he will be a member of the next higher grade, and in the senior grade an adult who has 'passed', *go ga*, i.e. already gone through all the grades. Under their *Etsu* the members of the prospective *ena* approach a certain young man whom they regard as a suitable candidate, and request him to accept the position of president in the new association. Every member of the Nupe age-grades is assigned a certain rank which defines his place on the miniature social scale of the age-grade association for the duration of the *ena*. It is the first official duty of the newly elected *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu* to call a general meeting in the house of the *Ndakotsu* at which the distribution of these *ena* ranks is to take place. The elastic rules which govern duration and membership of the Bida *ena* imply also that no fixed rules can be laid down with regard to the time when associations usually start or 'change over' to higher grades. Moreover, in these associations in which only a small nucleus of members may remain faithful to the *ena* throughout its three grades long waits are likely to occur between the termination of one *ena* and the founding of a new association of a higher grade.

In the village the procedure governing the foundation and promotion of the *ena*, although the same in principle, differs in certain significant features from that obtaining in Bida. To begin with, the time when age-grade associations are started and promoted to higher grades is fixed permanently: it falls towards the end of the dry season, an arrangement which gives the new association time to be fairly launched when the agricultural season begins, and ready to undertake the tasks which, in a farming community, fall to the age-grade associations. The enrolment of members for the new *ena* is much less selective and arbitrary. In a small community where most boys of approximately the same age know each other, and normally meet in work or play, there is no need to canvass the new *ena* among friends and acquaintances. Nor is there any special search for captain and president of the new association. The village associations have, in fact, their *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu* appointed for

[1] Sometimes the captain of the second grade bears a different title, *Sokyara*.

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them in advance. Shortly before the existing associations are dissolved previous to their reorganization on a higher grade, the outgoing presidents of the different grades appoint, as a last official act of their term of office, one of the members of their group as '*Ndakotsu*-elect' of the next junior group, i.e. the group which, in the new term, will take the place of the outgoing group. The *Ndakotsu*-elect will then take charge of the organization or reorganization of the new *ena*, and also of the appointment of a captain for the new association.

In these age-grade associations which rise *en-bloc* to higher grades there is no gap between the termination of the old and the foundation of the new *ena*. The association which is about to be dissolved and promoted stages a last public appearance in a great feast, with music and dancing, to which all friends and relations are invited. A few days later the members of the *ena* meet again for the preliminary discussion in the house of the new *Ndakotsu*, for the distribution of the age-grade ranks which will be assigned to them in the new *ena*. When all ranks have been satisfactorily allotted the group arranges another large festivity, which is to announce publicly its reorganization and to inaugurate the new term. I had the good fortune to be in Kutigi in 1936, the year when the six years' term of the local *ena* came to an end and the general 'change-over' took place. It fell in the middle of March; the last public meeting of the old association was on the 7th of March, the session in the house of the *Ndakotsu* took place five days later, and the inaugurative meeting of the group in its new form as a senior grade on the 2nd of April.

Now, what are the qualifications for the position of a *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu*, and according to what principles are the *ena* ranks distributed? For the election of the *Ndakotsu* a well-established social position, good reputation, intelligence, and also a pleasant nature and, if possible, an open hand, are regarded as essential qualifications. A satisfactory financial position is essential because the *Ndakotsu* will be expected to entertain and to organize parties—and to do it in style. Most of these conditions also apply to the election of the group captain. The members of a newly founded Bida *ena* explained to me: 'We made Mohamadu our *Etsu* because he is a nice fellow. We all like him. He has good connexions; you see he is invited to the court; besides, he has plenty of money, and both his father and his mother are rich. He is also ready to spend it when we have a feast and want drummers and dancers.' On the other hand, a very ambitious young man who had been *Etsu* of an *ena* (of the second grade) and who hoped to be made *Etsu* again in a new, senior, association whose captain was resigning shortly, complained to me that his chances were slight, for he had not much money and could not afford the expenses which he would be expected to meet. It is implied in the nature of these qualifications that the *Etsu* is not always the oldest member in the group. In one *ena* which I analysed the *Etsu* was 20 when the *ena* started, and there were three members older than he. But as a rule he is of higher social position, and often better educated, than the rest of the members. Thus in a Bida *ena* which consisted almost entirely of tailors and embroiderers the captain was a weaver, the son of the Bida guild-head. In another group of a similar composition the

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561 captain was an expert cap-maker, who made the expensive, fashionable
554 embroidered caps. And in a group the members of which came mostly
369 from the classes of the nobility, the captain was the son of a late Emir. It has become the fashion for captains of Bida age-grade associations to adopt an additional, allegoric or symbolic, title, which would also give the *ena* its name. Bida associations compete with each other in the invention of high-sounding names, which should evince the refinement and selectness of the *ena*. Thus one *Etsu* was known as *Etsu Yimani*, 'King Faith', as the *ena* over which he presided prided itself of the piety of its members; another captain called himself *Etsu Hankuri*, 'King Forgiveness', for more or less the same reason; a third *Etsu Turu*, 'King of the Europeans', a title which was meant to bear witness to the fact that this *ena* was organized on 'European lines' (to be explained presently).

The financial qualifications and those of status are of less importance in the village, where inequality of wealth and status are much less strongly marked, although even in the village *ena* the captain may be of a somewhat higher social position than the rest of the members, e.g. the son or brother of a village elder of high rank. The symbolic names of age-grade associations are absent in the village, where age-grade associations are neither as numerous as in Bida nor as interested in advertising their refinement and selectness.

The allotment of ranks in a newly founded association of the youngest
561 grade is largely a formality—although the popularity and influence of
554 the young boys among their age-mates will to some extent be taken into account. We have seen that these junior age-grades are generally regarded as representing a preparatory stage rather than a fully fledged *ena*. In the higher grades the distribution of ranks becomes much more serious. Change of rank during the lifetime of the *ena* occurs only when a member dies or withdraws prematurely, especially if he was holding one of the higher *ena* ranks, which must be represented. But when the *ena* terminates and the members form themselves into a new group, a complete reshuffle takes place. As the different grades use largely the same rank-system this redistribution of ranks at the end of an *ena* makes conspicuous the promotion, non-promotion, or degradation—as the case may be. These changes in the holding of *ena* ranks reflect faithfully the success or failure of individual members in the previous association, the capability shown in the performance of group activities, and the popularity enjoyed among comrades and superiors. The eager competition notwithstanding, the task of distributing ranks justly and to everybody's satisfaction does not, as a rule, take very long. I have seen these discussions carried through in one or two afternoons. But then, the general discussion is only a last, formal, step. Mostly, the two leaders of the group have decided the distribution at least of the more important ranks long before the first general meeting. The *Ndakotsu* of a prospective village *ena*, for example, knew a few months before the group was actually called into being exactly whom he was going to invest with the three highest ranks. As a rule the authority of captain and president is sufficiently strong to carry the vote. But instances of disagreement and

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561 554 themselves similarly heterogeneous and arbitrary, including Bida titles among its traditional village ranks.

561 554 516 The system of precedence involved in *ena* ranks and grades is taken very seriously, and the rigid rules of etiquette which govern it are enacted with all solemnity. Much of the *ena* business takes place, as we shall see, within the single *ena*; but when members of different grades meet—for example, at family feasts in the house of a member, or at collective farm-work—submissive or condescending behaviour marks their relation towards each other. Members of a junior grade will never dance when members of senior grades are present, except with their special permission and at their request; in collective farm-work the junior grades work at the back of the team, at less important and less conspicuous tasks. Age-grade etiquette is even more emphatic within the individual association. At communal meals the 'subalterns' will wait till their superiors have eaten; at *ena* feasts subaltern and senior ranks will never dance at the same time; when greeting a superior, the age-grade member of lower rank will squat down and bend his head, exactly as prescribed for intercourse between superiors and inferiors in the social scale of 'real life'.

561 554 369 In the village *ena* it is only in general terms that the ranks indicate social position on the rank-scale of the association. In the town *ena* the ranks are sometimes chosen so as to indicate and do justice to the special gifts, or the special social position outside the *ena*, which characterize individual members. In this the organization of the town *ena* reflects the more highly differentiated social structure of urban society. Thus a Bida *ena*, composed largely of illiterate members, assigned to a young man who had been educated in the Government Middle School the title *Naïbi*, a rank of the Mohammedan clergy which can be held only by scholars. The rank-list of another *ena* included the rank *Boroti*, lit. Head of the Bororó, its holder being the son of the late Emir's 'regent-delegate' for the Bororó Fulani. Some Bida age-grade ranks indicate a certain official capacity held by a member in the *ena*. Thus I found a rank *Dzufã* (lit. pocket) bestowed on a young man who acted as 'purser' of the group. All purchases and payments for *ena* purposes were made through him; when, for example, a member decided to give a party for the group he would place his money contribution in the hands of the *Etsu*, who would then hand it over to the 'purser' as the member responsible for financial arrangements. In one *ena* I found the rather curious rank *Mataushe* (Hausa, lit. 'the man who rubs', i.e. 'masseur'), by which name a certain slave or body-servant of the Nupe king was known whose special duty it was to massage the feet of his master. In like manner it was the duty of this 'office holder' in the age-grade association to massage the feet of his *Etsu* at meetings of the group when his master felt tired.

561 554 177 One group of ranks typical of the Bida *ena* deserves special attention, namely the ranks which are organized on 'European lines' and copy, not ranks and offices of Nupe society, but ranks, offices, and even names of Europeans with whom the Nupe had come into contact. Such titles are often amusing and even puzzling. In one *ena* the head of the group was

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in 561
the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), 554
Likita (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the 177
name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank
Borti (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the [576]
normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, 554
the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted, 561
forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. 177
Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and
achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and 154
forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tálaka* and *saraki* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world 369
of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real', 561
that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison
of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in 554
the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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369 561 554 and reality. The prototypes of *ena* ranks are all (at least theoretically) within the reach of the individual members. Every one of the young men who have gone through the *ena* may find when he reaches the suitable age that elimination by death or illness of senior relatives has singled him out for the position of a family head, and thus for a *nũsa* rank. Indeed, the promotion which accompanied his age-grade career will serve as an important qualification in the bestowal of the real rank by chiefs and elders. In certain respects all *ena* ranks of the senior grade retain their validity outside the *ena*, and after its expiry. The code of age-grade etiquette expires with the age-grade association. Not so the symbols of age-grade achievement: a man will be called by his rank rather than his name years after the *ena* has come to an end, often even for life—especially if he had held a very high rank. Men who have once been elected as *Ètsu* or *Ndakotsu*, even when they are not, or not yet, appointed to a *nũsa* rank, will occupy a position of some distinction in their native village. Not only are they addressed and known by their *ena* titles, but village elders will pay attention to their opinion, and will entrust them with responsible tasks—in the organization of a ceremony, or of important collective work carried on outside the framework of the age-grade association. *Ena* ranks will never be confused with the political ranks of the village; they remain *tici nya ena*, ranks of the age-grade association. But although still only models of the 'real thing', they are 'real' in the sense that they indicate the varying qualification of individuals for access to the final social advancement. In the village *ena*, then, and similarly in the few age-grade associations in Bida which are recruited from the ruling classes, the *ena* rank-system anticipates a future social status; it introduces social concepts, and practises forms of conduct the effectiveness of which will be proved in adult life.

None of this is true of the average Bida association. Although here, again, the ranks attained in the senior grade accompany a man through life, they can claim no significance beyond that accorded to them by the rules of the game. A game indeed it is. These ranks let you enjoy fictitious contacts with a world of rank and power which you can never hope to enter in reality. Their upward trend, their incentive of competition, imply, not preparation or anticipation, but pretence, imitation—'substitution'.

561 571 369 Let us examine now the composition of the age-grade associations with regard to the social groups and strata which they absorb. In small villages a single age-grade association includes the youths of the whole village, and may even go beyond it, including the 'dependencies' of the village, the small *tunga* settlements, or linking a number of *tunga* settlements with one another. In the scattered hamlets round Bida the boys and young men of three to four hamlets join in a common *ena*. In very large villages (e.g. Kutigi) the age-grade is subdivided into a number of associations, each embracing one large, or two or three small, neighbouring, village *efu*. The age-grade itself, however, stretches across the whole village community, and the different associations conform to the same pattern with regard to the length of the term, and the time and year of the 'change-over' from grade to grade. In Bida the sub-

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division goes much farther, and we find a large number of disconnected associations, which are no longer co-ordinated or conform to a common pattern. I estimate the number of age-grade associations in Bida at 200. The individual *ena* is, again, bound up with locality, and includes boys and young men from the same part of the town. But here two new factors enter: social differentiation, and divided political allegiance. The very fact that the Bida *ena* finds its members among friends and close acquaintances already expresses the tendency to make it socially homogeneous, and to limit its membership to individuals from the same social stratum, or the same professional group. *Sarakiži* and *talakaži* never mix in the same *ena*. Nor do prosperous traders or Mallams join the same *ena* as peasants or small craftsmen; nor does, finally, the youth of the craft-guilds intermingle—glass-workers, blacksmiths, weavers, all have their separate age-grade associations. The limitation with regard to locality and close acquaintances is less rigid in the highest grades than in the junior grades. For as in the course of years the membership decreases, some members having died, others having left the *ena* or perhaps the town, it sometimes becomes necessary to open the membership of the higest grade to people from other parts of the town. Yet no *ena* would accept members from beyond the boundary of the town *ekpā*. The political solidarity of the three dynastic divisions of the town is thus reflected in, and even, as we shall see, actively supported by, the age-grade associations of the capital.

Here once more we gain insight into the social significance of the Nupe age-grade association: it underlines and fosters the solidarity of the existing social groupings. This means something different in the village and in the town. In the former it refers to the village community at large, and we find the age-grade associations stretching across it, and across the large kinship units and 'houses' into which the village society is divided. We can liken the age-grade system to a horizontal plane cutting across the separate structures of the extended families, with their wide base, tapering off to the apex of the one official representative of the family group, the titled elder. The age-grade association must thus counteract all possible separatist tendencies of individual kinship groups and sustain the large-scale integration on which the existence of the village as a social unit depends. In large villages this integrative scheme is in some measure narrowed down, owing to the size of the groups that can be absorbed effectively in a single age-grade association. It assumes, in fact, a somewhat different aspect, in uniting the extended kinship units within themselves—in the form of the large *efu* group—that is, in holding together the widely expanded structure which is to support the apex of a common official representative.

In the town the existing social grouping is created and held together by political and class interests. Here again, the age-grade association fosters the unity of a group which is to submit, in 'real' life, to a common head. But he no longer represents the 'apex' of an organically grown structure; as the *ena* is largely the product of a free, voluntary association, the group loyalty which it fosters is towards the freely chosen leader of a local political faction.

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round 369 the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is 561 raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan religion.

I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing 561 collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the *ena* a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat [789] all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice as fast'.

Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the 561 narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional 574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*, *Etsu*, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food, drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the members of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited. At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred guests.

561 Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts 574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle, leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one 535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they 554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers. 369 There exist special *ena gbarifuši* dances, performed at these occasions: they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena. Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

[1] This song, which was composed by the *zaworo* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows.

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561 lays down the rules of behaviour for *ena* members, and which is again valid for life. These rules demand friendliness towards one another, and avoidance of all quarrels; mutual assistance in work (though not with regard to loans); respect towards one's superiors in the group; and respect also for the sanctity of marriage among all fellow members. The significance of this last rule, which applies to brides as well as wives, in age-grade associations the lifetime of which comprises the years when the adolescents first awake to the reality of sex, when they court and finally marry, need not be emphasized especially. Yet only in the village can the rule be regarded as tending to eliminate quarrels and feuds which must disrupt the community. In Bida it is in effect abetting matrimonial laxity outside the small group to which this code applies. The narrow political and class loyalty of the Bida *ena* has thus its counterpart in the no less narrow *esprit de corps* with its qualified respect for matrimonial rights.

In the case of a breach of the age-grade code the culprit is summoned before the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*, who have the right to punish him. A first, light offence may entail only a warning. Repeated offences will be punished more severely. If a young man shows himself lazy in *egbe* work or reluctant to fulfil the obligations of collective farm-work, it is regarded as sufficient punishment to order him to work in the back row, among the youngest and most inexperienced *ena* members. In the case of more serious offences the penalty may take the form of social ostracism: the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* would rule that no member of the *ena* must attend festivities in the house of the offender. This sentence, I was told, soon brings the culprit to heel; he will kneel down in front of the *Etsu* and ask him for forgiveness, protesting that he would henceforth mend his ways. In certain age-grade associations, especially in Bida, fines are 561 inflicted in the case of graver offences against the *ena* code. Expulsion is 831 never practised, not even as a penalty of the gravest of all age-grade offences—misconduct with the bride or wife of a comrade. However, my inquiries into the occurrence of this offence were invariably answered with a blunt denial. Whether or not it was founded on fact I have no means of deciding. Quite possibly the *esprit de corps* of the *ena* forbade admission of so shameful a charge. The rather too sweeping denial with which my questions were met makes it appear not unlikely: 'We are like brothers,' many of my informants said, 'who would steal a brother's wife?'

In one respect, at least, this statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration. 561 Age-grade comrades are not 'like brothers'. The intimate relation 512 between age-grade comrades which this simile suggests is not true to facts. The relationship existing between friends, on the other hand, is often likened to the relationship between brothers, and does in certain respects resemble it. But age-grade comradeship as all informants agreed, is sharply distinguished from friendship, and the mutual obligations of friendship in no way coincide with those implied in *ena* membership. The subject is worth pursuing.

A man (or woman) will never have more than one friend. The friend may come from a different locality, a different profession, even a differ-

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755 reasoning from analogy, it clearly belongs, with all the other treat-
757 ments just mentioned, to our second category, of practices utterly
incongruous and not even conceivably capable of the alleged effects.
813 We must add, further, that a great many therapeutic remedies are ascribed so multifarious an efficacy that their 'rational' application to one kind of ailment is belied by the other, extravagant claims. The same substance will serve as an antidote for snake-bite, as a cure for headaches, and as a potion applied in ordeals; and a herbal concoction for intestinal troubles will also be used to cure rheumatic pains in the fantastic manner just described. Thus the borderline between rational and pseudo-rational treatments is once more blurred, and the province of the former narrowed further. And here we may note that in a sense the Nupe wish to keep it narrow. For the one version of medicine which comes nearest to satisfying our two conditions of rational intent and empirical (if crude) appropriateness, that practised by the barber-doctors, is also criticized for this very reason. The barber-doctors
[759] are entirely profane practitioners, whose skill is a matter of cleverness and learning, involves no secrecy, and is at the disposal of all who can pay for their services. But their practice is largely restricted to the capital and the more sophisticated large villages, and little known or little thought of elsewhere. Indeed, the country people simply laugh when you suggest that the barbers have a knowledge of *cigbe*; 'barbers', I was always told, 'know no *cigbe*; all they can do is to cure headache'. Now some of my informants certainly knew that this was incorrect; furthermore, several village *cigbe* of the secret and mystical kind were also supposed to cope with headache. It was therefore not the efficacy of the remedies which the people held in ridicule but their purely profane character; and in denying that the barbers possessed any worthwhile knowledge of medicine, they really denied that their knowledge deserved the name of medicine. We note, then, a bias towards excluding from the genus *cigbe* those remedies which combine all the characteristics of a rational practice. The true *cigbe*, the people seem to feel, must at least in some respects bear the mark of the extraordinary or 'magical'. But this is no more than a bias since even in the villages where the art of the barber-doctors was so de-
[369] rided there exist purely profane, would-be rational remedies.[1] Their number, however, is strikingly small; so that in the peasant culture of Nupe, unlike the urban culture of the capital, the non-mystical or non-'magical' *cigbe* represents an exception from the rule.

[1] Also, this 'bias' is being obliterated by the modern usage of the word *cigbe* for all European drugs and medical appliances, in which the Nupe see nothing transcendental or magical, but the application of 'knowledge' proper.

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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

249 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a
438 larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe, which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—
[438] as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

388 As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

9 [i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

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326 screen another man is sitting, who works the bellows. The bellows are of the split-bag type common in Northern Nigeria; they are made of two bags of goatskin which end in a clay tube and are worked with sticks fixed on the top of each bag. The clay tube is buried in the ground and, passing underneath the screen, ends in the shallow furnace on the other side. In this furnace charcoal is burned, which the blacksmiths make themselves. They also forge their own working tools (apart from a few European tools, hammers and files, which have strayed into some of the blacksmiths' huts): a club-shaped hammer, a long pair of tongs, and a few chisels and pointed rods. The anvil, too, is of their own production; it is a solid piece of iron, shaped like a toadstool, the foot of which is buried in the ground. Of other working implements there is a bowl of water in which the red-glowing iron is tempered, and a heap of fine ashes in which the finished product is left to cool.

The technical process is simple. The bulk of crude iron is held over the fire until it becomes red hot and pliable. It is then placed on the anvil and gradually hammered into shape. The change from furnace to anvil is repeated several times, until the object has been given its final shape. Sometimes it is finished off with the help of files and chisels. The main products of the Nupe blacksmiths to-day are blades for hoes, bush-knives and crude axes, big nails and hooks for the big plank doors of the Nupe houses, and small brackets used in canoe-building. Sometimes the blacksmiths also make the wooden handles for hoes and axes; sometimes the customers prefer to buy only the blade and to make their own handles. One man, I found, can produce two hoe-blades a day, working from 9 a.m., with a pause for the midday meal, till 4 p.m., when the Nupe working-day finishes.

Iron-work thus involves four subsidiary forms of production: the manufacture of the bellows, of charcoal, of the tools, and finally of the raw material used in blacksmith work, i.e. the mining of iron ore. With the exception of the last all are undertaken by the blacksmiths themselves. The blacksmith buys the goatskins on the market and sews them together into the skin-bags used as bellows; he also produces the mouthpiece of clay for the bellows. Ordinary tools, such as hammers and tongs, are made by every worker individually; should it become necessary, however, to replace the anvil, the whole group of blacksmiths in the quarter (forty in all) would have to work together.

326 372 In charcoal-burning two or three men who share the same workshop work together, and produce a store which is to last the whole workshop for some time. Charcoal is burned in a clearing in the thick bush at some distance from farms and habitations. Wood of two different kinds may be used. Pieces of timber of about arm's length are piled 3 feet high. A thick layer of grass is placed on the top, and the whole heap is covered with sand, leaving only a small hole open. A dry piece of wood is lit and pushed into the opening to kindle the fire inside, after which the hole, too, is covered up, and the heap is left to burn for five or six days.

326 The production of the raw material of blacksmith work deserves special description. Formerly all iron used in blacksmith work was

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Calendar		Planting operations		Trees	State of food stores
Europ.	*Native*	*Inland farms (incl. irrigated plots)*	*Marsh-land farms*		
October	7th month	Second yam harvest. Harvest of ground-beans, sweet potatoes, and cassava grown on separate plots.			New yam, from second harvest, for storage. New sweet potatoes and cassava.
November	8th month	Preparation of new yam-plots and planting of yam (may be postponed for 2 or 3 months). Second ground-nut harvest begins. Harvest of late millet.	Sowing of second maize crop.		Yam from first harvest finished. Sorghum giving out.
December	9th month	Harvest of sorghum. Picking of cotton and red pepper. Harvest of late beans.	Harvest of rice (late maturing crop).		Sorghum and late millet for storage.
January	10th month		Harvest of second maize crop.		
February	11th month	End of ground-nut harvest. Burning of farms. Some farmers prepare new yam plots now instead of 3 months earlier.		First mango crop begins, also harvest of locust-bean.	
March	12th month	Burning of farms goes on.			

Selection of Species and Varieties

Most of the crops enumerated in the chart occur in more than one variety. Yam is the only exception; although grown in a large number of different varieties in Southern Nigeria, it is known only in one variety among the Nupe, which is incidentally another proof that Nupe is not a 'real yam country'. Sorghum (*eyi*) was originally grown in Nupe in a number of varieties. I could collect names for three main sorghum varieties: *kiyi*, *dindórogi*, and *ekpã*. Of these three varieties *kiyi* has [386] disappeared almost completely, and *dindórogi* is fast disappearing. The latter variety was formerly specially valued for the black and red dye that was obtained from the stalk. The importation of European dyes has reduced considerably its importance, so that to-day *ekpã* is grown almost exclusively. *Ekpã* is also agreed to be the finest and best tasting of the three varieties; its survival thus appears to reflect a certain growing fastidiousness with regard to food, which may well have influenced market prices and demands, and thus indirectly the policy of the sorghum growers.

Two varieties of rice are grown: the 'sweet' rice, a six-months' crop, in the river marshes, and a variety which matures in ninety days, on the less well irrigated inland farms. Till six years ago only the native variety of maize was cultivated. To-day the American variety (brought from Europe), which is sweeter and has a softer husk, is more and more widely adopted by the natives. This new variety is easily recognized since it is grown as a separate crop, in separate ridges, while the indigenous variety is interplanted through millet and sorghum or yam. The two millet varieties, finally, bulrush and late millet, have been mentioned already.

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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return.

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwõ*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top.

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to

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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa. 388 [177]

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men. 249 386

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who 386 439

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to
185 the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing
177 trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft.

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d.* to 3*d.* per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and

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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro,
323 Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the
438 river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there
317 exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

[171]

184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[439] cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and
386] women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konu* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

41 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
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(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :—

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge. 323 531

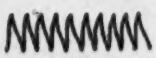

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(iii) The sharp end of a (! snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests. 323

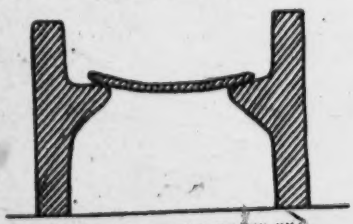

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323 531

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [386] [804]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]

(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat[9] is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

249 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a
larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe,
438 which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—
[438] as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

388 As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

9 [i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa. 388 [177]

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men. 249 386

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who 386 439

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil. 505 226 439 505

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with 505 484

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha. [376]

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dakári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 1,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

● 441 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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77 offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however,
626 losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

197 The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the
634 following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

634 The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the
[304] name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba
[304] Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in
[41] Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return.

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwã*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top.

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-sgetū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunya*—MAN 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

suitable piece of the local sandstone or ironstone which may be found is used as beater without artificial shaping.

(*b*) when the pancake becomes sufficiently thin it is placed on the bottom of a small inverted pot and beaten again with the hand-beater to make it slightly convex.

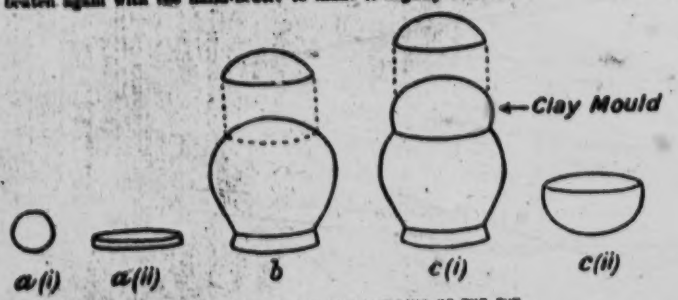

FIG. 1. STAGES A–C IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*c*) A clay mould is then placed upon the inverted pot and the clay beaten over this until it is shaped like an inverted bowl (*c* (i)).

It is then removed, turned over and put on one side to dry (*c* (ii)), and is eventually used as one half of the finished article.

(*d*) Processes (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are repeated and a second bowl identical in size with the first is made to form the second half. When both halves have been allowed to harden a little, one is inverted and superimposed on the other so that the edges coincide. The operator cements the two halves together by smearing clay round the line of junction so that a hollow ball, like a flattened sphere, is produced without any orifice.

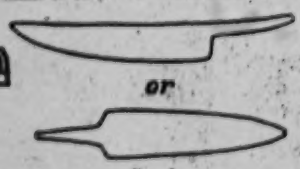

FIG. 2.

(*e*) A small hole, 2 inches in diameter, is cut in the centre of the top with an iron knife.

(*f*) To put the mouth on the pot, the operator takes a thin roll of clay and fits it to the edge of the hole by manipulation with the right hand while the pot is rotated by the left. The lip is shaped between the thumb and finger of the right hand and polished with a wetted rag.

(*g*) A thin roll of clay is then kneaded on to the pot to form a shoulder and the polishing with the wet rag continued.

(*h*) One or two handles are now attached; the operator takes a roll of clay of suitable length, attaches it first to the body of the pot, gives it an outward curve and attaches the other end to the mouth.

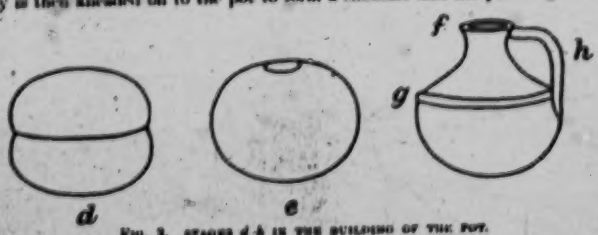

FIG. 3. STAGES *d* & *h* IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*j*) The exterior of the pot is polished by rubbing with a smooth, water-worn pebble (? of quartzite) and a piece of wetted rag.

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A FAMILY HEAD REPAIRING HIS GRANARY

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GRANARY AND COOKING PLACE IN A VILLAGE COMPOUND

[FACING p. 226]

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251 of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used [231] as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

251 The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does
439 not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which [415] the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

251 Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary
438 manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

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AN OLD POTTER WOMAN

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516
352

THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Cowrie-shells are a clumsy currency: you have to carry them about in bagfuls, and to count in thousands and tens of thousands. The numerical system of Nupe is fully equal to this task. Its elaboration and lucidity is not the least contribution to the efficiency of the exchange system of the country. Its scope is practically unlimited. A figure like 3,600,000 is expressed by this comparatively simple symbol: *gba kpotwani* (lit. two thousand times eighteen hundred, or, in more detail, two thousand times two hundred times nine). This facility in forming large numbers is due to the existence of a number of simple root words and multiples which are easy to handle. Omitting here the simpler figures 1–9, we find root words for 100, 200, and 2,000, multiples of 100 and 1,000 being formed by a simple multiplication of the root figures. For example, 400 is 200 . 2, i.e. *kpa gúba*, contracted to *kpoba*; 600 is 200 . 3, i.e. *kpa gúta*, contracted to *kpota*; 4,000 is 2,000 . 2, i.e. *gba gúba*, contracted to *gboba*; 6,000 is 2,000 . 3, i.e. *gba gúta*, contracted to *gbaotá*; 10,000 is 2,000 . 5, i.e. *gba gútsũ*, contracted to *gbotsũ*; and so on. A new unit is introduced as an alternative symbol for 20,000 cowries in the form of the *gura*, which is the name for the grass bags in which cowries were formerly packed. Thus 200,000 cowries (the traditional bride-price) make 10 *gura*; 400,000 20 *gura*, and so on.

The exchange rate between cowries and British money appears to have undergone some change. The original exchange rate, which I ascertained from the account of bride-price and tribute paid formerly, was 8*d*. for 2,000 cowries. Later the exchange value of cowries rose to 1*s*. for 2,000 cowries. This exchange rate is applied to-day when figures are quoted in cowries. Although cowrie-shells represented a currency in the strict sense of the word, they were used also for certain other purposes beside exchange, and had, above all, a certain value as ornaments. Gourds, bags, and musical instruments were formerly ornamented with cowries; but this practice has fallen into disuse.

To this elaborate system of units of exchange corresponds an almost as well-defined system of measures applied to commodities. We have spoken already of the *kpere*, the 'arm-length', a standard length used in measuring cloth; 10 *kpere* give, as we have seen, one full-length cloth. The measures used in selling agricultural produce are even more interesting, as quantities of these commodities do not lend themselves easily to simple forms of standardization. The unit for unthreshed grain is the bundle, *epa* (from *pa*, to tie up) or load, *hara*. It weighs very nearly 60 lb., but its size and weight vary a little according to the quality of the grain: of poorer grain there would be a larger quantity in the bundle, of better-class grain a proportionately smaller quantity, the main point being the equality in the value. Threshed grain is sold in large or small gourds, for which to-day tin bowls and basins are usually substituted. A large basinful of grain, *evo* (lit. gourd), contains twelve small bowls, *kpasu* (the latter taking a little over one pound). One bundle of unthreshed grain is reckoned to correspond to one *evo* of threshed grain. With maize five to six cobs are reckoned to give one small bowl of maize-flour. Rice is sold in large gourds (*evo*) or, more frequently, in small bowls, ten of which as a rule give one gourd. Beans are calculated in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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A WOMAN TRADER SELLING HER HUSBAND'S SILVERWARE

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A FOOD MARKET

482
443

[facing p. 330]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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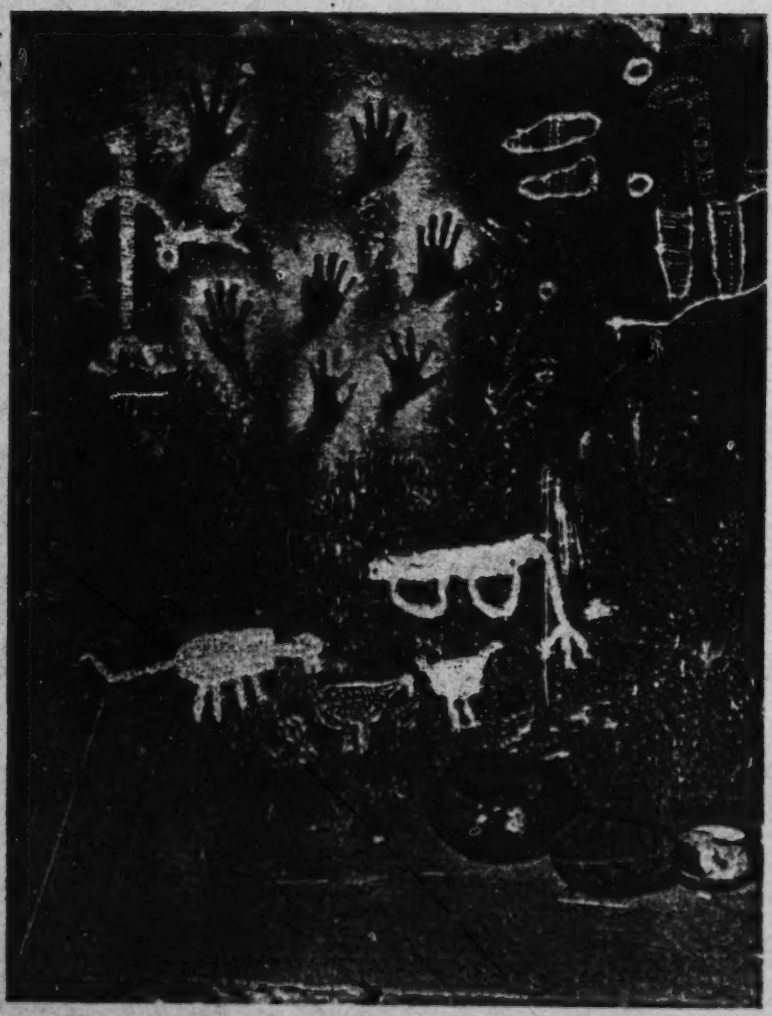

3. Wall paintings in a Nupe house

[p. 22(B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

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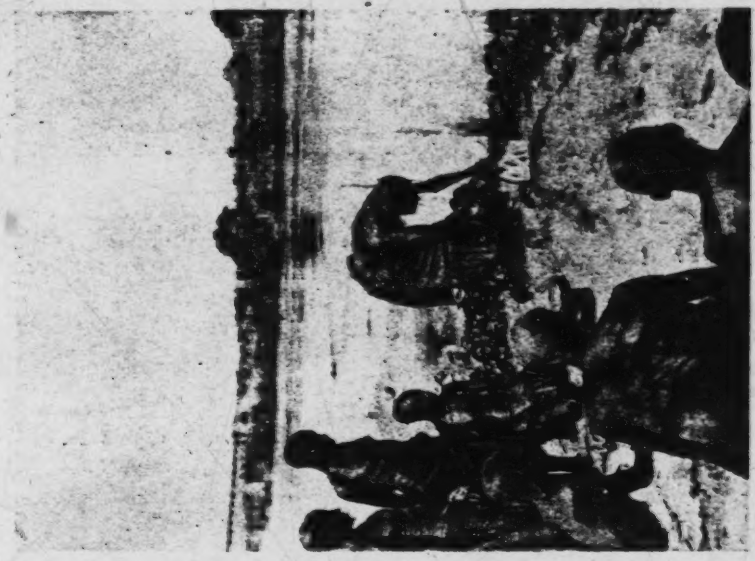

7. *Nddumu* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]

6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(R)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

796 X
795
782

8. Scene from *gunnu* dance in Jebba

[415]

9. *Dzakó* sacrifice
[p. 70 (A)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

796x

[535]

12. *Dzakó* dance

[304
852
415]

13. Cutting of tribal marks

[p. 86 (A)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

764

18. Levelling the ground over a new grave

759
415
516

19. The master of the *cigbeciži* in his 'dispensary'

[p. 118 (B)]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Crafts of Bida

323. 177 IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

326 177 The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

326 Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

[Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

326 415

[p. 139]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

"King of the dancers"—
a Bida brass spinning toy

Making a glass bangle. The bellows man sits behind the central furnace

323
516
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301

[p. 140]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Workers in brass and silver. The goat-skin bellows are similar to those of the glass-makers

326
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[p. 142]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

531
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No mechanical aids are used
to help achieve symmetry in design on trays

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries

Good examples of Bida silver work attain a high standard of craftsmanship

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[p. 144]

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-nyū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunwa*—MAN 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds; this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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A FAMILY HEAD REPAIRING HIS GRANARY

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GRANARY AND COOKING PLACE IN A VILLAGE COMPOUND

[facing p.226]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s*. to 15*s*., according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 142; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lah*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

LIVESTOCK

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[422] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
492] which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
534 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947; Temple 1919, p. 238.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 261–4.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

POSSESSION OF LAND

In the discussion of the rights to land obtaining in Nupe two facts must be borne in mind. First, the Fulani conquest, which resulted in the appropriation of part of the vacant tribal land; and second, the very low birth-rate and sparse population of the country. These two factors limit each other's effectiveness; moreover, they affect different parts of the country in different measure. We have seen that the appropriation of tribal land took place only in the area east of the Kaduna (Cis-Kaduna).[1] In the area west of the Kaduna (Trans-Kaduna),[2] land-tenure on the traditional tribal or village basis still obtains, and here the population factor shows itself effective in that it eliminates almost all pressure on the land and all more severe competition for landed possession. Owing to the political factors the opposite is true of Cis-Kaduna, and here a complex system of land ownership and land transfer, which in the extreme case amounts to outright purchase for money, reflects the attempts of the people to counteract the pressure on the land. That land disputes are extremely rare in Trans-Kaduna, but very frequent in the 'conquered' territory, is evidence of the same development. One exception may be mentioned at once: the especially valuable marsh-land groves and plots near river-courses, which the Nupe call *bata* (the Hausa *kurmi*). Disputes about this valuable kind of land occur now and again even in the land-rich Trans-Kaduna, and they are fought with special bitterness in Bida and the crowded 'conquered' territory. The following figures may be quoted in support of this statement: in the years 1934 and 1935 24 cases of land litigation came before the *Etsu*'s Court in Bida; 21 referred to Cis-Kaduna and 3 to Trans-Kaduna; of the latter none was a land case in the narrow sense of the word—one was a dispute about trees, and two were disputes over marsh-land plots.

The description of Nupe land-tenure may start most profitably with an enumeration of the various methods by which a man, stranger or native of Nupe, may acquire land or has been able to acquire land in the past. It must be said first of all that under traditional conditions only men can hold or claim possession of land. The dynastic policy of the Nupe kings has first led to women being invested with fiefs and landed property. Mohammedan law, besides, is inclined to confirm land holding by women in their own right. But the holding of land by women is still extremely rare, and limited to Bida and the surrounding districts I have come across one case only—a court case in which sons and brothers of a recently deceased woman contested the inheritance of her landed property. Needless to say, none of the parties concerned were peasants; the land had been acquired first through the channels of clientship, and the present claimants—Bida Mallams—wanted it only in order to sublet it for profit.

To return to traditional land-tenure. For a Nupe man who comes

[1] The territory between Kaduna and Gbako river, i.e. Beni country, and the districts east of the Gbako river, i.e. Badeggi and Kacha districts.

[2] Trans-Kaduna is the literal translation of the Nupe name for the area: *Lavunkpā* (*Lavun* being the Nupe name for the Kaduna river).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna.

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*latí*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cikã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'.

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociži wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-o*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

621 'colonies' or *tunga*. The *tunga* thus possesses land in its own right, but at
361 the same time pushes its territorial possessions further into no-man's-land.

Access to Village Land

621 There is no general rule for the distribution, within the area of village land, of the farms belonging to the various family groups and individuals.
423 Roughly one may say that the small individual plots (called *bucá*—a term to be explained presently) are situated near the village and the larger family plots (*efakó* plots) farther afield. When old men own plots of their own they, too, are given plots near the village so that they should not have to walk too far. The different plots which belong to the group of people living together in the same house (as a rule, a single family group), whether the plots are worked jointly or independently by the various household members, do not necessarily lie together, but are frequently scattered. Nor have the people who live together in the same *efu* their land on adjoining sites, or in the neighbourhood of the part of the village where they live. We may add that, again, there exist no special signs or boundary marks to distinguish the property of different farmers. A narrow path, a border of shrubs, or a tree, serve as landmark.[1] But the different cultivation that may be practised on the different fields, or the different stage of cultivation which the different fields may represent (fallow land, land that has been worked for one year, or two years, &c.), make these boundaries more obvious to the eye.

This irregular distribution of farm-plots appears to be due to a variety
242 of causes. To some extent it is entailed in the complex agricultural tech-
423 nique of the country, with its many different types of cultivation and its regular system of rotation of crops. Every farmer owns a certain number
621 of fields—some under cultivation while others are lying fallow—which he tries to distribute over different sites so that he can utilize different types of soil, e.g. the marshy sites near watercourses for the cultivation of rice or sweet potatoes, dry sandy soil for ground-nuts, heavier soil for yam and cotton, and so forth. This arrangement also has the advantage of distributing more evenly the risks of failure. You often find farmers complaining that one site on which they have a farm is less good than another, or has perhaps suffered special injury that year through birds or through thieving baboons, or has been washed away by a flooded river. But the irregular distribution of farm-plots is also a result of the very method of Nupe settlement: it could not be otherwise with the farm-land lying in a circle round the large villages in which a numerous population is concentrated. There would not be room enough for all family groups in the village to have their lands arranged in compact blocks in equally favoured positions, both with regard to the distance from the village and to the quality of the soil. Moreover, some plots more heavily worked than others 'tire' sooner and must be replaced by virgin land lying farther afield; and growing families must provide more land for their

[1] A characteristic exception are a few marsh-land plots near Kacha, which are properly fenced in—'because of the many disputes' that arise over this kind of land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nūsa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

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622 *albárka* (lit. blessing), a gift meant to express the 'blessing' that lay on the land which the family received from the chief. [651]

Another expression of the chief's control over the reapportionment of land is that all land of families or branches of families which have died out, and similarly the land of families who have emigrated, falls back to the common fund of land reserve administered by the chief. The period within which the land of emigrants still remains theirs is fixed everywhere in Nupe as three years. After that time the chief is entitled to reapportion the land. Should an heir from the emigrated group return after a longer period, he could (like any other stranger) claim land in the village, but not as a rule the same land that his family had held previously. The dying-out of a family, or a branch of a family, seems a fact not easy to establish and always open to doubts in a social system in which small sections repeatedly split off the main body of the family. There is always the chance of an unexpected or belated claimant turning up, representing a distant branch which chief and elders may no longer have reckoned as likely to identify itself with the original family. But this is mainly a theoretical speculation; there occur few such cases in Nupe —none in Trans-Kaduna, where land is plentiful and vacated plots unlikely ~~to be much competed for.~~

In Cis-Kaduna I witnessed an interesting case of this kind. A family head in Doko had died, leaving a small boy, who was then adopted by a childless brother of the deceased, living in a *tunga* on a farm of his own. The boy grew up on this farm and lived there contentedly until recently, after more than twenty years, the chief reapportioned the apparently unclaimed land that had belonged to the boy's father to two elders of high rank, the *Lile* and *Shaba* (both of the chief's family). Not until then did the young man return to Doko and make a formal claim for his ancestral land. But political motives rather than economic interest were behind this move; the parties in this case were, again, the chief of Doko and young Ndakó Gana, the 'dispossessed' descendant of the line of original chiefs. The chief had reapportioned the land in order to blot out the last visible connexion between the 'pretender's' family and the chieftainship of Doko; and the young man disputed the reapportionment on these very grounds. In the end he received back some of the original land and other new land in addition. [597]

Here we discover a new significance in the apportionment of village land—its connexion with the bestowal of rank or office. This is not surprising in the communities (such as Doko) where the village ranks, like the land, remain in the possession of one 'house'. Later, we shall see more clearly, in the discussion of inheritance, that the Nupe kinship system tends indeed to couple attainment of family headship (which goes with rank) with inheritance of ancestral land. Considering, however, that the ordinary village land does not differ widely in quality and productive value, we can understand that this political aspect of land ownership is rather obscure—save in a case such as the one just quoted where political aspirations have attached to a specific property more than its proper share of symbolic significance. The political aspect becomes more prominent in connexion with a natural resource that shows this

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difference in quality and value to a much greater extent, namely, fruit-bearing trees. 423 621

In most districts the chief has a special title to certain economically valuable fruit trees wherever they grow, on vacant land or on people's farms. In Doko and Shebe this special chief's tree is the locust-bean, in Kutigi and Wuna the oil-palm. In Mokwa there exists another regulation, namely, that all shea-nut and locust-bean trees inside the town belong to the chief, while the trees outside are the full property of the man on whose ground they stand. Also there is in many places the general rule that no fruit tree on village land may be cut down without the special permission of the chief. Sometimes family heads exercise a restricted right to the 'chief's trees' growing on their land, i.e. they return two-fifths of the crop to the chief and keep the rest. But the chief may also grant the full possession of these trees as a separate right; thus he [554] bestows the property of a certain number of valuable trees on an individual—young or old—as a recognition of higher civic status, together with the promotion to rank and title. The right to the trees, coupled with the rank, remains the property of the 'house', conditional upon the renewal of the appointment (to the same or a similar rank) after the death of each holder.[1] The shea-nut trees—to-day of considerable commercial importance—occupy everywhere in Nupe a special position. The trees on vacant land (virgin village land or no-man's-land) are common property. The women who collect the fruit go out in small [562] parties and share the crop among them. The shea-nut trees on occupied farm-land belong to the owner of the farm.[2] In either case the exploitation of the crop is the exclusive prerogative of the women.

A few words may be given to a special variety of village land, the plots that are situated in the village itself, round the compounds and between the village *efu*. This land is owned by the people who live in the compounds adjoining the plots. Its inheritance and apportionment is ruled by the same regulations as the inheritance and apportionment of the houses themselves and will best be discussed in a later section. The land inside village and town differs only in one respect from the village land without: it is never left uncultivated. Manured as it is by the refuse from the houses it can be used continuously without the necessity of being left fallow for a period. If the owner of such plots leaves the village or the town and does not return for some time, leaving no one behind (which has happened frequently in Bida during the last twenty years), the neighbours will use the farm-plots; they are always ready,

[1] A certain complication arises when the modern official Village Head is not identical with the traditional chief, for the former may assume control over the land only, not over trees—he may indeed not possess any 'chief's trees' himself, at least not at the time of his appointment. There is no evidence as yet to show how this contradiction will be solved in the course of time—except an indirect evidence to be mentioned presently (see p. 189, n. 2), which tends to show that this separation of land- and tree-rights is allowed to last for several generations.

[2] The facts mentioned here will correct the statement made by some students of West African agriculture, that 'shea-nut trees are generally regarded as entirely common property' (O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, *West African Agriculture*, 1933, p. 27).

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423 621 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 425 621 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to [431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the [431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who 609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted 621 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first 425 *dzankó*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose 651

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who [177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankó* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankó* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsoźi*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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423 No junior family member, even when already holding *efakó* land in his
622 own right, may claim any share in the produce of the fruit-bearing trees. Only succession to the family head's position implies the usufructory right to the trees that stand on his or any other parcel of the family land.

Borrowing of Land

427 Land can be borrowed only for limited periods, as a rule for periods from two to five years, that is, in order to help a temporary shortage of land. The family heads or other 'landlords' arrange the transaction between themselves, not necessarily informing the chief, but always in the presence of witnesses who should be able later to testify to the nature of the transaction. Every landowner who has enough land is ready to 'lend' it in this way. In Trans-Kaduna the transaction is regarded as a friendly act, a 'helping out', quite natural between neighbours or fellow villagers. The borrower pays annually a fixed rent in kind, as a rule one bundle of millet or sorghum. In Cis-Kaduna the transaction gains a definite commercial significance: the borrower pays a small sum of money down, varying with the quality of the land (from 8*d.* for about one acre of ordinary land to 2*s.* for a much smaller plot on valuable marsh-land—the highest amount paid I found to be 6*s.*), and again the annual rent of one bundle or the equivalent in money.[1] In one case I found that regular farm-work for the owner of the land had taken the place of the annual rent in kind.

427 A landlord is free to cancel the lease before it has lapsed if the tenant is not working the land—as happens frequently; the court would con-
425 firm his right to do so, only ordering him to return the initial payment. But it may also happen that the landlord dies or emigrates while the lease is still running, or that for some other reason the lease is not recalled. In such cases the lessee often continues to work the land, although he has naturally ceased to pay the annual rent; he even comes to regard the land as his own whether he is working it or not, till one day it may be demanded back by the original owner or his heirs. In Trans-Kaduna, where no long-term transfer of land exists, any evidence as to the nature of the original transaction will at once settle the case. In the conquered areas of Cis-Kaduna, where land is let and sublet, and where short leases and leases for an indefinite period coexist, it is often difficult to establish clearly whether temporary or permanent lease had been arranged originally, specially when the witnesses of the original contract have died. What type of lease was originally intended is shown by the amount of the initial payment, whether it was high or low, that is, a 'real' payment, or only a *kyutá*, a gratuity. The latter, combined with a repeated rent in kind, establishes the nature of the temporary lease, the *jí aro*, 'borrowing'. But the continued working of the 'borrowed' land, and the failure of the original owner or his heirs to call in the lease, clearly alter the situation considerably. The attitude of the court in such

[1] Characteristically this annual rent is called in Bida—quite logically—*dzankó* 'tithe', but in the villages *kyutá*, 'present'.

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566 services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

425 In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between 643 villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikā*, the uninhabited bush; also all village land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because 471 of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzankā* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

● 423 Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. 643 This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Maliki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other 423
respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'cor- 643
porate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town 423
walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esoži*, 643
where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esoži* is placed 241
under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of 567
the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esoži* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esoži* 423
has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from 241
the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with 643
the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch 427
with his *esoži*, and insisted only on the [illegible]l *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the commu[illegible]rk of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esoži*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esoži* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil. [485]

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family 241 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the 643 modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family 427 estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankd* arrangement. But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu* [242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and 466] demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they 313 need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of 438 the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a 313 slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpã* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

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CHAPTER XIII

AGRICULTURE: ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR

LABOUR organization in Nupe, in every field of economic activity, is characterized by a twofold principle: the distinction between individual work and family work or, in native terminology, between *bucá* and *efakó*. As the division of labour implied in this distinction also involves a corresponding division of income and property, our discussion of the organization of agricultural labour must at the same time be a discussion of the forms of property that obtain in relation to agricultural production. The terms *bucá* and *efakó* have, in fact, this wider meaning. Every kind of work done individually, its products and the income—individual income—derived from it, are *bucá*; and every work done jointly, in collective family work, producing output and income over which the family group or a section of the family group exercises joint rights, is *efakó*. Thus we find two different kinds of farm property: *efakó* farms which are owned and worked jointly by the family group, and *bucá* farms worked and owned by individuals. Similarly there are *efakó* granaries to hold the produce from the family farms, and *bucá* granaries to hold the produce which the individual members of the family group own and utilize. The family group or, more precisely, the section of the family group which forms the *efakó*-unit, owns from ten to twelve granaries which are as a rule placed close to the centre of the house. Every *bucá* owner has, besides, his own granary, which is usually found close to the wall of the compound. Obviously, in a system of labour based not on wages but on joint work and a share in the proceeds, the discussion of the labour organization cannot be treated separately from questions of ownership and land-tenure. On the other hand, a co-operative group consisting of a section of the kinship group cannot be described without constant reference to kinship organization. Frequent cross-references, and overlapping with other sections of the book, are thus unavoidable.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WORK

Let me begin with the *bucá*, which can be briefly described. Every male member of the family owns a *bucá*, with the exception of the family head who being the administrator of the *efakó* has no *bucá* himself. For his personal requirements he is entitled to draw on the *efakó* income. Young boys of 8 or 10 already possess *bucá* farms of their own. *Bucá* farms vary considerably in size, and grow with their occupants. The largest *bucá* farm which I found was about one acre, i.e. about half the size of the plot of land which on the family possessions is proportionate to every adult worker. The average *bucá* yield I found to be between one-third and one-half of the individual adult's share in the yield of the family farm. The *bucá* owner can work on his farm only 'out of business hours', when he is not needed for *efakó*

[p. 241]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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462 *Women*: 'Yes, but *only* the grain. We have to contribute *kula*, *kuka*, salt, pepper and palm-oil.'

562 *I*: 'Surely you have locust-bean trees and red pepper in Leaba?'

Women: 'No, there are no locust-bean trees here, nor pepper.'

One woman: 'This is not true, we have pepper.'

Another woman (rather defiantly): 'Well, there still remains salt, *kula*, and palm-oil for which we, the women, have to pay.'[1]

[1] Another example of the clearly defined economic rights of the women is this: in the Nupe communities in the forest groves on the Niger, where there are no shea-nut trees, the banana is the property of the women and supplies them with fruits which they can dispose of in their own right.

[423]

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *esi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in 349] the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *esi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *esi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *esi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *esi*.

652 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *esi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference 592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg- 354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying [423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 67–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother: custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[62] 425 Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still comparatively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.
(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* ("borrowing"); land thus acquired is also inalienable.
(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.
(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).
(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.
(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.
(7) By "primary" tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 471 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:

(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).
(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).
(3) The fringe of "reserve" land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[20]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batadi every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[21] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settlement. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers' [43] 66 tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[22]

[20] Nadel, 1942, pp. 190–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.
[21] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.
[22] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
674 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing
693 a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

657 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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arisen. Their occurrence or avoidance is clearly bound up with the interpretation put on Kede political autonomy—a point which we will discuss under a separate heading.

VI. The Claim to Autonomy

Let me say, first, that the administration of Kede country presents an exact analogy to the administration of Nupe kingdom. Emissaries from the capital, delegates recruited from the ruling house, are in charge of the administrative districts of the Emirate as they are of the district of Kede country. This analogy reflects the analogous political evolution in both countries; the rise to power of a small group over a large country with heterogeneous population. The only exception from this rule of administering the districts of the Emirate through royal delegates is Kede country itself, which remained under its own chief, who acted as the representative of the *Etsu* Nupe. Even for this exception there is a parallel to be found in Kede organization: the emissary system did not apply to the area of the upper-stream Kede. Their whole area was regarded as one sub-district of Kede country and was placed in charge, not of an emissary from Muregi, but of one of their own chiefs, the village chief of Bele, their southernmost settlement. The explanation for this privileged position of the two groups, the Kede *Tifin* under Kede and the Kede under Nupe, is most probably the same—namely, that their rulers would have found it difficult to control themselves effectively the territory of these subject communities: the Kede the country of the upper-stream group, which was not easy to reach with their big canoes (note that they made the chief in the place farthest down-stream the 'deputy' for the whole group), and the Nupe kings the whole river area.

To the down-stream Kede their autonomous position in Nupe Emirate is a sacred trust, dating back to their first chief who received, with the chieftainship of Kede, the 'Rule over the Water' from the mythical Tsoede. The Kede chiefs still style themselves *Etsu nya nuwã* ('King of the Water'), and, as their history shows, have always taken this title very literally. It meant to them more than merely the formal concession of assigning to a Kede chief duties normally discharged by a royal delegate, and they have in the past frequently attempted to acquire a larger

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the second for the chief, who was worried by the numerous cases of illness in the village; and the third for a young man who sacrificed a fowl so that his wife might bear a child. We note that the *tídzana* is appealed to for much the same reason as the *ketsá*; let me note also that the third suppliant came of a family which 'owned' a particular medicine reputed to cure sterility, even though he himself had invoked the sacred chain instead. In his case as in all others the sacrifice had been indicated by the diviners, who are the final judges of the appropriate supernatural remedy.

I mentioned before that the Chain of Tsoede formerly also served as an ordeal of deadly efficacy and as an instrument of execution.[1] It may seem puzzling that a tool of death should be believed to restore health and fertility. Yet even as a tool of death the Chain of Tsoede is a *kuti*; indeed, it is used to kill because it has the supernatural power also to purify the executioner and sanctify the deed. And as the *kuti* is always a force, divine in origin and unspecific in nature, so it can, by definition, be made to do many things.

We may add the ritual *ndáduma* to this list of movable rites although it figures equally among the fixed ceremonials. In its movable form, it is concerned with the rise and fall of the river and is performed when the seasonal floods are late or of threatening dimensions (though not sufficiently grave to warrant the performance of the *ketsá*). The name of the ritual, 'Father Niger', refers to a whole species of spirits inhabiting various localities on the river. The most powerful of these river spirits is said to live at Bazumagi, a small village up-river from Jebba. Here the local priest performs a special version of the ceremonial, which takes place only when ordered by the *Kuta* of the Kede. In the course of this ceremonial the priest wades into the river and throws a stone ashore, the place where the stone drops being believed to show that year's highwater mark. In Jebba, the ritual is in the hands of the *Tswanya*, who sacrifices a white cock, some beer, and a little honey (a favourite food of all river spirits). I did not witness the movable ritual but only the fixed version, which is the last in the cycle of rites falling in the ninth month; it was performed on 5th December, succeeding the ritual *dzakó* by two days. The actual observance, however, is the same in both rituals, though the fixed form bears not only on the river floods, but also, more generally, on health, prosperity, and childbirth in the village. In neither case can the *ndáduma* be made to serve the private interests of individuals or

[1] See above, p. 32.—The name *tídzana* is said to mean 'head (*eti*) of Dzana', Dzana being the name of the legendary first victim of this method of execution.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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In spite of this fluidity and uniformity each *kuti* represents, for the people, a procedure possessed of a distinct and unmistakable identity. We need not mention especially certain external details marking off one ritual from another, such as the different trees in places of sacrifice otherwise closely alike, different musical instruments played with songs which themselves may be interchangeable, or one or two objects peculiar to particular ceremonials. More importantly, the person of the officiant varies from ritual to ritual, only very few sharing the same priest. We spoke of him as being 'in charge' of a ritual; the Nupe would say that he 'owns' the ritual: and for them no reference to a *kuti* is complete without the mention of this relevantly varying 'ownership'.

Now, this is a new conception of the ownership of rituals. We have met with two others—an ownership vested in the village community, as part of its corporate estate, and one vested in the whole tribe or nation, as an attribute of its collective identity. The former comes closest to 'ownership' in the conventional sense of the word, since the village community in fact views its cycle of rituals much as one does some concretely held source of benefits. In the priest's ownership of 'his' ritual this notion disappears; for he 'owns' the ritual only as a task or duty (if a privileged one), which falls to him by virtue of his descent or rank. In either case, the village community, as the true 'owner' of the ceremonial, delegates its execution to one of its segments (the priest's kin group) or to one of its individual members. This notion is in fact carried to the extreme; for neither the priest nor his family derive any particular benefits, secular or mystic, from the religious office: the priest is merely the one individual entitled and expected to exercise it 'for the whole town'. The unique priestship of the *gunnu*, which sanctifies the person of the incumbent, is only partly an exception. The priest is distinguished from other mortals only inasmuch as he is a vessel of a force working miraculously; but he is not expected to be blessed with children because he officiates in a cult of fertility nor to be better off than others because the cult also promises prosperity. Indeed, like any other person due to assume a public office, he must prove that he is 'strong enough', that is, he must first acquire the full adult status of a married man and family head.

The individual 'ownership' of ritual thus implies no special validity of the thing owned for the owner. The two forms of group ownership imply precisely this. Here 'ownership' is coterminous with validity for a group so-and-so constituted. Where this group is the society at large, the tribe or nation, that is, the widest group on which behaviour is normally oriented, the validity of the ritual also ceases at the group boundary; which is merely saying that

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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Nupe religion is 'national', not 'universal'. Where the group equals the village community, the coincidence of validity and group is no longer entirely true. More precisely, the validity of the ritual holds on two different planes, both coinciding with and extending beyond the group boundaries. Thus every ritual is valid for the community which actually performs it, promising its various benefits to that congregation; and every ritual is further valid for the wider or widest group of which the congregation forms a part. This wider validity may again be of two kinds. First, the group performing the ritual may regard it as a task (a privileged task) apportioned to it within the embracing social unit, so that each performance is understood to contribute to the welfare of that unit and also affirms its existence; as we have seen, this is true of several rituals in the river area and, on the widest plane, of the rituals associated with Tsoede and the kingdom of Nupe.[1] Secondly, the community performing the ritual may merely know that other villages in the tribe or perhaps sub-tribe 'own' an identical observance; so that every performance will recall and confirm the existence of a larger human aggregate of like customs and beliefs. In the first case, then, the single village community sees itself as belonging to an embracing association in which it has a part to play; in the second, as belonging to a particular species of humanity. In either case the purely religious aims merge with notions of group existence and relationships.

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2. THE PROMISE OF RITUAL

The discussion of the validity of rituals, which is bound up with the promises they hold out, leads us at once to the crucial questions—how do rituals fulfil their promise? and how do they convey the hope, or perhaps certainty, that their professed aims will in fact come true?

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Consider that the rituals are being performed incessantly through the generations and have undoubtedly, at times at least, been followed by the desired results; thus there must be in existence a body of knowledge, empirical if misconstrued, bearing out the believed-in efficacy. Consider further that the fixed rituals are concerned mainly with 'ends' and 'new beginnings', that is, with the overall repetitiveness of natural life—with the cycles of the seasons, with birth, with the growing of crops, with the rise and fall of the river. This repetitiveness is well known empirically, independently of any belief in supernatural agencies. The

[1] We note the same principle of 'delegation' which also underlies Nupe priestship, though the 'privileged task' now falls, not to individuals, but to sections of the society at large or to groups within groups.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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POSSESSION OF LAND

In the discussion of the rights to land obtaining in Nupe two facts must be borne in mind. First, the Fulani conquest, which resulted in the appropriation of part of the vacant tribal land; and second, the very low birth-rate and sparse population of the country. These two factors limit each other's effectiveness; moreover, they affect different parts of the country in different measure. We have seen that the appropriation of tribal land took place only in the area east of the Kaduna (Cis-Kaduna).[1] In the area west of the Kaduna (Trans-Kaduna),[2] land-tenure on the traditional tribal or village basis still obtains, and here the population factor shows itself effective in that it eliminates almost all pressure on the land and all more severe competition for landed possession. Owing to the political factors the opposite is true of Cis-Kaduna, and here a complex system of land ownership and land transfer, which in the extreme case amounts to outright purchase for money, reflects the attempts of the people to counteract the pressure on the land. That land disputes are extremely rare in Trans-Kaduna, but very frequent in the 'conquered' territory, is evidence of the same development. One exception may be mentioned at once: the especially valuable marsh-land groves and plots near river-courses, which the Nupe call *bata* (the Hausa *kurmi*). Disputes about this valuable kind of land occur now and again even in the land-rich Trans-Kaduna, and they are fought with special bitterness in Bida and the crowded 'conquered' territory. The following figures may be quoted in support of this statement: in the years 1934 and 1935 24 cases of land litigation came before the *Etsu*'s Court in Bida; 21 referred to Cis-Kaduna and 3 to Trans-Kaduna; of the latter none was a land case in the narrow sense of the word—one was a dispute about trees, and two were disputes over marsh-land plots.

The description of Nupe land-tenure may start most profitably with an enumeration of the various methods by which a man, stranger or native of Nupe, may acquire land or has been able to acquire land in the past. It must be said first of all that under traditional conditions only men can hold or claim possession of land. The dynastic policy of the Nupe kings has first led to women being invested with fiefs and landed property. Mohammedan law, besides, is inclined to confirm land holding by women in their own right. But the holding of land by women is still extremely rare, and limited to Bida and the surrounding districts I have come across one case only—a court case in which sons and brothers of a recently deceased woman contested the inheritance of her landed property. Needless to say, none of the parties concerned were peasants; the land had been acquired first through the channels of clientship, and the present claimants—Bida Maliams—wanted it only in order to sublet it for profit.

To return to traditional land-tenure. For a Nupe man who comes

[1] The territory between Kaduna and Gbako river, i.e. Beni country, and the districts east of the Gbako river, i.e. Badeggi and Kacha districts.

[2] Trans-Kaduna is the literal translation of the Nupe name for the area: *Lorunkpa* (*Lovun* being the Nupe name for the Kaduna river).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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425 from farming stock, that is, whose family is holding land already, the usual way to acquire land is to exercise his claim to a parcel of the land that is held jointly by the family group, and which is administered and apportioned by the family head. This would be the procedure, for example, in the case of a young member of the family who had founded a family himself and now requests land for a farm of his own. More or less the same situation would arise in the case of a stranger, a native of Nupe though not of the particular village, or even a native of Nigeria (a Hausa or Yoruba) though an alien in Nupe, who, having been adopted into a household, may request land on which to settle. There is, however, the possibility that the family land available at the time is insufficient; or there might be a man desiring land whose family had not held land previously or had lost the claim to the land, e.g. through overlong absence. Here two main methods offer themselves: first, the man desir-
[621] ing land can exercise his right as a member, native or adopted, of the village community to request land (possibly additional land) from the chief, which may be either land that has been under cultivation previously but has fallen vacant, or virgin land within the village territory.
427 Second, he can acquire new land through an arrangement with an individual landlord (using the term here in the widest sense); in other words, he can lease land temporarily for a rent in kind—a method known in Nupe as *aro*, 'borrowing'. In both these methods the land thus acquired is inalienable.

A third method closely related to borrowing is a lease for life or for an indefinite period, in most cases against a single payment in money to which is added a fixed rent in kind. This arrangement, which definitely recognizes the money value of land, may be tantamount to real purchase. Fourth, there exists hereditary tenantship, which gives the tenant absolute right over his land, including the right to dispose of it again or sublet it. This tenantship I shall call (for reasons which will become clear presently) *secondary* tenantship. It implies not a fixed rent but a share in the produce—a form of métayer system.[1] Finally, there exists a *primary* tenantship, in which a landlord who himself owns the land by the right of conquest or appropriation may cede complete and absolute rights over land to another person, Nupe or stranger, in recognition of (political) services rendered; here again a share in the produce is implied. The last two methods form part of the feudal organization of the Nupe state.[2]

425 We have thus five methods of land acquisition, which fall in two main
427 categories: (1) Acquisition in virtue of membership of a group (kinship

[1] See A. Marshall, op. cit., p. 643.

[2] Different from these traditional methods of acquiring and transferring land is the method of land-tenure under the Native Land Ordinance Act, which, adjusted to modern requirements, involves the lease of native land to non-natives, i.e. non-Nigerians (a merchant who plans a trading-station, a missionary who intends to build a school or church, &c.). In such cases application for a lease of a parcel of the land that has been retained as Crown land must be made to the Administration. This method, and all questions entailed in it, will be disregarded in the following. It is, in fact, of very little significance in Nupe country where no commercial utilization of land and no settlement of non-natives exist.

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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna.

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*lati*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cikã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'.

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociži wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-o*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may
621 return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as
425 we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have
621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to
[431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the
[431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who
609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now
621 the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted
425 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first
651 *dzankó*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who
[177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankd* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankd* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsozi*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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423 No junior family member, even when already holding *efakó* land in his
622 own right, may claim any share in the produce of the fruit-bearing trees. Only succession to the family head's position implies the usufructory right to the trees that stand on his or any other parcel of the family land.

Borrowing of Land

427 Land can be borrowed only for limited periods, as a rule for periods from two to five years, that is, in order to help a temporary shortage of land. The family heads or other 'landlords' arrange the transaction between themselves, not necessarily informing the chief, but always in the presence of witnesses who should be able later to testify to the nature of the transaction. Every landowner who has enough land is ready to 'lend' it in this way. In Trans-Kaduna the transaction is regarded as a friendly act, a 'helping out', quite natural between neighbours or fellow villagers. The borrower pays annually a fixed rent in kind, as a rule one bundle of millet or sorghum. In Cis-Kaduna the transaction gains a definite commercial significance: the borrower pays a small sum of money down, varying with the quality of the land (from 8*d.* for about one acre of ordinary land to 2*s.* for a much smaller plot on valuable marsh-land—the highest amount paid I found to be 6*s.*), and again the annual rent of one bundle or the equivalent in money.[1] In one case I found that regular farm-work for the owner of the land had taken the place of the annual rent in kind.

427 A landlord is free to cancel the lease before it has lapsed if the tenant is not working the land—as happens frequently; the court would con-
425 firm his right to do so, only ordering him to return the initial payment. But it may also happen that the landlord dies or emigrates while the lease is still running, or that for some other reason the lease is not recalled. In such cases the lessee often continues to work the land, although he has naturally ceased to pay the annual rent; he even comes to regard the land as his own whether he is working it or not, till one day it may be demanded back by the original owner or his heirs. In Trans-Kaduna, where no long-term transfer of land exists, any evidence as to the nature of the original transaction will at once settle the case. In the conquered areas of Cis-Kaduna, where land is let and sublet, and where short leases and leases for an indefinite period coexist, it is often difficult to establish clearly whether temporary or permanent lease had been arranged originally, specially when the witnesses of the original contract have died. What type of lease was originally intended is shown by the amount of the initial payment, whether it was high or low, that is, a 'real' payment, or only a *kyutá*, a gratuity. The latter, combined with a repeated rent in kind, establishes the nature of the temporary lease, the *jí aro*, 'borrowing'. But the continued working of the 'borrowed' land, and the failure of the original owner or his heirs to call in the lease, clearly alter the situation considerably. The attitude of the court in such

[1] Characteristically this annual rent is called in Bida—quite logically—*dzankú* 'tithe', but in the villages *kyutá*, 'present'.

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disputes is this: if the original owner or his heirs had allowed the rent to lapse without calling in the lease, and if the other party can prove that he has worked the land for a long period, this is generally considered sufficient evidence that the original owner has abandoned his claim to the land, whether the new owner is at the time actually working the land or keeping it as reserve. Long occupation is thus recognized as tantamount to ownership. In summing-up a land case in 1935 the *Etsu* Nupe said: 'We do not agree that a man should be evicted from the place which he has been working for a long time.' And in another case, heard in 1934, the claim of the new 'borrower' to the land was confirmed by the court 'because of the many years the farm had been in so-and-so's hands'.

Litigation about 'borrowed' land comes up constantly before the court in Bida. This is a typical case: A. suddenly demanded back two farms which his grandfather and father had 'lent' to another man, because A. was going to be married and needed the land for himself. He based his claim on the fact that only *aro* had been intended, although the rent had been allowed to lapse. Evidence of the original transaction was difficult to obtain, so the court suggested the following compromise: the transfer of the farm of A.'s grandfather was confirmed, but the farm which A.'s father had 'lent' to the other man the latter was ordered to return—a decision which is again based on the length of occupation. The lack of precision in the concept of land-borrowing in Bida and Cis-Kaduna is illustrated still better by the following case, not itself a court case, but, as it were, a typical potential cause for such land-disputes. A certain rich Mallam had 'borrowed' land from the *Cece*, a *bara* of L., a nobleman of high rank. He had paid 8*d*. down, and every year one bundle of sorghum as rent, for five years. The *Cece* died in the meantime, and the present owner maintained in discussion with me that the land was his and could be inherited by his sons after his death. When I discussed the case later with the *Alkali* he confirmed my suspicion that this was not so; the land could in theory be recalled any day after the five years by the heirs of the *Cece*. But the *Alkali* admitted that this may not be the case for ten or even twenty years; by then the rent would have been allowed to lapse and the details of the original transaction would be difficult to establish.

In the course of the Fulani conquest certain farms which were at the time without a definite 'owner', the original owner having emigrated before the lease had lapsed, and the lessees having ceased work on the borrowed farms, were simply appropriated by the Fulani landlords within whose territory this 'ownerless' land was lying.

Trees are included in this short-term lease or 'borrowing'. But the strength of this regulation, in harmony though it is with the general principles of Nupe land-rights, has been weakened under present-day conditions. Economic stress has made fruit-bearing trees a very valuable resource, and farmers have in a few cases ignored the traditional practice, given away trees with the land, and even 'lent' trees independently of the land they stand upon. This sort of temporary transfer of trees is a simple means of obtaining money quickly (for example, for the payment

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427 of tax): the owner of oil-palms or locust-bean trees would sell a year's yield of his trees to another person, who in return would pay the tax for him. The issue is still more confused where the transfer of the land with which the trees go appears to be in the nature of a lease for an indefinite period. In this case the original owner or his heirs could claim that the trees, at least, were essentially inalienable, and could be transferred only temporarily, that is, could only have been 'lent' and 'borrowed'. This is itself a compromise, and the attitude of the court in these disputes constitutes a further compromise. In 1934 a farmer had ceded a farm-plot with locust-bean trees on it to another party. After the death of the original owner his heirs reclaimed the trees (though not the land) on the plea that the transfer of the trees could in the nature of things have been meant only as a temporary transfer. The decision of the court was that the new owner should share the crop, fifty-fifty, with the former owners.

Long-term Lease and Purchase

[184] We come now to forms of land-ownership which are typical of Bida and the conquered areas east of the Kaduna and which are almost completely absent in the Trans-Kaduna districts.[1] Among the people of 425 Bida town who derive their livelihood from the land, a few descendants of the original Beni population still own land under tribal conditions, that is, under the conditions described under the heading of village land. Their farms are scattered over the land around Bida—the village land that used to belong to the old, pre-Fulani Bida. But most of this land had been expropriated early in the conquest, under one or other pretext, and the former owners and their descendants had left Bida and moved into the country to other villages or *tunga* settlements, where they found vacant land. Thus of the descendants of the Beni 'town-kings' of Bida only Ndakotsu, the eldest of a number of brothers, had remained in Bida and continued to work the small plots that he had been able to keep; the other brothers had left the town and settled in the country.

Long absence, or the dying out of a family branch, too, gain a totally different aspect here in Bida, as compared with conditions in the village. For the vacated plot is as a rule at once appropriated by one of the big landlords whose lands may surround it, or possibly by one of the three royal houses on whose territory the plot may lie. The latter procedure was, as we shall see, the practice in pre-British times and in the early days of British rule. A somewhat similar case happened during my stay in Bida: a Bida man had returned to the town after a long absence and, claiming his old land, found that it had gone to another man. According to Nupe customary law he had forfeited his right to the land, having been away for such a long period. However, the customary law is not adapted to cope with conditions as they obtain in the town and in 'conquered territory': for here no spare land exists that could be offered to

[1] The exceptions are a few *tunga* settlements which some Bida noblemen have founded outside the 'conquered territory', for example on the Wuya-Kutigi road. There are no *tunga* of this kind west of Kutigi.

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the claimant in compensation for the land he had lost. Besides, the man's old land had changed hands several times in the meantime, and could not simply be taken away from the present owners who had spent work and money on it. The man was unwilling to move to a village, where he could find land, and unwilling, too, to take land in Bida for which he would have had to pay a small rent. He felt that he had been wronged, and being of a rather violent temper and a slightly unhinged mind he attacked the judge and threatened the *Etsu*, and his search for a new place where to live ended under lock and key. 425

The village ways of obtaining and securing land, rendered impossible by the social conditions obtaining in the capital and in what we have called the 'conquered territories', are replaced by a large variety of other, much more complicated—and costly—methods of land transfer. All land is in fixed hands; land cannot simply be claimed on the grounds of citizenship from the *Etsu* Nupe. Nor is land around Bida, especially the valuable marsh-land, often given away in short-term lease. But land can be acquired by the method of lease for life or of tenantship for an indefinite period. In Bida a large number of dependants of the royal household, fief-holders, former warriors, slaves, or Mallams who were attached to a noble house, possess land granted to them by the king or a powerful feudal lord. These landlords, usually not farmers themselves, are frequently prepared to let their land (or sometimes to sublet it if they themselves have obtained it by a similar arrangement) to men who are in need of land for their farms. If the landlord is of high rank the transaction is never carried out by him personally but always by an agent, who expects a small gratuity from the tenant for his services. The rent itself consists in a comparatively high initial payment in money —£1 to £2—and, again, the fixed annual rent in kind. M., a wealthy Bida man, for example, acquired two years ago a farm for his newly married son from a former slave of *Etsu* Mohamadu. He paid £1 in money, and undertook to pay an annual rent of one bundle of millet. The money was pocketed by the former slave himself, but the rent in kind went to the family of *Etsu* Mohamadu—a sign that the former owner was himself only a tenant (though a tenant of a different category). This transaction is definitely spoken of as sale and purchase of land. The lease itself is, in fact, 'sold' and 'bought'; for the original tenant has ceded all his rights, for a single payment, to the new tenant who takes over the lease from the (real) landlord. The concept of sale and purchase is emphasized further by the practice of the court rarely to bring up the matter of the annual *dzankó* in kind (although it is almost invariably implied in the transaction). The initial, single payment, and the nature of the right to the land which this payment entails, are the only points with which the court is concerned. The importance of the annual rent in kind, however, apart from the 'purchase' price, reveals itself in the practice of recalling the contract if the tenant leaves the land unworked (that is, is unable to pay the annual tithe). Also, if the tenant has for some other reason discontinued the tithe, the lease may be recalled (though here, as we shall see presently, modern court practice would not sustain the claims of the landlord). 425 427

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427 The lease is only for a lifetime—at least in theory—and has to be renewed by another payment in money if the heirs of the tenant intend to keep the land. If tenants and landlord are on good terms, or are social equals, or if the landlord is under some obligation to his tenant, the renewal is a mere formality and may be granted for a small gratuity. Thus tenants often feel justified in regarding their right to the land as implying absolute ownership, ownership *har dbada*, 'for ever'. But the [691] large number of disputes of this kind which come before the court prove that the arrangement is open to misinterpretation as well as misuse. Landlords who for any reason are dissatisfied with their tenants, or have found a higher bidder, may unexpectedly call in the lease, either at the death of a tenant or during his tenancy, or demand on the threat of eviction another, higher, payment from the tenant or his heirs. Here are two examples: A., a rich landlord, had 'sold' the same farm twice, first for 10*s*., and afterwards for 16*s*. E. transferred a farm-plot that had fallen vacant after the death of the tenant twice in two years, pocketing £3 altogether.

427 Like the practice itself the attitude of the court towards these cases of 'purchase' or indefinite lease is ambiguous and uncertain. Only in one 425 respect the issue is certain: all evictions from planted land, between the times of sowing and reaping, is declared illegal on whatever grounds the eviction may be based. Every man is entitled to the fruits of his immediate work. As regards the wider issue the tendency of the court seems to be this: if the transfer of the lease has taken place fairly long ago, the fact of the long occupation (and actual working) of the disputed land is taken to entail permanent ownership; further payments of *dzanka* rent are discouraged, and thus the purchase of the land is recognized as an accomplished fact. (As already said, in cases of this kind an original short-term lease—'borrowing'—is often confused with transfer for an indefinite period or for lifetime.) In other cases, where the transfer took place more recently, the court suggested the alternative solution of a return either of the money or the land.[1] In one or two cases of this kind the *Etsu* even made it clear that he wished to discourage sale of land for money altogether. In summing up a land case that came before the court in 1934, he said that 'it was right to divide up land for the benefit of people who had insufficient land; but this should not be done for money'—a pronouncement which, though morally admirable, does not quite do justice to actual facts. For how, one might ask, can land be 'divided up' for the needy in an area where such strong pressure on land, and such multitude of vested rights in land, obtains, if no allowance is made for some sort of compensation? In the Nupe economic system, firmly based as it is on money, a monetary compensation, sale and purchase, seems the only solution, unless the Administration is prepared to repudiate the whole system of land ownership as it exists in the 'conquered territory' as well.[2]

[1] This decision, however, made no allowance for the diminished value of the land, in the sense that the man to whom it was returned might have to leave it lying fallow for a considerable period before being able to cultivate it again.

[2] In one dispute of similar nature, which came before the court in 1935, the

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It will have been seen already that the land disputes which we have just described reflect more than merely disputable, equivocal land-contracts. The landlords who 'sell' the land are without exception men of the titled classes, courtiers, favourites, or former slaves of the king or of powerful noblemen, and the 'buyers' mostly commoners, peasants who have had no other chance of obtaining additional land. To-day they are coming to realize that their right to the land which they acquire is protected by the Native Court. But till very recently, in order to obtain their rights, they would have had to bribe their way through or to find a protector equal in rank and influence to the landlord who threatened to evict them—a typical source of the institution of clientship, which we discussed in a previous chapter.[1] A final example. A certain farmer had 'bought' land from D., a *bara* of the late *Etsu* Saidu. The *Etsu*, for reasons of his own, refused his confirmation of the deal—D., being a tenant of the *Etsu*, could not transfer the lease without the latter's permission—and the tenant had only one way open: he attached himself to another, more influential, *bara* of the *Etsu* and through him made various gifts to the *Etsu*, over £3 in money, a valuable civet cat, and promised besides an annual rent of two bundles of corn.

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Hereditary Land: Secondary Tenantship

Clientship, combined with a métayer arrangement, becomes a factor in land-tenure also in another respect. A commoner who desired more land, or a new piece of land, could give himself into the service or 'patronage' of a landowning overlord and thus secure land as well as political protection. The conditions were: an initial gift in kind as in all pacts of clientship, occasional presents, visits and other expressions of homage, and finally a tithe (*dzankd* again) from his millet or sorghum crop. This submission to patronage was often the only means by which the peasants in Cis-Kaduna could hope to retain their property when threatened with expropriation, and also the only means by which they could secure new land, that is, access to what under tribal conditions would have been a reserve of village land. The necessity of obtaining land and enjoying its secure possession thus constitutes another of the main roots of clientship. The lease of land obtained by these methods is hereditary, and remains in the family, a comparatively safe possession—unless political factors interfere. The tenants are rarely allowed to forget that the relationship between landlord and client implies more than merely a correct commercial relationship. Lack of respect, an apparent failure to render due homage, or behaviour suggestive of changed

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Etsu himself suggested that the disputed piece of land (a river grove that was claimed by two neighbouring villages) should be bought for money by one of the parties. The purchase price fixed was 15*s*.

[1] Till very recently no peasant tenant would have dared to invoke the *Etsu*'s or *Alkali*'s help against his landlord; he would have been looked upon as somebody who had broken away from a firmly established tradition of loyalty, one-sided though it was. The tenant in the last example quoted above kept silent for fifteen years; not till 1934 did he venture to bring his case before the court and thus to obtain a final confirmation of his ownership.

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566 services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family 425 appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikā*, the uninhabited bush; also all village 643 land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because 471 of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzanká* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders 423 and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. 443 This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Maliki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[562] Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still comparatively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.
(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* ("borrowing"); land thus acquired is also inalienable.
(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.
(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).
(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.
(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.
(7) By "primary" tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 471 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:

(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).
(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).
(3) The fringe of "reserve" land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[80]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batach every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[81] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settlement. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers' tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[82] [431] [65]

[80] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.
[81] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.
[82] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 582
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage.

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 588 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 851 425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

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557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

595 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
[554] the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have
[772] "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable, (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Duff.

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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child 848 inherit. 429

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the village-head amongst the various heads of families, according 178
to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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section is taken in rotation by these families, the 'second-in-command' succeeding to the position of the head at his death. Among the *Dokodza* people we find a threefold elaborate hierarchy which settles the succession even to the rank of the 'second-in-command': *Dokodza*, *Dokpa*, and *Shaba Dokpa* (lit. Successor of *Dokpa*). The smaller blacksmith section of the Bida Beni possesses two ranks: *Maji Tswata* and *Shaba Tswata*. The blacksmith groups in the villages, and also the groups of iron-ore miners, have similar rank systems.[1] The heads of the blacksmith groups, and to a lesser extent the other guild ranks, are respected, and their orders are obeyed by all co-workers. The main significance of their position lies in the fact that it is their task to organize all co-operative work within the group. 326 467

Co-operation and mutual assistance within the section takes many different forms. If the people of one workshop, for example, are unable to fulfil a certain order, they pass it on to another workshop; or if the occupants happen to be absent when a customer calls, their neighbours will always be ready to take the order on their behalf. When the workshops ran short of iron ore, the guild-head used to send messengers to the iron-ore miners to bring back a sufficient supply for the whole group; this form of co-operation, however, no longer exists, and to-day each workshop procures its own raw material. Co-operation of a more far-reaching order is concerned with the various tasks which we have placed under the heading of 'maintenance of labour'. We have already seen that these tasks involve co-operation and mutual assistance on a scale which transcends in varying degree the *efakó*-unit. Thus the division of labour in the preparation of charcoal implies co-operation of the whole workshop group. When it becomes necessary to forge and put up a new anvil an even larger group must co-operate in active work. We may add that the upkeep of the workshop itself, or the building of furnaces—especially the large furnaces used by the iron-ore miners—demands a co-operation much larger than that which the *efakó* group can provide. In none of these cases is the co-operation recompensed with a share in the profits (as is the case in *efakó* co-operation); nor is this co-operation organized on the basis of collective work of the *egbe* type; nor can it be explained, finally, by the fact that the co-workers may belong to the same family and household. Rather is it a co-operation based on membership of the same professional union—the guild or guild section—and mobilized by the appointed head of the group. 326 467 476

The head of the guild section is also responsible for maintenance of labour in a wider sense. His professional advice may be sought by all workers in the group if they have some difficult or unusual work in hand. He will also occasionally lend his people money if they need it for professional purposes (e.g. the purchase of crude iron ore), in other words, he provides them with the necessary working capital. Certain similar services towards the group are vested in the position of the *Dokodza* alone, that is, of the head of the guild at large. He arbitrates in all internal disputes among the blacksmiths of Bida, and is thus able to 326 467 [426]

[1] See chart of Village Ranks, p. 57.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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bearing enterprises ('interest' understood here in the widest sense). The 454
nature of the enterprise varies with local conditions, and differs above all in town and country. Peasants mostly invest their money in livestock (see Chap. XI). We have seen that Nupe inventiveness is always on the look-out for new opportunities promising a higher 'interest', even in the narrow field of stock-breeding as they know it: we have mentioned the buying and selling of ostriches, and the isolated experiment in horse-breeding of one village chief—incidentally the chief of a typical backwood village, Sakpe. In the town, and in the large trading-centres of the country, money is invested chiefly in trade, even by men and women who do not personally engage in trade. They would trust a certain sum to a trader of their acquaintance for a particular purpose, e.g. to help him finance a trading expedition to Kano or Bornu. The trader will use their capital together with his own, and will return it to them increased by the profits which it has brought when his business has been successfully concluded. The trader, of course, also derives a certain profit from these investments, as they enable him to enlarge the scope of his enterprise and to secure more favourable prices. Many most highly placed notables in Bida, not excluding the king himself, use this profitable method of investment.

Certain traditional and formerly highly important methods of investment, above all war and slavery, have disappeared under the new political order. I have described in an earlier chapter the contributions of the houses of the Bida nobility to the wars and military exploits of their country and have also discussed slavery and slave trade. It remains to discuss the closely related traditional form of investment in 'human capital' which has become a thing of the past only quite recently, namely, money investment in human pledges (*sofa*, in Nupe).

PAWNING

Besides the pawning of human pledges, ordinary pawning—pawning 426
of valuable goods—also occurs. My information is that beads, costly
gowns, a sword, or saddle, all things of silver or gold, are frequently 735
pawned as security for a loan. No interest is paid on the loan itself, and the transaction is regarded purely as an act of friendship. I have, however, not discovered any actual instance of this practice. My impression is that it is not, and has never been, very widespread. Pawning of people, on the other hand, has grown to enormous dimensions. When pawning of human pledges was finally suppressed in Nigeria, in 1933–4, 3,000 pawns were released in Bida Emirate alone.

As slavery reflects the insecurity of the political rights of the conquered subjects of Nupe kingdom, pawning reflects the economic insecurity under which a large proportion of the population of the Emirate lives. The lack of flexibility, more particularly, in their economy tends to foster such radical means of escape from financial difficulties. Under the pressure of unexpected demands or certain imperative heavy expenses which cannot be matched by normal efforts—payment of bride-price; a heavy fine; money with which to bail a family member or bribe

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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
735 procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other
558 household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

426 Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of
735 money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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trained, slave; for a pawn, with his restricted usefulness, one might have to pay more than twice the amount. There is no doubt, then, that the institution of pawning represented not only a profit-making, 'capitalist' investment, but also, to some extent, a 'humanitarian' duty linked with status and prestige, a crude attempt at alleviating the hardships involved in the unequal distribution of wealth. Well-educated Nupe men, themselves members of the wealthier classes, with whom I discussed pawning, even went so far as to explain pawning (at least on a moderate scale) as an institution of considerable educational value enabling the sons of the poor to study farm-work and husbandry in the houses of prosperous and enterprising men. They would admit drawbacks only in the excessive practice of pawning, which, they maintained, was a recent development, brought about by rising prices and rising cost of living. These drawbacks, as they saw them, were that with the increase in their numbers, the pawns, many of whom frequently worked together in the same household, grew lazy and irresponsible, and showed openly their resentment at having to work for strange masters. The complaints of my informants were thus that in the combination of material and moral rewards which the people of wealth and status expected from the institute of pawning, the material rewards had completely to give place to moral rewards.

A similar combination of material returns from invested wealth with benefits of a more abstract order—status and prestige—is also characteristic of the institution of clientship (already explained in Chap. VIII). The share of the 'abstract' benefits becomes larger the closer we approach forms of expenditure and investment bound up with social status: display of wealth in household arrangements, festivities, the equipment of one's retinue, and so forth. To this and similar questions we shall return later.

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have seen, not only supplies its members with efficient training, but also guarantees, to some extent, a steady market for their products. The guild-head, moreover, is enabled by the special resources involved in his position to act as the 'banker' of the group and come to the financial assistance of individual members.

Certain other economic arrangements designed to provide insurance operate outside the labour-unit, and are thus of special importance for the individual craftsmen and the free professions. The familiar recourse to clientship is a first instance. By sacrificing part of his personal freedom as well as his earnings, the *bara* buys the patronage of an influential person. Though this patronage will be appealed to specially against the 'extraneous' risks due to political factors, it plays a part also in more 'normal' circumstances. Thus I found that a barber had recently become the client of a certain nobleman in his quarter of the town in order to secure a regular and good clientele; it is significant that the father of the barber had not been a *bara*, i.e. had not felt the need to 'insure' his more prosperous business. A young hat-maker told me that he intended to attach himself as *bara* to an influential rank-holder, with whose help he hoped to start business as a trader. I have also spoken of the Mallams and drummers, to whom clientship means the guarantee of success in their profession.

A different method of insuring against risks is embodied in the practice of borrowing money. 'Pawning' represents the firmly institutionalized form of borrowing—an institution which provides against normal as well as abnormal risks, and in which a social relationship closely akin to that of patron and client forms the basis of the financial transaction. Other forms of borrowing occur irregularly, and with a narrow scope. No professional money-lenders exist; the individual in need of money borrows it mostly from close relations, more rarely from friends or 'patrons'. The most frequent form of borrowing is for a husband to borrow from his wife. An indirect form of borrowing money from one's wife, not uncommon in Bida, is the practice of wealthy women to contribute to the bride-price of their sons and to other expenses, which, in accordance with Nupe kinship ideas, should be borne by the father.

A final insurance arrangement is provided in a specific financial institution operating somewhat on the lines of a 'pooling club'. It is called *dashi* in Nupe (*adashi* in Hausa) and plays—or used to play—a very important part in Nupe economy. We must describe it here in detail.

The *dashi* is a pure business arrangement, a free association of a number of men and women who agree to enter this financial co-operation for a certain limited period. Each member undertakes to pay regularly (for example, every week, or five days, or every month) a certain amount of money into a common fund, as many times as the group numbers members. Each time when the contributions have been collected a different member is entitled to draw the total fund, until every member has had his share. Members may also contribute double subscriptions, and then be entitled to two 'draws' in the course of the *dashi*. The allotment of the fund does not follow a fixed rule, but is left to the head of the group to work out. A member who is urgently in need of money can

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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3*d.*: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4*d.* weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by N.A. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10*s.* per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7*s.* 6*d.* per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years.

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8*s.* and 9*s.* from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions.

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance —borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of

SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before 558 its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 The most important women's titles are those of *nimwoye*, of the royal house of 565 Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya;* she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not [554] reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 102–8, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 331–4, 147–56; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

[For information on the renting and leasing of land by baras, see also category 425. --Analyst]

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425 from farming stock, that is, whose family is holding land already, the usual way to acquire land is to exercise his claim to a parcel of the land that is held jointly by the family group, and which is administered and apportioned by the family head. This would be the procedure, for example, in the case of a young member of the family who had founded a family himself and now requests land for a farm of his own. More or less the same situation would arise in the case of a stranger, a native of Nupe though not of the particular village, or even a native of Nigeria (a Hausa or Yoruba) though an alien in Nupe, who, having been adopted into a household, may request land on which to settle. There is, however, the possibility that the family land available at the time is insufficient; or there might be a man desiring land whose family had not held land previously or had lost the claim to the land, e.g. through overlong absence. Here two main methods offer themselves: first, the man desir-
[62] ing land can exercise his right as a member, native or adopted, of the village community to request land (possibly additional land) from the chief, which may be either land that has been under cultivation previously but has fallen vacant, or virgin land within the village territory. Second, he can acquire new land through an arrangement with an in-
427 dividual landlord (using the term here in the widest sense); in other words, he can lease land temporarily for a rent in kind—a method known in Nupe as *aro*, 'borrowing'. In both these methods the land thus acquired is inalienable.

A third method closely related to borrowing is a lease for life or for an indefinite period, in most cases against a single payment in money to which is added a fixed rent in kind. This arrangement, which definitely recognizes the money value of land, may be tantamount to real purchase. Fourth, there exists hereditary tenantship, which gives the tenant absolute right over his land, including the right to dispose of it again or sublet it. This tenantship I shall call (for reasons which will become clear presently) *secondary* tenantship. It implies not a fixed rent but a share in the produce—a form of métayer system.[1] Finally, there exists a *primary* tenantship, in which a landlord who himself owns the land by the right of conquest or appropriation may cede complete and absolute rights over land to another person, Nupe or stranger, in recognition of (political) services rendered; here again a share in the produce is implied. The last two methods form part of the feudal organization of the Nupe state.[2]

425 We have thus five methods of land acquisition, which fall in two main
427 categories: (1) Acquisition in virtue of membership of a group (kinship

[1] See A. Marshall, op. cit., p. 643.

[2] Different from these traditional methods of acquiring and transferring land is the method of land-tenure under the Native Land Ordinance Act, which, adjusted to modern requirements, involves the lease of native land to non-natives, i.e. non-Nigerians (a merchant who plans a trading-station, a missionary who intends to build a school or church, &c.). In such cases application for a lease of a parcel of the land that has been retained as Crown land must be made to the Administration. This method, and all questions entailed in it, will be disregarded in the following. It is, in fact, of very little significance in Nupe country where no commercial utilization of land and no settlement of non-natives exist.

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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna.

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*lati*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cihã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'.

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociti wũ kin babá*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-o*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

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423 No junior family member, even when already holding *efakó* land in his
622 own right, may claim any share in the produce of the fruit-bearing trees. Only succession to the family head's position implies the usufructory right to the trees that stand on his or any other parcel of the family land.

Borrowing of Land

427 Land can be borrowed only for limited periods, as a rule for periods from two to five years, that is, in order to help a temporary shortage of land. The family heads or other 'landlords' arrange the transaction between themselves, not necessarily informing the chief, but always in the presence of witnesses who should be able later to testify to the nature of the transaction. Every landowner who has enough land is ready to 'lend' it in this way. In Trans-Kaduna the transaction is regarded as a friendly act, a 'helping out', quite natural between neighbours or fellow villagers. The borrower pays annually a fixed rent in kind, as a rule one bundle of millet or sorghum. In Cis-Kaduna the transaction gains a definite commercial significance: the borrower pays a small sum of money down, varying with the quality of the land (from 8*d.* for about one acre of ordinary land to 2*s.* for a much smaller plot on valuable marsh-land—the highest amount paid I found to be 6*s.*), and again the annual rent of one bundle or the equivalent in money.[1] In one case I found that regular farm-work for the owner of the land had taken the place of the annual rent in kind.

427 A landlord is free to cancel the lease before it has lapsed if the tenant is not working the land—as happens frequently; the court would con-
425 firm his right to do so, only ordering him to return the initial payment. But it may also happen that the landlord dies or emigrates while the lease is still running, or that for some other reason the lease is not recalled. In such cases the lessee often continues to work the land, although he has naturally ceased to pay the annual rent; he even comes to regard the land as his own whether he is working it or not, till one day it may be demanded back by the original owner or his heirs. In Trans-Kaduna, where no long-term transfer of land exists, any evidence as to the nature of the original transaction will at once settle the case. In the conquered areas of Cis-Kaduna, where land is let and sublet, and where short leases and leases for an indefinite period coexist, it is often difficult to establish clearly whether temporary or permanent lease had been arranged originally, specially when the witnesses of the original contract have died. What type of lease was originally intended is shown by the amount of the initial payment, whether it was high or low, that is, a 'real' payment, or only a *kyutá*, a gratuity. The latter, combined with a repeated rent in kind, establishes the nature of the temporary lease, the *jī aro*, 'borrowing'. But the continued working of the 'borrowed' land, and the failure of the original owner or his heirs to call in the lease, clearly alter the situation considerably. The attitude of the court in such

[1] Characteristically this annual rent is called in Bida—quite logically—*dzankó* 'tithe', but in the villages *kyutá*, 'present'.

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disputes is this: if the original owner or his heirs had allowed the rent to lapse without calling in the lease, and if the other party can prove that he has worked the land for a long period, this is generally considered sufficient evidence that the original owner has abandoned his claim to the land, whether the new owner is at the time actually working the land or keeping it as reserve. Long occupation is thus recognized as tantamount to ownership. In summing-up a land case in 1935 the *Etsu* Nupe said: 'We do not agree that a man should be evicted from the place which he has been working for a long time.' And in another case, heard in 1934, the claim of the new 'borrower' to the land was confirmed by the court 'because of the many years the farm had been in so-and-so's hands'. 427 425

Litigation about 'borrowed' land comes up constantly before the court in Bida. This is a typical case: A. suddenly demanded back two farms which his grandfather and father had 'lent' to another man, because A. was going to be married and needed the land for himself. He based his claim on the fact that only *aro* had been intended, although the rent had been allowed to lapse. Evidence of the original transaction was difficult to obtain, so the court suggested the following compromise: the transfer of the farm of A.'s grandfather was confirmed, but the farm which A.'s father had 'lent' to the other man the latter was ordered to return—a decision which is again based on the length of occupation. The lack of precision in the concept of land-borrowing in Bida and Cis-Kaduna is illustrated still better by the following case, not itself a court case, but, as it were, a typical potential cause for such land-disputes. A certain rich Mallam had 'borrowed' land from the *Cece*, a *bara* of L., a nobleman of high rank. He had paid 8*d.* down, and every year one bundle of sorghum as rent, for five years. The *Cece* died in the meantime, and the present owner maintained in discussion with me that the land was his and could be inherited by his sons after his death. When I discussed the case later with the *Alkali* he confirmed my suspicion that this was not so; the land could in theory be recalled any day after the five years by the heirs of the *Cece*. But the *Alkali* admitted that this may not be the case for ten or even twenty years; by then the rent would have been allowed to lapse and the details of the original transaction would be difficult to establish. [691] 427

In the course of the Fulani conquest certain farms which were at the time without a definite 'owner', the original owner having emigrated before the lease had lapsed, and the lessees having ceased work on the borrowed farms, were simply appropriated by the Fulani landlords within whose territory this 'ownerless' land was lying. 427 425

Trees are included in this short-term lease or 'borrowing'. But the strength of this regulation, in harmony though it is with the general principles of Nupe land-rights, has been weakened under present-day conditions. Economic stress has made fruit-bearing trees a very valuable resource, and farmers have in a few cases ignored the traditional practice, given away trees with the land, and even 'lent' trees independently of the land they stand upon. This sort of temporary transfer of trees is a simple means of obtaining money quickly (for example, for the payment 427

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427 of tax): the owner of oil-palms or locust-bean trees would sell a year's yield of his trees to another person, who in return would pay the tax for him. The issue is still more confused where the transfer of the land with which the trees go appears to be in the nature of a lease for an indefinite period. In this case the original owner or his heirs could claim that the trees, at least, were essentially inalienable, and could be transferred only temporarily, that is, could only have been 'lent' and 'borrowed'. This is itself a compromise, and the attitude of the court in these disputes constitutes a further compromise. In 1934 a farmer had ceded a farm-plot with locust-bean trees on it to another party. After the death of the original owner his heirs reclaimed the trees (though not the land) on the plea that the transfer of the trees could in the nature of things have been meant only as a temporary transfer. The decision of the court was that the new owner should share the crop, fifty-fifty, with the former owners.

Long-term Lease and Purchase

[184] 425 We come now to forms of land-ownership which are typical of Bida and the conquered areas east of the Kaduna and which are almost completely absent in the Trans-Kaduna districts.[1] Among the people of Bida town who derive their livelihood from the land, a few descendants of the original Beni population still own land under tribal conditions, that is, under the conditions described under the heading of village land. Their farms are scattered over the land around Bida—the village land that used to belong to the old, pre-Fulani Bida. But most of this land had been expropriated early in the conquest, under one or other pretext, and the former owners and their descendants had left Bida and moved into the country to other villages or *tunga* settlements, where they found vacant land. Thus of the descendants of the Beni 'town-kings' of Bida only Ndakotsu, the eldest of a number of brothers, had remained in Bida and continued to work the small plots that he had been able to keep; the other brothers had left the town and settled in the country.

Long absence, or the dying out of a family branch, too, gain a totally different aspect here in Bida, as compared with conditions in the village. For the vacated plot is as a rule at once appropriated by one of the big landlords whose lands may surround it, or possibly by one of the three royal houses on whose territory the plot may lie. The latter procedure was, as we shall see, the practice in pre-British times and in the early days of British rule. A somewhat similar case happened during my stay in Bida: a Bida man had returned to the town after a long absence and, claiming his old land, found that it had gone to another man. According to Nupe customary law he had forfeited his right to the land, having been away for such a long period. However, the customary law is not adapted to cope with conditions as they obtain in the town and in 'conquered territory': for here no spare land exists that could be offered to

[1] The exceptions are a few *tunga* settlements which some Bida noblemen have founded outside the 'conquered territory', for example on the Wuya-Kutigi road. There are no *tunga* of this kind west of Kutigi.

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the claimant in compensation for the land he had lost. Besides, the man's old land had changed hands several times in the meantime, and could not simply be taken away from the present owners who had spent work and money on it. The man was unwilling to move to a village, where he could find land, and unwilling, too, to take land in Bida for which he would have had to pay a small rent. He felt that he had been wronged, and being of a rather violent temper and a slightly unhinged mind he attacked the judge and threatened the *Etsu*, and his search for a new place where to live ended under lock and key. 425

The village ways of obtaining and securing land, rendered impossible by the social conditions obtaining in the capital and in what we have called the 'conquered territories', are replaced by a large variety of other, much more complicated—and costly—methods of land transfer. All land is in fixed hands; land cannot simply be claimed on the grounds of citizenship from the *Etsu* Nupe. Nor is land around Bida, especially the valuable marsh-land, often given away in short-term lease. But land can be acquired by the method of lease for life or of tenantship for an indefinite period. In Bida a large number of dependants of the royal household, fief-holders, former warriors, slaves, or Mallams who were attached to a noble house, possess land granted to them by the king or a powerful feudal lord. These landlords, usually not farmers themselves, are frequently prepared to let their land (or sometimes to sublet it if they themselves have obtained it by a similar arrangement) to men who are in need of land for their farms. If the landlord is of high rank the transaction is never carried out by him personally but always by an agent, who expects a small gratuity from the tenant for his services. The rent itself consists in a comparatively high initial payment in money —£1 to £2—and, again, the fixed annual rent in kind. M., a wealthy Bida man, for example, acquired two years ago a farm for his newly married son from a former slave of *Etsu* Mohamadu. He paid £1 in money, and undertook to pay an annual rent of one bundle of millet. The money was pocketed by the former slave himself, but the rent in kind went to the family of *Etsu* Mohamadu—a sign that the former owner was himself only a tenant (though a tenant of a different category). This transaction is definitely spoken of as sale and purchase of land. The lease itself is, in fact, 'sold' and 'bought'; for the original tenant has ceded all his rights, for a single payment, to the new tenant who takes over the lease from the (real) landlord. The concept of sale and purchase is emphasized further by the practice of the court rarely to bring up the matter of the annual *dzankâ* in kind (although it is almost invariably implied in the transaction). The initial, single payment, and the nature of the right to the land which this payment entails, are the only points with which the court is concerned. The importance of the annual rent in kind, however, apart from the 'purchase' price, reveals itself in the practice of recalling the contract if the tenant leaves the land unworked (that is, is unable to pay the annual tithe). Also, if the tenant has for some other reason discontinued the tithe, the lease may be recalled (though here, as we shall see presently, modern court practice would not sustain the claims of the landlord). 425 427

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427 The lease is only for a lifetime—at least in theory—and has to be renewed by another payment in money if the heirs of the tenant intend to keep the land. If tenants and landlord are on good terms, or are social equals, or if the landlord is under some obligation to his tenant, the renewal is a mere formality and may be granted for a small gratuity. Thus tenants often feel justified in regarding their right to the land as implying absolute ownership, ownership *har dbada*, 'for ever'. But the [691] large number of disputes of this kind which come before the court prove that the arrangement is open to misinterpretation as well as misuse. Landlords who for any reason are dissatisfied with their tenants, or have found a higher bidder, may unexpectedly call in the lease, either at the death of a tenant or during his tenancy, or demand on the threat of eviction another, higher, payment from the tenant or his heirs. Here are two examples: A., a rich landlord, had 'sold' the same farm twice, first for 10*s*., and afterwards for 16*s*. E. transferred a farm-plot that had fallen vacant after the death of the tenant twice in two years, pocketing £3 altogether.

427 Like the practice itself the attitude of the court towards these cases of 'purchase' or indefinite lease is ambiguous and uncertain. Only in one 425 respect the issue is certain: all evictions from planted land, between the times of sowing and reaping, is declared illegal on whatever grounds the eviction may be based. Every man is entitled to the fruits of his immediate work. As regards the wider issue the tendency of the court seems to be this: if the transfer of the lease has taken place fairly long ago, the fact of the long occupation (and actual working) of the disputed land is taken to entail permanent ownership; further payments of *dzankd* rent are discouraged, and thus the purchase of the land is recognized as an accomplished fact. (As already said, in cases of this kind an original short-term lease—'borrowing'—is often confused with transfer for an indefinite period or for lifetime.) In other cases, where the transfer took place more recently, the court suggested the alternative solution of a return either of the money or the land.[1] In one or two cases of this kind the *Etsu* even made it clear that he wished to discourage sale of land for money altogether. In summing up a land case that came before the court in 1934, he said that 'it was right to divide up land for the benefit of people who had insufficient land; but this should not be done for money'—a pronouncement which, though morally admirable, does not quite do justice to actual facts. For how, one might ask, can land be 'divided up' for the needy in an area where such strong pressure on land, and such multitude of vested rights in land, obtains, if no allowance is made for some sort of compensation? In the Nupe economic system, firmly based as it is on money, a monetary compensation, sale and purchase, seems the only solution, unless the Administration is prepared to repudiate the whole system of land ownership as it exists in the 'conquered territory' as well.[2]

[1] This decision, however, made no allowance for the diminished value of the land, in the sense that the man to whom it was returned might have to leave it lying fallow for a considerable period before being able to cultivate it again.

[2] In one dispute of similar nature, which came before the court in 1935, the

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It will have been seen already that the land disputes which we have just described reflect more than merely disputable, equivocal land-contracts. The landlords who 'sell' the land are without exception men of the titled classes, courtiers, favourites, or former slaves of the king or of powerful noblemen, and the 'buyers' mostly commoners, peasants who have had no other chance of obtaining additional land. To-day they are coming to realize that their right to the land which they acquire is protected by the Native Court. But till very recently, in order to obtain their rights, they would have had to bribe their way through or to find a protector equal in rank and influence to the landlord who threatened to evict them—a typical source of the institution of clientship, which we discussed in a previous chapter.[1] A final example. A certain farmer had 'bought' land from D., a *bara* of the late *Etsu* Saidu. The *Etsu*, for reasons of his own, refused his confirmation of the deal—D., being a tenant of the *Etsu*, could not transfer the lease without the latter's permission—and the tenant had only one way open: he attached himself to another, more influential, *bara* of the *Etsu* and through him made various gifts to the *Etsu*, over £3 in money, a valuable civet cat, and promised besides an annual rent of two bundles of corn.

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Hereditary Land: Secondary Tenantship

Clientship, combined with a métayer arrangement, becomes a factor in land-tenure also in another respect. A commoner who desired more land, or a new piece of land, could give himself into the service or 'patronage' of a landowning overlord and thus secure land as well as political protection. The conditions were: an initial gift in kind as in all pacts of clientship, occasional presents, visits and other expressions of homage, and finally a tithe (*dzankd* again) from his millet or sorghum crop. This submission to patronage was often the only means by which the peasants in Cis-Kaduna could hope to retain their property when threatened with expropriation, and also the only means by which they could secure new land, that is, access to what under tribal conditions would have been a reserve of village land. The necessity of obtaining land and enjoying its secure possession thus constitutes another of the main roots of clientship. The lease of land obtained by these methods is hereditary, and remains in the family, a comparatively safe possession—unless political factors interfere. The tenants are rarely allowed to forget that the relationship between landlord and client implies more than merely a correct commercial relationship. Lack of respect, an apparent failure to render due homage, or behaviour suggestive of changed

427 566

Etsu himself suggested that the disputed piece of land (a river grove that was claimed by two neighbouring villages) should be bought for money by one of the parties. The purchase price fixed was 15*s*.

[1] Till very recently no peasant tenant would have dared to invoke the *Etsu*'s or *Alkali*'s help against his landlord; he would have been looked upon as somebody who had broken away from a firmly established tradition of loyalty, one-sided though it was. The tenant in the last example quoted above kept silent for fifteen years; not till 1934 did he venture to bring his case before the court and thus to obtain a final confirmation of his ownership.

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566 allegiance, suffice to make the landlord refuse a renewal of the tenancy or even to cancel a running tenancy. Several cases of this kind have come
427 to my knowledge; one even found its way to court: L., a nobleman of high rank, evicted his tenant (and this in the middle of the planting season!) because he had lacked in loyalty towards him and 'betrayed his confidence'.

427 Political changes have brought about an interesting development. To-day the initiative in this kind of tenantship has to some extent
566 passed from the tenants to the landlords themselves. The landlords were, as we have seen, mostly warriors and courtiers who, living in the
621 capital, never worked their land themselves, but settled their slaves on
567 it, and had it worked by their labour. When slavery was abolished and wars came to an end, when the 'absentee' landlords no longer needed *bara* as soldiers for their private armies and could no longer support a large household of henchmen and hangers-on in the town, they offered their land to their *bara*, and so new settlers went out into the country, occupying the land and founding new farm settlements. Sometimes the noble landowners even settled some of their relations in this fashion on the land, nephews and younger brothers, for whom no place or job could be found in town.

427 All these farm settlements, whether they were for slaves or *bara*, for peasants turned client or clients turned peasant, are called *tunga*—the
566 same name that is applied to the Nupe village 'colonies'. But the 'private'
621 *tunga* has no name of the kind villages possess, but bears the name of the noble patron to whom it 'belongs'. These *tunga* settlements are scattered all over Cis-Kaduna, and surround Bida in a dense belt. There are innumerable hamlets called Sokyara, Maiyaki, Ndeji, or similar titles of nobility—the titles of the landlords under whose patronage the settlements were founded. To our description of the village *tunga* given in a previous chapter we will add here a few examples of the 'private' *tunga*.

Etsu-Kolo (about four miles south of Bida), consisting of two compounds, two families which are distantly related. Called after the founder of the *tunga*, the father of the present family head. This Etsu-Kolo had been, like his father before him, a *bara* of the *Cekpa* in Bida. Later, however, Etsu-Kolo transferred his allegiance to the then ruling Emir, *Etsu* Mohamadu. The change of allegiance proved good policy: *Etsu* Mohamadu procured for him the position of a Village Head for the whole district with its many *tunga* settlements. Since then the family had remained faithful to *Etsu* Mohamadu's house, even after the Village Headship had been abolished again; they are still paying their regular *dzanká* to his successors, at present to the *Shaba* in Bida.

Emi Bwori ('House of Bwori', one mile north of Bida), called after a certain Bwori, the head of the guild of Bida butchers, and a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. This Bwori settled his own slaves in this *tunga*. The present owners of it regard themselves as *bara* of the descendants of Bwori, but have abandoned paying *dzanká* to them; but they still go to 'salute' them whenever they come up to town.

Lumanen (four miles west of Bida), a group of very prosperous *tunga* settlements, founded at different times by relations and noblemen attached to the royal house of *Etsu* Masaba. One settlement has been built by the

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father of the present *Maiyaki* for his *bara*, and is accordingly called *Maiyaki*. A second settlement is called *Emi 'tsu Saba*, and was founded in the time of the father of the present family head, who was a slave in *Etsu* Masaba's house. A third settlement was built recently, by the present family head, who was a *bara* of the present *Etsu* Saidu (also of the Masaba dynasty). All three settlements still pay their regular *dzanká* to their patrons. This year's *dzanká* amounted to one bundle of corn and ten yams.[1] 427 566 621

Makū (one mile south of Bida), consisting of three compounds, called after the noble patron of a certain Ndatazi, a peasant who had had a farm somewhere else first and then moved to the present site, obtaining the land with the help of the *Makū*. He lives in one of the compounds; of the other two one belongs to his brother, and one to a distant relative by marriage, who left his old farm and came here, where the land is better, also becoming a *bara* of the *Makū*. Each of the three houses pays an annual *dzanká* to the present *Makū*. It amounted this year to three bundles of corn and ten yams per compound.

Saci (three miles east of Bida), called after the *Saci* of Bida (a nobility rank). It consists of five compounds; in one a son of the *Saci* is living—the other members of his family are living in Bida—in the other compounds *bara* of the *Saci*. They have discontinued paying their *dzanká*, but still pay regular visits to their patron in town.

One word about the economic arrangement obtaining in the *tunga*. The slaves had worked the land entirely for their masters; that is to say, they had no *efakó* (family) land of their own, but were fed and clothed by their masters, and were also allotted smaller, *bucá* plots, which they were free to work for themselves. The arrangement between the landlord and the *bara* whom he settles on his land is the same métayer system which also regulates the tenantship of the free peasant who accepts clientship in order to obtain land. To-day, the difference between former slaves and *bara* has disappeared; for to most of the freed slaves their change of status meant only a promotion from slave to (free) client. Both, in a good many cases, still acknowledge this form of dependence and, as we saw, still return the annual tithe from their crops to the patron, or at least still pay their respects dutifully. The *dzanká* is no longer a compulsory tribute, and would not be upheld by the court. It is a voluntary gift which confirms the relationship of patronage and protection—a relationship which is as real to-day as it was in former times: political protection for oneself and one's children is bought cheaply with a bundle or two of corn a year. 566 567

Hereditary Land: Primary Tenantship

The acquisition of land through clientship follows the general pattern of the Nupe feudal hierarchy. A man who obtains land as a *bara* obtains it from a man of higher rank, either a royal prince or nobleman who holds the land in his own right, or from a rank-holder or titled slave or a king's *bara* who has himself obtained the land from another landlord higher up on the hierarchical scale. These 'primary tenants', however, have acquired their land by a different method, namely, through certain 566

[1] This census was taken in 1934, when *Etsu* Saidu was still alive.

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other 423
respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'cor- 643
porate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town 423
walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esozi*, 643
where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the
land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esozi* is placed 241
under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of 567
the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esozi* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esozi* 423
has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from 241
the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with
the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* 643
Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the
communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch 427
with his *esozi*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esozi*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esozi* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil. [485]

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family
241 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
643 land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the
modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family
427 estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzanká* arrangement.
But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become
his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the
old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu*
[242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family
estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and
466] demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work
carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own
fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the
produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is
used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which
clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-
building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore
smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All
these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like
the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the
ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they
313 need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of
438 the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*);
other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-
making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are
found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen
who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the pro-
curing of the raw material thus gains independent commercial signifi-
cance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men
who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of com-
parative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to
collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a
little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a
313 slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of
land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker
[927] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became
[357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and
286 there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven
[804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except
443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

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The family has been regarded by many anthropologists as a typical *bilateral* unit—a group in which the transmission of rights and duties follows both the paternal and maternal line. We know now that such family structures are extremely rare, and that in most societies succession in paternal and maternal line supplement each other and are assigned different spheres of validity, certain rights and duties being transmitted in the paternal and others in the maternal line. For the Nupe family we

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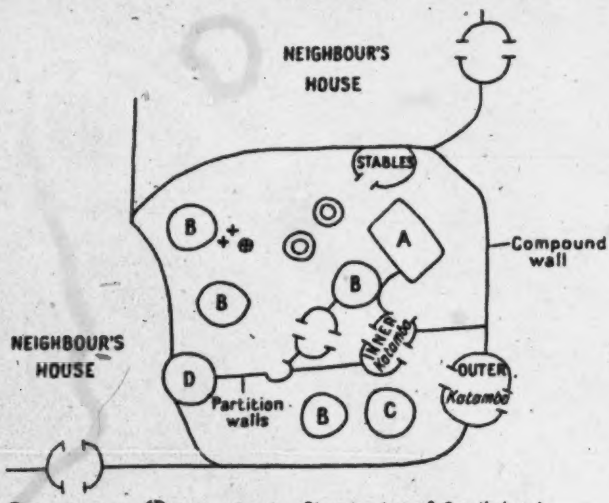
HOUSE OF A BIDA NOBLEMAN OF LOW RANK



[592
342]

○ Sleeping huts ⟲ Katamba. A... Sleeping hut of family head.
B... Sleeping huts of his wives. C... Sleeping hut of unmarried son.
D... Sleeping hut of unmarried daughter. ● Well. ◎ Granaries.

can say that rights and duties which are transmitted through the father greatly outweigh in scope and importance those transmitted through the mother. Kinship membership itself and the access to the political and religious rights vested in it are determined by paternal descent. As women in Nupe neither own nor work land, this most important property is also inherited through the father. The rights to certain forms of financial support (e.g. for the payment of bride-price or support in old age) are equally derived from descent in the father's line. As Radcliffe-Brown has shown, the genealogical division into paternal and maternal succession depends also on the nature of the rights and duties that are transmitted from individual to individual, some being transmitted more satisfactorily through men (i.e. the father) and others through women (i.e. the mother).[1] Thus the personal property of the Nupe women is inherited by their daughters—as the personal property

[1] R. A. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935.

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611 of the men is inherited by their sons. As in the Nupe economic system
428 the women frequently enjoy a financially more advantageous position than the men we find also that, in the event of economic stress, a mother may take over some of the financial duties normally discharged by the father.

611 Generally speaking, matrilineal descent in Nupe, including here both descent from the mother as an individual and from her family, has essentially the significance of an ultimate safeguard in case the patrilineal arrangement proves insufficient. In Bida society, with its great inequality of wealth and status, rich or powerful maternal relations may be as valuable as paternal relations; political connexions, especially, through the mother's family will often be utilized profitably. We realize that these 'matrilineal' rights do not follow rigid rules of descent and succession; rather they represent a 'second line of defence' on which individuals can fall back in case the 'first line of defence'—claims derived through the father—has failed. If we speak of the Nupe extended family as 'patrilineal' it will be understood that we refer only to the preponderance and the more rigid formulation of rights and duties transmitted in the father's line. The kinship organization as such, in which the alternative methods of reckoning descent stand in that relation of 'first' and 'second line of defence', can be most aptly described by a term which was suggested by R. W. Firth as 'ambilateral'.

601 The rule of succession to the rights and duties derived in the paternal line, which, as we have seen, imply a succession running through one whole generation before descending to the next, is expressed very clearly in the Nupe kinship terminology, about which I will only say a few words. It is of the classificatory type and corresponds to the generation pattern: it subsumes all members of the kinship group who are of the same generation under a common term. Thus members of the same generation are all 'brothers' to each other, 'sons' to the generation above them, 'fathers' to the generation below, 'grandsons' to the second generation above, and so forth. Within the generation seniority is specially defined: elder brothers are distinguished from younger brothers, and also the father's elder brothers from the father's younger brothers. The former, who represent the potential family heads senior to one's own (real) father, are called 'father', the latter, who may be placed as junior relations under one's father, 'little father'.

602 Let me summarize the main kinship concepts with which we shall be concerned in the course of this book. We shall largely disregard the fluid and vaguely defined large kinship unit formed by all individuals who are regarded as being *dengi*. When speaking of kinship group, or large family group, we shall always mean the 'house-group'. To the smallest unit, finally, we shall refer either as the family section, or as the household or labour unit, according to the aspect under which we are considering it. I must add, however, that the Nupe also recognize a much wider unit derived—in a very vague sense—from kinship factors. Thus a whole village is sometimes spoken of as representing one *dengi*, and as having 'one ancestor'. This interpretation does not refer to concrete common descent from an original family, but rather reinterprets

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slaves a not inconsiderable measure of economic and social independence. An adult male slave would work for his master in the same way as sons and junior relations work for the head of the household. If he was put to farm-work, he would be given a small plot of his own to cultivate in his spare time. Or if he helped his master in a craft or in trade he would be able to count on a regular commission. Other slaves, who made good soldiers, were put into their master's private army, in which they would serve as foot-soldiers, armed and equipped at their master's expense. In the wars they would have their share of the booty. Slaves could thus acquire property, and the more fortunate owned horses, sheep, cattle, money—even slaves of their own. But when they died their property fell not to their wives and children but to their master.[1] Female slaves became personal servants of their mistresses or possibly concubines of their master. Unlike the male slaves they had no income of their own; what they might earn—by handicrafts or trade—would be their master's property.

Frequently the master would have to find wives for his male slaves; he would buy either a slave girl from the market, or possibly a girl belonging to another master—a slave girl to whom his own slave may have lost his heart. In the latter case a very reduced price would be paid, but the children would belong to the owner of the girl. But a slave might make money enough during his service to pay the bride-price for a free woman —mostly a widow, for whom a low bride-price is paid. In such marriages the free wife would in no way share the conditions of slavery, she would have her own house and work (a farm or trade) and might in due course be able to ransom her husband. Or a slave who had done well might be able to buy his own and his children's liberty. In this case he had to pay the full purchase price, except in the case of very old slaves who were no longer good for work—they would be released for half the amount. But if the offer to ransom a slave came from the slave's (free) relations, the owner would ask an exorbitant price, up to £20 or £30. Very rarely would a master let a slave free without the payment of the ransom, for example, as reward for faithful service. In all these cases the slave would bring two men as witnesses of the act of manumission.

A slave girl often became the wife of a free man—her own master or another man who bought her from her master, the purchase price replacing in this case the usual bride-price. This was not, however, real marriage; the slave girls became only concubines, not wives, and no religious or legal ceremony accompanied the marriage. Once they had borne their 'husband' a child, both mother and child became automatically free (though the status of a concubine remained unchanged). The families of the Fulani nobility count an innumerable offspring from this type of concubinage.

Children born of a free father and a slave mother were thus free

[1] To-day, more than thirty years after the abolition of slavery, this rule still holds in a modified form, with respect to ex-slaves who die without issue. In a court case heard before the Chief *Alhali* in Bida in 1936 the considerable property (cattle) of an ex-slave who had died without heirs was thus awarded to the son of his ex-master.

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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts,
441 although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women
441 as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6
868 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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755 757 813 and interests of a profane kind. The 'sense of the extraordinary' if it is not vouchsafed by verbal expressions, is clearly the most difficult to identify. But it is at least likely to go together with uncommon procedures and with rigid rules, barring even minute departures from a given course of action, that is, with ritualization. In sum I would list these criteria of professedly mystical as against professedly rational intent: the degree of ritualization implied in the preparation or application of medicines; their secrecy or otherwise; their commercial or non-commercial, public or private character; the diverse ways in which the knowledge of *cigbe* is transmitted; and the different kinds of faith placed in it.

If previously we described 'ritual' behaviour as behaviour exhibiting a degree of rigidity not accounted for by its professed aim, we may now say, of the 'ritualized' procedure of *cigbe*, that its rigidity is not accounted for by the rational intent. For the Nupe, the latter lies in the application of material substances which as such possess a given efficacy. But often we find additional and incongruous rules such as these: certain medicines may only be prepared in certain months of the year; in certain treatments a particular procedure must be repeated three times; in the operation of setting a broken limb four splints (no more and no less) must be used. Here, then, the Nupe no longer rely on the empirical or pseudo-empirical knowledge of 'ingredients'; rather, they abandon their own 'scientific' principles, diluting them with rules of a different order—with ritual, and hence with 'mystic' observances.

Again, certain medicines, their preparation and disposal, are cloaked in rigorous secrecy, while others are not secret or no more secret than the skills or tricks of a particular trade. The latter kind is usually freely bought and sold, while the secret medicines can be given away only with special formalities or not at all, being accessible only to the relatives or perhaps friends of the 'owner'; so that some medicines are available to the public, like any commercial commodity, and others are unalterably 'private'. As we know, the knowledge of *cigbe* is mostly transmitted through [428] ordinary teaching, and is such as any clever, observant, or widely-travelled person can acquire; but occasionally it is hereditary, the ultimate provenance of the knowledge remaining unexplained. Finally, while no one would assume that ordinary remedies, administered without ceremonial, are infallible, precisely this faith is put in the other, 'miraculous', medicines, even if they involve no explicit appeals to the deity.

These features, however, occur with varying degrees of definiteness; and, though they all hang together logically, they do not always appear together in practice. But considered singly, they

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794 Islam. In all these cases the result has been an odd compromise.
582 In Bida, the Moslem type of marriage is now more frequent than the traditional type; while among the Mohammedans outside the former is absent and the latter still fully in force. The observance of the levirate is somewhat puzzling. Islam permits the marriage with a brother's widow whether the brother is senior or junior to the deceased; in pagan Nupe, marriage with an elder brother's widow is forbidden, but marriage with a younger brother's widow greatly encouraged. Now, in the villages these rules still obtain; in Bida, however, the first kind of marriage is practised, though not very frequently, while the second never occurs. It seems, then, that in the type of marriage which Islam permits but the indigenous custom disallows, the hold of the latter is still sufficiently strong to prevent any widespread adoption of the novel practice; while the type of marriage both permitted by Islam and strongly pressed by local custom has been abandoned by the more 'orthodox' Moslems. This instance contradicts our previous argument as to the fortuitous fit and hence ready acceptance of certain Moslem customs. Rather, we must admit that such a given fit may, paradoxically, entail the rejection of the custom in question. Has it been rejected so as to prevent any blurring of the division between Moslems and non-Moslems, and thus to emphasize the new, different 'way of life'? It would seem to be so; but since this is the only instance of the kind I can only suggest the possibility. The strong hold of the indigenous practice is finally shown in a type of marriage as definitely forbidden by Islam as it is encouraged by Nupe custom, namely, the nominal marriage of a boy with his paternal grandfather's widow. This *yawó suna* ('marriage in name') is practised both in Mohammedan Bida and in the pagan districts. It is clearly bound up with the idea of reincarnation and with the corresponding practice of naming a grandson after his father's father: identical in name and 'soul', the grandson also assumes the nominal status of his *alter ego*. And as the traditional belief remained unassailed by Moslem doctrine, so the practice rooted in it withstood the impact of the new usages.

794 The most serious divergence between indigenous custom and
● 428 Moslem ideas occurs in inheritance. The Moslem law of inheritance implies, briefly, the division of a man's property among all his offspring (both male and female) as well as his wives, their respective shares varying in amount.[1] Nupe custom, on the other hand,

[1] The inheritance of women's property can be disregarded. Women in Nupe own only personal belongings and money, and can dispose of them more or less as they like—to sons, daughters, or their husband. Though the Nupe practice is more fluid than the Mohammedan usage, the two do not clash; nor has the former changed under Moslem influence.

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makes a younger brother or, in the absence of surviving brothers, the eldest brother's son the main heir, excluding wives and daughters. It must be borne in mind that the main property in rural Nupe is land, worked co-operatively by a 'house', that is, by the male members of the extended family—a man, his younger brothers, and his and their sons.[1] The traditional rules of inheritance thus prevent the fragmentation of land and keep intact the large labour team bound to it; for the land descends together with the headship of the family group, and thus with the command over the 'house' and labour team.[2] The acceptance of the Islamic rules of inheritance would change all this: the land would be progressively fragmented, the labour team broken up, and the headship of large families would disappear. But the Nupe have not turned to the new system in summary fashion; they still exclude wives and daughters from inheritance and largely kept intact the succession to the titular headship of the 'house'. But that most critical innovation, the division of landed property among sons, has steadily been gaining ground. It is important to note, however, that this is not simply a result of the pressure of Islam. I have shown elsewhere how the political and economic changes which began with the Fulani conquest and continue to the present day encouraged individual as against family enterprise and deprived the productive organization of the large family group of its former economic advantages.[3] My point now is that the 'individualistic' type of inheritance exemplified in Islam was also the type the new situation demanded, so that the changed outlook which happened to coincide with the impact of Islam provided additional motives for its acceptance, or for the acceptance of the way of life it represents.

In a wider sense the mere presence of the new religion in such circumstances answered the 'demand of the situation'. The political and economic events which were disrupting family co-operation also assailed the whole authority of family heads and their hold over the younger generation. In consequence the latter, sons or younger brothers of men still pagan, were turning away from the traditional cults (and are doing so even today), not for any particular benefits they were expecting of Islam, but because there was logic in the mere 'turning-away'; for this meant abandoning religious practices which, more or less openly, stood for the *status quo*, for parental authority and an outmoded family structure. The great appeal of the *navũ*, which concedes greater freedom to

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, chap. III.

[2] This situation is somewhat modified among the craftsmen in the town (see op. cit., chap. XIV). The conclusions drawn further on, however, apply to the labour teams of craftsmen as much as of peasants.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 124, 374–6.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the " new " law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, " big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a " chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother: custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 168
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child 348 428
inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites. 622 623 661

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free himself from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission. 622 661

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe', from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally. 623 651 [431] [476]

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes. Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a 622 651 431

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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622 651 [43]

voluntary present. It is, I was told, only the 'old men who are still doing it'. The value of the right to communal farm-work has also lost its former importance. A number of salaried Village Heads have abandoned almost completely their former agricultural work, being too busy with their official duties. One village chief, who is District Head at the same time (in Kacha), has found it impossible to spare even his sons and brothers for farm-work, needing them as messengers and the like. Instead, he has adopted the most recent innovation in Nupe economics, and engages wage-labour to work his land. The chiefs of small villages, however, who draw no wages, and have been given no official position under the N.A., have lost the most important of the old economic prerogatives—unless their people voluntarily continue the old practice—without benefiting from the new. Only the right to special fruit-bearing trees, game, and fishing has survived everywhere without change. It is not surprising, therefore, that the old term *Žitsu* is more and more losing its splendour, overshadowed by the matter-of-fact term *Etsu Nyenkpa*, Money or Tax Chief. And often the small chiefs, who have been passed over in the political reorganization of the Emirate,[1] tell you that to-day there is little difference between chief and commoners.

622 How far did the former economic prerogatives in reality establish a definite, unassailable economic superiority of the chief? The approach to this question must be through the comparison between traditional income and expenditure of chief and elders respectively. Here we see that some of the economic prerogatives of the chief are shared (though in lesser degree) by the other family heads and titled elders. The *nūsaši*, like the chief, have a right to the possession of fruit-bearing trees; they too can avail themselves of communal farm-work—though only after the chief. And if they have a large family, many sons and younger brothers helping in the farm-work, their normal income may not be very much lower than the chief's. Of the economic prerogatives of the chief only the land-tithe (or its modern counterpart, the chief's salary) and the game and fishing rights are exclusive to his official position. The game rights contribute mainly to the symbols of chieftain status—the possession of a leopard or lion skin, allowed only to the chief. The additional capital resources vested in chieftainship—additional in the sense that they are unavailable to ordinary family heads—were thus derived in the main from the tithe.[2] I have calculated that the annual land-tithe of a village the size of Doko would amount to about seventy bundles of corn—twice the annual yield upon which an average peasant household could reckon.[3] Now, on this evidence we are justified in saying that the

[1] See p. 52.

[2] Certain other irregular forms of income it is impossible to estimate to-day: occasional land fees from new tenants, fines or gifts from parties between whom the chief was arbitrating. Moreover, certain chiefs received a small share of the tax money they levied for the *Etsu* Nupe (see p. 116); but this last income, derived from the kingdom, no longer reflects the village system as such.

[3] There is a certain margin of error in this calculation. The constant extension and subdivision of Nupe family groups and households make it impossible to define with any precision the size of the households originally responsible for the payment of the tithe. I have taken an average of the larger groups, such as are

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by cowering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner. 565 576 516

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver. 565 576 431

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally, [643]

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565 576 431 small kola-nuts, in fives or tens, were handed out to messengers, dancers, guild-heads, and other people of lower rank.

Even language and music are used as symbols of class. There exist in 565 Nupe special drum-rhythms, *take*, greeting formulae, *kirari* (Hausa, lit. 576 'calls'), and songs which are linked with certain noble families and important ranks. As soon as a family comes to power or a man receives 533 rank and title, the drummers of Bida will compose such *take* and *kirari* in their honour. You can, in fact, have them made to order, at various prices; but an influential person will not need to order them, for the drummers, counting on his patronage, will supply him at once with this musical salute. Some of the *take* and *kirari* which one can hear to-day date back to pre-Fulani times; others were composed recently. Whenever a member of these noble families attends a festivity, the drummers would announce his arrival by playing 'his' *take* and singing 'his' *kirari*, and the 'master of ceremonies', who is always present at such gatherings, would recite a long list of illustrious ancestors to whom the nobleman can lay claim, the ranks which he had held, and the deeds which he achieved. Lastly, the Nupe address each other by titles only, and never by name, if the person addressed bears a title. Special formulae of greeting are linked with every rank, and thus mark position on the social scale by the most obvious system of signs—everyday speech.

565 Class symbols and class etiquette shade over into the more substantial 576 differences of class. Behaviour which is pressed into the service of class manifestation becomes indistinguishable from behaviour which results from differences in social and economic advantage. The right to carry a sword or appear everywhere on horseback presupposes the economic ability to acquire these 'emblems of rank'. Submissive behaviour of a client towards his patron, or a member of the lower class towards a man of rank, is determined as much by the convention of class etiquette as by the special interest of gaining favour in the eyes of a person of 565 consequence. Here we are dealing with the other aspect of class differentiation, those 'cultural' differences which are, or become, typical of different classes. They revolve round the two pivots: political and economic structure.[1] They involve the existence of political prerogatives and the varying measures of individual liberty and mastery over one's own destiny, enjoyed by the different classes. Here we can outline the existing classes of Nupe society. We have met their protagonists already: the ruling class of the kingdom, rich absentee landlords, men whose occupation was war and slave-raiding, and, low down on the social scale, commoners and peasants, heaviiy taxed, and gaining a scanty livelihood rendered insecure by the very facts that add power and prestige to the ruling class. We have also met the craftsmen in the town, who share some of the privileges of the nobility, and the Mohammedan intelligentsia who can attach themselves to the highest stratum irrespective of

[1] The two structures do not define identical strata, nor is the economic differentiation invariably reducible to political prerogatives. However, we will leave the examination of the exact relation between the two 'pivots' of social stratification for a later chapter.

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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed 423 to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is 621 to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that 423 a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a 621 junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect 423 to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of 622 his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift [431] to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid 423 to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the 622 chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three 651 bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nŭsu* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may
621 return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on
request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as
425 we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have
621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to
[431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the
[431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who
609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now
621 the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted
425 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first
651 *dzankú*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who
[177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which
467 had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny.
431 The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and
467 most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*,
173 who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

323 The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass
438 and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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294 They make as much as 1*s.* or 2*s.* on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4*s.* Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d.* to 4*d.* a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-
[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

435 You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-
294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his
593 mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never
[431] more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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CHAPTER XVIII

WEALTH

THE examination of the problem of labour may be fittingly concluded with a discussion of the role played by wealth, free capital, in Nupe economy. It is in keeping with Nupe production in general, with its emphasis on individual property and money profits, that the concept of wealth should be clearly pronounced. The principle of accumulation of wealth as free capital pervades Nupe economics and, in particular, serves to define the economic (and, indirectly, social) stratification of the society. 556

MONEY CAPITAL

The appreciation of wealth figures prominently in the educational conceptions of the people. Young boys of 8 or 10, when they are given a separate *bucá* plot to farm, are at the same time taught the value of money income and money capital. Mothers will help them to market their small produce for money, or will buy their produce directly from them. And fathers and mothers, as we have seen, equip their children with a first diminutive working capital, a penny or two, to start a profitable trade (see pp. 286–7, 331). These profits enable boys and girls to defray the expenses of the social obligations incumbent upon this tender age, namely, contributions to the costs of the age-grade associations of which they are members. Money expenses, partly involving the accumulation of reserves, accompany Nupe men and women all through their lives: money to meet the costs of kinship rituals—birth, weddings, and funerals—money for the maintenance of labour, the purchase of tools, &c., or for personal wants and the luxuries of life. Money also frequently forms part of the inheritance left by men or women. 556 867

Farm produce or gifts in kind in general cannot fully replace money expenditure. This is shown clearly in the nature of the universal gift in Nupe—kola-nuts. Gifts of kola-nuts are more or less regularly exchanged between friends and relations; a gift of kola-nuts serves as the traditional announcement, and invitation at the same time, extended to kinsfolk at the occasion of forthcoming kinship ceremonies. Gifts of kola-nuts also represent the traditional expression of political allegiance. And, with the insignificant exception of the kola-nut growers, the donor of the gift has to buy the kola-nuts on the market for money. The largest single expenditure of Nupe economy, finally, bride-price, is paid entirely in money (see the discussion of bride-price in Chap. XX). It involves, moreover, accumulation of money reserve, or, if the bride-price is paid in instalments, as it frequently is, careful planning of money expenditure over a considerable period. 431 437

Although none of the larger forms of traditional money expenditure were ever replaceable by gifts or contributions in kind, it is also true that the practice of money expenditure has been increasing with the spreading of cultural influences from the town. It is natural that Bida society,

[p. 309]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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431 with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and
437 adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its
[273] own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

436 How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated? One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying
454 it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

454 Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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On the eighth day or some time during the first week each guest makes a small gift of food to the family head, which is meant to be used in the funeral meal and represents the guests' 'greeting' or 'salute'. That day starts with a beer sacrifice, performed by the family head outside the sleeping hut of the deceased. The congregation consists of his (or her) male relations, the old men forming the usual inner ring while the youths, including the sons of the deceased, sit on the outside, looking forlorn and dejected, and being generally ignored. The family head addresses God (or sometimes the *kuci*), saying:

'We make mourning for so-and-so, who died. God, cause all people to have health. We offer you water (i.e. beer) because of the death. God, grant health to everyone; may no one die from now on.'

The beer is then drunk by the old men, which act concludes the ceremonial. Let me add that during this brief sacrifice, though it conforms so closely to the general formula of rituals, the men wear their ordinary clothes, only the bared head indicating the sacred occasion.

Soon afterwards the general meal begins. And now the house loses all appearance of mourning. It is crowded with visitors, there is constant coming and going, children get in one's way at every step, and everyone is busy preparing food, handing it round, or consuming it. The women laugh and joke while they work, the men no longer endeavour to behave severely, and even the chief mourners have turned into ordinary hosts or guests. If it is the funeral of an old man or woman, drummers and musicians will have been engaged, and soon the younger folk will sing and dance, men and girls apart, each group keeping to its own songs and dances. These are in no way peculiar to the occasion, but correspond in style and expression to any ordinary form of 'merry-making'. Ample supplies of beer keep up the spirits of the gathering until nightfall, when the feast comes to an end, the visitors departing and the hosts retiring to their huts.

The period following the Eight Days' ceremony involves few prohibitions. Widows must continue to wear the simple dress of mourning and must not wash or do their hair; nor must they leave the compound, though they are now free to pursue their daily tasks. As regards the men, the brothers (or the husband) of the deceased should refrain from shaving until the Forty Days' ceremony, though this custom has now fallen into disuse. The men go about freely but will try to be at home at night. Guests will still occasionally visit the house, but now these visits are free from the restraint and show of grief that marked the earlier occasion. Forty days after the death and burial, the family head repeats the beer

757 and neighbours first before consulting the accredited experts. One does not pay in money for this kind of assistance, but only offers a [431] small return gift of kolanuts or food. The household remedies are mainly laxatives, or cures for toothache, headache, and slight wounds or bruises, though they include also certain crude treatments to induce abortion or prevent pregnancy—by sucking frogs or drinking the blood from the afterbirth. Normally, one uses infusions of common plants, ash-water or natron (both known as laxatives), ointments made of palm-oil or sheanut-butter, or damp earth (applied to cuts and the like); the more complex herbal concoctions and the use of bark and roots, which make up the *cigbe* proper, are entirely absent.

Certain individuals, are known to possess this more 'professional' knowledge as well. Like the barbers, they apply therapeutic treatments in a profane and would-be rational manner, and like the *cigbeci*, practise the non-therapeutic variety with more or less conspicuous mystical intent. Their skill extends to remedies alleged to increase virility and facilitate pregnancy, though contraceptives are outside the scope of the individual practitioner. 'Fantastic' treatments, however, are not. We already mentioned one such cure meant to remove rheumatic pains through 'drawing them from the body'. Two further treatments are of special interest, one because it is empirically sound, the other because it is surgical as well as daring and involves a clear apprehension of the symptoms of a relatively obscure disease. The first example con- [278] cerns the use of the severely toxic *datura stramonium*. Many Nupe are aware of the effect of the seeds or powdered leaves which produce stupor and insensitiveness, and the experts prescribe small doses, taken in water, as a cure for pains; with less justification, they also recommend the external application of the leaves, soaked in ash-water and mixed with sheanut butter, for aching limbs. The 757 second example is an alleged cure for sleeping sickness, which must 752 be applied in the early stages of the disease, recognized by the swelling of the neck glands. I only met one expert who knew of this treatment, a man from Mokwa, whose repute had spread far and wide. The surgical treatment involves a deep incision in the skin above the glands, charred leaves of a bean variety being rubbed into the wound; the leaves are said to have a caustic effect so that, when the treatment is repeated twice daily for a week, the glands themselves can be removed. As an after-treatment the patient is given an infusion of bark and roots to drink, and a coarse grass and fish to eat. The expert did not claim that his cure was always effective: it would still depend on 'God's will'; but he showed me a man, bearing the scars of the operation, who, he claimed, had completely recovered.

[i.e., simple medicinal treatments. - Analyst]

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[562] 425 Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still comparatively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.

(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* (" borrowing "); land thus acquired is also inalienable.

(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.

(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).

(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.

(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.

(7) By " primary " tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 471 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:

(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).

(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).

(3) The fringe of " reserve " land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[30]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batadi every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[31] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settlement. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers' [431] 661 tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[32]

[30] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.

[31] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.

[32] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later. 462

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking for the household. In our general description we have reached the point when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuka* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook. 462 252 592 432

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women 462 592 443

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s*. to 15*s*., according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

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235 There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are
438 kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most
[182] important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as house-
hold-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most
[262] desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make
[842] men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

231 About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong
492 to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number
231 of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol
554 of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

231 Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying
471 enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic
433 stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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MEANING AND FUTURE OF GUILD ORGANIZATION

467 In examining the different industries of Nupe we have met with co-operative organizations of widely varying degrees of closeness and intensity. The individual crafts appear in this respect as one extreme, the zero point, as it were, of this scale of intensity of co-operation. What, then, are the conditions determining the degree of closeness in productive organization? Or, more specifically: Why are certain native industries guild-organized, and others left to independent individual enterprise?

We can discover four conditions of the closeness of productive co-operation: (1) The nature of the productive technique and the measure of actual working together which it entails. In this respect the work of glass-makers and iron-ore miners must be placed at the top of the list, and the work of bead-makers or individual craftsmen at the bottom. (2) Special skill and experience involved in the productive technique. The glass makers, with their jealously guarded trade secret, again, top the list; the individual crafts represent the other extreme, of techniques which can be easily acquired by anyone. (3) The regularity of the demand for the goods produced by an industry, and thus, indirectly, its economic success. The work of glass-makers or brass-smiths presents one extreme, the work of bead-makers or weavers the other. (4) The comparative unimportance of originality and inventiveness on the part of the individual craftsman. In this respect brass-smith work shows the most 'individualistic', and blacksmith-work, the most closely integrated, form of production.[1]

The balance which, in the actual case, is achieved between these four factors determines the final structure of the productive organization. The issue is, however, complicated by the fact that different factors bring about similar results. Thus both a high degree of 'individualism' (as among brass-smiths) and a low measure of economic success (as among beadworkers) tend towards a dissolution of the co-operative organization. On the other hand, we find a certain closeness of organization visible in the tendency of craftsmen to work together in the same locality and perhaps in the same workshop, when most factors are pressing towards dissolution. Thus beadworkers of different families and households still tend to share a common workshop and to live together in the same quarter although their technique of production does not necessitate actual working together, nor the economic success o their craft favour co-operation. This qualified co-operation appears to be due to the advantage of keeping in close contact with one another for the purpose of profiting from each other's experience, and of keeping abreast of fashions and new styles.

467 Efficiency in group production appears, then, as the main motive for co-operation on a guild scale. But while the first and third condition 433 refer to efficiency in the narrower, technical, sense of the word, i.e. ease, speed, and economy of production, the second condition reveals a more

[1] With the weavers we find an additional motive for closeness of co-operation in the tribal and cultural unity of these alien, 'Nupe-ized', groups. We can disregard this type of co-operation, which is not limited nor peculiar to labour organization.

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467 specifically social and cultural aspect. Efficiency in this sense means
433 continuity of the craft and of craft knowledge; it means the ability to raise, through the medium of an hereditary, imperceptibly changing labour group, successive generations of craftsmen. If in these respects production is planned for an unchanging future, the agency of the third factor must expose it to the disruptive effects of time and change. For it may appear as if modern economic changes directed their most destructive attacks against this third condition of closeness and co-operation, which is dependence upon regular demand. This influence is especially visible in the gradual disappearance of orders from the main customer of the country, king and court.
467 The Great *Sallah*, once the occasion for numerous orders from the
177 court, which kept the workshops of Bida busy for weeks, is now an occasion for making purchases at the stores that trade in European
433 goods. At the *Sallah* of 1935, the first *Sallah* of the newly installed *Etsu*, the traditional royal gifts of kola-nuts were sent out, not in ornamental brass bowls of native make, but in newly bought enamelled teapots; the king's bodyguard, newly equipped, wore, not Bida gowns and turbans or native-made straw hats, but red blankets and Trilby hats; and many notables who would have appeared formerly on horses with costly trappings and gorgeous saddle-cloths, rode in on new, shining bicycles. Conspicuous though the competition of European goods appears, it is not the only reason for the decline of Nupe craft-guilds. The very organization of guild-organized crafts has contributed to lowering their resistance to outside pressure. The inertia inherent in the rigid group-organization with its traditional standards of production prevents the craft-guild from readjusting itself to new demands with the same ease as the individual craftsman, who is free to change his mode of production and to gain success by new methods. The decision of the younger men among the weavers to abandon the traditional production and to turn to the more profitable production of cap-making, the success of the most 'individualistic' of all crafts, brass-work, are instances of this.

435 But readjustment involves in reality two different and independent
433 processes: adjustment to modern conditions may mean both adjustment in price and cost of production, and adjustment with regard to the kind of goods produced. A close examination of this question is of special interest as attempts to preserve and help native arts and crafts are to-day officially sponsored by the educational departments in many African colonies. In these attempts the second type of adjustment is frequently taken into account exclusively, the first being either ignored or artificially eliminated by turning native crafts into tourist and 'curio' industries which can command prices quite out of proportion to the native economic system. That the Nupe crafts themselves have adjusted prices to demands is clearly shown in the general fall in prices which has taken place during the last five or ten years.[1] Thus mats of the best quality were sold, nine to ten years ago, for 3*s.*; in 1934 for 9*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936,

[1] In the two years I spent in Nupe country—two years which saw a partial economic recovery—I witnessed a corresponding slight rise in prices of native craft products.

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after a slight recovery, for 1*s.* 3*d.* Straw hats ten years ago fetched 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.*; in 1934 8*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936 5½*d.* and 1*s.* 3*d.*; embroidered gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 30*s.* or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fall short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

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433 We can now place the two systems of industry side by side and compare their respective assets and defects. Against highly efficient co-
467 operation and mutual assistance embodied in the guild organization we have to set the free play of competition allowed in individual crafts. Against the principle of continuity and planned training we have to set higher adaptability and larger scope for individual initiative and inventiveness. Broadly speaking, it cannot be doubted that uncontrolled, 'individualistic', industries stand a higher chance of developing production, possibly on new lines, and of achieving technical progress. Moreover, efficient training and continuity of craft knowledge can, to some extent, also be assured in the narrower form of co-operation vested in the small labour-unit; this is shown in the village groups of blacksmiths and weavers. The question which we have asked at the beginning of this section thus still stands: Why has Nupe society chosen, of these two possible methods of organizing industrial enterprise, the method that assured group efficiency and continuity on the largest scale, and group efficiency rather than progress and individual initiative?

The main reason lies in the political system of the country. The
467 guilds are, as we have seen, built closely into the political framework.
656 Let me recall the main facts: the guild-head is the agent of the king in all matters concerning the group; like the members of the nobility, he is the holder of an official rank, and is admitted to the *nkó*, the King's Council. The guilds themselves enjoy a privileged position in the Nupe state in that they were exempted from tax and were assigned a social position superior to that of other commoners, peasants, or traders. Yet they were, in other respects, very much controlled; they were bound to their profession and could not freely change it. They were even bound to the locality in which they practised their trade and could not move from it without permission of the guild-head. If a village chief desired to have a certain Bida craft represented in his village, he had to apply to the guild-head in the capital; this happened some years ago in Kutigi, when the chief requested the guild-head of the carpenters in Bida to send him a craftsman to settle and practise in his village. The craftsmen, then, are the king's craftsmen. Not only are they dependent on the king for their prosperity, but they are also controlled and supervised by him and his official agent, the guild-master. This organization of the craft-guilds amounts to a full control of the political system over all the more important industries of the country. We may even go further and say that this control was dictated by the needs of the state: based on constant warfare, committed to uphold the splendour of a huge court, the political system has to guarantee a dependable, uninterrupted supply of all that is needed—arms, tools, clothes, saddles, as well as the many symbols of wealth and status. Upon this dedication of the craft-guilds to the service of the state the seal is set by the discriminative social appreciation which the Nupe people extend to the different crafts.[1] The noblest craft is that of the brass- and sword-smiths, for they, as an informant put it, are 'the makers of arms'.

[1] See p. 103.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" — A Bida brass spinning toy.

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The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

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This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

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This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

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The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

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the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His
326 younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In
592 another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A
326 blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s*.; this quantity is
434 sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at
435 the price of 6*d*. and 1*s*. a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d*.). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d*. and 3*d*. In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d*. in the dry season fetches 8*d*. in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s*.

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger.
[437] The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
326 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system
467 —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

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two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and such-like. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgiži*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s*. for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

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A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d*. apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d*.; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d*. Silver bangles are sold for 12*s*. a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s*., and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d*. to 1*s*. Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s*.; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s*. 6*d*., and the profit per

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326 434 435 day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

326 Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relations work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

326 467 The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

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cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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306 time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
442 with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases
439 I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other
workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
306 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'mainten-
442 ance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide
the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work
467 effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Majī*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the
[434] *Majī* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

306 All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
467 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry.
178 With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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285 the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take
435 ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

434 If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household
463 groups following the same profession. But just as often we find house-
592 holds in which three or four different professions are represented, and houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

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Household A

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: one man. Family of four

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	5 loads	All	..	Mat-weaving, for 9*d.* apiece. Total earnings 5*s.*
Late millet	3 ,,	,,	..	
Sorghum	8 ,,	5 loads	3 loads, for 2*s.*	
Beans	v. little	All	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	..	All, for 3*s.*	
Cassava	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 1*s.* 3*d.*	

	s.	*d.*
Income from farm produce . . .	6	3
Total income	11	3
Money expenditure: Tax . . .	9	6

Household B

Bida. Labour unit: father and boy. Family of three

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Occasionally straw hat-making. Borrowed 1*s.* from relations for tax.
Late millet	6 loads	All	..	
Sorghum	6 ,,	,,	..	
Beans	?	..	All, for 2*s.*	
Yam	6 loads	All	..	
Rice	31 gourds	10 gourds	21 gourds for 3*s.* 6*d.*	
Locust-beans	..	..	Sold the whole tree for felling to the Bida brick-works, for 4*s.* 6*d.*	

	s.
Income from farm produce	10
Total income (incl. money loan) . . .	11
Money expenditure: Tax	11

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Household C

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: father (old) and married son (invalid). Family of five

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Sold 2 young goats for 3*s.* each, in order to obtain the rest of the tax.
Late millet	10 loads	..	9 loads, for 9*s.*; 1 load given as *dzanka* to *Makū*	
Sorghum	5 „	1 load	3 loads, for 3*s.*; 1 load given as *dzanka* to *Makū*	
Beans	7 „	..	All, for 5½*d.*	
Locust-beans	9 „	..	All, for 3*s.*	

	s.	*d.*
Income from farm produce	15	5½
Total income	21	5½
Money expenditure: Tax	21	0

Household D

Kutigi. Labour unit: father and two sons, one of them married. Family of seven

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	20 loads	All	..	Family head: occasional hunting. Hides sold for 2*d.* to 4*d.* apiece, total earnings 1*s.* 3*d.* Sons: mat-weaving, for 6*d.* apiece; total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a. (i.e. *bucá* income). Each son contributes 3*s.* towards the family tax.
Late millet	15 „	13 loads	2 loads, for 1*s.* 4*d.*	
Sorghum	20 „	10 „	10 loads, for 7*s.* 6*d.*	
Yam	7 „	All	..	
Cassava	?	„	..	
Beans	2 loads	„	..	
Ground-beans	1 load	„	..	
Sw. potatoes	little	„	..	
Ground-nuts	5 loads	Only seed	Rest, for 3*s.* 6*d.*	
Bananas	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 1*s.* 3*d.*	
Palm-kernels	?	..	All, for £1 or 25*s.*	
Kola-nuts	5 loads	..	All, for 6*s.* 3*d.*	

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Income from farm produce	2	4	10
Total income (incl. contribution from sons)	2	12	1
Money expenditure: Tax	1	13	0
Egbe work		6	8
Final instalment of bride-price for younger son		10	0

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Household E

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Lemu. Labour unit: father and four sons, two of them married. Family of ten

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Add[illegible] income*
Bulr.-millet	50 loads	20 loads	30 loads for 15*s.*	Family head: trade in rams and sheep. Total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a.
Late millet	30 ,,	10 ,,	20 loads for 10*s.*	
Sorghum	40 ,,	20 ,,	20 loads for 13*s.* 6*d.*	Sons: *buca* farm-work. Total earnings approx. 4*s.* p.a.
Beans	6 ,,	All	..	
Yam	?	A little	8 loads for 4*s.*	
Cassava	?	Eaten at once	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	,, ,,	..	
Cotton	10 loads	..	All, for 15*s.*	
Red pepper	4 ,,	..	All, for 8*s.*	
Locust-beans	6 ,,	..	All, for 4*s.*	

		£	*s.*	*d.*
Income from farm produce		3	9	6
Total income	approx.	4	0	0
Money expenditure: Tax		2	7	0
Egbe work			6	6
Name-giving ceremony for grandchild			8	0
First instalment of bride-price for younger son			17	0

511 The construction of these household budgets is designed to show the main division of resources into those which are utilized in kind, i.e. for food consumption, and those utilized for exchange, i.e. for the acquisition of commodities and the satisfaction of other, non-nutritive, wants. We have said that the latitude in satisfying wants beyond the 'minimum level' gives us the standards of living and economic stratification.

Now, it is characteristic that Nupe society, which is so conscious of its
511 class stratification, is equally conscious of its economic stratification and
262 the varying standards of living. Even the principle of the 'minimum point' of the scale of values, the existence of a minimum cost of living, is clearly understood and, what is more important, generally accepted. I have worked out questionnaires referring to this minimum standard of living and collected answers from twenty men in Bida and the villages, of different classes and different degree of wealth. They all were in agreement on the essential points. Expressed in agricultural produce, i.e. staple food crops, calculated for a small family of four, the minimum annual cost of living amounts to 12 to 15 bundles of grain (of any variety) or 90 loads of yam, if the household relies on one of the two staple food crops; or, if both are combined, 6 to 8 bundles of grain and 40 to 50 loads of yam. Expressed in money, 1½*d.* per day is the lowest cost of living per adult. But this food, as my informants added, will hardly be nutritive, it would only 'make the belly swell'. With more nutritive food, the lowest cost of living is 3*d.* per day. Even this is not yet a high standard, for it excludes *na ma re na*, things 'that taste nice', e.g. sweetmeats, savouries, and suchlike. For a family of four or five I was given

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567 professional slave-trading; they acted as middlemen between the slave markets of the north, Kano, Katsina, and others, and the buyers in the south, on the river and coast.[1]

567 At the time of the Fulani conquest the price paid locally for an able-bodied male slave was 40,000 cowries, i.e. £1, and for a female slave 435 50,000 cowries, i.e. £1. 5s.[2] The price of slaves rose very high in later times. Shortly before the British occupation it had reached the sum of £7 for male, and £7. 10s. for female slaves. As my inquiries from various informants showed, this price had become almost standardized in the last decade before the British occupation and was valid throughout the country. It is interesting to note that this rise in price took place at a time when the largest market for slaves from Nupe was disappearing, shipments of slaves to countries overseas, especially to the Americas, having come to an end. We cannot say how this rise in price started, nor what might have been its cause. I can only suggest that it was due to increased difficulties of supply. Half a century of wars and raids had denuded the country of people who could with no great difficulty be made slaves. Slave-raiders were forced to obtain their human chattels in more distant areas and by more serious warfare—in the language of the economist, under conditions of higher 'cost'. Whatever the cause, this rise in price meant that the commoners and peasants of Nupe could derive from the wars and raids by which their rulers gained their fortunes not even the benefit of cheaper slave labour. Commoners and peasants would suffer when their country was defeated and their villages invaded by the enemy, or when, in civil wars, rival troops fought on their land. But the fruits of victory—rich booty in slaves—they could share only at a price: the same price which foreigners had to pay when buying slaves from Nupe in the open market.

567 Slaves were, in the strict sense of the word, the property of their masters. If anyone killed a slave belonging to somebody else this was [685] not regarded as a case of murder or manslaughter, but only as an offence demanding restitution of the 'destroyed' property, i.e. the full purchase price had to be paid over to the owner. But the slaves who were kept in the houses of the Nupe nobility were on the whole well treated. The master of a slave was quite within his rights if he chose to maltreat him, sell him again, or even kill him. But there is no doubt that this happened rarely—if ever. Many slaves, in fact, preferred to stay on in the houses of their ex-masters when slavery was abolished, in the position of an unpaid servant or retainer, rather than to start life on their own, especially if they were of advanced age. Custom even guaranteed the

[1] Barth states that most of the slaves from Kano were carried by small caravans to Bornu and Nupe; 'the best of slaves now go to Niffee (Nupe) to be there shipped for America. . . . Slaves are sent from Zinder to Niffee. Indeed it now appears that all this part of Africa is put under contribution to supply the South American market with slaves' (Dr. Barth, op. cit. ii, pp. 132 and 135). Lander mentions that the slaves brought to Rabá were purchased by southern peoples, traded down the Niger, and from there 'delivered from hand to hand till they at length reached the sea' (op. cit. ii, p. 298).

[2] See Schoen-Crowther, *Journals*, p. 194, and J. and R. Lander, op. cit. ii, p. 298.

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) 233
breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' re- 433
sources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during [439]
the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breed- 233
ing the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or 422
-sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself.

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, 262
as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one 231
sees in the country belong to Yoruba.

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and [435]
goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season.

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common land. The system of individual *bucd* work which runs parallel to the family work no doubt fosters such reckoning; no doubt also that this form of reckoning, essentially competitive as it is, must enhance the energy devoted by the individual worker to the common task. But such an attitude must also foster the tendency to split up and eventually dissolve the working-unit. In a small hamlet near Bida I discovered an interesting form of transition between full co-operation, which yet recognizes the individual share in the common work, and complete dissolution of the working-unit into independent agents. In the case to which I am referring the *efakó* group was divided into two working-units, each being engaged permanently on different fields although the yield produced by the two sections was still collected as the common *efakó* yield. The *efakó* group was formed by a father—a man of over 50—and his two married sons—of about 25 and 30. The father was working one group of plots and the two sons, together, another. The two groups of plots incidentally produced equally large crops, which was due to the fact that the old man could enlist outside labour on his farms and thus equalize the difference in working capacity between himself and his two sons.

MAINTENANCE OF LABOUR

The produce of the *efakó* is handed over *in toto* to the family head. It is stored in the *efakó* granaries, and only the family head has the right to dispose of it. We shall discuss later in detail the various uses to which he may put it. But let me describe here one aspect of the employment of the *efakó* income, namely its use for the benefit of the *efakó* members themselves who helped to produce it, speaking more generally, for the maintenance of the labour organization. The question of maintenance of labour has, first, a strictly material aspect, namely, the supply of the means of production—the agricultural tools. The main agricultural instruments used in Nupe farming, as we have seen, are two kinds of hoe, bush-knife, and axe. They all have to be bought from the blacksmiths or, in the case of the bush-knife, from the European store, and must be repaired periodically—expenses which are by no means negligible. A heavy hoe costs between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*, a light hoe between 6*d.* and 1*s.*, axe and bush-knife between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*; repairs may amount to between 3*d.* and 4*d.* each time, that is, perhaps 1*s.* a year. Now, as long as the individual worker remains in the *efakó* group, the head of the group supplies new tools and pays for repairs. A man who leaves the *efakó* group to work on his own may take away the tools which he has been using—they have become 'his' tools—but from now on he must himself pay the cost of all repairs or the purchase of new tools.

[435]

The second, human, aspect in the problem of maintenance of labour is the maintenance of the workers themselves. They are housed, clothed, and fed by the family head. The head of the *efakó* group is responsible for all expenses that occur in connexion with the repair of the house and the huts in which his co-workers live; he provides their clothing and food—the section of the family group which is regularly

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326 the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His
592 younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

326 Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A
434 blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s*.; this quantity is
435 sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at the price of 6*d*. and 1*s*. a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d*.). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d*. and 3*d*. In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d*. in the dry season fetches 8*d*. in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s*.

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
[437] Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

326 The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
467 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and suchlike. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgizi*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s*. for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d*. apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d*.; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d*. Silver bangles are sold for 12*s*. a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s*., and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d*. to 1*s*. Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s*.; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s*. 6*d*., and the profit per

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326 434 435 day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

326 Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relations work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

326 467 The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

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cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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285 the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for 435 from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

434 If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household 463 groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and 592 houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

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294 They make as much as 1*s.* or 2*s.* on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4*s.* Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d.* to 4*d.* a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-
[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2
435 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-
294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his
593 mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons
[453] work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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specifically social and cultural aspect. Efficiency in this sense means continuity of the craft and of craft knowledge; it means the ability to raise, through the medium of an hereditary, imperceptibly changing labour group, successive generations of craftsmen. If in these respects production is planned for an unchanging future, the agency of the third factor must expose it to the disruptive effects of time and change. For it may appear as if modern economic changes directed their most destructive attacks against this third condition of closeness and co-operation, which is dependence upon regular demand. This influence is especially visible in the gradual disappearance of orders from the main customer of the country, king and court. The Great *Sallah*, once the occasion for numerous orders from the court, which kept the workshops of Bida busy for weeks, is now an occasion for making purchases at the stores that trade in European goods. At the *Sallah* of 1935, the first *Sallah* of the newly installed *Etsu*, the traditional royal gifts of kola-nuts were sent out, not in ornamental brass bowls of native make, but in newly bought enamelled teapots; the king's bodyguard, newly equipped, wore, not Bida gowns and turbans or native-made straw hats, but red blankets and Trilby hats; and many notables who would have appeared formerly on horses with costly trappings and gorgeous saddle-cloths, rode in on new, shining bicycles. Conspicuous though the competition of European goods appears, it is not the only reason for the decline of Nupe craft-guilds. The very organization of guild-organized crafts has contributed to lowering their resistance to outside pressure. The inertia inherent in the rigid group-organization with its traditional standards of production prevents the craft-guild from readjusting itself to new demands with the same ease as the individual craftsman, who is free to change his mode of production and to gain success by new methods. The decision of the younger men among the weavers to abandon the traditional production and to turn to the more profitable production of cap-making, the success of the most 'individualistic' of all crafts, brass-work, are instances of this.

But readjustment involves in reality two different and independent processes: adjustment to modern conditions may mean both adjustment in price and cost of production, and adjustment with regard to the kind of goods produced. A close examination of this question is of special interest as attempts to preserve and help native arts and crafts are to-day officially sponsored by the educational departments in many African colonies. In these attempts the second type of adjustment is frequently taken into account exclusively, the first being either ignored or artificially eliminated by turning native crafts into tourist and 'curio' industries which can command prices quite out of proportion to the native economic system. That the Nupe crafts themselves have adjusted prices to demands is clearly shown in the general fall in prices which has taken place during the last five or ten years.[1] Thus mats of the best quality were sold, nine to ten years ago, for 3*s.*; in 1934 for 9*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936,

[1] In the two years I spent in Nupe country—two years which saw a partial economic recovery—I witnessed a corresponding slight rise in prices of native craft products.

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after a slight recovery, for 1*s.* 3*d.* Straw hats ten years ago fetched 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.*; in 1934 8*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936 5½*d.* and 1*s.* 3*d.*; embroidered gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 30*s.* or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fall short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s.* to 15*s.*, the material costing 5*s.*; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d.* and 3*d.* This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpã* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciši* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciši* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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533 he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy him-
467 self a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the wood-
[322 workers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable
435] wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever
533 taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain
467 bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one
178 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a side-line.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of
533 limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic
545 style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zatóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

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804 baskets (*kasa*); fruits and ground-nuts in *kasa* or *kara* (loads). The calculation is fairly precise, one 'load' of shea-nuts, for example, being [435] reckoned to bring 2*s*., or one load of locust-beans 3*d*.

435 These examples suffice to illustrate the clear conception which the Nupe have of measures and marketable quantities. Combined with the universal use of money they result in a well-defined system of market prices. The calculation of market prices in Nupe corresponds closely to variations in supply and demand, above all, to seasonal fluctuations. We have already given instances. I will add here a few more which refer to the staple produce of the country.[1] In April and May 1936 one bundle of unthreshed sorghum was sold for 6*d*., in August and September for 9*d*. to 10*d*., and in certain places even for 1*s*. During the same time the price of bulrush-millet rose from 6*d*. to 1*s*. 6*d*. In April ten yams were sold for 6*d*.; at the beginning of June the price rose to 10*d*., and in July, shortly before the yam harvest, to 1*s*. 8*d*., to fall again in August to 6*d*. In the case of bulrush-millet and yam, the cultivation of which is restricted to certain districts, the fluctuations of price are markedly greater than in the case of the universal food-crop, sorghum. For rice, on the other hand, an expensive foodstuff for which there is only limited demand, and new supplies of which appear on the market three times a year, the price remained unchanged at 2*d*. for a small bowl.

These prices refer to village markets. Prices in Bida are always higher. When grain in the country sells for 6*d*. a bundle, the Bida price is 8*d*.; when the highest price in the country is 10*d*., it will reach in Bida 1*s*. and 2*s*. When yams are sold ten for 6*d*. in the country, the Bida price is ten for 9*d*., and so forth. Industrial products manufactured in Bida, on the other hand, are dearer in the districts, as the middlemen add a certain amount to the original price (between 1*d*. and 2*d*. in the shilling). Goods produced in the country which pass through the hands of the Bida trader on their way to Bida market or to markets abroad become markedly more expensive: thus Kutigi mats produced locally for 11*d*. are sold in Bida for 1*s*. or 1*s*. 2*d*., and abroad, for example in Lokoja, for 1*s*. 6*d*.

These regular variations and fluctuations in price must, to some extent at least, be based on a systematic common knowledge of the conditions which determine supply and demand in the country and which can thus sustain definite expectations of price developments at a given moment. Such a body of common knowledge indeed exists in Nupe. It is embodied in the universal experience that certain commodities are always plentiful in the dry season and get more and more scarce towards the close of the rains. It is also reflected in the generally accepted fact that prices are higher in the capital, which has to import a large proportion of its food-supplies, and which is also wealthier and possessed of a higher standard of living than the rest of the country. These considerations imply a further important fact viz. that distance between area of production and market, and the additional labour and loss of time involved in

[1] Certain fluctuations are determined by increased consumption during the festival season. Thus one sheep fetched 5*s*. in January and 10*s*. to 15*s*. in March, i.e. shortly before the Great Sallah, to fall again to 5*s*. during the rains (see p. 203, n. 1).

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transport, enter into the calculation of price and profit.[1] Finally, the economic significance of 'waiting' is fully recognized, and goods sold are at a proportionately cheaper price when they can be disposed of in larger quantities. I found, for example, that a trader on the market would sell two bowls of grain for 1½*d.*, but one bowl for 0·8*d.*; a large *evo* (containing 12 small bowls) of the same grain could be had for 8*d.* One large *evo* of rice (containing 10 small bowls) is sold for 1*s.* 6*d.*, while a small bowl would be priced at 2*d.* The factor of 'waiting' plays an important part also in the economy of the individual household. When money is urgently needed, or when for other reasons the whole crop is sold in one, the seller must be prepared to accept a less favourable price. A farmer in Lemu sold his whole crop of bulrush-millet and late millet for 4*d.* a bundle, in order to have sufficient money in hand for certain urgent household expenses (the marriage ceremony of one of his sons). With his sorghum crop he could afford to go more slowly, and obtained for it prices varying from 6*d.* to 9*d.* per bundle. Another farmer, near Bida, had to sell twelve bundles of late millet and sorghum for 1*s.* per bundle, as he was pressed for money for tax, well knowing that if he could afford to sell his grain in smaller quantities he could easily obtain 1*s.* 6*d.* a bundle. 435

This common knowledge of price-conditions seems also to explain the lack of haggling in Nupe marketing—to the student of African peoples a rather surprising feature. Cooked food, all victuals including grain, rice, palm-oil, &c., as also the common products of tailors, blacksmiths, mat-makers, and so forth, have 'fixed prices', and buyers will never try to bargain. They might, when buying yams or fish, a mat or a hoe, poke about in the goods displayed for sale till they find the biggest or nicest-looking specimen offered at the price they are willing to pay. Real haggling and bargaining is common only with expensive, more rarely sold, commodities, the price of which is always more or less fluid, and commodities the quality and perfection of which show many gradations: embroidered cloth, a woven gown, and all products of artistic value. 437 435

The common knowledge of price-conditions is limited by existing communications and forms of economic contact. Thus we find a uniform regulation of prices only within the area in which regular contacts of this kind exist; outside it the calculation of prices and profits, and productive planning in general, is determined by the varying local conditions of supply and demand. The most striking instance of this lack of co-ordination is perhaps the backward village of Sakpe to which I have referred in a previous chapter, where the people were unaware of the fact that the kapok from their silk-cotton trees had a money value in Bida. The following example, though referring to an exchange connexion going beyond Nupe country, is no less significant: in the same village, Sakpe, I met two men from Igbira country who had come to

[1] It is not unnecessary to mention especially this aspect of Nupe economic knowledge. For it is frequently found in more primitive societies that the economic value of time is not recognized and that native producers sell their goods at a distant market for the same price as they would locally.

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435 Nupe to sell dogs, and were greatly disappointed to find that dogs had no market value in that country. It need not be stressed that modern development of communications has greatly enlarged the area in which common price-conditions obtain. Railways, steamers, and road transport have become regular factors in native marketing and in the planning of native production.[1] The stores of the European trading-companies, which are the centres for the marketing in commercial crops, have helped to expand further this framework of common economic conditions. But these last factors have at the same time introduced a new element of insecurity into the body of native economic knowledge. The new, wider, framework of reference includes conditions of supply and demand which go far beyond those embodied in the native productive system, and calculations of price which are no longer accessible to the experience of the native producer—the conditions of supply and demand, and the calculations of price, determined by the state of European or American markets. The erratic and, to the native, incomprehensible fluctuations in the price of ground-nuts or cotton are typical instances; we have seen how, in the extreme case, they may completely upset native agricultural planning. The price policy of the trading-companies may also place a certain native productive area in a more unfavourable position than others: thus the price for ground-nuts paid by the United Africa Company in Nupe (that is Niger Province) was 5*s.* 6*d.* per ton as against 11*s.*, for an inferior quality, in Zaria or Kano. The conditions in cotton marketing were, till recently, similar.[2] Many enterprising native traders avail themselves to-day of the modern facilities of transport to visit these various towns and centres of trade: how can they be anything but bewildered by that unwarranted difference in price; or rather, they have learned to accept it as one more of the many incomprehensible arrangements brought in by 'the white man', and find a ready explanation for it in the fact that 'money is more plentiful in Zaria and Kano'.

We must consider here the relation between commodity prices and labour. The prices for the products of native industries given in an earlier chapter reflect, within limits, the varying amount of labour necessary for their production. The lowest daily profit with which the various Bida industries reckon is, as we have seen, between 1½*d.* and 2*d.* It is interesting to note that this amount corresponds to the lowest cost of living per day of an adult in Bida (see below, p. 342). The highest profits, on the other hand, may be determined not only by the amount of work, but also by the skill and artistic qualities which the work involves. We have seen that the artistic work of embroidery is paid more highly than ordinary tailor's work. If we compare, however, the average profits made in blacksmith work with the profits with which brass-smiths

[1] A Nupe trader known to me bought £5 worth of cheap kola-nuts in Lagos early in the season, stored them for 6 months, and then transported them by rail to Bida, where he sold his stock for £10.

[2] I was informed that this discrepancy in price was due mainly to the monopoly position of two large trading-companies in Niger Province, while in the north several companies have to compete with one another. The recently adopted control of the cotton markets by the Administration tends to maintain cotton prices at approximately the same level in the whole of Nigeria.

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reckon, we make the somewhat surprising discovery that here the more refined work is not only not more highly paid but partly even worse paid than the cruder industry. Both as regards profits per day and profits per article produced the brass-smiths work on the whole with lower profits than the blacksmiths.[1] Why, then, does the calculation of price and profit allow for an appreciation of the specific artistic qualities of the work of tailors and embroiderers but not in the analogous instance of brass-smith work? But is it an analogous instance? In the case of tailors and embroiderers both the cruder and the more refined technique belong to the same class of production: they are both what we may loosely call luxury industries. In blacksmith and brass-smith work we have fundamentally different industries, one supplying necessities, and the other a typical fashion and luxury industry. The explanation thus seems to be that indispensability may equal aesthetic value; and that where these two diverse types of industry compete side by side the factor of necessity may balance or outweigh the appreciation of artistic qualities.

MARKET AND TRADE

We have had frequent opportunity to speak of the complexity of Nupe economics and of the far-reaching specialization of Nupe production, which must express itself most forcibly in the wide scope of trade and marketing. In a wider sense Nupe country itself is one big market. For Nupe is a country which exports and imports, and represents, besides, an important station on the route of transit-trade across Nigeria. The ancient trade-routes have to some extent been adjusted to-day to the new forms of communication, motor-roads, steamers, and railways. But to a large extent they have remained the same, for now as of old a large proportion of this transit-trade is carried to, and by, the water-way of the river Niger.

The following are the traditional trade-routes through Nupe. They run mostly roughly from north to south. One, coming from Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi, goes through Kontagora and reaches Nupe north of Mokwa; from here it goes either west, crossing the Niger at Jebba (formerly at Buka, five miles up the river) into Yoruba, or east through Laboži, Sakpe, to the Kaduna, which it crosses at Gbara, then south to Muregi and, after crossing the Niger, on to Yoruba and Kabba. A second route from Kontagora reaches Nupe Emirate north of Kutiwengi, passes through Dabbā and Kutigi, and crosses the river Niger at Ogudu, on the way to Ilorin. An alternative to this route branches off at Dabbā, crosses the Kaduna at Wuya, and ends at Bida. A third trade-route passes through Birnin Gwari and Wushishi, and reaches Bida via Gbangba. There are three routes from Bida to the south and south-east: one through Jima and Dokomba, down the Kaduna by canoe to Muregi,

[1] The profits of blacksmiths per object are: 3*d.*, 3½*d.*, 6*d.*; per day, 6*d.*, 7*d.*, 1*s.* The profits of brass-smiths per object are: 1½*d.*, 2*d.*; per day, 3*d.*, 6*d.* Higher profits are only realized in the casting of bangles in precious metal, in the casting of brass figures for tourist trade, and also in the production of ladles in the modern cheap material, aluminium.

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more severe and the advantageous positions secured by the enterprising first-comers are threatened by later recruits of the 'seeking-out-the-customer' movement.

Wayside shops also line the road leading from the north gate to the two large European stores—'canteens' in the popular idiom. Here the inventiveness of Bida traders has seized upon a new device to attract and 'seek out' the customer. Many peasants from backward villages who come to Bida to buy certain essential European articles, such as salt or sugar, either want to buy them in very small quantities—smaller quantities than they could obtain at the store—or are too shy and frightened to enter the stores themselves. These are the customers of the little stands outside the 'canteens': for here the peasants can buy the same articles in the smallest quantities and without having to undergo the ordeal of a purchase in the unfamiliar, forbidding, store.[1]

MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

The last example brings us to another essential difference between the marketing system in Bida and in the village. The large volume of native trade in European goods and the close business connexion between native traders in Bida and the stores of the trading-companies have introduced certain completely new factors into Nupe marketing. They are visible in local trade on the smallest scale as well as in the large-scale enterprises of wealthy Bida merchants. Trade in certain European goods allows a more rapid turnover and more certain profits than any branch of native economy. The native trader or middleman can, as we have just seen, turn to his profit the fact that he can make certain essential and highly valued goods accessible to the consumer by retailing them in such small quantities that their price (though relatively high) is low enough to be within the means of peasants and small craftsmen. It is, for example, a regular practice of Bida women traders to buy tins of 50 cigarettes at the 'canteen', and to sell them singly (or even cut in half); to buy boxes of matches, and sell them in little bundles of five; packets of sugar, and sell the sugar a piece or two at the time; or to buy 4-gallon tins of paraffin, and sell it in pint bottles. It is hardly surprising that the profits, though absolutely small, are relatively high, up to 100 per cent.[2]

[1] This fear is really a compound of shyness and suspicion—one is suspicious just because one is shy and unfamiliar with the ways of these [illegible]ern institutions. A most characteristic instance, concerning a Bida man [illegible], one would think, would hardly need to be shy or afraid, is the following: a Bida Mallam with whom I was very friendly came to see me one day and asked me if I would do him a favour and order spare tyres from the 'canteen' for a lorry belonging to a friend of his. His friend, he explained, disliked ordering them himself, for he knew he would be cheated and given the wrong kind of tyres. What had happened was that his friend had some time previously ordered tyres without, however, knowing that it was necessary to quote the exact size. He had been given tyres of the size most frequently found on the lorries running in the country, but unfortunately they did not fit his lorry.

[2] One tin of 50 cigarettes costs 1*s.*; one cigarette is sold for 0·3*d.*, allowing a profit of 3*d.* in 1*s.* One box of matches, containing approximately 50 matches, costs 1*d.*; five matches sold for 0·2*d.* give a profit of 0·8*d.* in the penny. One

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442 It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials
452 from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run
[494] lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an *extremely low price—in certain cases* only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

439 The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and,
177 generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

435 4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7s. 6d.; one bottle is sold for 6d., giving a profit of 8s. The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go
443 outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for market-
49 ing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Maccu Kolo Kolo*, "the hagglers."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [584
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence [935]
his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [866]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), [862]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

1. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Massge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Max, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-agetū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pakunsa*—Max 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cart. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :—

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge. 323 531

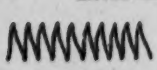

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests. 323

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323 531

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [386] [304]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]

(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

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[p. 73]

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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

 632

'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and 651
tunga which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the [436] *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 [285] mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order 632
in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the 692
right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, 631
relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These 651
fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king 534
after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

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431 with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and
437 adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its
[273] own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

436 How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated?
454 One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

454 Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER XIX

ECONOMIC BALANCE: EXCHANGE

121 IN the discussion of economic balance we approach a group of questions which modern economic theory regards as the principle subject-matter of economics, viz. the relation between means which exist in some degree of scarcity and their alternative uses for the satisfaction of needs and wants. We shall examine 'balance' under two aspects: first, the relation between means and their uses in a wider sense, as they exist and are balanced in the economic system of the society at large. In this sense economic balance can be equated with exchange and exchange-mechanisms. Secondly, economic balance can be approached from the angle of the economic unit, and understood in the sense of the relation existing between means and wants in the narrow compass of individual or group economy. Economic balance here can be equated with the relation between capacity to produce and the ability to satisfy existing wants, i.e. between income and expenditure.

Although the two aspects refer to the same phenomenon, and are thus clearly interdependent, it is necessary to point out that the relation between the two does not invariably lie on the surface. Certain wants which greatly influence individual economy do not enter openly into general exchange relations. I refer here to wants which flow from specifically social sources—the dictates of religious obligations, of etiquette, status and prestige, political interests, and so forth. Over and above the overt exchange-mechanisms which we study under the first aspect of economic balance we shall have to introduce, in the discussion of the second aspect, a certain 'invisible' exchange—exchange against such imponderables as moral values, or forms of social appreciation. We will examine these two aspects of economic balance in the order in which we have enumerated them.

CURRENCY, MEASURES, AND PRICES

436 The description of Nupe production has clearly established the nature of Nupe economy as a highly complex exchange-economy based on money. A discussion of exchange-mechanisms may thus profitably begin with the examination of the units of exchange, the currency, and certain fixed measures used in trade.

Before the adoption of British money cowrie-shells constituted the currency of the country. Its use still lingers—not in the currency that is actually used (although this, too, has been mentioned),[1] but in an abstract sense, in the native methods of reckoning money. Certain standardized amounts, e.g. bride-price, certain traditional gifts and payments, are expressed more often in cowrie-shells than in modern money. In the country figures in cowrie-shells are quoted commonly, and in connexion with every kind of payment, including food-prices and suchlike. Cowrie-

[1] See p. 310.

[p. 314]

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Cowrie-shells are a clumsy currency: you have to carry them about in bagfuls, and to count in thousands and tens of thousands. The numerical system of Nupe is fully equal to this task. Its elaboration and lucidity is not the least contribution to the efficiency of the exchange system of the country. Its scope is practically unlimited. A figure like 3,600,000 is expressed by this comparatively simple symbol: *gba kpotwani* (lit. two thousand times eighteen hundred, or, in more detail, two thousand times two hundred times nine). This facility in forming large numbers is due to the existence of a number of simple root words and multiples which are easy to handle. Omitting here the simpler figures 1–9, we find root words for 100, 200, and 2,000, multiples of 100 and 1,000 being formed by a simple multiplication of the root figures. For example, 400 is 200 . 2, i.e. *kpa gúba*, contracted to *kpoba*; 600 is 200 . 3, i.e. *kpa gúta*, contracted to *kpota*; 4,000 is 2,000 . 2, i.e. *gba gúba*, contracted to *gboba*; 6,000 is 2,000 . 3, i.e. *gba gúta*, contracted to *gbaotá*; 10,000 is 2,000 . 5, i.e. *gba gútsũ*, contracted to *gbotsũ*; and so on. A new unit is introduced as an alternative symbol for 20,000 cowries in the form of the *gura*, which is the name for the grass bags in which cowries were formerly packed. Thus 200,000 cowries (the traditional bride-price) make 10 *gura*; 400,000 20 *gura*, and so on.

The exchange rate between cowries and British money appears to have undergone some change. The original exchange rate, which I ascertained from the account of bride-price and tribute paid formerly, was 8*d.* for 2,000 cowries. Later the exchange value of cowries rose to 1*s.* for 2,000 cowries. This exchange rate is applied to-day when figures are quoted in cowries. Although cowrie-shells represented a currency in the strict sense of the word, they were used also for certain other purposes beside exchange, and had, above all, a certain value as ornaments. Gourds, bags, and musical instruments were formerly ornamented with cowries; but this practice has fallen into disuse.

To this elaborate system of units of exchange corresponds an almost as well-defined system of measures applied to commodities. We have spoken already of the *kpere*, the 'arm-length', a standard length used in measuring cloth; 10 *kpere* give, as we have seen, one full-length cloth. The measures used in selling agricultural produce are even more interesting, as quantities of these commodities do not lend themselves easily to simple forms of standardization. The unit for unthreshed grain is the bundle, *epa* (from *pa*, to tie up) or load, *kara*. It weighs very nearly 60 lb., but its size and weight vary a little according to the quality of the grain: of poorer grain there would be a larger quantity in the bundle, of better-class grain a proportionately smaller quantity, the main point being the equality in the value. Threshed grain is sold in large or small gourds, for which to-day tin bowls and basins are usually substituted. A large basinful of grain, *evo* (lit. gourd), contains twelve small bowls, *kpanu* (the latter taking a little over one pound). One bundle of unthreshed grain is reckoned to correspond to one *evo* of threshed grain. With maize five to six cobs are reckoned to give one small bowl of maize-flour. Rice is sold in large gourds (*evo*) or, more frequently, in small bowls, ten of which as a rule give one gourd. Beans are calculated in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
[437] Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
326 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system
467 —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XVIII

WEALTH

THE examination of the problem of labour may be fittingly concluded with a discussion of the role played by wealth, free capital, in Nupe economy. It is in keeping with Nupe production in general, with its emphasis on individual property and money profits, that the concept of wealth should be clearly pronounced. The principle of accumulation of wealth as free capital pervades Nupe economics and, in particular, serves to define the economic (and, indirectly, social) stratification of the society. 556

MONEY CAPITAL

The appreciation of wealth figures prominently in the educational conceptions of the people. Young boys of 8 or 10, when they are given a separate *bucá* plot to farm, are at the same time taught the value of money income and money capital. Mothers will help them to market their small produce for money, or will buy their produce directly from them. And fathers and mothers, as we have seen, equip their children with a first diminutive working capital, a penny or two, to start a profitable trade (see pp. 286–7, 331). These profits enable boys and girls to defray the expenses of the social obligations incumbent upon this tender age, namely, contributions to the costs of the age-grade associations of which they are members. Money expenses, partly involving the accumulation of reserves, accompany Nupe men and women all through their lives: money to meet the costs of kinship rituals—birth, weddings, and funerals—money for the maintenance of labour, the purchase of tools, &c., or for personal wants and the luxuries of life. Money also frequently forms part of the inheritance left by men or women. 556 867

Farm produce or gifts in kind in general cannot fully replace money expenditure. This is shown clearly in the nature of the universal gift in Nupe—kola-nuts. Gifts of kola-nuts are more or less regularly exchanged between friends and relations; a gift of kola-nuts serves as the traditional announcement, and invitation at the same time, extended to kinsfolk at the occasion of forthcoming kinship ceremonies. Gifts of kola-nuts also represent the traditional expression of political allegiance. And, with the insignificant exception of the kola-nut growers, the donor of the gift has to buy the kola-nuts on the market for money. The largest single expenditure of Nupe economy, finally, bride-price, is paid entirely in money (see the discussion of bride-price in Chap. XX). It involves, moreover, accumulation of money reserve, or, if the bride-price is paid in instalments, as it frequently is, careful planning of money expenditure over a considerable period. 431 437

Although none of the larger forms of traditional money expenditure were ever replaceable by gifts or contributions in kind, it is also true that the practice of money expenditure has been increasing with the spreading of cultural influences from the town. It is natural that Bida society,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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431 with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the
437 practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its
[273] own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

436 How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated?
454 One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

454 Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

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transport, enter into the calculation of price and profit.[1] Finally, the economic significance of 'waiting' is fully recognized, and goods sold are at a proportionately cheaper price when they can be disposed of in larger quantities. I found, for example, that a trader on the market would sell two bowls of grain for 1½*d.*, but one bowl for 0·8*d.*; a large *evo* (containing 12 small bowls) of the same grain could be had for 8*d.* One large *evo* of rice (containing 10 small bowls) is sold for 1*s.* 6*d.*, while a small bowl would be priced at 2*d.* The factor of 'waiting' plays an important part also in the economy of the individual household. When money is urgently needed, or when for other reasons the whole crop is sold in one, the seller must be prepared to accept a less favourable price. A farmer in Lemu sold his whole crop of bulrush-millet and late millet for 4*d.* a bundle, in order to have sufficient money in hand for certain urgent household expenses (the marriage ceremony of one of his sons). With his sorghum crop he could afford to go more slowly, and obtained for it prices varying from 6*d.* to 9*d.* per bundle. Another farmer, near Bida, had to sell twelve bundles of late millet and sorghum for 1*s.* per bundle, as he was pressed for money for tax, well knowing that if he could afford to sell his grain in smaller quantities he could easily obtain 1*s.* 6*d.* a bundle.

This common knowledge of price-conditions seems also to explain the lack of haggling in Nupe marketing—to the student of African peoples a rather surprising feature. Cooked food, all victuals including grain, rice, palm-oil, &c., as also the common products of tailors, blacksmiths, mat-makers, and so forth, have 'fixed prices', and buyers will never try to bargain. They might, when buying yams or fish, a mat or a hoe, poke about in the goods displayed for sale till they find the biggest or nicest-looking specimen offered at the price they are willing to pay. Real haggling and bargaining is common only with expensive, more rarely sold, commodities, the price of which is always more or less fluid, and commodities the quality and perfection of which show many gradations: embroidered cloth, a woven gown, and all products of artistic value.

The common knowledge of price-conditions is limited by existing communications and forms of economic contact. Thus we find a uniform regulation of prices only within the area in which regular contacts of this kind exist; outside it the calculation of prices and profits, and productive planning in general, is determined by the varying local conditions of supply and demand. The most striking instance of this lack of co-ordination is perhaps the backward village of Sakpe to which I have referred in a previous chapter, where the people were unaware of the fact that the kapok from their silk-cotton trees had a money value in Bida. The following example, though referring to an exchange connexion going beyond Nupe country, is no less significant: in the same village, Sakpe, I met two men from Igbira country who had come to

[1] It is not unnecessary to mention especially this aspect of Nupe economic knowledge. For it is frequently found in more primitive societies that the economic value of time is not recognized and that native producers sell their goods at a distant market for the same price as they would locally.

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361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where [346] the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along 361 the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, 443 stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It 438 starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
241 owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family
643 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
427 land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankâ* arrangement. But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu*
[242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family
466] estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
313 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
438 rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
313 the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

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235 There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. ● 438 Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most [782] important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as house-hold-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most [267] desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make [842] men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

231 About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, 492 pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number 231 of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol 554 of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

231 Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital 471 in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic 433 stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

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251 of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used [231] as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

251 The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list 434 complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not [415] for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary 251 manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural 438 produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

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rice, and partly ground-nuts) or after it has undergone a rudimentary 257
'refining' process (such as the threshing and milling of grain, the shelling 438
of ground-nuts, &c.). Side by side with this trade there exists an 252
extensive local trade in the 'finished' product, which means various kinds of prepared food. I cannot attempt a detailed description of the intricate and varied art of Nupe cooking. I will only enumerate the more important products of this native 'food-industry', which, like most food preparation, is in the hands of the women. It is of considerable importance for the economy of the Nupe household. There are three main kinds of such prepared food which are sold everywhere in the markets and streets of the towns and villages of Nupe: (1) a gruel of millet or sorghum, made with water, and called *ekwa* in the more jelly-like and *zambú* in the more solid form. It is eaten for breakfast or lunch, and nicely done up in banana leaves, bought by labourers, canoe-men, travellers, and sometimes farmers going out to their fields—men who are unable to have their meals with their families or to have food brought out to them from home. (2) *Yisá* (Hausa, *fura*), bread-like balls made of late millet or sorghum and rolled in flour. Men and women attending markets are fond of buying this food and eating it with milk which they buy, there and then, from the Fulani women. (3) *Masa*, *kuli-kuli*, *bánkuru*, and *kara*—savouries of different kind, made of beans, sorghum- or millet-flour or ground-nuts, fried in shea-butter and prepared with various spices. They are eaten at any time of the day, practically by everybody who can spare an *anini* (a tenth of a penny).

To turn to the food crops proper. Our chart has established the even 262
distribution of food crops over the year's cycle, a distribution which should, 438
normally, leave every household well provided with food from harvest to 241
harvest. Old yam should last till the new yam is dug out, sorghum and late millet till the new sorghum harvest—or at least till bulrush-millet—is reaped. I have found that June and July are the critical months: yam may begin to give out by the end of May or June, about six weeks or two months before the new yam harvest, and late millet and sorghum may become scarce by the middle of June. But bulrush-millet, which is harvested about that time, and maize, both from inland and marsh-land crops, make the transition easy.[1] So do also fresh ground-nuts, new potatoes, and partly the new rice, all harvested before the late main crops; I have mentioned already the 'stopgap' character of cassava.[2] A dry year, a late or failing harvest of early millet or first yam, may, of course, upset the balance temporarily in a district—till imports from the river area where yam matures earlier, or other districts, which have fared better, set it right again.[3] But the nutritive balance of the country must always remain dependent on the contribution of trade and markets:

[1] See p. 213.

[2] Cassava-flour as a substitute for grain-flour appears on the Nupe markets only for about two months, during July and August. Corn-gruel, a daily food in many Nupe households, can be made with rice-flour instead of sorghum- or millet-flour, if the latter has become scarce. This substitute is more expensive than ordinary corn-gruel, and is also said to be less pleasant to the taste.

[3] In 1936 the first yams appeared on the river markets on 6 July, while inland the first yams were dug out a fortnight later.

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262 yam, maize, and early millet are not grown everywhere; special crops are cultivated on marsh-land and inland farms; and besides, there is the 438 large population of Nupe which does not live on the land and can obtain 241 its food only from the markets of the country. The Nupe agricultural system, as we have realized already, is adjusted essentially to a highly developed system of exchange and marketing. The surprisingly small number of crops grown exclusively for household consumption is perhaps the most striking proof.

241 The degree to which the individual farmer, and the farmer in the 438 different districts of the country, adjusts his planting to the principle of exchange economy varies considerably. In the marshes of Niger and Kaduna almost the whole production of rice is intended for sale and export. But at the other end of the scale we find farmers who, able to cultivate a few crops only, have just enough to provide food for their families. We have already examined some of the conditions determining this changing balance between trade crops and food crops. Ultimately it only reflects that greater fundamental balance that underlies Nupe peasant economy: between the need of food for the group, and the need of commodities which are obtainable only by means of exchange, that is, money—which can itself be obtained only from the sale of farming produce.

TREE CULTIVATION AND FRUIT INDUSTRY

245 As stated in the first chapter, most of the fruit-bearing trees in Nupe are wild growing. Only two or three kinds are cultivated: the kola-nut tree, *ebi*, and to much lesser extent the banana, *yaba*; to these two indigenous plants we must add to-day the European imported mango tree, *mangoro*. In the case of trees the main productive activities refer therefore not so much to the planting and tending of the plants as to the collection of the fruits and the preliminary manufacturing process of the same order as that described in the preceding section. Only in a few cases can the fruits of the trees be utilized directly—for food, cooking, or marketing. Most fruits have to undergo a special 'refining' process before they become marketable or ready for use.

Banana

Only in Bida, Patigi, and Laboži did I see real banana plantations. They are small and of little importance, for bananas have little commercial value in Nupe; they are sold for an extremely low price (a bunch of about twenty for ½*d*. or less)—if they are sold at all. Bananas are eaten raw, and play in Nupe a part comparable to our occasional eating of fruit. In the banana plantations the plants are arranged in a circle of about 6 feet in diameter. The important thing is to plant them very deep in the ground (from 3 to 4 feet), and the whole circle has thus to be excavated to that depth. It is this heavy and slow work—unprofitable work from a commercial point of view—that, according to my informants, discourages the Nupe farmer from growing bananas. In Bida, where the soil is poor, the banana plot has to be manured with animal dung; in the bush plantations and in the forest groves where the banana grows wild, the

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245 the surface; it is skimmed and placed in another pot, where it hardens to
252 shea-butter. The residue of the pure fat is used as a fuel for the Nupe
[372] clay lamps.

Oil-palm

249 This grows in the thick groves near watercourses and, covering a larger area, in the dense forest country round Yeti, in the north of Nupe,
•438 which is inhabited by the Kusopa, the Keepers of the Forest. The Kusopa of Yeti are accorded a position somewhat similar to that of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. They too are regarded as 'experts' from most ancient times, and their chief holds the title *Yikunu Dzuru*, 'Oil-palm', as a symbol of his tribe's close association with the tree.[1] But they are 'experts' on a much smaller scale and claim no monopoly with regard to the products of their trees. Moreover the palm-oil produced in Kusopa country plays an unimportant part in the economy of Nupe at large. It contributes only very little towards the needs of the country, and palm-oil has to be imported regularly—and has most probably been so imported for centuries—from the south, i.e. the great oil-producing countries in the forest belt. The export of palm-kernels from the Emirate is negligible. The fruits of the palm-tree are plucked by the men, who climb up the trees with the help of a hoop made of supple boughs, and throw the fruits on the ground. They are later collected by the women. The manufacture of oil from the palm-kernels is women's work.

252 The kernels of about twenty fruits are extracted and then boiled in water for one day. They are left to cool overnight. Next morning they are placed in a mortar, and the women knead the soft mass by treading on it. Later, cold water is poured over it, and a first oil comes to the surface. It is skimmed and boiled again, in another pot. The oil which now appears on the surface is the pure palm-oil, *emi dzuru* (lit. red oil). The residue is dried in the sun, later kneaded again in a mortar, and finally boiled. From this boiling a second, less pure, oil is extracted, called *edi*. Twenty palm-fruits give two small pots of pure palm-oil (about 4 gallons).

Palm-oil plays an important part in the Nupe household; the pure palm-oil is the chief ingredient in all soups and sauces which are eaten with the universal Nupe dish porridge-and-fish and porridge-and-meat. The less pure oil, which is gained as a second extract, is used for cooking yam, potatoes, and beans, but also serves—a rather indiscriminate ingredient—as a hair-lotion, ointment, laxative, and lamp-oil. On the Nupe markets
[438] only the pure 'red' oil, not the whole fruit nor the less pure second extract, is offered for sale.

388 As palm-oil is also used in the preparation of native soap we may add the description of this process; it is again women's work. Water is filtered through hot wood ashes, collected in a pot and boiled. In another pot a bowlful of palm-oil has been prepared. To this an equal amount of boiling ash-water is added. The mixture is again boiled, and is constantly stirred till it hardens. This mass is left to cool, and is afterwards kneaded into large balls. The quality of the soap depends on the purity of the oil used.

[1] The Kusopa of Yeti are also said to 'cultivate' the oil-palm. What this term implies in reality, and how far it refers to real tending of the trees, weeding, thinning out, &c., I cannot say, not having been to Yeti myself.

[i.e. of the shea-nut rendering — Analyst]

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owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe, who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which
467 had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny.
431 The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and
467 most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*,
173 who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

323 The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass
438 and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

462 Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages. Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro,
323 Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

[171]

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We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

 443

study of the village market. No Nupe town or village is without its market and its regular market-days. Larger places hold their markets once a week; smaller villages every fifth day (irrespective of the seven days' week). This arrangement, illogical though it may appear, is well adjusted to the needs of the country, where local transport is still to a large extent by porterage. It enables more people, and people from more distant places, to attend the markets in the bigger villages. I estimated the attendance of the big market at Kutigi, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, at from 400 to 500. The distance from which people come varies considerably. Kacha market, the largest market after Bida, attracts men and women traders from the capital, forty miles away. In Kutigi I met women traders from Lemu, which is thirty miles from Kutigi, who were selling pots made in Gbari country, another fifty miles north. Professional, full-time traders, men and women, regularly attend all the larger markets in the country, stopping in one village for five or six successive market-days, and then moving on to another place. The peasant women, on the other hand, who practise trade only as a 'side line' and whose marketing is concerned chiefly with the disposal of the produce from their houses and their husbands' farms, rarely attend markets which are more than six or ten miles from their home. These small circles of inter-village exchange form no less part of the comprehensive marketing scheme of the country than do the extensive journeys of the professional traders. For the system of local exchange areas is partly subordinated to the main axes of trade and traffic. We find an organization almost of relay stations, half-way houses of exchange, situated all along the main trade-routes of the country, above all on the roads leading to the capital.

438 ● [482] 442 438

On the western road to Bida from Wuya (which is 12 miles from Bida) there are three such 'relay stations', used for the different kinds of produce of which Bida is constantly in need. Duzko Wuya (lit. Market Wuya) on the right bank of the Kaduna is used by the women of Batati, a village fifteen miles inland, for trading their cotton to Bida traders whom they meet at this place. Zantica, six miles from Bida, and Lumanla, four miles from Bida, serve as exchange places for agricultural produce and firewood, which goods are brought to these places by the local women, and then bought and carried to Bida by traders from the town. A similar arrangement, with regard to yam and other farm-produce, obtains on the northern road to Bida from Lemu; the 'relay station' is a tiny village half-way between Lemu and Bida, the only importance of which lies in its use as an exchange market.

Similar relay systems which exist in the river area, following and branching out from the water-ways, serve as centres for the extensive trade in smoked fish. Here the local exchange circles are primarily determined by the varying conditions of transport. Thus the wives of fishermen on the lower Kaduna take their fish (already smoked) in their small canoes to the nearest riverside market, e.g. Jima or Muregi. Here a wholesale trader from Jebba buys up fish in large quantities, takes them, again by canoe (this time a large river-going canoe) to Jebba market, and sells them to another wholesale trader who will transport the fish (by rail or lorry) to the final destination—the inland markets of Bida,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942 FF52 Nupe FF52

438 Ilorin, Oshogbo, or Ibadan. Another method is that the wholesale trader who buys up the smoked fish at the local riverside markets also trades them directly to Bida, Ilorin, &c.; certain enterprising traders with plenty of capital may also charter canoes and, travelling from place to place, buy up the local produce before it comes to the riverside markets.[1]

438 477 I have emphasized on various occasions the close correlation between markets and specialization of production. Here is the place to state the case once more. Generally speaking, trade and transport which bring the products of one area within reach of another involve competition, and through competition the elimination of inferior forms of production. Trade and transport must thus tend to foster (as they are in turn fostered by) local specialization. Certain developments in the agricultural and industrial production of Nupe reveal the effectiveness of these influences also in that culture. The people of Jebba, for example, do not grow sugar-cane or onions on their land, although on a similar type of land in Rabá and Ogudu these crops are cultivated. They explain this situation as being due to the fact that they are farmers on a less extensive scale, spending much time on fishing and (formerly) hunting; they prefer to import onions and sugar-cane from these other places. For certain handicrafts our evidence is even more striking, for here competition owing to an expansion of trade has only comparatively recently replaced an indigenous craft by imports from another area. The women of Leaba [323] formerly practised pottery; but when the regular canoe traffic, which used to stop farther down the river, was brought up to Leaba, and pots made in Jebba and Gbajibo reached Leaba market, the Leaba women gave up their craft; their own pots, they explained, were inferior in quality to the imported product, owing to the inferior potter's clay found locally.

443 In small villages no trade is done, and markets are deserted, on days other than market-days. In large villages the markets do a little trade—in food only—also on ordinary week-days. On the day after a market there is often quite considerable trade in goods which did not find a buyer the previous day. On market-day the people begin to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The market is in full swing by noon, and from 1 to 3 is the busiest time. After 4 the attendance begins to scatter, and soon after that the traders remove their goods, and the market is left empty. Every kind of trade and craft is represented even in the smaller village markets. In the roofed booths which every market possesses the more valuable goods are displayed—products of native industries as well as European goods. Tailors and leather-workers work in open huts. In the open square framed by these booths and huts agricultural produce, food-stuffs of every kind, live stock, pots, and tools are offered for sale.

[1] Lately the wives of the fishermen have attempted to break down the 'relay system' and to dispense with the services of middlemen, having begun to market their fish directly in Ilorin and Ibadan. A place like Ogudu, on the road from the river to Ilorin, which formerly formed an important exchange place, has now lost this transit trade in fish. The chief of Ogudu, to whom I owe this information, remarked regretfully that the women have 'begun to understand' (lit. 'have seen light').

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443 above. A census of the same market will give quantitative data with regard to the attendance of the market and the goods which are offered for sale on an average market-day. The figures quoted, which are of necessity elastic, were compiled from a large number of regular observations during the months of February and March. The kind and quantity of goods traded on the Nupe markets reflect the seasonal fluctuations in supply and demand. It must be understood, therefore, that at other times of the year, especially in the rainy season, the composition of the market will be somewhat different. In a large centre like Kutigi, however, which can count throughout the year on imports from distant places, these changes remain within more narrow limits than in a small market which relies largely on local supplies. For the purpose of comparison I have also added the corresponding figures referring to ordinary week-days.

The chart shows that, in marketing, certain goods are regularly com-
443 bined. The same women who sell grain also sell rice, red pepper, *kuka*,
441 and partly palm-oil and shea-butter. The sale of yam is regularly combined with the sale of cotton, and sometimes of gourds; or cotton is sold
438 by the traders in native cloth. Such goods as smoked fish, native tobacco, or cooked food, on the other hand, are always traded separately. The combination of goods offered for sale does not invariably betray the character of the seller, whether she is a farmer's wife, marketing his produce, or a professional trader or 'middleman'. The two categories, in fact, overlap to some extent. As a rule the women who sell grain, rice, *kuka*, red pepper, yam, and cooked food are only 'occasional' traders, i.e. are marketing produce from their husbands' farms. In the case of the women who combine the sale of grain, red pepper, rice, and palm-oil, grain and red pepper may well come from the farms of their husbands, while rice and palm-oil may have been bought by the woman from someone else. Or the woman who sells cloth and cotton may be selling her husband's cotton together with cloth which she purchased in Bida. The women, on the other hand, who sell tobacco, smoked fish, and various Bida goods are invariably professional traders or 'middlemen'.

443 The distinction between seller and buyer is no less difficult to elicit from the chart. The two roles are often combined in the same person.
571 Many women who come to the market to sell agricultural produce or cooked food, or men who bring live stock or hoes, at the same time purchase various goods from other traders. But the market, in Africa as well as Europe, is more than merely a business institution. The people who attend it, whether they come to buy or to sell, also come for the sake of company and entertainment. In the market they meet friends and acquaintances with whom they can gossip and exchange news. There also the sexes meet, girls and their suitors. Rarely will there be a market-day on which drummers and musicians do not turn up also, and young men or girls join in a dance. This 'social' aspect of the village market must appeal more to the local people, than to the professional traders from Bida or other more distant places. It presupposes common interests, a familiarity and intimacy of long standing. The group of peasant men and women who are brought together regularly on market-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Census of Kutigi Market

Goods	Attendance and quantities of goods: On market-day	Attendance and quantities of goods: On ordinary days
Fulani butter and milk	4 Fulani women from camp in the neighbourhood, each with 1–2 gals. of milk and 1 lb. butter	2–3 Fulani women
Grain, rice, red pepper, *kuka*	30–40 women, each with 10–12 *kpanu* of grain and rice, 1 lb. of red pepper and a small bowl of *kuka*	2 women
Palm-oil, shea-butter, and salt	50–60 women, partly the same as those who sell grain and rice, each with 2–4 gals. of palm-oil (in old petrol tins)	2 women
Cotton and yam	10–12 women, each with 4–5 heaps of yam, each containing 6–8 yams. Quantity of cotton very variable	2–3 women
Smoked fish	30–40 women, each with one basket containing 15–20 fish	3 women
Various greens and herbs (partly used as medicine)	15 old women	..
Native tobacco	5 women	3 women
Live stock	Men with 4–5 sheep or goats	..
Pottery of different size	10–15 women, each with 10–15 smaller or 4–5 larger pots	..
Gourds	7–8 women, partly the same as those who sell cotton	..
Hoes	1–2 men each with 4 hoes	..
Mats	Very variable, 2–10 mat sellers, mostly men	..
Cooked food (pastries, corn-gruel, corn-water, &c.)	20–30 women, the same as those who also sell grain or palm-oil, each with 2 pts. corn-water, 20–25 packets (in banana leaves) of corn-gruel, and 10–15 pastries	4–5 women
Meat	3 butchers, average 2 sheep or sometimes 1 bull or cow	They slaughter every second day
Straw hats	5 men	..
Cloth, various fancy goods	5 men in the booths, and 15 women (Nupe and Yoruba) in the square	..
Tailors	6 men, in the booths	..
Barbers	4 men	..
Leather-workers	4 men, in the booths	..
Charms, medicines, and potash	4 men, two of them Hausa	..
Roast meat	1 man, sitting on the road-side opposite the market	..

days indeed constitute a substratum of community life at large. The social life at the village markets utilizes, and creates or revives, at the same time the contacts and social relationships which characterize the 'area of common life'. It is no accident that this circle of five to ten miles radius from which the local attendance of village markets is recruited coincides with the area which is covered by local knowledge and interest in each other's affairs,[1] and within which intermarriage between different villages takes place.

[1] See p. 38.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*ázolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

LIVESTOCK

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[432] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262] No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
[492] which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 236–7, 238, 206–14; Line, 1947; Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
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Bida

516
291
438
301

Bangles and bracelets of metal and glass, soup spoons of aluminium, all made in Bida

Glass-makers of Bida

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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wanderings from west to east and south-east, was the carrier of conquest. It was separated from the groups which it subjugated by ethnic descent and social structure, consisting apparently of a loose aggregate of kinship groups and self-constituted warlike bands, and only partly by its system of livelihood; for the predecessors of the Fulani, the Nupe rulers, had already been soldiers and had themselves evolved an urbanized civilization in which Mohammedan culture played its part. But the analysis of Fulani political history goes beyond the scope of this book. 175

We can study some of the stimuli which, though perhaps it did not initiate, yet certainly influenced and directed the political growth of Nupe. Limiting ourselves to the periods that come under the heading of 'real' history, we can point out the essential difference in the policy of expansion before and after the Fulani conquest. The expansion of the pre-Fulani kingdom appears to have been most marked in the north, and of the Fulani era, in the south. Tsoede's grave, symbolic to all Nupe kings of what we might call his 'political testament', lies in Gbagede, 100 miles north of their northernmost capital, Rabá. The Fulani Emirs, on the other hand, drove their armies farther and farther south; only in recent times, less than two generations ago, did they begin to 'consolidate' the Gbari provinces, thirty or forty miles north of Bida. The conquest of the northern territories, inhabited by primitive pagans who possessed no handicrafts or remarkable wealth, had evidently two main aims (apart from the necessity of pacifying the border countries): first, to tap the rich, easily accessible reservoir of slaves which the Nupe found among these primitive and poorly protected groups; and second, to protect and attract the trade from the wealthy centres of civilization in the Hausa states. Of this latter aim we have concrete proof. The main trade-routes from Hausa passed through, and partly ended in, Nupe, crossing on their way the territories of unruly hostile tribes. Rabá was the goal of the huge caravans that carried regularly *kamwa* (potash) from Lake Chad over Kano to the countries of the south.[1] When the first European explorers, in the times of the last indigenous Nupe kings, reached Nupe country and Rabá, they found it a town rich in cattle (the humped, northern, breed), horses, camels, and ostriches—which must all have come from the north—and the markets full of precious goods from Hausa, Bornu, and North Africa.[2] [439]

The turning to the south represents a new political interest, bound up with a later phase in the history of West Africa. Fulani-Nupe, as the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, carried its wars of expansion into the pagan south and no longer into the northern countries which had come under the sovereignty of various Fulani potentates to whom Nupe was tied by common allegiance. The south offered, over and above new densely populated areas for slave raiding, the command of the main route for the slave-trade, down the river to the coast whence ships took the slaves to foreign ports. Not until the Fulani subjugated the Kakanda

[1] See Barth, op. cit. ii, p. 115.
[2] See J. and R. Lander: Rabá had large herds of 'horned cattle remarkable for size and beauty' and a 'prodigious number of excellent horses' (op. cit. ii, pp. 312–13).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
652 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
661 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in
[575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyä*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
643 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will
652 find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold
655 Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4. 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help
[782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to
567] have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaši kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *ldlemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsóži*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop
outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the
royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the
ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic
division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps per-
manently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa*
(or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or
Asari), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two
men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly
have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from
the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they
paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they
were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch
the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters
concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts
curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects
the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this
society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where im-
ported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be
bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroid-
ered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
621 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
554 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form
themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different
parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent
member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or
efu Dzwoáfu, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained
partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen,
slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the
people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the
member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had
the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protec-
tion and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong,
permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there
real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to
a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change;
every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and
reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accor-
571 dance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions
are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three
ekpã, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpã* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alhali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects. 233 433 [439]

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself. 233 422

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is [illegible], as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba. 262 231

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season. [435]

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The proportion of maize and the various other millet and sorghum varieties in the productive scheme of one household is illustrated in the following typical example: on a farm which produced a total millet and sorghum crop of twenty bundles the different varieties were distributed as follows: 241

Bulrush-millet . .	2 bundles
Maize	2–3 ,,
Late millet . . .	8 ,,
Sorghum . . .	10 ,,

Sorghum and late millet are clearly shown to be the main staple crops as compared with bulrush-millet and maize, the importance of which, as we shall see later, lies in their subsidiary, 'stopgap', character.

Some enterprising farmers, and farmers in certain districts of Nupe, have added to this table of crops certain special, commercially valuable, plants or have given over a large portion of their farm-land to the cultivation of plants which normally would play only a secondary, unimportant, part. Thus we find henna (*lali*) cultivated in many parts; indigo (*eci*) is collected and prepared especially in the districts of Sakpe and Kutigi. Recently farmers in Lemu, north of Bida, have started the cultivation of red pepper (*yakd*) as a main crop, in the place of groundnuts. The first two kinds of produce have a considerable marketing value in the country, the last kind is meant for European export. [439]

Clearing

The dry season is not completely a season of leisure. Many Nupe farmers will visit their fields more or less regularly even during that time, perhaps once a week, to 'look over the farm' as they say, to see that animals have not done damage to ridges and mounds, or to collect brushwood for fuel, or leaves for which there is always use in the Nupe household.

In the dry season comes also the first agricultural activity of the year, the *nwa tsaka*, the clearing and burning of the farms. On farms (fallow or virgin land) which are to be taken under cultivation for the first time, grass and shrubs are cut and afterwards the farms are burned. Old farms also are cleared summarily by burning the dead stalks, leaves, and undergrowth that have been left there from last year. Later the first rains will wash the ashes into the soil, thus completing the process of 'green manure', which the Nupe farmers consciously utilize (see p. 221). The burning of the farms takes place at any time between January and May; new plots, the clearing of which involves the heavier work, being as a rule burned earlier in the season, cultivated plots (on which the stalks and leaves are given ample time to dry and rot) towards the beginning of the rains. The heaviest and lengthiest work is the clearing of virgin land. If carried out early it will curtail seriously the short leisure season of the Nupe farmer, and if left till late will add to the work of an already very busy time of the year. Clearing virgin land is, in fact, considered so heavy and inconvenient work that the farmers, especially those who cannot count on the assistance of a large working group, make all efforts to avoid taking virgin land under cultivation.

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241 'making yam mounds'. Many farmers will try to prepare their new yam plots soon after the yam harvest, or at any rate before the beginning of the dry season.[1] They clear new plots, throw up the mounds, and plant the yams at once, thus having everything prepared for next year. In Nupe opinion one obtains bigger yams if one follows this practice, plants yam early, and leaves the seed yam in the ground through the whole dry season.[2]

The early preparation of ridges or mounds offers, on the other hand, two very concrete advantages: first, it means comparatively easy work, carried out as it is in the soft soil; second, it enables the farmer to start his planting without further delay as soon as the rains break. In the case of yam, particularly, this early planting removes one difficult crop from the already crowded time-table of sowing and planting.

Reaping and Harvesting

Our description of the agricultural activities of the year has taken us to the second phase in the farming cycle: harvesting. A fortnight after the harvest of bulrush-millet, following closely upon the third weeding, the first yam crop is dug up, and shortly afterwards the first ground-nut crop. There are two yam harvests. In July the farmers dig out yam for the first time, cutting one tuber from the plant and leaving the rest in the ground to sprout farther. This young yam is considered a delicacy; unlike the late yam it is eaten 'mashed'. Only a little of it is sold; most of it is consumed by the household. The fresh yam, however, lasts only a short time; the second yam harvest, in October–November, is the main harvest, at which the remaining tubers (three or four in each mound) are dug out.[3] Ground-nuts, too, are harvested twice. The first ground-nut crop is dug out between mid-July and the end of August, and used for [439] food only; the second ground-nut crop, dug out between the end of December and the end of January—a much drier crop than the first—is used exclusively for sale to the European trading companies.

There is hardly any pause between the end of the first yam harvest and the fourth and last weeding. After this, however—it is by then the end of August or beginning of September—there is a certain lull in the farming activities, at least if the time-table has been kept fairly strictly. Till the next big item on the list, the second yam harvest, the farmer can enjoy a short respite of three or four weeks, during which he can take his work more leisurely. Even so, he remains fully occupied: he is still going regularly to the farm to clear away leaves and brushwood; those who have planted rice or sweet potatoes as additional crops harvest them now; the women pick the melons which have been interplanted with yam or corn. Certain farmers who were pressed for time earlier in the year have postponed the important third weeding until now. The lull continues to some extent after the second yam harvest. Now is the time

[1] In Bida this operation is often postponed till January or February.

[2] I cannot say how far this opinion is substantiated by fact. Agricultural officers whom I consulted on this question were unable either to confirm or to refute this native theory.

[3] In Leaba, in the extreme north of Nupe, i.e. close to the line which marks the northern boundary of yam cultivation, yam is harvested only once.

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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa. 388 [177]

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men. 249 386

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who 386 439

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

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386 owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin
439 market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

245 Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-
248 wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton
438 tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

245 From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe,
185 who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing
177 trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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326 Mohamadu before him, whose royal residence was not far from the brass-smiths' quarter. Here, as in many other instances, the invaluable royal patronage was extended primarily to the craftsmen living in the part of the town traditionally associated with the dynasty. With the change of the dynasty the royal patronage changed also, and under the late *Etsu* Saidu, of the house of Masaba, the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter captured the largest and most lucrative trade. A contributory cause lies in the lay-out of modern Bida. The motor-road to the centre [361] of Bida and the big market leads through the street of the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter, while the other brass-smiths' group is situated in an obscure corner of Bida, away from roads and markets. Now, the brass- and silver-ware manufactured in Bida consists to a large extent of ornaments for men and women and other 'luxury' objects. A large pro- [339] portion is intended for export, and certain goods are even made specially for tourists and European 'curio'-hunters. In either case the nearness of the big trading centre and the main thoroughfare of the town, with its opportunity for display and for attracting customers, must prove an advantage which is denied to the other, almost inaccessible, group of craftsmen.

The character of this luxury industry also explains its concentration in Bida. Its products find their way to villages and peasant districts as well. But a constant and large-scale demand exists only in the capital. Moreover, the concentration of this industry is, in sophisticated Nupe, a trade-mark of refinement and value, and a guarantee that its products express the latest fashions.

326 The technical equipment of the workshop of the brass-smiths differs 531 in certain important details from that of the blacksmiths. The workshops of the brass-smiths, with their smaller and less smoky furnace, are more often housed in the compound itself, i.e. in the entrance hut. The tools are less heavy and adjusted to the finer technique. European hammers, chisels, and files are used to a much larger extent. The main products of the Nupe brass industry are sword-hilts and daggers,[1] horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles of various kinds, made mostly of beaten brass or copper; bangles and rings, which are cast in open clay moulds of bars of brass or silver or (nowadays) aluminium and then bent and twisted into shape; also hairpins and silver chains. Artistic decoration, especially ornamentation of the surface of these various objects, plays an important part. From old Nupe brass- and silver-work preserved in Bida and in European museums we learn the different styles in decoration which have succeeded each other in the course of the last hundred years. The style in fashion to-day is ornamentation in *pointillé* technique.[2]

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

[1] The blades are old, mostly of German or Austrian manufacture, and have been traded for centuries to Nigeria and Nupe, across the desert, from North Africa.

[2] The oldest style appears to be a fluted design which I have seen on certain brass bowls; a later style which flourished at the end of last century, consisted in embossed ornaments which made special use of the flower motif. The *pointillé* style appears to have come in about 1910.

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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and suchlike. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgiši*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s.* for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d.* apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d.*; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d.* Silver bangles are sold for 12*s.* a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s.*, and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d.* to 1*s.* Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s.*; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the profit per

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles. 323

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen. 323 444 439 [527]

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production, 323 471 592 474 [465]

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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306 time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
442 the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
439 with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
306 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
442 in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'mainten-
467 ance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Majī*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the
[434] *Majī* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

306 All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
467 the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
178 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry. With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

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reckon, we make the somewhat surprising discovery that here the more 435
refined work is not only not more highly paid but partly even worse paid than the cruder industry. Both as regards profits per day and profits per article produced the brass-smiths work on the whole with lower profits than the blacksmiths.[1] Why, then, does the calculation of price and profit allow for an appreciation of the specific artistic qualities of the work of tailors and embroiderers but not in the analogous instance of brass-smith work? But is it an analogous instance? In the case of tailors and embroiderers both the cruder and the more refined technique belong to the same class of production: they are both what we may loosely call luxury industries. In blacksmith and brass-smith work we have fundamentally different industries, one supplying necessities, and the other a typical fashion and luxury industry. The explanation thus seems to be that indispensability may equal aesthetic value; and that where these two diverse types of industry compete side by side the factor of necessity may balance or outweigh the appreciation of artistic qualities.

MARKET AND TRADE

We have had frequent opportunity to speak of the complexity of Nupe 439
economics and of the far-reaching specialization of Nupe production, 487
which must express itself most forcibly in the wide scope of trade and marketing. In a wider sense Nupe country itself is one big market. For Nupe is a country which exports and imports, and represents, besides, an important station on the route of transit-trade across Nigeria. The ancient trade-routes have to some extent been adjusted to-day to the new forms of communication, motor-roads, steamers, and railways. But to a large extent they have remained the same, for now as of old a large proportion of this transit-trade is carried to, and by, the water-way of the river Niger.

The following are the traditional trade-routes through Nupe. They 487
run mostly roughly from north to south. One, coming from Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi, goes through Kontagora and reaches Nupe north of Mokwa; from here it goes either west, crossing the Niger at Jebba (formerly at Buka, five miles up the river) into Yoruba, or east through Laboži, Sakpe, to the Kaduna, which it crosses at Gbara, then south to Muregi and, after crossing the Niger, on to Yoruba and Kabba. A second route from Kontagora reaches Nupe Emirate north of Kutiwengi, passes through Dabbā and Kutigi, and crosses the river Niger at Ogudu, on the way to Ilorin. An alternative to this route branches off at Dabbā, crosses the Kaduna at Wuya, and ends at Bida. A third trade-route passes through Birnin Gwari and Wushishi, and reaches Bida via Gbangba. There are three routes from Bida to the south and south-east: one through Jima and Dokomba, down the Kaduna by canoe to Muregi,

[1] The profits of blacksmiths per object are: 3*d.*, 3½*d.*, 6*d.*; per day, 6*d.*, 7*d.*, 1*s.* The profits of brass-smiths per object are: 1½*d.*, 2*d.*; per day, 3*d.*, 6*d.* Higher profits are only realised in the casting of bangles in precious metal, in the casting of brass figures for tourist trade, and also in the production of ladles in the modern cheap material, aluminium.

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where the route crosses the Niger and goes on to Ilorin and Yoruba; a second, to Badeggi and Kacha, where it crosses the Niger to Eggã and Yagba country; the third route goes from Bida to Kacha, or Giddi, farther down the river, where the trade-goods are loaded on canoes on their way south to Lokoja, Idah, and Onitsa. In addition to these land routes we have also an 'all-water' route, the north terminus of which used to be at Rabá or Ogudu.[1]

Let me summarize the main facts concerning the 'international' commerce in Nupe. Nupe country exports a certain proportion of its agricultural produce, especially rice and Laboži kola-nuts, smoked fish, and a large variety of its industrial products. It imports various foodstuffs, especially palm-oil and European salt, cheap southern kola-nuts, potash, and live stock. It re-exports potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, European salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. This commerce follows certain interesting traditional patterns. A simple export trade from Nupe to another country is the exception: of this kind is the trade in smoked fish from the riverain districts of Nupe by rail to Ilorin and Ibadan, or the trade in Nupe glass, beads, brass, and silverware, which goes by canoe to Lokoja. In the majority of cases the import or export trade in a certain commodity is combined with a definite return trade in another commodity. Here we find the following regular 'patterns': donkey caravans from Hausa bring beans to Bida and return with kola-nuts (either the local Laboži nuts or the cheap southern variety). Other donkey caravans go north from Nupe; they are loaded in Kacha with palm-oil and salt, which arrive on the Niger Company steamers from the south, and return from the north with *kanwa* (potash) from Bornu. In Kacha the riverain Kakanda buy Nupe-grown rice, which comes down by canoe from Patigi and the Kaduna, and take it south to Onitsa, whence they return with palm-oil. Hausa traders from Kano bring horses and sheep and goats to Bida, to return to their country with Nupe straw hats. Another exchange pattern between Hausa and Nupe is the trade of potash against Bida embroidered gowns. In this trade the imported goods are invariably first sold for money, with which the goods for the return voyage are then purchased. All the variations that are theoretically possible in this threefold export and transit-trade are found to occur in practice. In other words, the Nupe merchant plays three different roles: he is either the local broker who arranges the sale of goods between importer and exporter; or he acts as wholesale trader and buys himself the imported goods to re-export them (himself supplying the transport) to their eventual destination; or he acts as retail trader and sells the imported goods either directly to the customer (on the Bida markets) or to other retail traders, who will dispose of them on the various village markets of the country.

We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

[1] To-day the 'all-water' route goes to Jebba, the new railway and steamer station, and even farther north, the water-way north of Jebba having been made navigable for canoes. I have described this river-trade more fully in 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria' (in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 165).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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442 It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials
452 from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run
[444] lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an extremely low price—in certain cases only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

439 The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and,
177 generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

435 4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7*s.* 6*d.*; one bottle is sold for 6*d.*, giving a profit of 8*s.* The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is
249 women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[439 cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and
386] women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1930.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go 443 outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for market- 49 ing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Masu Kolo Kolo*, "the hagglers."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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251 of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used [231] as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

251 The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list ● 439 complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not [415] for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

251 Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary 438 manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
463 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
439 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell ground-nuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsozi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsozi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsozi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
[582 villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the
184] (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsozi*.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956

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Bida

323 Beads are made similarly, small amounts of molten glass being allowed to fall fixed distances to determine size and shape much as round shot used to be made in Europe.

323 This trade is suffering badly now. The products are very cheap, but
439 they are in direct competition with more sophisticated, imported products.

One type of Bida bead is *not* cheap. It is very rare and is said to be made from "a sort of stone found a thousand miles away in the desert, only at one place. It is brought here only by women traders who go to Kano and Zinder to buy it from the desert people and very few know how to work on it". Accurate details are very difficult to come by, but this type of bead is very scarce and still greatly prized.

326 The brass workers fashion all but their most involved shapes on small anvils, beating rhythmically with a very small hammer. The patterns are made with a punch without any preliminary drawing of the intended pattern. As may be expected, the results vary but many are remarkably symmetrical and precise.

Much of the work is carried out in "silver", correctly coloured but bearing about as much likeness to real metal as does the average silver coinage. The Maria Theresa dollar, one of the traditional sources of
[439] silver in the North, has been used as far south as Bida but the supply seems to be running out. In some places, craftsmen may be seen making Maria Theresa dollars . . .

Bida metal work is both interesting and disappointing at the same time. The folklore of the Nupe people makes many references to great skill in bronze casting and the Jebba bronzes are there to support the tale (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 43). There appears to be no casting now, though there remains an ability to make thin and very ductile metal sheet in a variety of alloys which can be worked over and over again without harm. Many of these metals have a quite surprising capacity to conduct heat, as anyone casually using a brass ash tray may quickly learn.

There is among the surviving guildsmen of Bida a reservoir of craftsmanship and familiarity with working glass, metals, leather and similar traditional materials. Without outside help, their skills will be lost and their young men will turn to other jobs. Perhaps there can never be an adequate, expanding market for their present products; but with a little help and advice, they could still be of greater value to their town and to Nigeria.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu. [88] [121]

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found. [323] [469] [97] [78]

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-nyetū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunu*—MAN 1931, 166). [415]

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated— [317] [343] [335]

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds; this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo. [415]

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any [410] [430]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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where the route crosses the Niger and goes on to Ilorin and Yoruba; a second, to Badeggi and Kacha, where it crosses the Niger to Eggā and Yagba country; the third route goes from Bida to Kacha, or Giddi, farther down the river, where the trade-goods are loaded on canoes on their way south to Lokoja, Idah, and Onitsa. In addition to these land routes we have also an 'all-water' route, the north terminus of which used to be at Rabá or Ogudu.[1]

Let me summarize the main facts concerning the 'international' commerce in Nupe. Nupe country exports a certain proportion of its agricultural produce, especially rice and Laboži kola-nuts, smoked fish, and a large variety of its industrial products. It imports various foodstuffs, especially palm-oil and European salt, cheap southern kola-nuts, potash, and live stock. It re-exports potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, European salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. This commerce follows certain interesting traditional patterns. A simple export trade from Nupe to another country is the exception: of this kind is the trade in smoked fish from the riverain districts of Nupe by rail to Ilorin and Ibadan, or the trade in Nupe glass, beads, brass, and silverware, which goes by canoe to Lokoja. In the majority of cases the import or export trade in a certain commodity is combined with a definite return trade in another commodity. Here we find the following regular 'patterns': donkey caravans from Hausa bring beans to Bida and return with kola-nuts (either the local Laboži nuts or the cheap southern variety). Other donkey caravans go north from Nupe; they are loaded in Kacha with palm-oil and salt, which arrive on the Niger Company steamers from the south, and return from the north with *kanwa* (potash) from Bornu. In Kacha the riverain Kakanda buy Nupe-grown rice, which comes down by canoe from Patigi and the Kaduna, and take it south to Onitsa, whence they return with palm-oil. Hausa traders from Kano bring horses and sheep and goats to Bida, to return to their country with Nupe straw hats. Another exchange pattern between Hausa and Nupe is the trade of potash against Bida embroidered gowns. In this trade the imported goods are invariably first sold for money, with which the goods for the return voyage are then purchased. All the variations that are theoretically possible in this threefold export and transit trade are found to occur in practice. In other words, the Nupe merchant plays three different roles: he is either the local broker who arranges the sale of goods between importer and exporter; or he acts as wholesale trader and buys himself the imported goods to re-export them (himself supplying the transport) to their eventual destination; or he acts as retail trader and sells the imported goods either directly to the customer (on the Bida markets) or to other retail traders, who will dispose of them on the various village markets of the country.

We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

[1] To-day the 'all-water' route goes to Jebba, the new railway and steamer station, and even farther north, the water-way north of Jebba having been made navigable for canoes. I have described this river-trade more fully in 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria' (in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 165).

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443 above. A census of the same market will give quantitative data with regard to the attendance of the market and the goods which are offered for sale on an average market-day. The figures quoted, which are of necessity elastic, were compiled from a large number of regular observations during the months of February and March. The kind and quantity of goods traded on the Nupe markets reflect the seasonal fluctuations in supply and demand. It must be understood, therefore, that at other times of the year, especially in the rainy season, the composition of the market will be somewhat different. In a large centre like Kutigi, however, which can count throughout the year on imports from distant places, these changes remain within more narrow limits than in a small market which relies largely on local supplies. For the purpose of comparison I have also added the corresponding figures referring to ordinary week-days.

443 The chart shows that, in marketing, certain goods are regularly combined. The same women who sell grain also sell rice, red pepper, *kuka*,
● 441 and partly palm-oil and shea-butter. The sale of yam is regularly combined with the sale of cotton, and sometimes of gourds; or cotton is sold
438 by the traders in native cloth. Such goods as smoked fish, native tobacco, or cooked food, on the other hand, are always traded separately. The combination of goods offered for sale does not invariably betray the character of the seller, whether she is a farmer's wife, marketing his produce, or a professional trader or 'middleman'. The two categories, in fact, overlap to some extent. As a rule the women who sell grain, rice, *kuka*, red pepper, yam, and cooked food are only 'occasional' traders, i.e. are marketing produce from their husbands' farms. In the case of the women who combine the sale of grain, red pepper, rice, and palm-oil, grain and red pepper may well come from the farms of their husbands, while rice and palm-oil may have been bought by the woman from someone else. Or the woman who sells cloth and cotton may be selling her husband's cotton together with cloth which she purchased in Bida. The women, on the other hand, who sell tobacco, smoked fish, and various Bida goods are invariably professional traders or 'middlemen'.

443 The distinction between seller and buyer is no less difficult to elicit
571 from the chart. The two roles are often combined in the same person. Many women who come to the market to sell agricultural produce or cooked food, or men who bring live stock or hoes, at the same time purchase various goods from other traders. But the market, in Africa as well as Europe, is more than merely a business institution. The people who attend it, whether they come to buy or to sell, also come for the sake of company and entertainment. In the market they meet friends and acquaintances with whom they can gossip and exchange news. There also the sexes meet, girls and their suitors. Rarely will there be a market-day on which drummers and musicians do not turn up also, and young men or girls join in a dance. This 'social' aspect of the village market must appeal more to the local people, than to the professional traders from Bida or other more distant places. It presupposes common interests, a familiarity and intimacy of long standing. The group of peasant men and women who are brought together regularly on market-

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Census of Kutigi Market

Goods	Attendance and quantities of goods: On market-day	Attendance and quantities of goods: On ordinary days
Fulani butter and milk	4 Fulani women from camp in the neighbourhood, each with 1–2 gals. of milk and 1 lb. butter	2–3 Fulani women
Grain, rice, red pepper, *kuka*	30–40 women, each with 10–12 *kpanu* of grain and rice, 1 lb. of red pepper and a small bowl of *kuka*	2 women
Palm-oil, shea-butter, and salt	50–60 women, partly the same as those who sell grain and rice, each with 2–4 gals. of palm-oil (in old petrol tins)	2 women
Cotton and yam	10–12 women, each with 4–5 heaps of yam, each containing 6–8 yams. Quantity of cotton very variable	2–3 women
Smoked fish	30–40 women, each with one basket containing 15–20 fish	3 women
Various greens and herbs (partly used as medicine)	15 old women	..
Native tobacco	5 women	3 women
Live stock	Men with 4–5 sheep or goats	..
Pottery of different size	10–15 women, each with 10–15 smaller or 4–5 larger pots	..
Gourds	7–8 women, partly the same as those who sell cotton	..
Hoes	1–2 men, each with 4 hoes	..
Mats	Very variable, 2–10 mat sellers, mostly men	..
Cooked food (pastries, corn-gruel, corn-water, &c.)	20–30 women, the same as those who also sell grain or palm-oil, each with 2 pts. corn-water, 20–25 packets (in banana leaves) of corn-gruel, and 10–15 pastries	4–5 women
Meat	3 butchers, average 2 sheep or sometimes 1 bull or cow	They slaughter every second day
Straw hats	5 men	..
Cloth, various fancy goods	5 men in the booths, and 15 women (Nupe and Yoruba) in the square	..
Tailors	6 men, in the booths	..
Barbers	4 men	..
Leather-workers	4 men, in the booths	..
Charms, medicines, and potash	4 men, two of them Hausa	..
Roast meat	1 man, sitting on the road-side opposite the market	..

days indeed constitute a substratum of community life at large. The social life at the village markets utilizes, and creates or revives, at the same time the contacts and social relationships which characterize the 'area of common life'. It is no accident that this circle of five to ten miles radius from which the local attendance of village markets is recruited coincides with the area which is covered by local knowledge and interest in each other's affairs,[1] and within which intermarriage between different villages takes place.

[1] See p. 38.

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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips. 441 574 484

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course 441 167 484 571 [191]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts, although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong
441 the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6
441 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which
868 they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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593 562 makes the women the main traders of the country that the women can as a rule command more liquid capital than the men. In this sense, referring to the liquid resources, it can be said that the Nupe women are on the whole wealthier than the men. This does not mean that their financial position is entirely unaffected by the limited resources of the husband. The wives of small farmers and craftsmen or, generally, impecunious husbands, have little scope for their commercial activities, and may be unable to derive from the household resources the necessary working capital for a profitable independent enterprise. Where there is little to sell there can be little profit; and this small profit may be swallowed up by the normal household expenditure. Even the utensils and goods which constitute the wife's dowry may disappear gradually in a household where there is no money with which to replace the stock of pots, clothes, and ornaments—the woman's initial 'capital' (see p. 351). The household of a diviner in Bida, whom I knew well, was a typical case. The man was of poor health, unable to do any serious work, and had to rely entirely on his income from divining, which was small and irregular. The wife maintained the household, poor and simple as it was. She was about 40 years old; she had nothing left of her dowry save the few rags which she wore, and a few damaged pots. Every day she bought grain for 6*d.* on the market, made corn-gruel and corn-water, and sold this food in the mornings in the street, with a total profit of 2*d.* With this money she kept herself and her husband and a small child.

But usually the wives even of men whom one would hardly call prosperous attain an impressive degree of solvency. Solvency in this connexion is a relative term, as the pecuniary demands which the wives have to meet are much smaller than those which devolve on the men as the heads of the household. Yet in many cases the women come to the succour of their men even in expenses of the latter kind. It is by no means rare, especially in Bida, to find families in which a mother undertakes to pay the bride-price for the sons. Much more widespread is the practice of wives lending their husbands money, for example, for the payment of tax. Of this practice we shall hear more later. Let me emphasize here the dependence of the husband on his wife with regard to these monetary obligations—a dependence which must increase as the independent economic enterprise of the women, commerce, is increasing in scope. This fact is essential for the understanding of certain moral issues involved in the expansion of women's trade in Nupe.

441 462 562 I have stated earlier that the line of distinction between professional and occasional traders is much more fluid among the women than among the men. Wives of farmers, craftsmen, Mallams, noblemen, traders, officials—they all are, or may be, traders. The enormous variety in the trade which is carried out by the Nupe women, and in the degree of their 'professionalization', cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The woman who sells every morning two or three dozen packets of home-made *kamu* (corn-gruel) for a tenth of a penny each, and the woman who buys £5 worth of rice, kola-nuts, or European cloth, do not really differ in anything except in the amount of capital they can lay their hands on. The difference in the distance which they cover when

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disposing of their goods—the peasant woman who walks eight to ten miles to the nearest local market, and the professional woman trader who travels to Lokoja or Ilorin by canoe or train—may seem but an external feature. Yet this factor of distance possesses a deeper significance. The essential difference between the professional and the occasional woman trader is embodied in the extent to which their trading and marketing becomes an independent, self-contained, and self-centred enterprise. Both the occasional and the professional trader are out for profit. But only the latter has adjusted her life fully to this aim. 'Proper' trade necessitates a freedom of movement, a full-time devotion to the task, which only women who have made themselves independent can afford. It means extensive journeys, and long absence from home. Obviously, the wife of a farmer or craftsman who must look after the house is less able to do this than the wife of a trader or a man of the leisured classes.

But the profession demands even more than comparative leisure. The long absence from home, the life on the road, in foreign villages and countries to which none of the normal contacts of the community stretch, means ultimately a dissolution of the bonds of marriage, household, and family. The disappearance of all moral control of the husband over his wife, or the local community over its women, expresses itself in the sexual licence claimed by these women. Female trade and immorality are in Nupe conception two things closely related. The women traders who go on these long expeditions and stay away from home for weeks, months, or even years, are commonly regarded as 'loose' women, as women who cannot help leading a 'loose' and 'immoral' life. The women traders prostitute themselves for money in the villages and towns where they stop on their trading expeditions. The money which they make is regarded by the people as legitimate a form of earnings as that gained from trade itself. When they return to their homes husband and family will receive them without question, and no blame would attach to them for the life which they had been leading while away. Public opinion, though outspoken in its general condemnation of moral laxity, yet countenances the sexual licence of women traders and accepts it almost as an institution. If people—men, as the spokesmen of public opinion—express their indignation at this danger to matrimonial morality, they attack, not the practice itself, but its disproportionate growth in recent times.

We have, in a previous chapter, discussed the social significance of this qualified admission of sexual licence in a certain limited social domain (see Chap. IX). Let me recall the salient facts: female trade, closely associated as it is with licentious living, provided the scope for that socially condoned sexual licence which other social forces seem to have made necessary. Thus female trade became in some respects a closed profession, the entrance into which was made dependent on the qualification of sterility. We may add here that, not unnaturally, women who were past child-bearing age could also legitimately join the profession of women traders. By means of these two qualifications an occupation which harboured some danger to common morality was limited to

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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go 443 outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for market- 449 ing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Masu Kolo Kolo*, "the haggler."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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306 time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
442 with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases
439 I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other
workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation
of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they
buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after
they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work
on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or
sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither
case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the
smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young
men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task
suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not
practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
306 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
442 in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'mainten-
ance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide
467 the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work
effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Majī*, Master,
also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in
beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they
would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show
them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he
needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would
take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on
the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he
would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lāntana* paying
the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for
himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the
fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry
(of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for
innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida
busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the
[434] *Majī* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in
this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his
group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'.
In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act
himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to
£1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the
strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as
sufficient security.

306 All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
467 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry.
178 With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

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We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

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study of the village market. No Nupe town or village is without its market and its regular market-days. Larger places hold their markets once a week; smaller villages every fifth day (irrespective of the seven days' week). This arrangement, illogical though it may appear, is well adjusted to the needs of the country, where local transport is still to a large extent by porterage. It enables more people, and people from more distant places, to attend the markets in the bigger villages. I estimated the attendance of the big market at Kutigi, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, at from 400 to 500. The distance from which people come varies considerably. Kacha market, the largest market after Bida, attracts men and women traders from the capital, forty miles away. In Kutigi I met women traders from Lemu, which is thirty miles from Kutigi, who were selling pots made in Gbari country, another fifty miles north. Professional, full-time traders, men and women, regularly attend all the larger markets in the country, stopping in one village for five or six successive market-days, and then moving on to another place. The peasant women, on the other hand, who practise trade only as a 'side line' and whose marketing is concerned chiefly with the disposal of the produce from their houses and their husbands' farms, rarely attend markets which are more than six or ten miles from their home. These small circles of inter-village exchange form no less part of the comprehensive marketing scheme of the country than do the extensive journeys of the professional traders. For the system of local exchange areas is partly subordinated to the main axes of trade and traffic. We find an organization almost of relay stations, half-way houses of exchange, situated all along the main trade-routes of the country, above all on the roads leading to the capital.

438 [482] 442 438

On the western road to Bida from Wuya (which is 12 miles from Bida) there are three such 'relay stations', used for the different kinds of produce of which Bida is constantly in need. Duzko Wuya (lit. Market Wuya) on the right bank of the Kaduna is used by the women of Batati, a village fifteen miles inland, for trading their cotton to Bida traders whom they meet at this place. Zantica, six miles from Bida, and Lumanla, four miles from Bida, serve as exchange places for agricultural produce and firewood, which goods are brought to these places by the local women, and then bought and carried to Bida by traders from the town. A similar arrangement, with regard to yam and other farm-produce, obtains on the northern road to Bida from Lemu; the 'relay station' is a tiny village half-way between Lemu and Bida, the only importance of which lies in its use as an exchange market.

Similar relay systems which exist in the river area, following and branching out from the water-ways, serve as centres for the extensive trade in smoked fish. Here the local exchange circles are primarily determined by the varying conditions of transport. Thus the wives of fishermen on the lower Kaduna take their fish (already smoked) in their small canoes to the nearest riverside market, e.g. Jima or Muregi. Here a wholesale trader from Jebba buys up fish in large quantities, takes them, again by canoe (this time a large river-going canoe) to Jebba market, and sells them to another wholesale trader who will transport the fish (by rail or lorry) to the final destination—the inland markets of Bida,

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442 It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run [444] lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an extremely low price—in certain cases only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

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439 The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and, generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

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435 4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7s. 6*d*.; one bottle is sold for 6*d*., giving a profit of 8s. The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

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361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where [346] the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along 361 the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, ●443 stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It 438 starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women
554 of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The [443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding [651] land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women',
562 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about
624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a
754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later. 462

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking for the household. In our general description we have reached the point when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuka* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook. 462 592 252 592 [432]

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women 462 592 443

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are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker [427] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became [357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and 280 there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven [804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's-lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except 443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

study of the village market. No Nupe town or village is without its market and its regular market-days. Larger places hold their markets once a week; smaller villages every fifth day (irrespective of the seven days' week). This arrangement, illogical though it may appear, is well adjusted to the needs of the country, where local transport is still to a large extent by porterage. It enables more people, and people from more distant places, to attend the markets in the bigger villages. I estimated the attendance of the big market at Kutigi, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, at from 400 to 500. The distance from which people come varies considerably. Kacha market, the largest market after Bida, attracts men and women traders from the capital, forty miles away. In Kutigi I met women traders from Lemu, which is thirty miles from Kutigi, who were selling pots made in Gbari country, another fifty miles north. Professional, full-time traders, men and women, regularly attend all the larger markets in the country, stopping in one village for five or six successive market-days, and then moving on to another place. The peasant women, on the other hand, who practise trade only as a 'side line' and whose marketing is concerned chiefly with the disposal of the produce from their houses and their husbands' farms, rarely attend markets which are more than six or ten miles from their home. These small circles of inter-village exchange form no less part of the comprehensive marketing scheme of the country than do the extensive journeys of the professional traders. For the system of local exchange areas is partly subordinated to the main axes of trade and traffic. We find an organization almost of relay stations, half-way houses of exchange, situated all along the main trade-routes of the country, above all on the roads leading to the capital.

On the western road to Bida from Wuya (which is 12 miles from Bida) there are three such 'relay stations', used for the different kinds of produce of which Bida is constantly in need. Duzko Wuya (lit. Market Wuya) on the right bank of the Kaduna is used by the women of Batati, a village fifteen miles inland, for trading their cotton to Bida traders whom they meet at this place. Zantica, six miles from Bida, and Lumanla, four miles from Bida, serve as exchange places for agricultural produce and firewood, which goods are brought to these places by the local women, and then bought and carried to Bida by traders from the town. A similar arrangement, with regard to yam and other farm-produce, obtains on the northern road to Bida from Lemu; the 'relay station' is a tiny village half-way between Lemu and Bida, the only importance of which lies in its use as an exchange market.

Similar relay systems which exist in the river area, following and branching out from the water-ways, serve as centres for the extensive trade in smoked fish. Here the local exchange circles are primarily determined by the varying conditions of transport. Thus the wives of fishermen on the lower Kaduna take their fish (already smoked) in their small canoes to the nearest riverside market, e.g. Jima or Muregi. Here a wholesale trader from Jebba buys up fish in large quantities, takes them, again by canoe (this time a large river-going canoe) to Jebba market, and sells them to another wholesale trader who will transport the fish (by rail or lorry) to the final destination—the inland markets of Bida,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942 FF52 Nupe FF52

Ilorin, Oshogbo, or Ibadan. Another method is that the wholesale 438 trader who buys up the smoked fish at the local riverside markets also trades them directly to Bida, Ilorin, &c.; certain enterprising traders with plenty of capital may also charter canoes and, travelling from place to place, buy up the local produce before it comes to the riverside markets.[1]

438 I have emphasized on various occasions the close correlation between markets and specialization of production. Here is the place to state the 477 case once more. Generally speaking, trade and transport which bring the products of one area within reach of another involve competition, and through competition the elimination of inferior forms of production. Trade and transport must thus tend to foster (as they are in turn fostered by) local specialization. Certain developments in the agricultural and industrial production of Nupe reveal the effectiveness of these influences also in that culture. The people of Jebba, for example, do not grow sugar-cane or onions on their land, although on a similar type of land in Rabá and Ogudu these crops are cultivated. They explain this situation as being due to the fact that they are farmers on a less extensive scale, spending much time on fishing and (formerly) hunting; they prefer to import onions and sugar-cane from these other places. For certain handicrafts our evidence is even more striking, for here competition owing to an expansion of trade has only comparatively recently replaced an indigenous craft by imports from another area. The women of Leaba [323] formerly practised pottery; but when the regular canoe traffic, which used to stop farther down the river, was brought up to Leaba, and pots made in Jebba and Gbajibo reached Leaba market, the Leaba women gave up their craft; their own pots, they explained, were inferior in quality to the imported product, owing to the inferior potter's clay found locally.

443 In small villages no trade is done, and markets are deserted, on days other than market-days. In large villages the markets do a little trade—in food only—also on ordinary week-days. On the day after a market there is often quite considerable trade in goods which did not find a buyer the previous day. On market-day the people begin to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The market is in full swing by noon, and from 1 to 3 is the busiest time. After 4 the attendance begins to scatter, and soon after that the traders remove their goods, and the market is left empty. Every kind of trade and craft is represented even in the smaller village markets. In the roofed booths which every market possesses the more valuable goods are displayed—products of native industries as well as European goods. Tailors and leather-workers work in open huts. In the open square framed by these booths and huts agricultural produce, food-stuffs of every kind, live stock, pots, and tools are offered for sale.

[1] Lately the wives of the fishermen have attempted to break down the 'relay system' and to dispense with the services of middlemen, having begun to market their fish directly in Ilorin and Ibadan. A place like Ogudu, on the road from the river to Ilorin, which formerly formed an important exchange place, has now lost this transit trade in fish. The chief of Ogudu, to whom I owe this information, remarked regretfully that the women have 'begun to understand' (lit. 'have seen light').

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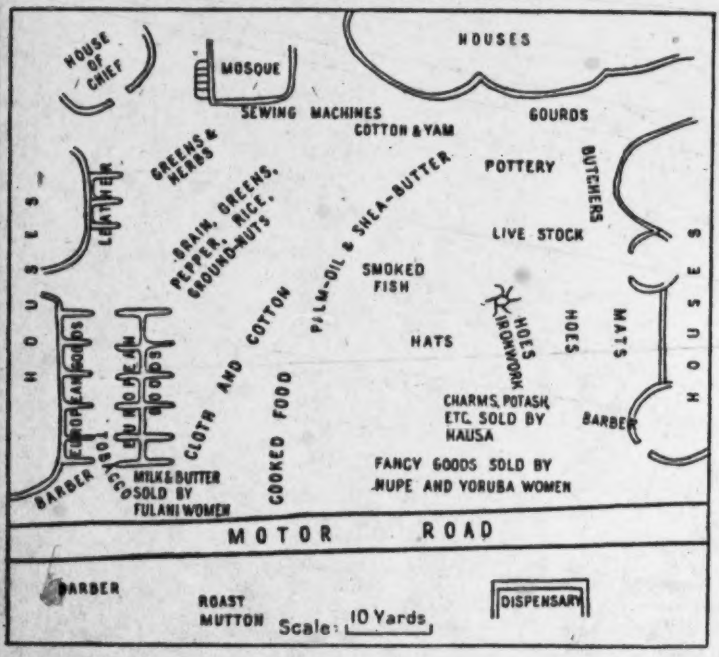
In one corner of the market barbers put up their open-air shop. In another corner butchers sell their goods, a drummer endlessly repeating the same rhythmical *motif*—the signal that the butchers have slaughtered that day—to attract the attention of the crowd. 443

SKETCH-MAP OF KUTIGI MARKET



[366]

Markets in the wider sense of the word, places for exchange and trade, grow spontaneously with the needs of the country. But markets of the kind just described, with permanent buildings, booths, and stalls, have to be built and laid out specially. Moreover, provision must be made to guarantee the protection of the large attendance, especially of the traders from other districts and countries. The element of planning is clearly visible. The villages which decide to have a market of this kind will go to work methodically; formerly, they appealed first, through the royal delegate in their district, to the king, who would designate some of his private slave police to take charge of the supervision of the market. In the Mohammedan and semi-Mohammedan villages a well-known Mallam would be summoned to consecrate the market and thus ensure its prosperity. This practice is said to be still in use. Certain markets become, in fact, known by the name of the Mallam who dedicated them. [625]

A sketch-map will best illustrate the well-planned arrangement of a typical village market—the market of Kutigi, to which I have referred

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443 above. A census of the same market will give quantitative data with regard to the attendance of the market and the goods which are offered for sale on an average market-day. The figures quoted, which are of necessity elastic, were compiled from a large number of regular observations during the months of February and March. The kind and quantity of goods traded on the Nupe markets reflect the seasonal fluctuations in supply and demand. It must be understood, therefore, that at other times of the year, especially in the rainy season, the composition of the market will be somewhat different. In a large centre like Kutigi, however, which can count throughout the year on imports from distant places, these changes remain within more narrow limits than in a small market which relies largely on local supplies. For the purpose of comparison I have also added the corresponding figures referring to ordinary week-days.

The chart shows that, in marketing, certain goods are regularly com-
443 bined. The same women who sell grain also sell rice, red pepper, *kuka*,
441 and partly palm-oil and shea-butter. The sale of yam is regularly combined with the sale of cotton, and sometimes of gourds; or cotton is sold
438 by the traders in native cloth. Such goods as smoked fish, native tobacco, or cooked food, on the other hand, are always traded separately. The combination of goods offered for sale does not invariably betray the character of the seller, whether she is a farmer's wife, marketing his produce, or a professional trader or 'middleman'. The two categories, in fact, overlap to some extent. As a rule the women who sell grain, rice, *kuka*, red pepper, yam, and cooked food are only 'occasional' traders, i.e. are marketing produce from their husbands' farms. In the case of the women who combine the sale of grain, red pepper, rice, and palm-oil, grain and red pepper may well come from the farms of their husbands, while rice and palm-oil may have been bought by the woman from someone else. Or the woman who sells cloth and cotton may be selling her husband's cotton together with cloth which she purchased in Bida. The women, on the other hand, who sell tobacco, smoked fish, and various Bida goods are invariably professional traders or 'middlemen'.

443 The distinction between seller and buyer is no less difficult to elicit
571 from the chart. The two roles are often combined in the same person. Many women who come to the market to sell agricultural produce or cooked food, or men who bring live stock or hoes, at the same time purchase various goods from other traders. But the market, in Africa as well as Europe, is more than merely a business institution. The people who attend it, whether they come to buy or to sell, also come for the sake of company and entertainment. In the market they meet friends and acquaintances with whom they can gossip and exchange news. There also the sexes meet, girls and their suitors. Rarely will there be a market-day on which drummers and musicians do not turn up also, and young men or girls join in a dance. This 'social' aspect of the village market must appeal more to the local people, than to the professional traders from Bida or other more distant places. It presupposes common interests, a familiarity and intimacy of long standing. The group of peasant men and women who are brought together regularly on market-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Census of Kutigi Market

Goods	Attendance and quantities of goods: On market-day	Attendance and quantities of goods: On ordinary days
Fulani butter and milk	4 Fulani women from camp in the neighbourhood, each with 1–2 gals. of milk and 1 lb. butter	2–3 Fulani women
Grain, rice, red pepper, *kuka*	30–40 women, each with 10–12 *kpanu* of grain and rice, 1 lb. of red pepper and a small bowl of *kuka*	2 women
Palm-oil, shea-butter, and salt	50–60 women, partly the same as those who sell grain and rice, each with 2–4 gals. of palm-oil (in old petrol tins)	2 women
Cotton and yam	10–12 women, each with 4–5 heaps of yam, each containing 6–8 yams. Quantity of cotton very variable	2–3 women
Smoked fish	30–40 women, each with one basket containing 15–20 fish	3 women
Various greens and herbs (partly used as medicine)	15 old women	..
Native tobacco	5 women	3 women
Live stock	Men with 4–5 sheep or goats	..
Pottery of different size	10–15 women, each with 10–15 smaller or 4–5 larger pots	..
Gourds	7–8 women, partly the same as those who sell cotton	..
Hoes	1–2 men, each with 4 hoes	..
Mats	Very variable, 2–10 mat sellers, mostly men	..
Cooked food (pastries, corn-gruel, corn-water, &c.)	20–30 women, the same as those who also sell grain or palm-oil, each with 2 pts. corn-water, 20–25 packets (in banana leaves) of corn-gruel, and 10–15 pastries	4–5 women
Meat	3 butchers, average 2 sheep or sometimes 1 bull or cow	They slaughter every second day
Straw hats	5 men	..
Cloth, various fancy goods	5 men in the booths, and 15 women (Nupe and Yoruba) in the square	..
Tailors	6 men, in the booths	..
Barbers	4 men	..
Leather-workers	4 men, in the booths	..
Charms, medicines, and potash	4 men, two of them Hausa	..
Roast meat	1 man, sitting on the road-side opposite the market	..

days indeed constitute a substratum of community life at large. The social life at the village markets utilizes, and creates or revives, at the same time the contacts and social relationships which characterize the 'area of common life'. It is no accident that this circle of five to ten miles radius from which the local attendance of village markets is recruited coincides with the area which is covered by local knowledge and interest in each other's affairs,[1] and within which intermarriage between different villages takes place.

[1] See p. 38.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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443 366 I have described already at some length the markets of Bida so that there is little to add here. Bida possesses six markets, three main day markets close to the 3 royal houses, two small day markets—one near the west gate, one in the strangers' quarter—and one night market. In the distinction between day and night market the village distinction between the restricted trade on ordinary week-days and the extensive trade on market-days is in some respects repeated.[1] Multiply by ten the largest village market, and its attendance and the quantity and variety of goods displayed, and you have the Bida night market. Its average attendance has been estimated at 6,000, and as regards the goods which are bought and sold, I can only repeat that there is practically nothing that cannot be obtained there, from kola-nuts to beams for roofing, and from native-tanned goatskins to watches, scissors, or bicycle spare parts. Besides, [445] there are scribes who will write letters for you, Yoruba money-changers (who charge a commission of one penny in the shilling), cooks who roast small pieces of mutton over the fire and sell the meat on wooden skewers to passers-by, drummers, barbers, tailors, loungers, not to forget [625] the policeman who regulates the traffic and keeps watch (not always a sinecure) on disturbances of the peace.

In certain respects, however, marketing and trade in Bida differ essentially from their counterpart in the village. A first difference concerns the local distribution of marketing. Bida possesses, in addition to its four markets, also more or less regular shops which are open all day, such as the wayside shops in the street of the brass-smiths, where the womenfolk of brass- and silversmiths display the goods manufactured by the men, or the permanent shops in *lálèmi*, the crowded strangers' quarter. Many traders, moreover, who will attend the night market keep during day-time little wayside stands on cross-roads or busy thoroughfares. The wide local distribution of shops corresponds to the typical demands of a large, decentralized town, in which the groups of potential customers are concentrated in widely scattered localities. At the same time it expresses a keener spirit of competition, and that doctrine of 'seeking out the customer' which is familiar to all more advanced systems of marketing. Two new stands which have only appeared during my stay in Bida will illustrate what I mean. One wayside shop established itself opposite the workshops of the Public Works Department, and its customers were the labourers, who would come out to buy food, sweets, and cigarettes; the other was installed close to the Bida Middle School, and catered for the occasional wants of schoolboys and teachers. In both cases two or three young women had joined forces and were keeping shop together. These wayside shops and stands do not pay rent; street corners and cross-roads are free to everyone; nor have any quarrels over claims to a particular spot arisen—as yet. But this is essentially a fluid process; and it is not unlikely that quarrels or litigation of this kind might arise in the future if competition becomes

[1] The day markets reflect the different needs of the large town as compared with the village markets. Firewood, for example, which is never seen on village markets as the women collect their own firewood on family farms, appears in large quantities on the day markets of Bida.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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more severe and the advantageous positions secured by the enterprising first-comers are threatened by later recruits of the 'seeking-out-the-customer' movement. 443 366

Wayside shops also line the road leading from the north gate to the two large European stores—'canteens' in the popular idiom. Here the inventiveness of Bida traders has seized upon a new device to attract and 'seek out' the customer. Many peasants from backward villages who come to Bida to buy certain essential European articles, such as salt or sugar, either want to buy them in very small quantities—smaller quantities than they could obtain at the store—or are too shy and frightened to enter the stores themselves. These are the customers of the little stands outside the 'canteens': for here the peasants can buy the same articles in the smallest quantities and without having to undergo the ordeal of a purchase in the unfamiliar, forbidding, store.[1]

MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

The last example brings us to another essential difference between the marketing system in Bida and in the village. The large volume of native trade in European goods and the close business connexion between native traders in Bida and the stores of the trading-companies have introduced certain completely new factors into Nupe marketing. They are visible in local trade on the smallest scale as well as in the large-scale enterprises of wealthy Bida merchants. Trade in certain European goods allows a more rapid turnover and more certain profits than any branch of native economy. The native trader or middleman can, as we have just seen, turn to his profit the fact that he can make certain essential and highly valued goods accessible to the consumer by retailing them in such small quantities that their price (though relatively high) is low enough to be within the means of peasants and small craftsmen. It is, for example, a regular practice of Bida women traders to buy tins of 50 cigarettes at the 'canteen', and to sell them singly (or even cut in half); to buy boxes of matches, and sell them in little bundles of five; packets of sugar, and sell the sugar a piece or two at the time; or to buy 4-gallon tins of paraffin, and sell it in pint bottles. It is hardly surprising that the profits, though absolutely small, are relatively high, up to 100 per cent.[2] 443

[1] This fear is really a compound of shyness and suspicion—one is suspicious just because one is shy and unfamiliar with the ways of these modern institutions. A most characteristic instance, concerning a Bida man who, one would think, would hardly need to be shy or afraid, is the following: a Bida Mallam with whom I was very friendly came to see me one day and asked me if I would do him a favour and order spare tyres from the 'canteen' for a lorry belonging to a friend of his. His friend, he explained, disliked ordering them himself, for he knew he would be cheated and given the wrong kind of tyres. What had happened was that his friend had some time previously ordered tyres without, however, knowing that it was necessary to quote the exact size. He had been given tyres of the size most frequently found on the lorries running in the country, but unfortunately they did not fit his lorry. 157

[2] One tin of 50 cigarettes costs 1*s.*; one cigarette is sold for 0·3*d.*, allowing a profit of 3*d.* in 1*s.* One box of matches, containing approximately 50 matches, costs 1*d.*; five matches sold for 0·2*d.* give a profit of 0·8*d.* in the penny. One 435

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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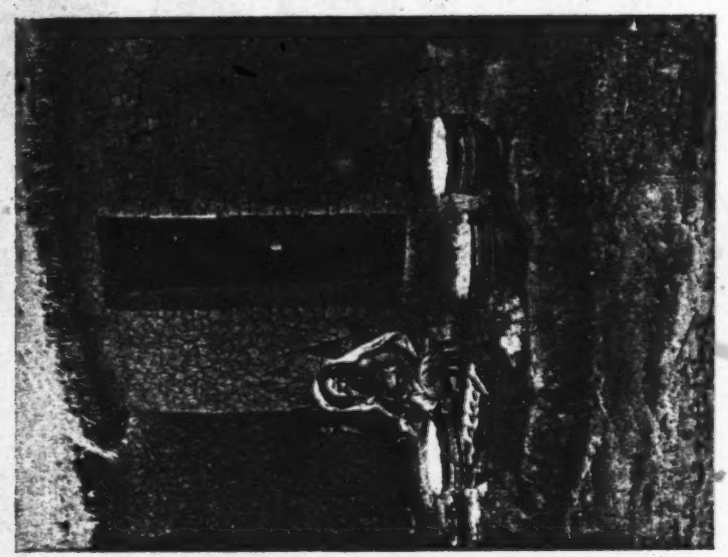

A WOMAN TRADER SELLING HER HUSBAND'S SILVERWARE

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415
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A FOOD MARKET

482
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[facing p. 330]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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15. Vendor of medicines

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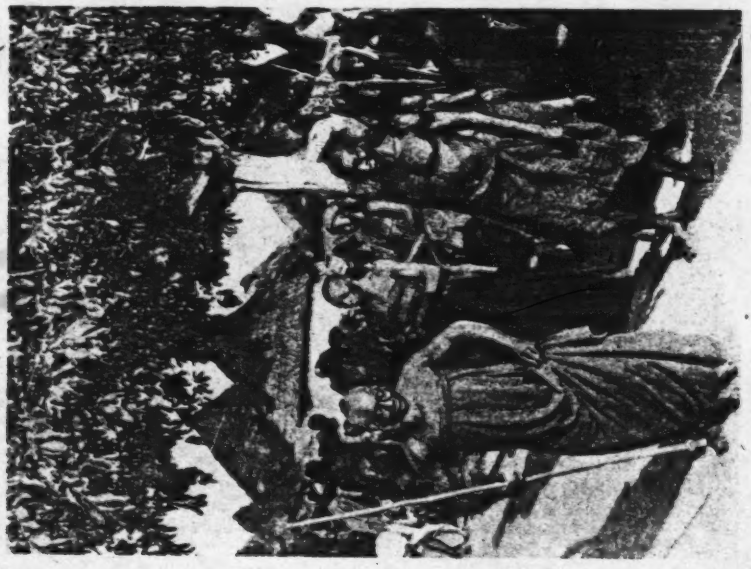

14. *Dzakó* dance

[p. 86(B)]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 443 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 49 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for marketing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Masu Kolo Kolo*, "the haggliers."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu. 89 121

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found. 323 [464] [77] [78]

Two varieties of article are made :—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Max, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-ugetā* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pakunmi*—Max 1931, 186). [415]

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated— [317] [443] [435]

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo. [415]

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any [412] [439]

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles. 323

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen. 323 444 439 [527]

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production, 323 471 592 474 [465]

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443 366 I have described already at some length the markets of Bida so that there is little to add here. Bida possesses six markets, three main day markets close to the 3 royal houses, two small day markets—one near the west gate, one in the strangers' quarter—and one night market. In the distinction between day and night market the village distinction between the restricted trade on ordinary week-days and the extensive trade on market-days is in some respects repeated.[1] Multiply by ten the largest village market, and its attendance and the quantity and variety of goods displayed, and you have the Bida night market. Its average attendance has been estimated at 6,000, and as regards the goods which are bought and sold, I can only repeat that there is practically nothing that cannot be obtained there, from kola-nuts to beams for roofing, and from native-tanned goatskins to watches, scissors, or bicycle spare parts. Besides, [445] there are scribes who will write letters for you, Yoruba money-changers (who charge a commission of one penny in the shilling), cooks who roast small pieces of mutton over the fire and sell the meat on wooden skewers to passers-by, drummers, barbers, tailors, loungers, not to forget the policeman who regulates the traffic and keeps watch (not always [625] a sinecure) on disturbances of the peace.

In certain respects, however, marketing and trade in Bida differ essentially from their counterpart in the village. A first difference concerns the local distribution of marketing. Bida possesses, in addition to its four markets, also more or less regular shops which are open all day, such as the wayside shops in the street of the brass-smiths, where the womenfolk of brass- and silversmiths display the goods manufactured by the men, or the permanent shops in *lálemi*, the crowded strangers' quarter. Many traders, moreover, who will attend the night market keep during day-time little wayside stands on cross-roads or busy thoroughfares. The wide local distribution of shops corresponds to the typical demands of a large, decentralized town, in which the groups of potential customers are concentrated in widely scattered localities. At the same time it expresses a keener spirit of competition, and that doctrine of 'seeking out the customer' which is familiar to all more advanced systems of marketing. Two new stands which have only appeared during my stay in Bida will illustrate what I mean. One wayside shop established itself opposite the workshops of the Public Works Department, and its customers were the labourers, who would come out to buy food, sweets, and cigarettes; the other was installed close to the Bida Middle School, and catered for the occasional wants of schoolboys and teachers. In both cases two or three young women had joined forces and were keeping shop together. These wayside shops and stands do not pay rent; street corners and cross-roads are free to everyone; nor have any quarrels over claims to a particular spot arisen—as yet. But this is essentially a fluid process; and it is not unlikely that quarrels or litigation of this kind might arise in the future if competition becomes

[1] The day markets reflect the different needs of the large town as compared with the village markets. Firewood, for example, which is never seen on village markets as the women collect their own firewood on family farms, appears in large quantities on the day markets of Bida.

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It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an extremely low price—in certain cases only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and, generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7*s.* 6*d.*; one bottle is sold for 6*d.*, giving a profit of 8*s.* The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

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431 with its large population of non-farmers, should have developed the practice of money expenditure more extensively than the villages, and
437 adopted money expenditure in certain instances in which, in the village, gifts and contributions in kind were the custom. The universal practice nowadays of giving and accepting presents of kola-nuts, for example, appears to have spread from the town, and to have replaced gifts of food or sorghum beer. Of similar changes in other fields we possess even more concrete evidence: thus the name-giving ceremony or funeral feast involves to-day contributions in money by guests and relations; in Mohammedan districts it is also customary to distribute alms (again in money) among the local Mallams. In the traditional form these kinship ceremonies implied gifts in kind, i.e. contributions of food and sorghum beer for the feast. Formerly, also, every household used to produce its
[273] own beer; to-day the manufacture of beer is limited to certain households so that the other families are obliged to buy it for money. Moreover, sorghum beer has been replaced in the town by palm-wine, which, as palm-kernels are largely imported from districts outside Nupe, must again be bought (see p. 234).

It is necessary to emphasize that this change represents a change of customs and fashion, and a change in the *form* of expenditure, rather than a change, or an increase, of expenditure itself. We shall, in fact, see later that the modern Mohammedan burial, for example, may come cheaper than the pagan ceremony, although in the latter contributions and gifts were largely in kind. In other words, the symbols of wealth are changing and becoming more unified, being adjusted to the symbols of wealth which have been adopted and standardized by the social and cultural *élite* of the country.

436 How, then, are money reserves and wealth in general accumulated? One method, which is widespread in Nupe, is to hoard money by burying
454 it. Sometimes valuables, above all, precious beads, take the place of money, and are buried or concealed otherwise in a safe place. In a number of court cases over inheritance the question of discovering the hidden wealth (money or beads) of the testator played an important part. Another illustration of the practice of hoarding money came to my knowledge in connexion with inquiries into the continued use of cowrie-shell currency.[1] It is generally known in Nupe country that when cowrie-shells were finally replaced by English money and the former currency declared worthless many people buried their cowrie-shells in the hope that, some day, they might become legal tender again. Once I asked certain informants in Kutigi if they could show me any cowrie-shells. They said that they had none, and that cowrie-shells were no longer to be found in the country. I said that I was prepared to pay money for them, whereupon large baskets full of cowries suddenly turned up, and, the rumour having spread that the white man was buying cowries, I had to do my best not to be inundated with the suddenly rediscovered currency.

454 Another method of accumulating capital is the investment in interest-

[1] See 'A Ritual Currency in Nigeria—A Result of Culture Contact', in 'Notes and News', *Africa*, 1937, 3.

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bearing enterprises ('interest' understood here in the widest sense). The nature of the enterprise varies with local conditions, and differs above all in town and country. Peasants mostly invest their money in livestock (see Chap. XI). We have seen that Nupe inventiveness is always on the look-out for new opportunities promising a higher 'interest', even in the narrow field of stock-breeding as they know it: we have mentioned the buying and selling of ostriches, and the isolated experiment in horse-breeding of one village chief—incidentally the chief of a typical backwood village, Sakpe. In the town, and in the large trading-centres of the country, money is invested chiefly in trade, even by men and women who do not personally engage in trade. They would trust a certain sum to a trader of their acquaintance for a particular purpose, e.g. to help him finance a trading expedition to Kano or Bornu. The trader will use their capital together with his own, and will return it to them increased by the profits which it has brought when his business has been successfully concluded. The trader, of course, also derives a certain profit from these investments, as they enable him to enlarge the scope of his enterprise and to secure more favourable prices. Many most highly placed notables in Bida, not excluding the king himself, use this profitable method of investment.

Certain traditional and formerly highly important methods of investment, above all war and slavery, have disappeared under the new political order. I have described in an earlier chapter the contributions of the houses of the Bida nobility to the wars and military exploits of their country and have also discussed slavery and slave trade. It remains to discuss the closely related traditional form of investment in 'human capital' which has become a thing of the past only quite recently, namely, money investment in human pledges (*sofa*, in Nupe).

PAWNING

Besides the pawning of human pledges, ordinary pawning—pawning of valuable goods—also occurs. My information is that beads, costly gowns, a sword, or saddle, all things of silver or gold, are frequently pawned as security for a loan. No interest is paid on the loan itself, and the transaction is regarded purely as an act of friendship. I have, however, not discovered any actual instance of this practice. My impression is that it is not, and has never been, very widespread. Pawning of people, on the other hand, has grown to enormous dimensions. When pawning of human pledges was finally suppressed in Nigeria, in 1933–4, 3,000 pawns were released in Bida Emirate alone.

As slavery reflects the insecurity of the political rights of the conquered subjects of Nupe kingdom, pawning reflects the economic insecurity under which a large proportion of the population of the Emirate lives. The lack of flexibility, more particularly, in their economy tends to foster such radical means of escape from financial difficulties. Under the pressure of unexpected demands or certain imperative heavy expenses which cannot be matched by normal efforts—payment of bride-price; a heavy fine; money with which to bail a family member or bribe

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organization, all of which—in theory at least—can easily be remedied. Poverty in the new scheme will be due to a fundamentally different inadequacy, the inability to secure the necessary means of production. It is a permanent, and even progressive, inadequacy, which must get worse with the continued process of production. For the same process that leads to accumulation of capital (in the modern sense of the word) in the hands of the owner of the adequate means of production will render more and more remote the chances of their acquisition by the people who are as yet without them. Economic inequality in its most extreme form, *latifundia* existing side by side with a landless proletariat, will be the final result.

These grave consequences can be avoided, and the valuable elements in the new policy saved, I think, by slowing-up the transformation of the agricultural system of the country until a corresponding transformation of the labour organization can be achieved. The increase in the cost of the means of production must be met by widening the basis of the co-operative unit which makes itself responsible for the maintenance of labour in this sense into co-operative societies. Co-operative societies, which could buy the new means of production from common funds, and would jointly own ploughs and cattle, would enable also the less prosperous farmer to profit from the technical improvements. A co-operative society which would include, for example, all the owners of adjacent fields would also be able to utilize ploughing to the fullest advantage without incurring the danger of large-scale land-exchange. The increase in the extent of cultivation would be gradual and well controlled, and the traditional labour-unit not rendered useless overnight; it would still be useful for supplementary farm-work (in the traditional fashion) at times when plough and cattle are employed on the field of a fellow member of the farm co-operative.[1]

RISK AND INSURANCE

Every productive organization must include in its calculations the factor of risk and insurance against risk. Certain risks are over and above the normal in that they are due to accidents outside the productive system itself, and beyond the range of foresight which the producers

[1] When I discussed this question in a lecture given at the Summer School for Colonial Studies in Oxford, in 1937 (see the *Summary of Lectures*), I was attacked by a member of the audience for attempting to 'boost poverty'. Now, this is a serious charge. However, I hope to have made it clear that my attempt was not towards fostering poverty or pampering backwardness, but towards avoiding a development which would create, and make permanent, the most dangerous form of poverty and economic dependence. To organize the less prosperous so that they should not be left behind in economic progress does in no way imply putting obstacles in the way of the more enterprising. 'The rich', as the chairman, who came to my assistance in the discussion, put it, 'will look after themselves.' It is interesting to note in this connexion that when mixed farming was discussed at the Residents' Conference in 1936 one Resident suggested that it might be feasible to utilize the Hausa *gaya* (collective farm-work) for the new agricultural organization. I presume that he, too, had in mind a co-operative organization of the kind suggested above.

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456 can normally exercise. Such are wars, slave-raids, political abuses which might deprive a group of the fruits of its labour, the loss of a member of the working group through imprisonment, or—to-day—unexpected fluctuations in the market for export commodities. The insurance which the Nupe productive system can provide against risks of this kind is, of necessity, limited in scope and efficiency. I have spoken already of certain forms which this insurance took in the traditional society: clientship and political allegiance. More interesting to us here are risks which are inherent in the productive organization itself, and which represent 'normal' risks in the sense that experience shows them to be ever present. Into this category come risks due, for example, to a failure of the crop, to marketing difficulties, a temporary economic stringency, or a temporary deficiency in the labour organization owing to illness or old age of individual members of the labour-unit. With risks of this kind the Nupe productive system is well equipped to deal, either through its normal labour organization or through certain mechanisms specially devised to provide 'insurance'.

456 592 The 'normal' risks in agriculture are insured against by means of the very constitution of the *efakó*, the co-operative labour-unit. A large co-operative group is capable of utilizing fully the highly diversified agricultural technique of the country, and of spreading cultivation, both locally and with regard to the crops grown, so as to eliminate the risk of a total failure. In a large working-unit it is also comparatively easy to make up for the temporary elimination of a worker. In a group of this kind invalid or aged group members can be assigned lighter work, or can even be supported by the rest of the group without doing any work. The smaller the group the more difficult it becomes to distribute tasks in this fashion, to spare a worker, and feed an 'extra mouth'. In the small, two-men or one-man labour-unit, the retirement of a member means the end of the working group, and his support places a heavy strain on the remaining organization. A new *ad hoc* arrangement may become necessary, in which independent small labour-units have to combine to maintain the retired member. Here is an instance which I noted in a *tunga* near Bida: a family of five was divided in two labour-units, one consisting of two adults, and the other of an old man, their father, who worked together with his two young grandsons. As his labour-unit could not produce enough for food and tax, the sons contributed ten bundles of grain a year towards the cost of their father's household.[1] That a situation of this kind may, in an extreme case, lead to a complete break-down of the 'insurance' scheme could be seen from household budget C quoted above,[2] which showed an old man and an invalid still depending on their own greatly reduced working capacity. Another example is that of a farmer who had hurt his arm and, having been disabled for one year, became a temporary labourer the following year to make up for the losses he had sustained.

456 467 The group co-operation in the guild-organized crafts similarly provides insurance against 'normal' risks. The guild organization, as we

[1] An analogous example from a family of craftsmen was quoted above, in household budget E.

[2] [See p. 341, cat. 116 —Analyst.]

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have seen, not only supplies its members with efficient training, but also guarantees, to some extent, a steady market for their products. The guild-head, moreover, is enabled by the special resources involved in his position to act as the 'banker' of the group and come to the financial assistance of individual members.

Certain other economic arrangements designed to provide insurance operate outside the labour-unit, and are thus of special importance for the individual craftsmen and the free professions. The familiar recourse to clientship is a first instance. By sacrificing part of his personal freedom as well as his earnings, the *bara* buys the patronage of an influential person. Though this patronage will be appealed to specially against the 'extraneous' risks due to political factors, it plays a part also in more 'normal' circumstances. Thus I found that a barber had recently become the client of a certain nobleman in his quarter of the town in order to secure a regular and good clientele; it is significant that the father of the barber had not been a *bara*, i.e. had not felt the need to 'insure' his more prosperous business. A young hat-maker told me that he intended to attach himself as *bara* to an influential rank-holder, with whose help he hoped to start business as a trader. I have also spoken of the Mallams and drummers, to whom clientship means the guarantee of success in their profession.

A different method of insuring against risks is embodied in the practice of borrowing money. 'Pawning' represents the firmly institutionalized form of borrowing—an institution which provides against normal as well as abnormal risks, and in which a social relationship closely akin to that of patron and client forms the basis of the financial transaction. Other forms of borrowing occur irregularly, and with a narrow scope. No professional money-lenders exist; the individual in need of money borrows it mostly from close relations, more rarely from friends or 'patrons'. The most frequent form of borrowing is for a husband to borrow from his wife. An indirect form of borrowing money from one's wife, not uncommon in Bida, is the practice of wealthy women to contribute to the bride-price of their sons and to other expenses, which, in accordance with Nupe kinship ideas, should be borne by the father.

A final insurance arrangement is provided in a specific financial institution operating somewhat on the lines of a 'pooling club'. It is called *dashi* in Nupe (*adashi* in Hausa) and plays—or used to play—a very important part in Nupe economy. We must describe it here in detail.

The *dashi* is a pure business arrangement, a free association of a number of men and women who agree to enter this financial co-operation for a certain limited period. Each member undertakes to pay regularly (for example, every week, or five days, or every month) a certain amount of money into a common fund, as many times as the group numbers members. Each time when the contributions have been collected a different member is entitled to draw the total fund, until every member has had his share. Members may also contribute double subscriptions, and then be entitled to two 'draws' in the course of the *dashi*. The allotment of the fund does not follow a fixed rule, but is left to the head of the group to work out. A member who is urgently in need of money can

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456 request to be considered out of his turn. He can thus put his hands at once on a sum of money for which, normally, he would have had to save for weeks or months. In this, then, lies the benefit of the *dashi*. The administration of the *dashi* association is entrusted to a man of good reputation, for example, a well-known trader or the head of a craft-guild. People who decide to form a *dashi* request such a man to undertake its organization. He will summon the first, and only, general meeting of the group, at which all the important points are settled, and afterwards arrange all matters on his own. People who learn from neighbours or friends that a certain *dashi* is being formed are, up to the date of the first subscription, free to join it; after that, while the *dashi* is running, no new members are accepted. The 'chairman' of the association, the *Etsu Dashi* (King of the *dashi*) as the Nupe call him, is responsible for the collection of the subscriptions and the regular paying out of the fund. He does not himself pay into it, nor does he receive any money payment for his trouble. He is recompensed by being allowed to borrow from the fund occasionally for himself and his own business provided that the general arrangement on which the group had agreed, and the duration of the *dashi*, are not altered. Sometimes he also receives gifts from members who desire an early share without being able to show serious reasons for this request. When money is needed, for example, for a funeral, in the case of illness, or for the payment of bride-price, no gifts or bribes are necessary to secure immediate consideration. *Dashi* chairmen who have the reputation of being good organizers are in great demand, and may be continuously engaged in organizing and supervising *dashi* associations, often several at the same time. Women are regarded as specially able organizers: one of the most successful *dashi* 'chairmen' I met in Bida was a woman; she was actually living in Doko, where she had lived since her marriage, but organized a *dashi* in Bida, sending her messenger, a young girl, every Friday into Bida to collect the subscriptions.

Although the benefits of the *dashi* embrace every variety of risk and expense, its practice is limited to the professions which depend on regular money earnings and money investments. It is practised by traders and brokers, both men and women, by certain groups of craftsmen, the wives of farmers, canoe-men (who are enabled to buy their canoes with the help of the *dashi*), labourers, and officials. The schoolboys in Bida Middle School have a little 'pocket-money' *dashi* of their own, the subscription being 1*d*., paid every Friday. The farmers, although familiar with the *dashi*, do not practise it, nor have they apparently ever done so. Clearly their stores of produce are regarded as sufficient reserve, and their labour organization as sufficient 'insurance'.

456 The number of members and the amount of the subscription vary
554 widely. The sharp distinctions of social and economic stratification are visible also in the organization of the *dashi*. A well-to-do trader or nobleman would never join one of the petty *dashi* associations of small craftsmen or tradesmen in which the contribution is a few pennies. They would form a small *dashi* of their own, with a high subscription, even if they have to be content with five members only. During my stay

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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3*d.*: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4*d.* weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by N.A. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10*s.* per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7*s.* 6*d.* per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years. 456 554

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8*s.* and 9*s.* from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions. 456 426 [586]

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance —borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of 456 182

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production, the present case demonstrates forcibly that it affects the very stability of the economic system of the country. We cannot claim to be able to describe exactly how the labour-unit was working under traditional conditions, and to state categorically that the scheme of insurance entailed in it operated without difficulty or friction. But on the evidence which we possess it is reasonable to assume that under certain conditions, with a smaller taxation, and protected from severe, incalculable, market fluctuations, the large co-operative group represented—or would represent—an eminently stable and successful labour-unit. The process of transformation cannot be halted. Where the large labour-unit still exists, it may, given the conditions just mentioned, be preserved; where it has disappeared, it cannot be revived. Our conclusions point to one solution only: to the creation of new institutions and labour organizations which can be made to fulfil, under existing conditions, those tasks which fell formerly to the labour organization that has disappeared—above all, the task of insurance. Such institutions can be found in co-operative organization, saving societies, co-operative marketing, and suchlike—organizations which in other parts of Africa have amply proved their efficiency.[1]

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE GROUP

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Throughout this discussion we have dealt with family and kinship group purely in their economic aspect. We have interpreted the mechanisms which maintain the working-unit and thus the co-operation in its human substratum, the family group, in terms of economic relations only. Against this treatment of the problem one might argue that it sees only one side of it, and that the kinship and family structure must be taken into account also as an entity *sui generis*, which, within the framework of economic relations, exercises its own specific influences. One might argue, in particular, that as the Nupe *efakó*-unit is based on the family, kinship ties and kinship sentiments as such supply the binding forces of the labour group—'maintain labour', in our terminology—and that the binding forces which we have recognized, namely, commonness of material interests and benefits accruing from co-operation, are in reality mutual kinship obligations.

The double nature of economic obligations in a productive unit which happens to be a kinship-unit at the same time cannot be denied. The influence of kinship factors can, in fact, be made evident by comparing the labour-unit based on kinship, with similar labour-units in which kinship plays no part. While, in the former, co-operation is achieved by mutual obligations such as payment of bride-price, and supply of clothing, food, and shelter, labour of the latter order must be recompensed in the form of money wages. The effectiveness of kinship

[1] It has been said that our intention should always be to graft these new co-operative organizations on to existing, indigenous, organizations. The scope and the possibilities of such a scheme must not be exaggerated. Although the tasks with which the new organization is to be charged may have formed part of the traditional system, the organization itself may have to be newly created, and may, in fact (as in our case), have to replace a failing indigenous organization, rendered inadequate by modern conditions.

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241 For example, cassava and sweet potatoes grown on the marsh-land farms must be dug out quickly as rice is planted on the same plots almost immediately. The harvesting of bulrush-millet and the first yam harvest, if delayed, may interfere with the planting of cotton, and the third weeding. A quick harvest, for a different reason, is imperative also for late millet and sorghum; here it is the danger of monkeys and birds damaging the standing grain which forbids delay. The Nupe have various ways and means to combat this danger: they put up scarecrows and erect high platforms on the fields from the top of which boys try to scare off monkeys and birds, by shouting, throwing stones, brandishing long sticks, or swinging long ropes tied between the platform and a near-by tree. In districts where the danger is very great the farmers may have to spend the night on the farm shortly before the harvest to guard their fields from these unwelcome guests.

It is interesting to supplement this large-scale survey of the agricultural cycle with a view from closer range which could do justice to the varying individual arrangements. To illustrate this aspect of Nupe farming I have compiled the farming diaries of three Kutigi farmers for two typical weeks—one between the end of May and the beginning of June, when the work is temporarily easing off, and the second towards the end of June, when work is at its highest. These farming diaries show the scope of the individual variations of the general time-table. We shall see that they are fairly considerable—in details; but in general lines the activities of the three farmers conform closely to a common pattern. During the more leisurely season all farmers are ready to interrupt their work, and rest for two or three days in succession; but during the busy season only a very weighty reason will make them stay at home and leave their fields even for a day. Indeed at that time of the year you will find the Nupe villages deserted from early morning till about 3 or 4 in the afternoon, save for women, children, and old men. Another interesting fact emerging from the diaries is the disregard, under pressure of work, for the traditional day of rest, Friday. To work six days and rest on the seventh is a common practice in Nupe (in fact a practice said to have been common already in the times before the spreading of Mohammedanism). But a farmer who knows himself behindhand with his work will disregard the rule. Finally, we see that in labour groups consisting of several people the family head may sometimes enjoy a short rest while the young men carry on the work; or that if one of the workers is called away, for example, by some social obligation, the work of the group goes on unimpaired. An arrangement of this kind is evidently impossible in the case of the farmer *K.*, who works on his own.

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N.	*M.*	*K.*
Labour group: father and three sons	*Labour group: father and one son*	*Labour group: one man*
31.5.1936		
Goes out to farm about 8 a.m. Eats midday meal on the farm, and returns about 4 p.m.	Goes out to farm together with *N.*, whose farm is close to his own. Also returns with him.	Is away from Kutigi; went to a neighbouring village for the funeral of his sister.

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241 592 178 How are we to explain this comparatively sudden change? Viewing it from the general economic point of view all the advantages seem to be on the side of a large labour-unit: our discussion of the agricultural technique of the country has taught us that a large labour group represents, in Nupe, the only means of cultivating a large variety of both useful and profitable crops. Moreover, a large *efakó*-unit assures a certain measure of leisure to the family head and the old men in general, by enabling them to leave a large proportion of the actual work to the younger generation. It assures also a better distribution of responsibility, counting more adults among its members than does the small working-unit. It utilizes more fully the important incentive of competition and is, finally, of great educational value; for only in large labour-units are the young boys likely to work regularly in the company of others of their own age.

241 592 178 461 But if from point of view of group efficiency and security the large working-unit appears superior to the small (say) one- or two-men 'group', it is not necessarily so when looked at from the viewpoint of the individual. Take the question of leisure and distribution of responsibility. In one of the instances in which I found a large *efakó*-unit having been dissolved recently (six years ago), after the death of the family head, I was given this as the reason of the change: the new family head, the eldest of five brothers, had availed himself liberally of the privilege of leisure which his position implied, and frequently went hunting while the others were working on the farm. Now, while they had accepted the same arrangement under the old family head, their father, they declined to accord this privilege to their eldest brother, and preferred to dissolve the whole unit and work each for himself. To-day, working on their own, the individual family members have a comparatively larger measure of freedom and leisure, which they are free to use as they like. They can use their own discretion in planning the farm-work: of the five brothers two have taken to spend their spare time in making mats, a leisure-time occupation which, they assured me, is financially very advantageous to them; one has left the village; and the family head himself can still spend part of his time in hunting. Against the considerations of group efficiency thus stand individual considerations of gain, which provide another, and in some respects very different, standard of appreciation by which to measure the value of the large labour-unit. The word 'gain' should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Freedom of movement, freedom to choose a different profession (we remember, for example, the openings which the political life of the capital offered to young men of adventurous spirit), even freedom to enjoy one's leisure independent of the dictates of family requirements—these spiritual values appear under certain circumstances as tempting to the younger generation as does the prospect of material gain.

The two standards of appreciation will coincide where the *efakó* group is in a position to guarantee the satisfaction of all needs and demands which the group-members might feel. Nupe family co-operation in farm-work, once apparently more satisfactorily adjusted, is now failing in this respect. This failure can be attributed to two different develop-

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ments: to an increase in the needs and demands on the part of the individual members with which the system of family co-operation failed to cope; or to a decline in the efficiency of the group to maintain its former standards of maintenance. The Nupe *efakó* system has, in fact, failed on both accounts. As regards the first, a large variety of new needs and wants, temptations and values have spread, primarily from the town, and have begun to transform the original peasant culture; as regards the second, the family head is to-day frequently unable to meet out of the family income two financial demands which are regarded as essential to the *efakó* concept, the payment of the bride-price and the payment of tax for the individual members of the *efakó* group.

Certain of the influences which have thus led to the decline of the large working-unit are no doubt due to factors of modern culture change. Yet it would be wrong to regard the change in the structure of the working-unit merely as a result of the outside influence of culture contact. The structural change forms part of a much wider phenomenon; it is the result of an intrinsic economic development, namely, the readjustment between productive organization and needs existing in the society. If the change were due exclusively to culture contact we should expect to find the larger working-unit preserved only in backward, 'unsophisticated', districts. This is not the case. The table on p. 243 showed that three households out of fifty had working-units composed of more than four adults. Of these three households only one belongs to a backward area—the household of the chief of Doko. The two other examples come both from one of the most progressive places in Nupe, Lemu, and from a group of farmers who, as mentioned before, have but recently undertaken the cultivation of a new commercial crop, red pepper, to replace another commercial crop, ground-nuts, which had not proved an economic success. A large working group is essential to the cultivation of this new crop. In these two households the young men have remained in the *efakó*, content with their position, while the family head, in turn, is able to provide bride-price and tax-money. Here, then, culture contact so far from being responsible for the dissolution of the large working-unit has on the contrary supplied a type of production which enables the large working-unit to maintain itself; paradoxically, culture contact has placed the *efakó*-unit in a position to satisfy those very demands and needs which culture contact has newly imposed upon the society. However, these instances from Lemu are exceptional: neither in Mokwa, the centre of ground-nut cultivation, nor in Kutigi, where cotton is grown on a comparatively large scale, has the large *efakó* group survived. The exceptional cases which I have discovered are too few to warrant a more far-reaching, systematic explanation. Moreover, whereas in this case attractions and temptations appealing to the younger generation are partly responsible for the social change, individual differences must play a considerable part. We can only tentatively point to a certain negative evidence: the absence of some of these 'temptations' in Lemu which have made the younger generation in Mokwa and Kutigi claim an early economic independence. Lemu is neither a centre of native trade, nor does a profitable alternative

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are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front 462
and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the 476
women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the 461
egbe: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing—
the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs 533
(no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small [857]
girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between 462
the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contribu- 562
tions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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TABLE III

Temporary Labour

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	Home	*Farmers*	*Guild craft*	*Individual craft*	*Mallams*	*Traders*	*Nobility*	*No altern. occupation*	*Total*
Occupation of father	Bida	4	1	13	9	1	11	..	39
	Country	10	..	..	6	..	2	..	18
	Total	14	1	13	15	1	13	..	57
Alternative occupation of labourer	Bida	4	1	20	8	..	..	5	38
	Country	16	..	..	2	..	..	1	19
	Total	20	1	20	10	..	..	6	57

with Table I we can see that of the 16 farmers who have sought work as labourers only 1 has abandoned farming permanently for labourer's work, while 15 remained seasonal labourers. Turning to the Bida contingent we see that among the different professions which contribute to temporary labour individual crafts come first and Mallams second—the most loosely organized occupational groups thus contribute most heavily to occasional labour. The occupations of the families of which these labourers come appear in a slightly different order of importance: individual crafts are, again, first, with 'nobility' second and Mallams third. 'Nobility' means here mostly the lower political ranks, above all 'household' and *bara* ranks. Their share in the contribution reflects the great political and economic changes that have deprived many members of this 'leisure class' of a livelihood mainly derived from warfare or political attachment.

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But what are the incentives which led the men from the other occupational groups to give up their previous occupation or to undertake the work of labourers in addition to their ordinary profession? This question is answered by the data of the last table.

TABLE IV

	Married	*Unmarried*	*Tax as reason*
Permanent labour	9	12	..
Temporary labour: Bida	9	13	4
Temporary labour: Country	6	9	5
Age 20–5	4	10	..
" 25–30	3	8	..
" 30–5	4	4	..
" 35–40	4	..	..

The majority among permanent as well as temporary labourers is unmarried—although many of the men, as we can see, have reached, and partly passed, the age at which it is normal for the Nupe man to marry. The work as labourers in their case was undertaken with the intent to obtain money for the bride-price, a plan which did not always materialize as our figures show, especially in Bida. For there are many other uses for money, and some, as we shall see later, may interfere with the laudable intention of working for one's bride-price. In a number of cases the reason for becoming a labourer was to obtain money for tax,

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either for oneself or for one's family. One young labourer from the country gave his father 5*s*. out of his weekly wages of 7*s*. to put by for his bride-price; another kept 2*s*. to 3*s*. a month for himself, and gave the rest to his father. Many Bida labourers, on the other hand, used the whole money for themselves; some explained that they had become labourers because there was no money in their old profession, others because they wanted to be independent and because their fathers or elder brothers could not give them as much money as they liked to have.

To summarize: as one would expect, paid labour, especially temporary labour, does not represent a 'real' profession in the sense of an occupation involving special training and selection of workers. It is essentially a stopgap occupation chosen to supplement or replace a failing normal source of income. Owing to the specific composition of Nupe society the new profession is being adopted by certain social groups and strata more than by others. Yet in some respects paid industrial labour must be regarded almost as a modern continuation of forms of occupations which, in the traditional society, bore the same supplementary and stopgap character. As such it appeals strongly to the individual craftsman, to Mallams, and *bara*, who depend for their livelihood on similar forms of unskilled and partly temporary work. It differs from these other occupations, however, in that it is carried out on the road and in the workshop yard instead of in the home, and that it represents heavy manual labour, and not light work which it is easy to combine with a dignified social status. The labourers, unlike the individual craftsmen, can no longer pretend that they belong to the leisured class. If they receive better and more regular pay, they also lose caste. This explains why of the many hundreds of men who, once members of the privileged classes, are to-day men 'without occupation',[1] gaining a precarious livelihood from occasional work, only those coming from the lowest grade of the 'upper classes' have chosen the profession of labourers.

In the case of the peasants we can no longer speak of any inherent congruity between their work and the new temporary occupation. To them, especially to the peasants who do not practise a handicraft beside agriculture, paid labour in addition to farm-work, a form of labour, moreover, which keeps them for months from their homes, must appear as something quite new and unprecedented. If to-day paid labour is gradually attracting the peasant class as well, twenty or thirty years ago the (very prosperous) Nupe peasants had to be coaxed by all available means to undertake temporary paid labour, for example, in railway construction. The more 'sophisticated' Hausa and Yoruba were already then flocking in large numbers to work of this kind. Missionaries who knew Nupe country at that time told me that it was often impossible in the peasant districts to obtain even porters to carry loads; the promise of money did not attract them sufficiently to make them leave their homes even temporarily, to upset their whole routine of work or forgo their well-earned leisure. In certain backward and prosperous districts this

[1] An unofficial occupational census of Bida lists 1,130 men under the class 'no occupation'. They belong without exception to the titled leisured classes of the Emirate.

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511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he
554 should have built himself such a pretentious house. We shall also hear later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale poly-
554 gamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even
595 be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status. Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they express the effectiveness of this incentive.[1]

511 We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog-
554 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant
514 households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly, they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer in-
461 vestigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest' borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept. In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time represents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe, as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid. The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure, members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers, craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the spreading of the Mallam profession.

[1] It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such questions of historical truth.

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work, and whose relations also assist him in this work as messengers and the like.

The labourers are all young men, mostly the sons of farmers, but occasionally also sons of impoverished *bourgeois* families (one of the labourers on my list was the son of a Mallam, another the son of a Bida *saraki*). Some labourers come from far away to the place where they expect to find employment: thus I found a young man from Lapai working in Jebba, and one from Bida working in Ilorin. Their working day is from early morning till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, the normal working day of the *efakó* worker. They get 2*d.* or 3*d.* a day and food; they work mostly for from four to ten days, some for a longer period, till they have collected a substantial sum of money. In no case has wage-labour in Nupe become a permanent, exclusive occupation. These young men seek only temporary employment and return after or in between their engagements to the family farm, where they carry on with the ordinary work of the season. Even a temporary absence of this kind may, of course, render the management of the family farm difficult and even precarious. For instance, the labourer from Lapai whom I have just mentioned, was working in Jebba as late as June, and could not return home before July when all the early planting and weeding would be completed. However, the need of money seems to outweigh all other objections. The main motive in undertaking wage-labour is invariably to obtain money for tax—either for oneself or as contribution to the parental household; next in importance is the motive to obtain money for bride-price.

It must be said in conclusion that though wage-labour represents a comparatively recent growth in Nupe society, the situation which created the need of wage-labour is not. Nor is the system of employed, i.e. non-family, labour the product of a recent development. Part of the social stratification of Nupe was, as we have seen, the creation of an upper class which owned land but did not work it. The labour which this class had to employ was of three kinds: slave labour, the labour of pawns, and, to a lesser extent, of clients. The first and the last kind of employed labour, both involving a social and political significance far beyond the aspect of labour, we have discussed already in a previous section. The second kind—labour of pawns—we will discuss later when analysing the concept of wealth.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (I)

The role which the women play in the agricultural production of the country lends itself to a simple formula. With very few exceptions the women do not perform any primary productive activity: they do no farm-work; they do not help in cultivation except occasionally when assisting the men in the harvesting of cotton or beans or the digging out of cassava—the easiest crop of all. Their sphere of work is, first, the 'refining' of agricultural produce to make it marketable, and secondly, the marketing itself. If the general formula is simple, the details of the division between 'primary' and 'secondary' productive activities, one

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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later. 462

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking for the household. In our general description we have reached the point when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuha* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook. 462 252 592 [432]

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women 462 592 443

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are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front 462
and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the 476
women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the 461
egbe: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing— 533
the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs (no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small [857]
girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between 462
the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contribu- 562
tions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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462 *Women*: 'Yes, but *only* the grain. We have to contribute *kula*, *kuka*, salt, pepper and palm-oil.'

562 *I*: 'Surely you have locust-bean trees and red pepper in Leaba?'

Women: 'No, there are no locust-bean trees here, nor pepper.'

One woman: 'This is not true, we have pepper.'

Another woman (rather defiantly): 'Well, there still remains salt, *kula*, and palm-oil for which we, the women, have to pay.'[1]

[1] Another example of the clearly defined economic rights of the women is this: in the Nupe communities in the forest groves on the Niger, where there are no shea-nut trees, the banana is the property of the women and supplies them with fruits which they can dispose of in their own right.

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft. 462

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d*. to 3*d*. per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and 462 386 563 476

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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
476 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro,
323 Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s*. to 15*s*., the material costing 5*s*.; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d*. and 3*d*. This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts,
441 although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women
441 as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which
868 they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d*., and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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593 makes the women the main traders of the country that the women can as
562 a rule command more liquid capital than the men. In this sense, referring to the liquid resources, it can be said that the Nupe women are on the whole wealthier than the men. This does not mean that their financial position is entirely unaffected by the limited resources of the husband. The wives of small farmers and craftsmen or, generally, impecunious husbands, have little scope for their commercial activities, and may be unable to derive from the household resources the necessary working capital for a profitable independent enterprise. Where there is little to sell there can be little profit; and this small profit may be swallowed up by the normal household expenditure. Even the utensils and goods which constitute the wife's dowry may disappear gradually in a household where there is no money with which to replace the stock of pots, clothes, and ornaments—the woman's initial 'capital' (see p. 351). The household of a diviner in Bida, whom I knew well, was a typical case. The man was of poor health, unable to do any serious work, and had to rely entirely on his income from divining, which was small and irregular. The wife maintained the household, poor and simple as it was. She was about 40 years old; she had nothing left of her dowry save the few rags which she wore, and a few damaged pots. Every day she bought grain for 6*d.* on the market, made corn-gruel and corn-water, and sold this food in the mornings in the street, with a total profit of 2*d.* With this money she kept herself and her husband and a small child.

But usually the wives even of men whom one would hardly call prosperous attain an impressive degree of solvency. Solvency in this connexion is a relative term, as the pecuniary demands which the wives have to meet are much smaller than those which devolve on the men as the heads of the household. Yet in many cases the women come to the succour of their men even in expenses of the latter kind. It is by no means rare, especially in Bida, to find families in which a mother undertakes to pay the bride-price for the sons. Much more widespread is the practice of wives lending their husbands money, for example, for the payment of tax. Of this practice we shall hear more later. Let me emphasize here the dependence of the husband on his wife with regard to these monetary obligations—a dependence which must increase as the independent economic enterprise of the women, commerce, is increasing in scope. This fact is essential for the understanding of certain moral issues involved in the expansion of women's trade in Nupe.

441 I have stated earlier that the line of distinction between professional
462 and occasional traders is much more fluid among the women than among the men. Wives of farmers, craftsmen, Mallams, noblemen,
562 traders, officials—they all are, or may be, traders. The enormous variety in the trade which is carried out by the Nupe women, and in the degree of their 'professionalization', cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The woman who sells every morning two or three dozen packets of home-made *kamu* (corn-gruel) for a tenth of a penny each, and the woman who buys £5 worth of rice, kola-nuts, or European cloth, do not really differ in anything except in the amount of capital they can lay their hands on. The difference in the distance which they cover when

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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disposing of their goods—the peasant woman who walks eight to ten miles to the nearest local market, and the professional woman trader who travels to Lokoja or Ilorin by canoe or train—may seem but an external feature. Yet this factor of distance possesses a deeper significance. The essential difference between the professional and the occasional woman trader is embodied in the extent to which their trading and marketing becomes an independent, self-contained, and self-centred enterprise. Both the occasional and the professional trader are out for profit. But only the latter has adjusted her life fully to this aim. 'Proper' trade necessitates a freedom of movement, a full-time devotion to the task, which only women who have made themselves independent can afford. It means extensive journeys, and long absence from home. Obviously, the wife of a farmer or craftsman who must look after the house is less able to do this than the wife of a trader or a man of the leisured classes.

But the profession demands even more than comparative leisure. The long absence from home, the life on the road, in foreign villages and countries to which none of the normal contacts of the community stretch, means ultimately a dissolution of the bonds of marriage, household, and family. The disappearance of all moral control of the husband over his wife, or the local community over its women, expresses itself in the sexual licence claimed by these women. Female trade and immorality are in Nupe conception two things closely related. The women traders who go on these long expeditions and stay away from home for weeks, months, or even years, are commonly regarded as 'loose' women, as women who cannot help leading a 'loose' and 'immoral' life. The women traders prostitute themselves for money in the villages and towns where they stop on their trading expeditions. The money which they make is regarded by the people as legitimate a form of earnings as that gained from trade itself. When they return to their homes husband and family will receive them without question, and no blame would attach to them for the life which they had been leading while away. Public opinion, though outspoken in its general condemnation of moral laxity, yet countenances the sexual licence of women traders and accepts it almost as an institution. If people—men, as the spokesmen of public opinion—express their indignation at this danger to matrimonial morality, they attack, not the practice itself, but its disproportionate growth in recent times.

We have, in a previous chapter, discussed the social significance of this qualified admission of sexual licence in a certain limited social domain (see Chap. IX). Let me recall the salient facts: female trade, closely associated as it is with licentious living, provided the scope for that socially condoned sexual licence which other social forces seem to have made necessary. Thus female trade became in some respects a closed profession, the entrance into which was made dependent on the qualification of sterility. We may add here that, not unnaturally, women who were past child-bearing age could also legitimately join the profession of women traders. By means of these two qualifications an occupation which harboured some danger to common morality was limited to

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú;* Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
422 butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
492 which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

462 [252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

441 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 232; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
463 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
439 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell groundnuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu. 89 121

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found. 323 [96] [99] [98]

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—MAN, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukã-ngetã* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pakunan*—MAN 1931, 186). [415]

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated— [317] [343] [335]

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds; this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo. [415]

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any [415] [439]

● 463, 565 Nupe FF52

[Information on the Mallams, combination jurists and Mohammedan scholars, has been placed in category 875. -- Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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easily turns into discouragement. In Kutigi and Sakpe I have spoken to many farmers who, discouraged by the increasing difficulties that appear to accompany cotton-growing, seemed determined to give it up altogether. We may, I think, draw a valuable lesson from this. If new agricultural schemes are to be introduced they must be brought in already well tried-out and fully adapted to the existing conditions. The adoption of a new crop or technique is to the native in itself a large-scale experiment; to make the people adopt a technique which has not been fully tried-out means to double this element of experimenting. It will prevent the new knowledge from being absorbed quickly in the 'body of Nupe farming-knowledge' on which the people feel they must be able to rely, and may eventually give them over to disappointment and discouragement. 242

BY-PRODUCTS OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and forest-cultivation produce as by-products certain raw materials which are used in Nupe home industries and handicrafts. Thus the grain-stalks which are left on the fields after the harvest are used for the making of fences, doors, and bedsteads: cut in fine strips, grain and maize stalks are used for mat-making; a vegetable dye, black and red, is gained from the stalk of a certain species of sorghum (*dindórogi*). Small trees which do not bear fruit are occasionally cut down by the owner of the field on which they stand and used as timber for house-repairs and suchlike. In all these cases it is the cultivator and his family themselves who use the plant or tree; the by-products of agriculture have no marketing value. This is different in the case of firewood and grass for thatching which, as I have mentioned already, is collected or cut by the Nupe women and marketed by the men (see p. 200). 241

It is frequently quoted as a characteristic feature of African agriculture that every part of a plant or tree that can be used in any way is actually utilized by the people. This is only partly true in Nupe. Only a small proportion, for example, of the grain-stalks is used in the various ways just described. A great many farmers are either unskilled in the craft which makes use of these by-products, or devote their spare time to other, to them more attractive or profitable, occupations. This comparative failure on the part of the Nupe farmer to utilize to the fullest possible extent the products of his land appears to be connected with the complexity and specialization of the productive system of the country. As we shall see later, only certain groups or individuals have specialized in mat-making, the making of bedsteads, or dyeing. The influence of specialization involving a clear-cut division between the agriculturist and the craftsman who utilizes the by-products of agriculture is most conspicuous in this case; big trees, when not fruit-bearing, may also be cut down and used as timber. But no farmer would ever attempt to cut a big tree himself for fear of bungling the job and being injured or even killed by the falling tree. He calls in the professional wood-cutter, who possesses both the necessary skill and experience and the special magic which alone can prevent the spirit of the tree from revenging himself on 241 463

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241 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-
463 value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has
651 been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-
322 adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of
[672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving
[323] will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already
325 an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted
171] down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XV

INDUSTRIES (*continued*)

INDIVIDUAL CRAFTS

463 467 THE guild-organized crafts represent, as we have seen, a specific social group or class—the class of skilled artisans—which only occasionally enlarges its membership by adopting individuals from other professional or social groups. The individual crafts, on the other hand, present a vaguely defined and ever fluid group which recruits itself from every stratum of Nupe society, the peasant class as well as the 'intelligentsia', slaves and clients as well as members of the nobility. We shall see presently that men of the titled classes who have lost their former sources of income frequently adopt an individual craft as a new means of livelihood. The technical conditions which contribute to make the guild-organized crafts into 'closed groups', organized on the lines of more or less intensive co-operation, are absent in the industries which are carried out as 'free professions'. Tailors, straw-hat makers, or mat-weavers need no workshops; they can work anywhere, in any part of the house, in sleeping-huts as well as in a corner of the *katamba*. Some craftsmen even wander from place to place and practise their work wherever there is a prospect of trade. Many Bida tailors, for example, have made a practice of visiting neighbouring villages on the market days or at the time of the annual ceremonies and festivals, when they can be sure of finding plenty of work. Nor does their work involve co-operation, or necessitate the use of expensive tools. Mat-weavers work with their hands, straw-hat makers use a block of clay or wood (called *ekugi*) over which they shape the crown of the head, a tool which they can easily make themselves. Tailors, embroiderers, or leather-workers need, in addition to the material, only needle and thread.

463 Although there exist, specially in Bida, experts in these crafts who practise them as their only profession, the technique itself is simple enough to be learned by anyone in a very short time. We remember the farmers who carry out a handicraft as *buca* work in their spare time. People in the town similarly practise these handicrafts as leisure-time occupations, in addition to other work, or as a lucrative pastime. Many learned men and students of the Koran do a little tailoring beside. Embroidery, a more delicate work, involving taste and a certain skill, has become the pastime occupation of many members of the 'intelligentsia'. Of hat-making, on the other hand, the Nupe say that it is the ideal occupation for 'lazy people', who can do nothing else, meaning particularly those impoverished 'people of quality' who are neither skilled nor resourceful enough to find other means of livelihood.

463 868 The varied demands of the Nupe markets have also called into being various other, minor, handicrafts, some of which are so easy that young boys of 10 or 11 are encouraged to take them up as a first *buca* occupa-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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285 the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for
435 from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

434 If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

463 Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household groups following the same profession. But just as often we find house-
592 holds in which three or four different professions are represented, and houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XVI
FREE PROFESSIONS

463 IT is not surprising that a rich and complex culture like Nupe should possess its clearly defined *artes liberales*—its professional scholars, scientists, and artists, or, in a terminology more akin to the native conception, its Mallams, barber-doctors, and drummers and dancers. I will leave the discussion of the profession of Mohammedan scholars for the chapter on education, and deal here with the last two of these 'free professions'.

BARBER-DOCTORS

'Free professions' in the sense in which we are using the term here does not necessarily mean 'individualistic' professions or professions unattached to any organization or co-operative unit. If what I have said in the preceding chapter about the meaning of guild-organization is correct, we may expect to find it developed also in the field of these native *artes liberales*. In fact, we do find it, adjusted to the new field of activity, in the barber-doctors of Nupe. We can no longer speak here of home industry; nor is the element of co-operation and mutual assistance the same as in the industries. But the other factors that tend to call into being a closely co-operative organization are clearly visible: we find again the necessity of long, specialized training, even to the degree of adoption into a trade secret; we also find the existence of a constant 'market' for the products and services of the craft; and lastly, we find a close relation between the group of craftsmen and the political system of the country.

305 759 As in medieval Europe and the Orient, the barber of Nupe, *gozan*, is also doctor and surgeon. His activities are numerous: he cuts the hair of men, women, and children; he shaves the head and cuts the tribal marks of newborn babies at the name-giving ceremony. For a tenth of a penny he cuts finger- and toe-nails: a few barbers have specialized in tattooing. The barbers also dispense medicines (mostly worthless[1] infusions and charred powders made of herbs) for every known disease; they perform certain minor surgical operations—circumcision or blood-letting—and administer the *turare*, a potent inhalation of the smoke from certain medicinal herbs. Certain barbers know the secret of contraceptive medicines, others know cures against barrenness; others, again, are experts in the treatment of lunacy. This far-reaching competency is the most characteristic feature of the craft of Nupe barber-doctors. Leaving aside the ordinary routine work of the barber and certain simpler operations such as the cutting of tribal marks, we may say that every barber

[1] This judgement is based on an analysis in the Wellcome Research Laboratory in London, for which I am greatly indebted to this institution, of certain drugs made by the Nupe barber-doctors which I had brought home from Nigeria. The discussion of the more specifically medical questions I must leave for a future publication.

[p. 298]

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).[21]

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuši*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[22]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three " wards " of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a " closed " craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[23]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for " copper "), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[24]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciši*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[21] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[22] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[23] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[24] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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reduced to a system of merely occasional assistance. According to my informants the change is due primarily to the high cost of the *egbe*, which to-day few farmers can afford. This is no doubt true if we understand 'cost' in the relative and not in the absolute sense. In the very closely balanced budget with which most Nupe farmers must reckon to-day the comparatively large single outlay for the *egbe* may prove an insuperable difficulty. But this is not the whole picture. A cost is high only measured on the profit it can realize. And here we have seen that one of the most essential kinds of profit—moral profit—which the *egbe* can realize, namely, its assurance of the economic balance between the generations, has itself lost much of its significance in the life of the community.

The second type of collective work, the *dzolo*, is less important than the *egbe*. It is practised only for harvesting of those crops which demand a large working team (ground-nuts, cotton, and beans) and consists in the arrangement among a number of farmers to work in turn on each other's farms. The host provides the meal after the work. But there is no drumming or dancing, nor is any competition involved in the work of the *dzolo*. Neither is the mechanism of the age-grade associations utilized for this collective work, which is carried out on a much smaller scale than the *egbe*, and only between friends, i.e. families whose heads are friendly with one another. In the *dzolo* the tie of friendship evidently supplies that incentive to collective work which, in the *egbe*, is entrusted to the appeal of music and dance and the stimulus of competition.

WAGE-LABOUR

Assistance in farm-work by means of paid labour plays on the whole (we must add as yet) an insignificant part in Nupe production at large. It is called *kantsú* in Nupe but is often referred to by the Hausa name *lada*, i.e. wages. It is employed by the owners of farms who are not themselves farmers or who for other reasons cannot themselves look after their land. Paid farm-labour is a new thing in Nupe. It has no place in the traditional system of land-tenure and *efakó* work. Characteristically, it is almost completely absent in the rural districts; it is employed mostly in the large commercial centres in which a considerable proportion of the population belongs to the well-to-do 'professional classes', such as Kacha, Jebba, and, above all, Bida.[1] Let me give you a list of the cases I recorded in which wage farm-labour was employed. The employers were a number of traders in Kacha who had bought some land a few years ago but did not work it themselves; a number of traders in Bida; two Mallams in Bida; a Mallam in Jebba whose health did not allow him to work on the land (he was employing wage-labour for the first time); Native Administration officials in Bida—a few policemen, and teachers at the Bida Middle School; and lastly, the village chief of Kacha (who is at the same time District Head) whose time is taken up by official

[1] One of my Bida informants, himself a well-to-do member of the 'intelligentsia', estimated that six out of ten farmers in Bida employ wage-labour. Though I should regard this estimate as much too high it is significant for the outlook of the urban *bourgeoisie*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241 work, and whose relations also assist him in this work as messengers and the like.

464 The labourers are all young men, mostly the sons of farmers, but occasionally also sons of impoverished *bourgeois* families (one of the labourers on my list was the son of a Mallam, another the son of a Bida *saraki*). Some labourers come from far away to the place where they expect to find employment: thus I found a young man from Lapai working in Jebba, and one from Bida working in Ilorin. Their working day is from early morning till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, the normal working day of the *efakó* worker. They get 2*d.* or 3*d.* a day and food; they work mostly for from four to ten days, some for a longer period, till they have collected a substantial sum of money. In no case has wage-labour in Nupe become a permanent, exclusive occupation. These young men seek only temporary employment and return after or in between their engagements to the family farm, where they carry on with the ordinary work of the season. Even a temporary absence of this kind may, of course, render the management of the family farm difficult and even precarious. For instance, the labourer from Lapai whom I have just mentioned, was working in Jebba as late as June, and could not return home before July when all the early planting and weeding would be completed. However, the need of money seems to outweigh all other objections. The main motive in undertaking wage-labour is invariably to obtain money for tax—either for oneself or as contribution to the parental household; next in importance is the motive to obtain money for bride-price.

It must be said in conclusion that though wage-labour represents a comparatively recent growth in Nupe society, the situation which created the need of wage-labour is not. Nor is the system of employed, i.e. non-family, labour the product of a recent development. Part of the social stratification of Nupe was, as we have seen, the creation of an upper class which owned land but did not work it. The labour which this class had to employ was of three kinds: slave labour, the labour of pawns, and, to a lesser extent, of clients. The first and the last kind of employed labour, both involving a social and political significance far beyond the aspect of labour, we have discussed already in a previous section. The second kind—labour of pawns—we will discuss later when analysing the concept of wealth.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (I)

462 The role which the women play in the agricultural production of the country lends itself to a simple formula. With very few exceptions the women do not perform any primary productive activity: they do no farm-work; they do not help in cultivation except occasionally when assisting the men in the harvesting of cotton or beans or the digging out of cassava—the easiest crop of all. Their sphere of work is, first, the 'refining' of agricultural produce to make it marketable, and secondly, the marketing itself. If the general formula is simple, the details of the division between 'primary' and 'secondary' productive activities, one

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CHAPTER XVII
INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

464 177 THE influences of modern culture contact which we have seen at work in almost every field of Nupe production gain their fullest expression in this most recent native occupation. The employer is the Bida Native Administration; the employees are recruited from certain specific sections of the Nupe people, and the nature of this selection is deeply significant of the structure of the society.

We must distinguish two different categories of paid industrial labour: skilled permanent, and unskilled temporary, labour.[1] Skilled labour is employed in the workshops of the Native Administration Public Works Department, and comprises blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers, i.e. occupations which (with the exception of the bricklayers) are closely associated with the traditional native crafts of the country. Temporary unskilled labour is employed partly in addition to permanent labour in the N.A. Workshops, but mostly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labourers such as construction work of various kinds. The term 'temporary' must be understood in a very loose sense; men who have been working as 'temporary' labourers, off and on, for ten or fifteen years figure prominently on my lists. Some [167] move from place to place, wherever there is a chance of finding employment. As there are large numbers of alien, non-Nupe, labourers among those engaged in temporary work in Nupe country, so we also find Nupe workmen in other districts and provinces of Nigeria. A few of these labourers have never even had another, more or less permanent, profession, but have adopted their present occupation in earliest youth. None of them, however, are skilled and specially trained labourers. By far the largest proportion of temporary labourers go home and return to whatever their original profession was when their temporary employment comes to an end. In the sense, then, that their work as labourers constitutes an alternative to some other original occupation, they can all be classed under the heading of 'temporary labourers'.

464 The data on which are based the statistical tables which follow were compiled in and near Bida in 1936. It was a fortunate coincidence that at the time a large building programme was being carried out—the construction of new office buildings in Bida, and the rebuilding of a big bridge on the Badeggi road—in which a large body of labourers was employed. My census of temporary labour was taken among the workmen who were employed in this work. I have placed bricklayers in the same category with temporary labourers, although, technically, they represent a group of skilled, permanent, workmen; but the technique of

[1] To be quite precise we should distinguish four different classes of labour: permanent and non-permanent, and skilled and unskilled. As, however, all skilled labour is permanent, and all non-permanent labour unskilled, and as unskilled permanent labour represents only a small minority (8 individuals) it is simpler to deal with the two sub-divisions as one.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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their work is in no way connected with a traditional trade or craft, which means, that they all had to abandon another, original, occupation (either of themselves or their families) and that their present work constitutes an alternative profession in the sense just explained. 464

TABLE I

Temporary Labour

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Home	No alternative occupation	Alternative occupation	Seasonal labour	Length of employment as labourers: Under 2 years	2–5 years	5–10 years	Over 10 years	Totals
Bida	6 (3)	30	2	5	16	10	7	38
Country	1	3	15	10	5	3	1	19
Totals	7	33	17	15	21	13	8	57

Under 'No alternative occupation' I have listed in brackets the labourers who are studying the Koran in their spare time, but without intention of practising the profession of Koran teachers. The heading 'seasonal labour' refers to farmers who, for various reasons, seek work as labourers only in the dry season and return to their farm-work in the rains. It is natural that their number should be much larger among people from the country than among Bida men. All peasants, incidentally, who have become labourers during the last two years belong to this class of seasonal labour. Our figures further show that their number is greatly on the increase. Labourers pure and simple, as might be expected, come almost exclusively from Bida. The only exception is a man from Badeggi, the village on the urbanized railway, twelve miles from Bida; he is also the only country man who has been a labourer for over ten years. Under 'alternative occupations' I had to list a great many different occupations; Table III will show the various original, or 'alternative', occupations of temporary labourers. In Table II we shall examine the professional groups from which skilled permanent labour is recruited. 464

TABLE II

Permanent Labour

Occupation of the labourer	Occupation of the labourer's family: Guild crafts: Same	Guild crafts: Different	Individual crafts	Farmers	Mallams	Traders	Nobility	Total
Carpenters	6	..	..	1	1	..	1	9
Blacksmiths	5	1	..	..	2	..	2	10
Total	11	1	..	1	3	..	3	19

The large majority of skilled workmen come, as we see, from families which have practised the same crafts on indigenous lines both in Bida and in the villages. The few 'outsiders' appearing in this group come mostly from families with no specific occupation, such as Mallams, and nobility.

The largest contingent of country people among the labourers is, naturally, composed of farmers and farmers' sons. Comparing Table III

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TABLE III

Temporary Labour

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		Homs	*Farmers*	*Guild craft*	*Individual craft*	*Mallams*	*Traders*	*Nobility*	*No altern. occupation*	*Total*
Occupation of father	Bida	4	1	13	9	1	11	..	39
	Country	10	..	..	6	..	2	..	18
	Total	14	1	13	15	1	13	..	57
Alternative occupation of labourer	Bida	4	1	20	8	..	..	5	38
	Country	16	..	..	2	..	..	1	19
	Total	20	1	20	10	..	..	6	57

with Table I we can see that of the 16 farmers who have sought work as labourers only 1 has abandoned farming permanently for labourer's work, while 15 remained seasonal labourers. Turning to the Bida contingent we see that among the different professions which contribute to temporary labour individual crafts come first and Mallams second—the most loosely organized occupational groups thus contribute most heavily to occasional labour. The occupations of the families of which these labourers come appear in a slightly different order of importance: individual crafts are, again, first, with 'nobility' second and Mallams third. 'Nobility' means here mostly the lower political ranks, above all 'household' and *bara* ranks. Their share in the contribution reflects the great political and economic changes that have deprived many members of this 'leisure class' of a livelihood mainly derived from warfare or political attachment.

461 464 But what are the incentives which led the men from the other occupational groups to give up their previous occupation or to undertake the work of labourers in addition to their ordinary profession? This question is answered by the data of the last table.

TABLE IV

	Married	*Unmarried*	*Tax as reason*
Permanent labour	9	12	..
Temporary labour { Bida	9	13	4
Temporary labour { Country	6	9	5
Age 20–5	4	10	..
,, 25–30	3	8	..
,, 30–5	4	4	..
,, 35–40	4	..	..

The majority among permanent as well as temporary labourers is unmarried—although many of the men, as we can see, have reached, and partly passed, the age at which it is normal for the Nupe man to marry. The work as labourers in their case was undertaken with the intent to obtain money for the bride-price, a plan which did not always materialize as our figures show, especially in Bida. For there are many other uses for money, and some, as we shall see later, may interfere with the laudable intention of working for one's bride-price. In a number of cases the reason for becoming a labourer was to obtain money for tax,

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either for oneself or for one's family. One young labourer from the country gave his father 5*s*. out of his weekly wages of 7*s*. to put by for his bride-price; another kept 2*s*. to 3*s*. a month for himself, and gave the rest to his father. Many Bida labourers, on the other hand, used the whole money for themselves; some explained that they had become labourers because there was no money in their old profession, others because they wanted to be independent and because their fathers or elder brothers could not give them as much money as they liked to have.

To summarize: as one would expect, paid labour, especially temporary labour, does not represent a 'real' profession in the sense of an occupation involving special training and selection of workers. It is essentially a stopgap occupation chosen to supplement or replace a failing normal source of income. Owing to the specific composition of Nupe society the new profession is being adopted by certain social groups and strata more than by others. Yet in some respects paid industrial labour must be regarded almost as a modern continuation of forms of occupations which, in the traditional society, bore the same supplementary and stopgap character. As such it appeals strongly to the individual craftsman, to Mallams, and *bara*, who depend for their livelihood on similar forms of unskilled and partly temporary work. It differs from these other occupations, however, in that it is carried out on the road and in the workshop yard instead of in the home, and that it represents heavy manual labour, and not light work which it is easy to combine with a dignified social status. The labourers, unlike the individual craftsmen, can no longer pretend that they belong to the leisured class. If they receive better and more regular pay, they also lose caste. This explains why of the many hundreds of men who, once members of the privileged classes, are to-day men 'without occupation',[1] gaining a precarious livelihood from occasional work, only those coming from the lowest grade of the 'upper classes' have chosen the profession of labourers.

In the case of the peasants we can no longer speak of any inherent congruity between their work and the new temporary occupation. To them, especially to the peasants who do not practise a handicraft beside agriculture, paid labour in addition to farm-work, a form of labour, moreover, which keeps them for months from their homes, must appear as something quite new and unprecedented. If to-day paid labour is gradually attracting the peasant class as well, twenty or thirty years ago the (very prosperous) Nupe peasants had to be coaxed by all available means to undertake temporary paid labour, for example, in railway construction. The more 'sophisticated' Hausa and Yoruba were already then flocking in large numbers to work of this kind. Missionaries who knew Nupe country at that time told me that it was often impossible in the peasant districts to obtain even porters to carry loads; the promise of money did not attract them sufficiently to make them leave their homes even temporarily, to upset their whole routine of work or forgo their well-earned leisure. In certain backward and prosperous districts this

[1] An unofficial occupational census of Bida lists 1,130 men under the class 'no occupation'. They belong without exception to the titled leisured classes of the Emirate.

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464 [482] attitude has still survived: when I trekked through the country round Sakpe in 1936 I found myself in the same predicament, and although it was in the dry season and farming was at a standstill, I had eventually to agree to women carrying my loads as men were not available for this task. That the appeal of paid labour as a seasonal occupation for peasants is rapidly gaining ground cannot be doubted. The stopgap occupation can, in fact, be said to satisfy a definite want in present-day peasant economy.[1] The strength of its appeal still varies greatly locally. The large majority of the peasants whom I found employed as labourers in the construction of Badeggi bridge were local men or men from the neighbourhood of Bida. Of 19 labourers 14 came from Badeggi itself, 3 from hamlets near Bida, 1 from Kacha, 1 from a village farther afield (Jima), and none from Trans-Kaduna. The local selection does not merely reflect varying degrees of progressiveness or 'sophistication'; it also reflects the varying urgency of the wants for the relief of which paid labour is undertaken. The nature of these wants we shall discuss in detail later.

[1] To-day many Nupe peasants are ready to try any kind of paid labour, but will abandon it quickly if it falls short of their expectations of a regular and substantial income. Thus the Nupe of Leaba tried their luck in gold-washing, which [316] is carried out on a considerable scale in that district. They had heard from Hausa labourers that one could make as much as 9*d*. or 1*s*. a day in this work. They had not realized, however, that the payment was not per day, but depended on the amount of gold which the individual worker can produce. As the Nupe were rather clumsy and slow, unlike the experienced Hausa labourers, their pay was small and irregular, and, gravely disappointed, they soon gave up gold-washing.

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*ázolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

●464 Wage labour (*kantsú;* Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[422] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
492] which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konu* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles. 323

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen. 323 444 439 [527]

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production, 323 471 592 474 [465]

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
241 owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family
643 estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
427 land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoši* people on his family estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankd* arrangement. But the *esoši* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoši* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu*
[242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family
●466] estate, the *esoši* workers there also denounced the old agreement and demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

423 The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
313 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
438 rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

423 The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
313 the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

[For information on the barber-doctor guild, see categories 759 and 305. --Analyst]

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565 laws or special judicial practices. Of this aspect of their activity we shall
554 hear more at a later stage. But one point (already mentioned) must be
693 stressed here. The office of *Liman* and *Alkali* could become hereditary; many judges and Mohammedan scholars are of Fulani stock; but this reflects only the political influence and partly also the tradition of learning in these families. As representatives of Mohammedan scholarship *Liman* and *Alkali* are only the most exalted exponents of a professional class which comprises men of every status and birth—the Mallams, 'learned men', who are held in high esteem by everyone. Even without rank or title, when of little and insignificant learning, they are placed above the ordinary commoner. They may marry the daughters and sisters of the high-born. The *Etsu* himself, descendant of a Mallam, puts a 'Mallam' before his name. Like his ancestors he honours and receives at his court all Mallams of reputation. They are a class between the classes, a mobile, privileged intelligentsia.

565 The description of the hierarchy of Nupe kingdom is incomplete
554 without the mention of a last group of minor rank-holders, composed of the heads of the Bida craft-guilds. The guilds are closed occupational
467 groups, the members of which live together in one locality and practise certain hereditary crafts such as glass-making, brasswork, weaving, &c.[1] The guild-heads receive their titles, together with the usual gift of a turban, from the *Etsu*. Though low down in the scale of ranks, they have yet an official standing, and are raised above the ordinary commoner and peasant. Their headship implies authority over all the members of their craft in town and village. Formerly the guild-heads received a small annual tribute of products of their craft from their fellow craftsmen. Like the members of the nobility, the titled guild-heads are summoned to the *Etsu*'s Council at the *Sallah*, the great Mohammedan festival; and,
[651] like the privileged nobility, they are exempted from taxation. Their only tribute takes the form of an annual gift—an *emisa*, or 'salute'—again of products of their craft, the cost of which is borne jointly by the whole guild, and which is presented to the *Etsu* at the *Sallah*.

Certain craft-guilds are linked with the dynastic division of the capital and are divided into three sections each of which resides in a different *ekpā*. The groups of craftsmen also bear more special allegiance to the royal house in whose *ekpā* they live and with the ancestor of which they associate their coming to Bida and the foundation of their guild. But over and above this party allegiance guilds and guild-sections are closely linked with the ruling king of Nupe. For the king and the court represent the most important customers of the Bida craftsmen. All orders which the court intends to place are given through the guild-head, who guarantees their execution and acts as an official 'controller' of his group of craftsmen.

A position similar to that held by the guild-heads is also assigned to the head of the Bida brokers, the *Etsu Dilali*, who again plays the part of an agent of the king in all matters concerning commerce and trade in the capital.

[1] The organization of the Bida craft-guilds will be described in more detail in Chapter xiv.

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We shall see later that the explanation of this incorporation of artisans and brokers in the rigid bureaucracy of the kingdom lies in the control which the state exercises over crafts and merchandise; only by means of a control of this kind could the head of this warlike state secure an unimpeded supply of the commodities that were vital to the court and the state: arms, clothes, and saddles for the soldiers, food for the huge capital, and the luxuries that were needed for the display of royal power and wealth. We find convincing evidence for this interpretation in the fact that the different crafts are not of equal standing. Some rank higher than others, and this grading is not correlated with economic success: the very prosperous butchers are last on this list, blacksmiths and brassmiths, on the other hand, head the list, 'for they are makers of arms'. Only the glass-makers, a strongly independent and important craft, stand aloof from this order of craft-guilds. This is a list of the craft-guilds in Bida, with the titles of the guild-heads, arranged in order of precedence.

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The figure in brackets shows the number of *ekpã* in which they live. The titles of the guild-heads are given in italics.

Brassworkers (2): *Muku.*
Blacksmiths (3): *Dokodza.*
Carpenters and Builders (1): *Egbaba.*
Barber-Doctors (3): *Sokyara.*
Beadworkers (2): *Majĩ Lantana.*
Leatherworkers (scattered in the town): formerly *Majĩ Kimpa.*
Weavers (3): *Leshe, Majĩ, Ndakó.*
Butchers (3): *Sonfawa.*
Glass-makers (1): *Masagá.*

SLAVERY

The lowest in the complex order of social classes in Nupe are the slaves (*wuži*, as against *egi*, freeman, lit. child). But in this one class there are shades and distinctions of social status. Some slaves have risen to positions of wealth and influence. Others have remained menial workers in the households and on the farms of their masters. Pre-British Nupe numbered its slaves by the thousands. Twenty to thirty slaves was a moderate average for the household of a man of consequence. The prosperous craftsmen of Bida town, blacksmiths and weavers, always had slaves to work for them; even in villages one found households with one or two slaves.

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The people of Nupe obtained their slaves by two methods: first, there were the slaves captured in the war, who became the property of the man to whose share in the booty they had fallen; and second, there were slaves bought in the markets of Bida.[1] The majority of the latter, it seems, were slaves sold by their captors—noblemen who had taken more slaves than they needed for their household. Slaves were also sold abroad, mostly to the south. Many Nupe men of rank were engaged in

[1] Lander reports that 200 slaves were on sale in the market of Rabá, the then capital of Nupe (op. cit. iii, p. 313).

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CHAPTER XIV
INDUSTRIES

ORGANIZATION OF CRAFT-GUILDS

IN the Western world Nupe native industries would fall under the heading of 'home industries'. They are carried out in the home, or in workshops connected with the home, and their labour organization is to a large extent composed of members of one household or a number of related households and families. All the industries are carried out by men. But we find a certain differentiation with regard to the organization of labour, between industries carried out in individual work and industries based on co-operative group production or, in other words, between individual crafts and guild-organized crafts. For the co-operative organization is of a specific type. It represents a closed group, the membership of which is to a large extent hereditary in a number of families; outsiders can join it only through a formal adoption into the profession, after a period of apprenticeship. The group, moreover, is defined not only with regard to the productive pursuit but also socially and politically, as a specific social group, almost an artisan class, which enjoys official recognition and certain political privileges. Its internal organization, finally, is marked by a certain hierarchy of grades and ranks. These crafts thus present a picture closely resembling the organization of craft-guilds in Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages. 467

Of the native industries in Nupe the following are organized in craft-guilds: blacksmith work and the mining of iron ore; the craft of brass- and silversmiths; glass-making; weaving; bead-work; building; wood-work and carpentry; and, lastly, the profession of butchers. Tailoring and embroidery, leatherwork, indigo dyeing, straw-hat-making, mat-making, and basketwork are practised as individual crafts. The majority of Nupe crafts, especially guild-organized crafts, are concentrated in the town. But even where these crafts occur both in town and village (as in blacksmith work and weaving), they appear in their most typical form only in Bida, and are indeed symptomatic of the civilization which evolved in the capital of the kingdom. I cannot attempt here to describe in full all these native industries, neither from the technological point of view nor with regard to the details of their organization. I shall deal only with the most typical and, sociologically, most significant crafts.

It will be best, however, before entering into the description of the various crafts, to anticipate certain general features common to all of them. I have called their productive organization 'co-operative group production'. But co-operation in these crafts exists in two different forms and on two different levels: we have, first, co-operation of the group at large, i.e. the guild or guild section; and, second, co-operation in the narrow sense, i.e. the actual working together, of the individual labour-unit. We shall leave the description of the former to the sections dealing with the various specific industries and concentrate here on the

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467 latter, narrower, group co-operation. We shall see that it varies widely in scope and closeness, owing partly to the different nature of the productive technique and the varying demands upon co-operation which it entails, and partly also to extraneous factors, not involved in productive technique. The labour-unit in craft-work is called *efakó*, i.e. by the same name as the labour-unit in farm-work, to which, in fact, it corresponds in all essentials. Again we find a section of the family group working together under a senior relative who, as the common head, directs group co-operation, supplies the means of production (tools and raw material), and disposes of the proceeds from the group work. He also undertakes the other *efakó* obligations of paying tax for his co-workers, providing them with food, clothing, and bride-price. At the death of the *efakó* head the group member next in seniority takes his place. If old age disables the *efakó* head for active work he can retire from the labour-unit without giving up his position as the head of the group, i.e. without abandoning his control over the group income. Old men who have not reached the position of an *efakó* head when they are forced to retire 467 will be supported by the labour-unit. The old men of the group are, moreover, often allotted a little farm-work close to the house, which 888 allows them to make their contribution, even in old age, to the group income. We can see already that the ability of the group to 'pension off' their old men and late leaders depends essentially on the size of the labour-unit; a very small labour-unit is clearly incapable of making the necessary provisions, and we shall find that in the case of these labour-units the support of the old men is undertaken, rather irregularly in fact, by their family as a family obligation, and no longer forms part of the regular services of the labour-unit towards its members or ex-members.

467 With regard to the junior *efakó* members we find, again, the practice of releasing from the *efakó*-unit adult workers who desire to make themselves independent and to set up a separate labour-unit. The question always entailed in the release from the labour-unit, namely, of the acquisition of new means of production, is complicated in craft-work by the fact that here the means of production are to some extent immovable (e.g. the blacksmith's furnace and anvil, the glass-maker's furnace, the weaver's loom, &c.). It appears to be due to this difficulty that the release from the labour-unit in craft-work does not invariably involve withdrawal also from the workshop in which these means of production are fixed, but that, on the contrary, there is the tendency to stay on and share workshops, furnaces, and so forth, with the ex-fellow-workers. Only if the workshop is overcrowded will the worker or workers who are leaving the *efakó*-unit look round for another place, for example, a vacant furnace in another workshop, or the entrance hut of a compound, or (more rarely) build themselves a new workshop, with the assistance of family and fellow craftsmen. The withdrawing workers will be allowed to take with them the (movable) tools which they had been using, and will also be supplied as a rule, by the old *efakó* head, with raw material for the start. This setting-up of independent workers is in craft-work as in farm-work the last act of the functioning *efakó*.

The co-operative organization of *efakó* work also enables the group to

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The cooperative organization of efakó work also enables the group to 467 868

train its adolescents and to bring them gradually into the system of co-operation. Young boys are employed first in easy auxiliary work, such as working the bellows in blacksmith and glass-work, or the spooling of cotton thread in weaving; sitting all day long in the workshop they learn a good deal from watching; when they are old enough they are given more serious work, which they carry out under the guidance and tuition of the *efakó* head till, eventually, they become fully fledged members of the labour-unit. In most cases the *efakó* work is supplemented by special individual, *bucá*, work. The relation between the two varies widely, with the specific nature of the craft and its productive technique.

BLACKSMITH WORK

The blacksmiths are called *tswata* in Nupe, or sometimes *tswata gbagba*, 'heavy smiths', to distinguish them from the *tswata muku*, the brass- and silversmiths. Nearly every village in Nupe possesses at least one or two blacksmith workshops. In Bida we find three groups of blacksmiths, whole blacksmith 'wards' in fact, each with its cluster of workshops, and each situated in a different *ekpã* of the town. According to tradition the three blacksmith groups are of different origin. One, in the old centre of Bida, *ba nin*, claims descent from the original group of blacksmiths which was established in Bida when it was still a Beni village. At that time the head of this group, the *Maji Tswata*, the Master of the Blacksmiths, is said to have held authority over all the blacksmiths of Beni country. The blacksmiths living in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter, the smallest of the three groups, came to Bida comparatively late, from Trans-Kaduna. The largest blacksmith group in Bida, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, traces its descent to the blacksmiths of Rabá, the former capital of the kingdom. They came to Bida together with the king and court when Bida became the new capital of Fulani Nupe. As we shall see later, this last group has established itself as the supreme guild authority over the blacksmiths of Bida and all Nupe. The craftsmen of this group call themselves *dokodzaši*, after their head, who bears the title *Dokodza*.[1] 326

Technology

The blacksmith wards of Bida are of very different size; the smallest contains two workshops, the largest seven. In some cases the entrance-hall of the compound in which the families of the craftsmen are living serves also as workshop or forge. But usually the forge is in a separate hut which stands by itself a small distance from the compound; with its three or four wide doors, and the many small window-holes let into the wall to serve as passage for the smoke from the forge, the workshops can be easily identified. Inside are two furnaces, each screened in by an angular mud wall, about 3 feet high. On the inner side of the screen, facing the open fire, sits the blacksmith himself; on the other side of the

[1] It is interesting to note that the modern Emirate of Patigi, where the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty are reigning to-day, also possesses its group of 'royal blacksmiths', under another *Dokodza*. They came to Patigi together with the family of the present rulers, from Gbara, the ancient residence of this branch of the Nupe dynasty.

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placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work. 325

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit. 326 467 592

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out. 326 592 [257]

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a
435 day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied
with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of
these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes.
One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is
the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have
lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-
stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the
Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters
have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen,
their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure
of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the
country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger.
[437] The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes
which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the black-
smiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facili-
ties of transport between town and country have also deflected some of
the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to
the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a
shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final,
more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks
smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the
former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'main-
tenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine
the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-
operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths,
326 whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system
● 467 —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and
grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as
well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although
the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more
closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system
extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various inde-
pendent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the
result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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326 467 the allegiance to a common head, the master of the *Dokodza* section in Bida. As this group of Bida blacksmiths is associated, historically, with Nupe kingship its head also holds his rank and position by appointment of the king of Nupe. The *Dokodza* claims that the blacksmiths in the whole of Nupe 'must obey him' in all matters concerning the profession. As an external expression of this allegiance he receives annually, at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*, a gift of crude iron ore from the various blacksmith groups of the country. Although this gift has now been abandoned the village blacksmiths still acknowledge (at least in theory) the supreme position of the guild-head in the capital, and never fail to pay their respects to him when they are in Bida. In return they count on his help and influence if they are in need of official intervention in the capital or at the court. The closeness of the co-operation under the guild-head, and the efficiency of his control over his fellow craftsmen, increases with the nearness to Bida, till, in the town, it takes the form of guild organization in the strict sense of the word.

The most effective unit, however, is not the guild at large, but the single guild section. The people of each group are of one *dengi*, one kinship group, related both by descent and frequent intermarriage. Every male born into the group is expected to become a blacksmith—'how can he become anything else', said my informants; 'we know no other job'. But, on the other hand, they would maintain that no man from outside could become a blacksmith. When I asked the *Dokodza* people why this should be so, they answered with a laugh: 'How can anyone who was not born a blacksmith become one?' Nevertheless, in another part of the town I discovered a man who, born of a family of traders, had adopted the profession of a blacksmith. He seemed to have been a rather more unruly youth than the rest of the family; for he had firmly declined to become a trader, like them; he had first studied the Koran and thought of becoming a Mallam, but later changed his mind, and decided to become a blacksmith: he 'liked it better' than either trading or studying. Certain maternal relations of his were Beni blacksmiths in a village near Bida. There he went, stayed with them for some years till he had learned the trade, and then returned to Bida, where he is now keeping a little workshop of his own in the entrance hut of the house of his paternal relations. Among the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I was told that formerly apprentices were taken regularly. The pupils came mostly from villages near Bida, and returned to their home as fully fledged craftsmen. The training took from three to five years, during which time the apprentice lived in the house of his master. No money was taken for the tuition, but after the completion of the apprenticeship the parents of the pupil sent a present of food and kola-nuts. Adoption into the profession went hand in hand with adoption into the guild, and the new craftsman would regard himself as a member of the guild section in which he was apprenticed. However, there have been no adoptions into the craft for many years now.

Each guild section has its own titled head and, besides, one or two other ranks which are bestowed on the family heads of the other large family groups in the section. The position of the head of the guild

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section is taken in rotation by these families, the 'second-in-command' succeeding to the position of the head at his death. Among the *Dokodza* people we find a threefold elaborate hierarchy which settles the succession even to the rank of the 'second-in-command': *Dokodza*, *Dokpa*, and *Shaba Dokpa* (lit. Successor of *Dokpa*). The smaller blacksmith section of the Bida Beni possesses two ranks: *Majī Tswata* and *Shaba Tswata*. The blacksmith groups in the villages, and also the groups of iron-ore miners, have similar rank systems.[1] The heads of the blacksmith groups, and to a lesser extent the other guild ranks, are respected, and their orders are obeyed by all co-workers. The main significance of their position lies in the fact that it is their task to organize all co-operative work within the group.

Co-operation and mutual assistance within the section takes many different forms. If the people of one workshop, for example, are unable to fulfil a certain order, they pass it on to another workshop; or if the occupants happen to be absent when a customer calls, their neighbours will always be ready to take the order on their behalf. When the workshops ran short of iron ore, the guild-head used to send messengers to the iron-ore miners to bring back a sufficient supply for the whole group; this form of co-operation, however, no longer exists, and to-day each workshop procures its own raw material. Co-operation of a more far-reaching order is concerned with the various tasks which we have placed under the heading of 'maintenance of labour'. We have already seen that these tasks involve co-operation and mutual assistance on a scale which transcends in varying degree the *efakó*-unit. Thus the division of labour in the preparation of charcoal implies co-operation of the whole workshop group. When it becomes necessary to forge and put up a new anvil an even larger group must co-operate in active work. We may add that the upkeep of the workshop itself, or the building of furnaces—especially the large furnaces used by the iron-ore miners—demands a co-operation much larger than that which the *efakó* group can provide. In none of these cases is the co-operation recompensed with a share in the profits (as is the case in *efakó* co-operation); nor is this co-operation organized on the basis of collective work of the *egbe* type; nor can it be explained, finally, by the fact that the co-workers may belong to the same family and household. Rather is it a co-operation based on membership of the same professional union—the guild or guild section—and mobilized by the appointed head of the group.

The head of the guild section is also responsible for maintenance of labour in a wider sense. His professional advice may be sought by all workers in the group if they have some difficult or unusual work in hand. He will also occasionally lend his people money if they need it for professional purposes (e.g. the purchase of crude iron ore), in other words, he provides them with the necessary working capital. Certain similar services towards the group are vested in the position of the *Dokodza* alone, that is, of the head of the guild at large. He arbitrates in all internal disputes among the blacksmiths of Bida, and is thus able to

[1] See chart of Village Ranks, p. 57.

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326 prevent friction in his body of workers. He is also the agency through
467 which important large orders reach the group. On a smaller scale this task also falls to the heads of the other blacksmith groups. But in the case of the guild-head it gains special significance; for these 'royal blacksmiths' worked for the largest customer of the country, the Nupe court. They could be certain of a constant large demand, e.g. for tools for the farm-hands working for the king, or various iron implements needed in the royal household, for horse bits and stirrups for the king's horses, or flint-locks for the guns of the bodyguard. These orders are given by the king or court officials to the *Dokodza*, who then distributes the work among the craftsmen of his group according to their capacity and skill, or, if the order proves too large, among the workers in other guild sections as well. The *Dokodza* also receives the payment for this work, and keeps the largest share; the rest of the money is divided equally among the whole guild section, whether they have been working on this particular job or not.[1] These royal orders have been greatly reduced recently, not only because many of the implements needed are obtained nowadays from the European stores, but also because many of the requirements of the royal household are now catered for by the Public Works Department in Bida. But when the present *Etsu* built his new house, in 1935, he ordered nails and brackets for all doors from the *Dokodza* people.

326 The part played by the guild-head (and to a lesser extent by the
467 sectional heads) in providing labour and capital for his group explains
178 the authority which he exercises over his fellow workers, and also his ability to act in certain circumstances as their 'financier'. On the other hand, the close co-operative organization of the guild section reveals itself as a device to meet these regular demands upon the production of the group. Here we can attempt to explain why the smaller guild sections in Bida (and similarly the village groups of blacksmiths) have suffered more severely under modern economic changes than did the *Dokodza* group. The size of the groups is itself significant. Only the privileged group of the 'royal blacksmiths' evolved a large-scale professional organization; the other groups, which did not have the same access to constant large-scale demands upon production, remained small, and more loosely organized. Now, we can assume that these smaller groups also obtained formerly a sufficient demand for their products from various sources. It may also be that their sources have failed sooner, and more completely, than the source with which the *Dokodza* people could reckon—the continued orders from the royal household are evidence of this. But these unequal changes are less significant in their direct effect upon production (which may be negligible)[2] than in their indirect effect,

[1] How, on the other hand, the authority of the guild-head can be adapted to new situations is illustrated in the following instance. When I went to inspect the furnaces of the iron-ore miners near Bida, I had to obtain a guide through the *Dokodza*. On our return to Bida the guide at once showed the money which I had paid him to the guild-head; though he was allowed to keep it he could not have done so without first informing the guild-head, who could have deducted a part of the money.

[2] The order for nails and brackets for the royal house which we mentioned above brought in only 2*s.* and a gift of food.

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through the medium of labour organization. The royal orders, though at present small and irregular, still mobilize the group organization of the *Dokodza* people in the traditional way. The general weakening of the guild organization brought about by recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild-head and sectional heads, has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller, and already weaker, guild sections. In their case the group organization has, in fact, been reduced beyond the margin of safety. We have seen that Nupe blacksmith work demands comparatively large group co-operation for a successful maintenance of labour (in all its aspects). In a weakened organization, a markedly reduced co-operative group, maintenance of labour becomes increasingly difficult. This is what happened in the case of the smaller blacksmith groups. And this difficulty, while not sufficient in itself to disrupt the labour organization, would yet weaken its resistance to the effects of economic change—a decline in trade, the competition of European goods—effects which (at least for the time being) have passed by the larger and more strongly organized section.

We can quote several instances of this: the division of labour which enables a workshop, say, of four men, to continue work while two of the men prepare charcoal is impossible in a small working unit, and a valuable working day, possibly in the busiest time of the year, must be sacrificed. Or a workshop may have to interrupt its work when iron ore runs out and new raw material has to be fetched from the iron-ore miners—a task which, in large-scale co-operation, can be performed by one man for a number of workshops without deranging the work of the group. I have even witnessed cases in which work had been interrupted, or reduced to small repairs, because the workers had no money to buy raw materials; in a large co-operative group money would have been found more easily, especially with the help of the guild-head. In Kutigi I saw one of the two local blacksmith workshops left dilapidated for a whole year because the workers could not muster sufficient labour. The most conspicuous example of all is that of the iron-ore miners who had let their means of production, their furnaces, fall into disuse.

BRASS- AND SILVERSMITHS

The Nupe brass-smiths—*tswata muku*—reside almost exclusively in Bida. The only place outside Bida where brass-smiths have settled is Kacha, the rich trading-place, where these craftsmen from Bida hoped to find a profitable market. There are two groups of brass-smiths in Bida, one in the quarter of *Etsu* Masaba and one in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. The latter has lost its former importance. In technical skill both groups are equal, as I could test for myself; as regards work and design of the traditional type the group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter seems the more efficient. Yet its decline, unmerited though it was, is not difficult to understand. It was partly due to political factors. The group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter flourished during the régime of *Etsu* Bello, who was of the dynasty associated with this part of the town, and also under *Etsu*

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326 434 435 day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

326 Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relations work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

326 467 The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of
467 which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny. The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large
431 bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the
467 whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after
173 them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass
323 and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of
438 raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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one piece of

cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *iscd*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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288 apprentices. This source of income, formerly quite considerable, dis-
542 appeared when weaving became less profitable. Young boys of about
467 10 years, mostly sons of farmers, were the pupils; they stayed with the weaver for from four to five years, and the work which they produced during the time of their apprenticeship belonged to their master; when their training was completed the parents of the pupil would bring one bundle of corn as payment.

288 The loose organization of the labour-unit has its counterpart in the
467 organization of the profession at large. Among the weavers no co-operation on a larger scale exists. We have even seen that individuals are quite ready to abandon the profession for other, more attractive, work—an attitude unprecedented among blacksmiths or glass-workers. Yet the symbols of guild organization, the guild ranks, are still preserved. Each group of weavers has its titled guild-head: the head of the Salu (Yagba) weavers is called *Maji*, and the head of the Yoruba weavers *Leshe*. He is also regarded as the head of all *konni* weavers in Nupe, and used to receive from them small annual gifts or tributes. But this common allegiance and co-operation reflects less the professional union than the tribal and cultural unity of these scattered Yoruba groups in Nupe country. The head of the Nupe group of weavers in Bida has no official title but is called simply *Ndakó*, Grandfather. The position of the group-head carries to-day none of the influence and authority which characterizes the guild-heads of other crafts; he neither receives gifts from the fellow craftsmen nor is he expected to advise or help them in their work. As in all other guild-organized crafts the official position of the guild-heads of the weavers was based originally on their role as intermediaries between the king and the craftsmen of Bida. But this role has lost very early all practical importance—earlier than it did in the other Nupe crafts. To quote the guild-head of the Yagba weavers: '*Etsu* Masaba still used to come to our workshops and order cloth personally from the *Maji*. But *Etsu* Umaru, who came after him, already bought what he needed on the market, and so did all the later kings of Nupe.'

BEADWORKERS

306 As a last example of guild-organized industries I will describe the organization of the beadworkers in Bida. Their craft shows certain specific features which make it specially interesting and distinguish it from the other crafts of Nupe. Beadworking represents, first of all, a typical refining industry, which involves a system of re-exportation comparable only to the most complex forms of economic enterprise found in Western civilization. It involves further the use of money capital and credit operations on a scale unparalleled in Nupe industry. It is, finally, a pure luxury industry, producing more expensive goods than either glass- or brass-work. These various factors have contributed to making the beadworking industry of Bida extremely vulnerable; it has suffered more than the other crafts from the economic stress of the recent years and, a significant result of this, presents the picture of a complete disintegration of co-operative production.

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306 time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume
442 the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope,
439 with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-
306 master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As
442 in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'mainten-
467 ance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Maji*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the *Maji* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in
[434] this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from
306 the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more
467 attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry.
178 With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

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has also disappeared. The result is a complete disintegration of the guild system. The guild-head, no longer able to act as financier and contractor, has lost his position of authority; as his contribution to the productive organization of the group was concerned exclusively with these financial and credit operations, the very *raison d'être* of a guild-head has disappeared. This is evident in the manner in which the *Majī* is treated by the other craftsmen; no one pays the slightest attention to him. Since he is too old now to earn money, he is supported by his son —but this is entirely a family matter, and in no way concerns the professional group at large. He receives no gifts or shares in the profits, not so much as an occasional present of kola-nuts, which even in the greatly weakened guild organization of the weavers still marks the privileged position of the guild-head. If I have called this change in the productive organization of the beadworkers a decline and disintegration, it is also felt as such by the people themselves. To them, it appears as the sad decline of a once highly respected and well-organized craft: as one of them said, 'the beadworkers to-day live from hand to mouth; their *Majī* has no longer any authority; theirs is an unlucky trade' (*gwa ẽi*, lit. an unlucky hand).

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CHAPTER XV

INDUSTRIES (*continued*)

INDIVIDUAL CRAFTS

463 THE guild-organized crafts represent, as we have seen, a specific
467 social group or class—the class of skilled artisans—which only occasionally enlarges its membership by adopting individuals from other professional or social groups. The individual crafts, on the other hand, present a vaguely defined and ever fluid group which recruits itself from every stratum of Nupe society, the peasant class as well as the 'intelligentsia', slaves and clients as well as members of the nobility. We shall see presently that men of the titled classes who have lost their former sources of income frequently adopt an individual craft as a new means of livelihood. The technical conditions which contribute to make the guild-organized crafts into 'closed groups', organized on the lines of more or less intensive co-operation, are absent in the industries which are carried out as 'free professions'. Tailors, straw-hat makers, or mat-weavers need no workshops; they can work anywhere, in any part of the house, in sleeping-huts as well as in a corner of the *katamba*. Some craftsmen even wander from place to place and practise their work wherever there is a prospect of trade. Many Bida tailors, for example, have made a practice of visiting neighbouring villages on the market days or at the time of the annual ceremonies and festivals, when they can be sure of finding plenty of work. Nor does their work involve co-operation, or necessitate the use of expensive tools. Mat-weavers work with their hands, straw-hat makers use a block of clay or wood (called *ekugi*) over which they shape the crown of the head, a tool which they can easily make themselves. Tailors, embroiderers, or leather-workers need, in addition to the material, only needle and thread.

Although there exist, specially in Bida, experts in these crafts
463 who practise them as their only profession, the technique itself is simple enough to be learned by anyone in a very short time. We remember the farmers who carry out a handicraft as *bucá* work in their spare time. People in the town similarly practise these handicrafts as leisure-time occupations, in addition to other work, or as a lucrative pastime. Many learned men and students of the Koran do a little tailoring beside. Embroidery, a more delicate work, involving taste and a certain skill, has become the pastime occupation of many members of the 'intelligentsia'. Of hat-making, on the other hand, the Nupe say that it is the ideal occupation for 'lazy people', who can do nothing else, meaning particularly those impoverished 'people of quality' who are neither skilled nor resourceful enough to find other means of livelihood.

463 The varied demands of the Nupe markets have also called into being
868 various other, minor, handicrafts, some of which are so easy that young boys of 10 or 11 are encouraged to take them up as a first *bucá* occupa-

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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efahó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own. 463 592

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows. 463 178 282 467

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand. 294 [404] [482]

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MEANING AND FUTURE OF GUILD ORGANIZATION

467 In examining the different industries of Nupe we have met with co-operative organizations of widely varying degrees of closeness and intensity. The individual crafts appear in this respect as one extreme, the zero point, as it were, of this scale of intensity of co-operation. What, then, are the conditions determining the degree of closeness in productive organization? Or, more specifically: Why are certain native industries guild-organized, and others left to independent individual enterprise?

We can discover four conditions of the closeness of productive co-operation: (1) The nature of the productive technique and the measure of actual working together which it entails. In this respect the work of glass-makers and iron-ore miners must be placed at the top of the list, and the work of bead-makers or individual craftsmen at the bottom. (2) Special skill and experience involved in the productive technique. The glass makers, with their jealously guarded trade secret, again, top the list; the individual crafts represent the other extreme, of techniques which can be easily acquired by anyone. (3) The regularity of the demand for the goods produced by an industry, and thus, indirectly, its economic success. The work of glass-makers or brass-smiths presents one extreme, the work of bead-makers or weavers the other. (4) The comparative unimportance of originality and inventiveness on the part of the individual craftsman. In this respect brass-smith work shows the most 'individualistic', and blacksmith-work, the most closely integrated, form of production.[1]

The balance which, in the actual case, is achieved between these four factors determines the final structure of the productive organization. The issue is, however, complicated by the fact that different factors bring about similar results. Thus both a high degree of 'individualism' (as among brass-smiths) and a low measure of economic success (as among beadworkers) tend towards a dissolution of the co-operative organization. On the other hand, we find a certain closeness of organization visible in the tendency of craftsmen to work together in the same locality and perhaps in the same workshop, when most factors are pressing towards dissolution. Thus beadworkers of different families and households still tend to share a common workshop and to live together in the same quarter although their technique of production does not necessitate actual working together, nor the economic success o their craft favour co-operation. This qualified co-operation appears to be due to the advantage of keeping in close contact with one another for the purpose of profiting from each other's experience, and of keeping abreast of fashions and new styles.

467 Efficiency in group production appears, then, as the main motive for co-operation on a guild scale. But while the first and third condition 733 refer to efficiency in the narrower, technical, sense of the word, i.e. ease, speed, and economy of production, the second condition reveals a more

[1] With the weavers we find an additional motive for closeness of co-operation in the tribal and cultural unity of these alien, 'Nupe-ized', groups. We can disregard this type of co-operation, which is not limited nor peculiar to labour organization.

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specifically social and cultural aspect. Efficiency in this sense means continuity of the craft and of craft knowledge; it means the ability to raise, through the medium of an hereditary, imperceptibly changing labour group, successive generations of craftsmen. If in these respects production is planned for an unchanging future, the agency of the third factor must expose it to the disruptive effects of time and change. For it may appear as if modern economic changes directed their most destructive attacks against this third condition of closeness and co-operation, which is dependence upon regular demand. This influence is especially visible in the gradual disappearance of orders from the main customer of the country, king and court. The Great *Sallah*, once the occasion for numerous orders from the court, which kept the workshops of Bida busy for weeks, is now an occasion for making purchases at the stores that trade in European goods. At the *Sallah* of 1935, the first *Sallah* of the newly installed *Etsu*, the traditional royal gifts of kola-nuts were sent out, not in ornamental brass bowls of native make, but in newly bought enamelled teapots; the king's bodyguard, newly equipped, wore, not Bida gowns and turbans or native-made straw hats, but red blankets and Trilby hats; and many notables who would have appeared formerly on horses with costly trappings and gorgeous saddle-cloths, rode in on new, shining bicycles. Conspicuous though the competition of European goods appears, it is not the only reason for the decline of Nupe craft-guilds. The very organization of guild-organized crafts has contributed to lowering their resistance to outside pressure. The inertia inherent in the rigid group-organization with its traditional standards of production prevents the craft-guild from readjusting itself to new demands with the same ease as the individual craftsman, who is free to change his mode of production and to gain success by new methods. The decision of the younger men among the weavers to abandon the traditional production and to turn to the more profitable production of cap-making, the success of the most 'individualistic' of all crafts, brass-work, are instances of this.

But readjustment involves in reality two different and independent processes: adjustment to modern conditions may mean both adjustment in price and cost of production, and adjustment with regard to the kind of goods produced. A close examination of this question is of special interest as attempts to preserve and help native arts and crafts are to-day officially sponsored by the educational departments in many African colonies. In these attempts the second type of adjustment is frequently taken into account exclusively, the first being either ignored or artificially eliminated by turning native crafts into tourist and 'curio' industries which can command prices quite out of proportion to the native economic system. That the Nupe crafts themselves have adjusted prices to demands is clearly shown in the general fall in prices which has taken place during the last five or ten years.[1] Thus mats of the best quality were sold, nine to ten years ago, for 3*s.*; in 1934 for 9*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936,

[1] In the two years I spent in Nupe country—two years which saw a partial economic recovery—I witnessed a corresponding slight rise in prices of native craft products.

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433 We can now place the two systems of industry side by side and compare their respective assets and defects. Against highly efficient co-
467 operation and mutual assistance embodied in the guild organization we have to set the free play of competition allowed in individual crafts. Against the principle of continuity and planned training we have to set higher adaptability and larger scope for individual initiative and inventiveness. Broadly speaking, it cannot be doubted that uncontrolled, 'individualistic', industries stand a higher chance of developing production, possibly on new lines, and of achieving technical progress. Moreover, efficient training and continuity of craft knowledge can, to some extent, also be assured in the narrower form of co-operation vested in the small labour-unit; this is shown in the village groups of blacksmiths and weavers. The question which we have asked at the beginning of this section thus still stands: Why has Nupe society chosen, of these two possible methods of organizing industrial enterprise, the method that assured group efficiency and continuity on the largest scale, and group efficiency rather than progress and individual initiative?

The main reason lies in the political system of the country. The
467 guilds are, as we have seen, built closely into the political framework.
656 Let me recall the main facts: the guild-head is the agent of the king in all matters concerning the group; like the members of the nobility, he is the holder of an official rank, and is admitted to the *nkó*, the King's Council. The guilds themselves enjoy a privileged position in the Nupe state in that they were exempted from tax and were assigned a social position superior to that of other commoners, peasants, or traders. Yet they were, in other respects, very much controlled; they were bound to their profession and could not freely change it. They were even bound to the locality in which they practised their trade and could not move from it without permission of the guild-head. If a village chief desired to have a certain Bida craft represented in his village, he had to apply to the guild-head in the capital; this happened some years ago in Kutigi, when the chief requested the guild-head of the carpenters in Bida to send him a craftsman to settle and practise in his village. The craftsmen, then, are the king's craftsmen. Not only are they dependent on the king for their prosperity, but they are also controlled and supervised by him and his official agent, the guild-master. This organization of the craft-guilds amounts to a full control of the political system over all the more important industries of the country. We may even go further and say that this control was dictated by the needs of the state: based on constant warfare, committed to uphold the splendour of a huge court, the political system has to guarantee a dependable, uninterrupted supply of all that is needed—arms, tools, clothes, saddles, as well as the many symbols of wealth and status. Upon this dedication of the craft-guilds to the service of the state the seal is set by the discriminative social appreciation which the Nupe people extend to the different crafts.[1] The noblest craft is that of the brass- and sword-smiths, for they, as an informant put it, are 'the makers of arms'.

[1] See p. 103.

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305 larger group, the guild section or guild). The work of the barbers is
759 organized on the familiar lines of *efakó* and *bucá*. Although their work
592 does not entail actually working together, a certain kind of work is regarded as a concern of the family group as such and as falling under the rules of *efakó*. The *efakó* principle itself is interpreted in an unusual sense. In the work of the barbers orders or summons do not usually reach the individual barber directly, but come to him via the head of the household, who allots the various tasks to the different family members. The proceeds from all work carried out on these lines are divided among the whole *efakó* group, in accordance with a certain schedule which takes
305 into account the seniority of the different family members. The tasks
759 which come under *efakó* rule are the most highly paid jobs: the shaving of the hair and the cutting of tribal marks at the name-giving ceremony,
553 and the circumcision of boys. The first task is performed at the occasion
592 of an important household feast, and the barber-doctors rarely fail to benefit from the generosity that goes with festal mood. These simpler operations are executed by the younger men of the family, but the family head and the older men will also be present, as guests quite as much as in their professional capacity—which latter may reveal itself in no more than an occasional hint thrown out to the young colleague. The barbers will all sit together, and in front of them there will be a bowl into which every visitor is expected to drop a coin, the largest contribution coming from the parents of the newborn child. Let us follow the fate of a shilling dropped into this bowl of the barbers at a name-giving ceremony in a Bida house: 2*d*. is retained by the grandmother, who held the infant during the operation; 1*d*. goes to each of the five junior members of the *efakó* group (including the young man who performed the operation); 1½*d*. each to two older men of the family, the family head and his younger brother; and 2*d*., finally, to the head of the guild section.

305 All other work of the barbers is regarded as *bucá*: ordinary haircutting
759 and shaving as well as medical treatment.[1] The latter, more lucrative, work is a prerogative of the older men, who alone know herbs and drugs and can perform the *turare*. The younger men will be taught these craft secrets when they reach a certain age. And thus another principle of family work is realized in the organization of the Nupe barber-doctors, namely, the balance in favour of senior family members which we have observed in the organization of farm-labour and native industries.

We have seen that in the distribution of *efakó* income a certain con-
305 tribution goes to the head of the guild section. This, then, is a first
759 instance of economic co-operation of the large professional unit. This co-operation is visible also in another, external, feature of this professional
467 organization. In each of the three day-markets of Bida there is a special barbers' 'hall', a spacious open hut, where all the barbers (specially the family heads) meet in the afternoon, and sit and wait for clients and summons. This hut is built and kept up from a common fund. The existence of this common fund is itself evidence of a close co-operation in the financial field. Into this fund, which is called *dashi*, every barber

[1] The barbers are usually paid in money; but when the Bida barbers tour the country villages they often take firewood or food in lieu of payment.

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305 pays a small amount of money at regular intervals; the fund is administered by the guild-head; he deducts from it money for possible common
759 expenses, and pays out the rest in full to every member of the guild
467 section in turn, after every pay-day. This financial arrangement is fairly common in Nupe, specially among traders and labourers, and we shall discuss it in more detail later. The barbers, however, are the only professional group which has embodied it in its professional organization and utilizes it as a system of mutual financial assistance vested in the craft-guild.

The guild organization is restricted to Bida town. In the villages, even in the larger places, one or two barbers are sufficient to meet the normal demand. Besides, the medicine-man of the pagan districts would constitute a serious competition to the Bida doctors. But so far as barbers and barber-doctors are wanted in the country, the organization in the capital supplies them, either permanently or temporarily. Certain Bida barbers, for example, have settled in villages; others tour the country regularly, stopping in this or that place for longer or shorter periods. Even in these tours of the country districts round Bida, the barbers keep to the territory of 'their' royal house, i.e. the royal house on whose land in Bida their home stands. Although it clearly cannot be said of the barber-doctors that they 'serve the state' in the same way as blacksmiths or leather-workers, this arrangement is a striking evidence of the fact that their association with the political structure of the country is as strongly marked, and that they, again, are in certain respects the 'king's craftsmen'.

DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

533 The drummers in Bida, true to the more 'advanced' urban conception
467 of art, are individualists; in the village, where the art of drumming belongs not only to the recreational side of social life, but also forms part of the organization of ritual and ceremony as well as production (we remember the part drumming plays in the farming *egbe*), it is less an 'art' in the modern sense of the word than a 'craft', working for well-defined institutionalized demands, and charged with responsibilities of a graver order. Drumming in the village thus moves in the framework of a close organization on guild lines. In every larger Nupe village we find a special group of drummers and musicians who, though belonging to different families and houses, yet recognize the authority of a common head, the *Etsu Dzâ*, the King of the Drummers. Certain other, subordinate titles, are distributed, in guild fashion, among the other members of the craft. The art of drumming remains in the family and is handed on from father to son. You may see small boys practising
[868] drumming on little toy-like instruments under the eye of the father. They will go with him wherever he is called to perform, watching him and, when they are sufficiently advanced, accompanying him on their own drums. Sometimes boys from other families desire to become drummers. Their father will then get in touch with the head of the drummers, and give him his son as apprentice. The young apprentice will visit the drummer's house every day for his lesson. In the beginning

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy himself a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the woodworkers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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456 can normally exercise. Such are wars, slave-raids, political abuses which might deprive a group of the fruits of its labour, the loss of a member of the working group through imprisonment, or—to-day—unexpected fluctuations in the market for export commodities. The insurance which the Nupe productive system can provide against risks of this kind is, of necessity, limited in scope and efficiency. I have spoken already of certain forms which this insurance took in the traditional society: clientship and political allegiance. More interesting to us here are risks which are inherent in the productive organization itself, and which represent 'normal' risks in the sense that experience shows them to be ever present. Into this category come risks due, for example, to a failure of the crop, to marketing difficulties, a temporary economic stringency, or a temporary deficiency in the labour organization owing to illness or old age of individual members of the labour-unit. With risks of this kind the Nupe productive system is well equipped to deal, either through its normal labour organization or through certain mechanisms specially devised to provide 'insurance'.

456 592 The 'normal' risks in agriculture are insured against by means of the very constitution of the *efakó*, the co-operative labour-unit. A large co-operative group is capable of utilizing fully the highly diversified agricultural technique of the country, and of spreading cultivation, both locally and with regard to the crops grown, so as to eliminate the risk of a total failure. In a large working-unit it is also comparatively easy to make up for the temporary elimination of a worker. In a group of this kind invalid or aged group members can be assigned lighter work, or can even be supported by the rest of the group without doing any work. The smaller the group the more difficult it becomes to distribute tasks in this fashion, to spare a worker, and feed an 'extra mouth'. In the small, two-men or one-man labour-unit, the retirement of a member means the end of the working group, and his support places a heavy strain on the remaining organization. A new *ad hoc* arrangement may become necessary, in which independent small labour-units have to combine to maintain the retired member. Here is an instance which I noted in a *tunga* near Bida: a family of five was divided in two labour-units, one consisting of two adults, and the other of an old man, their father, who worked together with his two young grandsons. As his labour-unit could not produce enough for food and tax, the sons contributed ten bundles of grain a year towards the cost of their father's household.[1] That a situation of this kind may, in an extreme case, lead to a complete break-down of the 'insurance' scheme could be seen from household budget C quoted above,[2] which showed an old man and an invalid still depending on their own greatly reduced working capacity. Another example is that of a farmer who had hurt his arm and, having been disabled for one year, became a temporary labourer the following year to make up for the losses he had sustained.

456 467 The group co-operation in the guild-organized crafts similarly provides insurance against 'normal' risks. The guild organization, as we

[1] An analogous example from a family of craftsmen was quoted above, in household budget E.

[2] [See p. 341, cat. 116 — Analyst.]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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have seen, not only supplies its members with efficient training, but also guarantees, to some extent, a steady market for their products. The guild-head, moreover, is enabled by the special resources involved in his position to act as the 'banker' of the group and come to the financial assistance of individual members.

Certain other economic arrangements designed to provide insurance operate outside the labour-unit, and are thus of special importance for the individual craftsmen and the free professions. The familiar recourse to clientship is a first instance. By sacrificing part of his personal freedom as well as his earnings, the *bara* buys the patronage of an influential person. Though this patronage will be appealed to specially against the 'extraneous' risks due to political factors, it plays a part also in more 'normal' circumstances. Thus I found that a barber had recently become the client of a certain nobleman in his quarter of the town in order to secure a regular and good clientele; it is significant that the father of the barber had not been a *bara*, i.e. had not felt the need to 'insure' his more prosperous business. A young hat-maker told me that he intended to attach himself as *bara* to an influential rank-holder, with whose help he hoped to start business as a trader. I have also spoken of the Mallams and drummers, to whom clientship means the guarantee of success in their profession.

A different method of insuring against risks is embodied in the practice of borrowing money. 'Pawning' represents the firmly institutionalized form of borrowing—an institution which provides against normal as well as abnormal risks, and in which a social relationship closely akin to that of patron and client forms the basis of the financial transaction. Other forms of borrowing occur irregularly, and with a narrow scope. No professional money-lenders exist; the individual in need of money borrows it mostly from close relations, more rarely from friends or 'patrons'. The most frequent form of borrowing is for a husband to borrow from his wife. An indirect form of borrowing money from one's wife, not uncommon in Bida, is the practice of wealthy women to contribute to the bride-price of their sons and to other expenses, which, in accordance with Nupe kinship ideas, should be borne by the father.

A final insurance arrangement is provided in a specific financial institution operating somewhat on the lines of a 'pooling club'. It is called *dashi* in Nupe (*adashi* in Hausa) and plays—or used to play—a very important part in Nupe economy. We must describe it here in detail.

The *dashi* is a pure business arrangement, a free association of a number of men and women who agree to enter this financial co-operation for a certain limited period. Each member undertakes to pay regularly (for example, every week, or five days, or every month) a certain amount of money into a common fund, as many times as the group numbers members. Each time when the contributions have been collected a different member is entitled to draw the total fund, until every member has had his share. Members may also contribute double subscriptions, and then be entitled to two 'draws' in the course of the *dashi*. The allotment of the fund does not follow a fixed rule, but is left to the head of the group to work out. A member who is urgently in need of money can

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).[21]

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuši*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[22]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *iswata* or *iswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three " wards " of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a " closed " craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[23]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for " copper "), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[24]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciši*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[21] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[22] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[23] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[24] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

467 286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[26] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 467 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[28]

323 467 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 467 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 [283] *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

[282] *Leather-workers* formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 759 467 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 535 467 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[26] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[27] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[28] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–9; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[29] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[30] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 295–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934, Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I, p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims. 643 648

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotũ*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpã*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions. 643 662 [471]

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field. 060

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

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566 services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family 425 appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between 643 villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikã*, the uninhabited bush; also all village land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because 471 of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzanká* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders 423 and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. 643 This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Maliki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

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233 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evi-
178 dently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and
233 from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the
● 471 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappear-
177 ance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readi-
231 ness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	137
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production, 323 471 592 474 [465]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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after a slight recovery, for 1*s.* 3*d.* Straw hats ten years ago fetched 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.*; in 1934 8*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936 5½*d.* and 1*s.* 3*d.*; embroidered gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 30*s.* or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fall short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[562] 425 Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still comparatively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.
(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* ("borrowing"); land thus acquired is also inalienable.
(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.
(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).
(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.
(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.
(7) By "primary" tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:
471
(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).
(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).
(3) The fringe of "reserve" land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[30]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batadi every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[31] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settlement. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers' [431] 661 tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[32]

[30] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.
[31] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.
[32] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

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326, 571, 592, 476 Nupe FF52

[For information on the efakó-group (cooperative labor group), particularly in the craft guilds, also see category 467--Analyst]

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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; 622
a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* 623
group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on 661
their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the 622
economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free him- 661
self from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important 622
economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) 651
a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe', from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this [431]
payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, [476]
which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general 622
money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes. 651
Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., 431
receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind has survived, though reduced in [illegible]nt and only in the nature of a

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241 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-
572 time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the
178 town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supple-
476 mented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first
476 and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young
241 men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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561 working party follow the musicians, the rest meet later out on the farm.
476 When all have assembled the young men start work. They work in a group of ten or twelve, starting on the same side of the field, leaving
241 plenty of space between each other. Everyone is working his own ridge and, having finished one, he turns to the next with hardly any pause. The drummers and flute-players walk alongside the field abreast of the workers. Older men stand at the side, watching, criticizing, commenting. Often you can hear them call one of the workers by name, exhorting him to ever greater efforts, or shouting impatiently: 'Quicker, quicker!' When one field is finished some of the young men, the captains of the age-grade association among them, will execute a short dance, balancing their heavy hoes in the air and heavily stamping on the tilled field, while the drummers are arrayed behind them, beating the rhythm of the age-grade *take*.[1] Then workers and audience—and every *egbe* attracts a large audience—move on to another field, while some of the older men may stay behind to sow the newly tilled plot. On another occasion I saw the young men working in two groups of about equal strength, each under its own leader—one of the captains of the age-grade association. The groups started on opposite ends of the field, working towards each other. Now and again a worker would get up, survey with one glance the work which his group had been doing, and cry out in a long high-pitched yell; others were shouting with deep hoarse voices at every stroke of their hoe. The speed with which they worked, the whole atmosphere of the *egbe*—the constant drumming, the shouts from the audience—had something deeply exciting, almost feverish. I have seen a team of fifteen young men, the oldest between 19 and 20, the youngest 14, clear and till a farm-plot of one acre in two and a half hours.[2]
561 The *egbe* work still more than *efakó* work is animated by an intense spirit of competition. The worker who has quickly finished his ridges will
476 stand up and look round, proudly showing off his splendid work; he will
241 chaff his fellow workers about their clumsy progress, their crooked
554 ridges; he executes a little dance, singing, and shaking his hoe to show how leisurely he can work and still beat the others. When all the work is finished the whole party, musicians, workers, and onlookers, repair to the house of the owner of the farm. Here the feast which concludes the *egbe* is celebrated with plenty of food, corn-beer, and dancing, and much boasting and prancing of the young men, who are the heroes of the occasion. Nor is their boasting and prancing without significance. In the village communities where the traditional age-grade system is still practised, one of the important side-issues of the *egbe* is that it represents a regular test in which the young men establish their qualification as farmers. From *egbe* to *egbe*, every year, their skill and their achievements are watched, compared, and judged by the older people. In the last *egbe* of the season, or some other outstanding *egbe* (e.g. on the farm of the chief),[3] the results of this competition are made known and the young

[1] See p. 395.
[2] In another case I saw six young men clearing a densely overgrown bush-plot for yam-cultivation of about a third of an acre in one hour.
[3] An *egbe* of this kind near Bida at which new titles were bestowed was

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561 farmer who did best is given by his age-grade association the title *Sode*, the second highest title that can be bestowed on young men. A man who
● 476 is once made *Sode* keeps his rank until some other claimant snatches the
241 title from him, or if he had no competitors, until he joins the 'old men'
554 and retires from the arena of the *egbe*. In the urbanized age-grade associations of Bida this title and the whole usage have disappeared. In other large places which follow Bida fashion, the title *Sode*, though still in existence, has become a title of minor importance, a long way down the list of age-grade ranks.

241 The primary advantage of collective farm-work lies evidently in the time-saving which it makes possible. The second weeding, for example,
476 which normally takes from five to ten days, can be done by *egbe* in one day. But this valuable help must be paid for. The cost of an *egbe* of from fifteen to twenty workers—the cost of food and drink for the guests and the pay of drummers and musicians—is between 6*s*. and 8*s*. *Egbe* work, then, implies a calculation of investment and return, cost and profit. To-day, farmers try to lower the cost of *egbe*. In an *egbe* near Bida (the *egbe* just described, in which the workers were grouped in two teams) the owner of the farm contributed music and food for thirty people, but no beer or palm-wine. The fare was simple—no meat or fish—but plentiful: porridge cooked in palm-oil for the men, half a bowl per head (1 lb.), and corn-gruel for the women. This cheap *egbe* cost only 4*s*. yet proved still sufficiently attractive to make a large group of workers attend.

Yet there is one element of 'profit' in this calculation which cannot be put down in shillings and pence, and which is of utmost sociological significance. *Egbe* work is performed only on family farms, i.e. on the farms of family heads and old men in general. Younger people, whether they still work under the family head or have made themselves independent, are not entitled to the help of the *egbe*. Thus the *egbe* provides a twofold balance, in favour of the old men who cannot work as efficiently as the young, and in favour of the sociological head of the family group who, though perhaps no longer able to command the services of a large body of co-workers, can still command the assistance of collective farm-work.[1] How real this balance is was illustrated in the example given before (p. 244) of an old man, the family head, cultivating fields equal in size and yield to the fields worked by his two adult sons. With the splitting-up of families and the reduction of the *efakó* group, with the disappearance, that is, of the clear-cut distinction between family and individual farms, the significance of the *egbe*, too, must weaken. Information gained from a large number of independent witnesses testifies to the gradual loss of importance of *egbe* work in Nupe productive life. Once practised regularly on every farm it has now been

performed on the new experimental farm of the Agricultural Department which was tilled in collective work.

[1] Recognition of this privileged position of the sociological head of the group in a wider sense is expressed in the traditional rule, still valid in most peasant communities in Nupe, that the first *egbe* of the season is performed on the chief's land.

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reduced to a system of merely occasional assistance. According to my informants the change is due primarily to the high cost of the *egbe*, which to-day few farmers can afford. This is no doubt true if we understand 'cost' in the relative and not in the absolute sense. In the very closely balanced budget with which most Nupe farmers must reckon to-day the comparatively large single outlay for the *egbe* may prove an insuperable difficulty. But this is not the whole picture. A cost is high only measured on the profit it can realize. And here we have seen that one of the most essential kinds of profit—moral profit—which the *egbe* can realize, namely, its assurance of the economic balance between the generations, has itself lost much of its significance in the life of the community.

The second type of collective work, the *dzolo*, is less important than the *egbe*. It is practised only for harvesting of those crops which demand a large working team (ground-nuts, cotton, and beans) and consists in the arrangement among a number of farmers to work in turn on each other's farms. The host provides the meal after the work. But there is no drumming or dancing, nor is any competition involved in the work of the *dzolo*. Neither is the mechanism of the age-grade associations utilized for this collective work, which is carried out on a much smaller scale than the *egbe*, and only between friends, i.e. families whose heads are friendly with one another. In the *dzolo* the tie of friendship evidently supplies that incentive to collective work which, in the *egbe*, is entrusted to the appeal of music and dance and the stimulus of competition.

WAGE-LABOUR

Assistance in farm-work by means of paid labour plays on the whole (we must add as yet) an insignificant part in Nupe production at large. It is called *kantsú* in Nupe but is often referred to by the Hausa name *lada*, i.e. wages. It is employed by the owners of farms who are not themselves farmers or who for other reasons cannot themselves look after their land. Paid farm-labour is a new thing in Nupe. It has no place in the traditional system of land-tenure and *efakó* work. Characteristically, it is almost completely absent in the rural districts; it is employed mostly in the large commercial centres in which a considerable proportion of the population belongs to the well-to-do 'professional classes', such as Kacha, Jebba, and, above all, Bida.[1] Let me give you a list of the cases I recorded in which wage farm-labour was employed. The employers were a number of traders in Kacha who had bought some land a few years ago but did not work it themselves; a number of traders in Bida; two Mallams in Bida; a Mallam in Jebba whose health did not allow him to work on the land (he was employing wage-labour for the first time); Native Administration officials in Bida—a few policemen, and teachers at the Bida Middle School; and lastly, the village chief of Kacha (who is at the same time District Head) whose time is taken up by official

[1] One of my Bida informants, himself a well-to-do member of the 'intelligentsia', estimated that six out of ten farmers in Bida employ wage-labour. Though I should regard this estimate as much too high it is significant for the outlook of the urban *bourgeoisie*.

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are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front 462
and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the 476
women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the 461
egbe: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing— 533
the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs (no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small [857]
girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between 462
the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contribu- 562
tions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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section is taken in rotation by these families, the 'second-in-command' succeeding to the position of the head at his death. Among the *Dokodza* people we find a threefold elaborate hierarchy which settles the succession even to the rank of the 'second-in-command': *Dokodza*, *Dokpa*, and *Shaba Dokpa* (lit. Successor of *Dokpa*). The smaller blacksmith section of the Bida Beni possesses two ranks: *Maji Tswata* and *Shaba Tswata*. The blacksmith groups in the villages, and also the groups of iron-ore miners, have similar rank systems.[1] The heads of the blacksmith groups, and to a lesser extent the other guild ranks, are respected, and their orders are obeyed by all co-workers. The main significance of their position lies in the fact that it is their task to organize all co-operative work within the group.

Co-operation and mutual assistance within the section takes many different forms. If the people of one workshop, for example, are unable to fulfil a certain order, they pass it on to another workshop; or if the occupants happen to be absent when a customer calls, their neighbours will always be ready to take the order on their behalf. When the workshops ran short of iron ore, the guild-head used to send messengers to the iron-ore miners to bring back a sufficient supply for the whole group; this form of co-operation, however, no longer exists, and to-day each workshop procures its own raw material. Co-operation of a more far-reaching order is concerned with the various tasks which we have placed under the heading of 'maintenance of labour'. We have already seen that these tasks involve co-operation and mutual assistance on a scale which transcends in varying degree the *efakó*-unit. Thus the division of labour in the preparation of charcoal implies co-operation of the whole workshop group. When it becomes necessary to forge and put up a new anvil an even larger group must co-operate in active work. We may add that the upkeep of the workshop itself, or the building of furnaces—especially the large furnaces used by the iron-ore miners—demands a co-operation much larger than that which the *efakó* group can provide. In none of these cases is the co-operation recompensed with a share in the profits (as is the case in *efakó* co-operation); nor is this co-operation organized on the basis of collective work of the *egbe* type; nor can it be explained finally, by the fact that the co-workers may belong to the same family and household. Rather is it a co-operation based on membership of the same professional union—the guild or guild section—and mobilized by the appointed head of the group.

The head of the guild section is also responsible for maintenance of labour in a wider sense. His professional advice may be sought by all workers in the group if they have some difficult or unusual work in hand. He will also occasionally lend his people money if they need it for professional purposes (e.g. the purchase of crude iron ore), in other words, he provides them with the necessary working capital. Certain similar services towards the group are vested in the position of the *Dokodza* alone, that is, of the head of the guild at large. He arbitrates in all internal disputes among the blacksmiths of Bida, and is thus able to

[1] See chart of Village Ranks, p. 57.

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft.

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d*. to 3*d*. per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large workshed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and

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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which
563 marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman
476 with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro,
323 Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[171] [1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

LIVESTOCK

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[420 butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold

[223 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
492 which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
534 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947; Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

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326 in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest
434 months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much
435 as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and
326 also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are
434 bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up
● 477 farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of
178 their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in
[437] Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

326 The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths, whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system
467 —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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Ilorin, Oshogbo, or Ibadan. Another method is that the wholesale 438 trader who buys up the smoked fish at the local riverside markets also trades them directly to Bida, Ilorin, &c.; certain enterprising traders with plenty of capital may also charter canoes and, travelling from place to place, buy up the local produce before it comes to the riverside markets.[1]

438 I have emphasized on various occasions the close correlation between markets and specialization of production. Here is the place to state the ●477 case once more. Generally speaking, trade and transport which bring the products of one area within reach of another involve competition, and through competition the elimination of inferior forms of production. Trade and transport must thus tend to foster (as they are in turn fostered by) local specialization. Certain developments in the agricultural and industrial production of Nupe reveal the effectiveness of these influences also in that culture. The people of Jebba, for example, do not grow sugar-cane or onions on their land, although on a similar type of land in Rabá and Ogudu these crops are cultivated. They explain this situation as being due to the fact that they are farmers on a less extensive scale, spending much time on fishing and (formerly) hunting; they prefer to import onions and sugar-cane from these other places. For certain handicrafts our evidence is even more striking, for here competition owing to an expansion of trade has only comparatively recently replaced an indigenous craft by imports from another area. The women of Leaba [323] formerly practised pottery; but when the regular canoe traffic, which used to stop farther down the river, was brought up to Leaba, and pots made in Jebba and Gbajibo reached Leaba market, the Leaba women gave up their craft; their own pots, they explained, were inferior in quality to the imported product, owing to the inferior potter's clay found locally.

443 In small villages no trade is done, and markets are deserted, on days other than market-days. In large villages the markets do a little trade—in food only—also on ordinary week-days. On the day after a market there is often quite considerable trade in goods which did not find a buyer the previous day. On market-day the people begin to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The market is in full swing by noon, and from 1 to 3 is the busiest time. After 4 the attendance begins to scatter, and soon after that the traders remove their goods, and the market is left empty. Every kind of trade and craft is represented even in the smaller village markets. In the roofed booths which every market possesses the more valuable goods are displayed—products of native industries as well as European goods. Tailors and leather-workers work in open huts. In the open square framed by these booths and huts agricultural produce, food-stuffs of every kind, live stock, pots, and tools are offered for sale.

[1] Lately the wives of the fishermen have attempted to break down the 'relay system' and to dispense with the services of middlemen, having begun to market their fish directly in Ilorin and Ibadan. A place like Ogudu, on the road from the river to Ilorin, which formerly formed an important exchange place, has now lost this transit trade in fish. The chief of Ogudu, to whom I owe this information, remarked regretfully that the women have 'begun to understand' (lit. 'have seen light').

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 634
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [186] permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida, whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [48] and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285] Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771] rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. [782] The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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244 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[805] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [825] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [241] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from [842] the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [857] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

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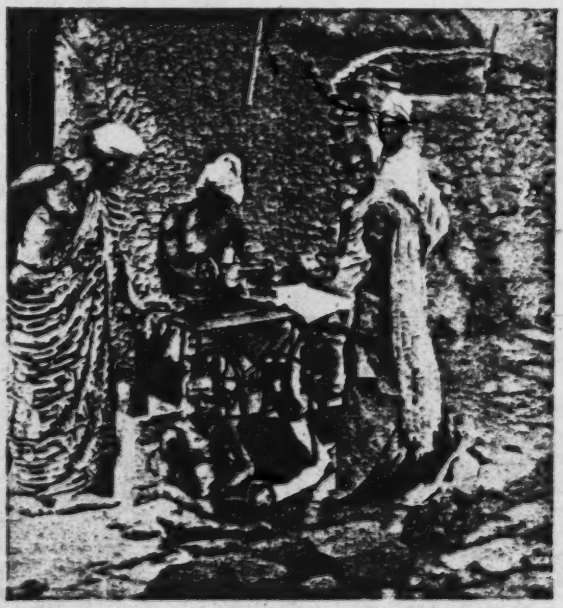
MAT-WEAVERS ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE FARM



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A MACHINE TAILOR

[facing p. 290]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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either for oneself or for one's family. One young labourer from the country gave his father 5*s.* out of his weekly wages of 7*s.* to put by for his bride-price; another kept 2*s.* to 3*s.* a month for himself, and gave the rest to his father. Many Bida labourers, on the other hand, used the whole money for themselves; some explained that they had become labourers because there was no money in their old profession, others because they wanted to be independent and because their fathers or elder brothers could not give them as much money as they liked to have.

To summarize: as one would expect, paid labour, especially temporary labour, does not represent a 'real' profession in the sense of an occupation involving special training and selection of workers. It is essentially a stopgap occupation chosen to supplement or replace a failing normal source of income. Owing to the specific composition of Nupe society the new profession is being adopted by certain social groups and strata more than by others. Yet in some respects paid industrial labour must be regarded almost as a modern continuation of forms of occupations which, in the traditional society, bore the same supplementary and stopgap character. As such it appeals strongly to the individual craftsman, to Mallams, and *bara*, who depend for their livelihood on similar forms of unskilled and partly temporary work. It differs from these other occupations, however, in that it is carried out on the road and in the workshop yard instead of in the home, and that it represents heavy manual labour, and not light work which it is easy to combine with a dignified social status. The labourers, unlike the individual craftsmen, can no longer pretend that they belong to the leisured class. If they receive better and more regular pay, they also lose caste. This explains why of the many hundreds of men who, once members of the privileged classes, are to-day men 'without occupation',[1] gaining a precarious livelihood from occasional work, only those coming from the lowest grade of the 'upper classes' have chosen the profession of labourers.

In the case of the peasants we can no longer speak of any inherent congruity between their work and the new temporary occupation. To them, especially to the peasants who do not practise a handicraft beside agriculture, paid labour in addition to farm-work, a form of labour, moreover, which keeps them for months from their homes, must appear as something quite new and unprecedented. If to-day paid labour is gradually attracting the peasant class as well, twenty or thirty years ago the (very prosperous) Nupe peasants had to be coaxed by all available means to undertake temporary paid labour, for example, in railway construction. The more 'sophisticated' Hausa and Yoruba were already then flocking in large numbers to work of this kind. Missionaries who knew Nupe country at that time told me that it was often impossible in the peasant districts to obtain even porters to carry loads; the promise of money did not attract them sufficiently to make them leave their homes even temporarily, to upset their whole routine of work or forgo their well-earned leisure. In certain backward and prosperous districts this

[1] An unofficial occupational census of Bida lists 1,130 men under the class 'no occupation'. They belong without exception to the titled leisured classes of the Emirate.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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464 attitude has still survived: when I trekked through the country round Sakpe in 1936 I found myself in the same predicament, and although it [482] was in the dry season and farming was at a standstill, I had eventually to agree to women carrying my loads as men were not available for this task. That the appeal of paid labour as a seasonal occupation for peasants is rapidly gaining ground cannot be doubted. The stopgap occupation can, in fact, be said to satisfy a definite want in present-day peasant economy.[1] The strength of its appeal still varies greatly locally. The large majority of the peasants whom I found employed as labourers in the construction of Badeggi bridge were local men or men from the neighbourhood of Bida. Of 19 labourers 14 came from Badeggi itself, 3 from hamlets near Bida, 1 from Kacha, 1 from a village farther afield (Jima), and none from Trans-Kaduna. The local selection does not merely reflect varying degrees of progressiveness or 'sophistication'; it also reflects the varying urgency of the wants for the relief of which paid labour is undertaken. The nature of these wants we shall discuss in detail later.

[1] To-day many Nupe peasants are ready to try any kind of paid labour, but will abandon it quickly if it falls short of their expectations of a regular and substantial income. Thus the Nupe of Leaba tried their luck in gold-washing, which [316] is carried out on a considerable scale in that district. They had heard from Hausa labourers that one could make as much as 9*d*. or 1*s*. a day in this work. They had not realized, however, that the payment was not per day, but depended on the amount of gold which the individual worker can produce. As the Nupe were rather clumsy and slow, unlike the experienced Hausa labourers, their pay was small and irregular, and, gravely disappointed, they soon gave up gold-washing.

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We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

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study of the village market. No Nupe town or village is without its market and its regular market-days. Larger places hold their markets once a week; smaller villages every fifth day (irrespective of the seven days' week). This arrangement, illogical though it may appear, is well adjusted to the needs of the country, where local transport is still to a large extent by porterage. It enables more people, and people from more distant places, to attend the markets in the bigger villages. I estimated the attendance of the big market at Kutigi, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, at from 400 to 500. The distance from which people come varies considerably. Kacha market, the largest market after Bida, attracts men and women traders from the capital, forty miles away. In Kutigi I met women traders from Lemu, which is thirty miles from Kutigi, who were selling pots made in Gbari country, another fifty miles north. Professional, full-time traders, men and women, regularly attend all the larger markets in the country, stopping in one village for five or six successive market-days, and then moving on to another place. The peasant women, on the other hand, who practise trade only as a 'side line' and whose marketing is concerned chiefly with the disposal of the produce from their houses and their husbands' farms, rarely attend markets which are more than six or ten miles from their home. These small circles of inter-village exchange form no less part of the comprehensive marketing scheme of the country than do the extensive journeys of the professional traders. For the system of local exchange areas is partly subordinated to the main axes of trade and traffic. We find an organization almost of relay stations, half-way houses of exchange, situated all along the main trade-routes of the country, above all on the roads leading to the capital.

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On the western road to Bida from Wuya (which is 12 miles from Bida) there are three such 'relay stations', used for the different kinds of produce of which Bida is constantly in need. Duzko Wuya (lit. Market Wuya) on the right bank of the Kaduna is used by the women of Batati, a village fifteen miles inland, for trading their cotton to Bida traders whom they meet at this place. Zantica, six miles from Bida, and Lumanla, four miles from Bida, serve as exchange places for agricultural produce and firewood, which goods are brought to these places by the local women, and then bought and carried to Bida by traders from the town. A similar arrangement, with regard to yam and other farm-produce, obtains on the northern road to Bida from Lemu; the 'relay station' is a tiny village half-way between Lemu and Bida, the only importance of which lies in its use as an exchange market.

Similar relay systems which exist in the river area, following and branching out from the water-ways, serve as centres for the extensive trade in smoked fish. Here the local exchange circles are primarily determined by the varying conditions of transport. Thus the wives of fishermen on the lower Kaduna take their fish (already smoked) in their small canoes to the nearest riverside market, e.g. Jima or Muregi. Here a wholesale trader from Jebba buys up fish in large quantities, takes them, again by canoe (this time a large river-going canoe) to Jebba market, and sells them to another wholesale trader who will transport the fish (by rail or lorry) to the final destination—the inland markets of Bida,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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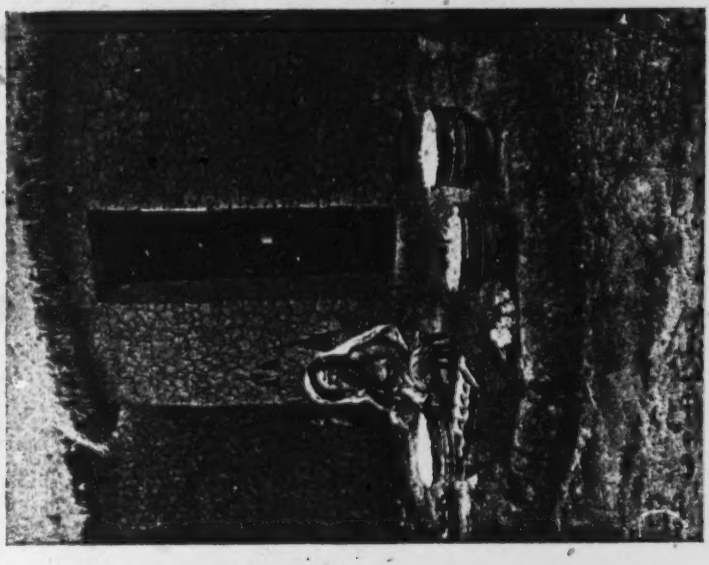

A WOMAN TRADER SELLING HER HUSBAND'S SILVERWARE

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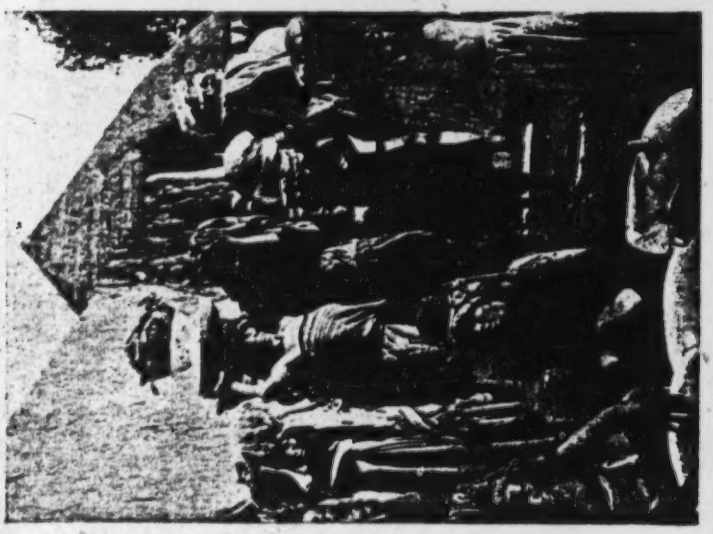

A FOOD MARKET

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[facing p. 330]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly.
571 Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups
[484] without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the
621 parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in
186 the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips. 441 574 484

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course 441 167 484 571 [191]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase 556 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of 554 wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the 545 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more 554 personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the 565 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank 484 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

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rulers, with whom they stay as honoured guests, and whom they will repay, one day, by similar hospitality extended to their young relations. (I have mentioned, in a different context, how I met two princes from Sokoto whose Grand Tour had taken them to the court of the *Etsu* Nupe in Bida.) The noble tourists enjoy their travels and enjoy—as they put it—'seeing the world'. But this incentive of travelling for travelling's sake with which their education and cultural background inculcate them also serves, indirectly, the political purpose of fostering personal contacts and ties of friendship between the ruling families of Nigeria and, more specially, the widespread Fulani empire.

We must now ask ourselves to what extent these wants and incentives apply to the society at large and determine (more or less) the economic decisions of the people. We must ask, more particularly, whether there do not exist 'upper limits' by which the economic ambitions of the various classes are bounded—whether by choice or of necessity. Such limits exist in the form of objects and values which have come to be regarded as fixed symbols of political status and which, like status itself, are excluded from free economic choice, being attainable only by the ladder of social promotion. As fixed symbols of status, much as a uniform or decoration in our society, the glazed turban of the nobility, or the right to carry a silver sword, cannot be coveted as such. This limitation has also been accepted with respect to the recent innovation, the clock in the glass case carried by the body-servant of a noble master: the people outside the ranks of the nobility have not attempted—as well they might—to possess themselves of this new emblem of rank.

But though promotion to political status and acquisition of its paraphernalia represent things that 'cannot be bought' (we shall discuss certain exceptions later), most of the features characteristic of the social life on these more exalted planes are, in theory, of the nature of universal economic wants. Beautiful clothes, costly turbans, and the possession of a horse are widely desired and can be acquired by anyone who can afford the expense. Even wants which are so far beyond the means or labour which commoners and peasants can muster that for this reason alone they seem unlikely to become concrete ambitions outside the *élite* of the country, represent yet common wants and ideals. Thus we find the ornate high-gabled square or round entrance hut which is typical of the large houses of the Bida nobility also in certain villages, put up by chiefs or prosperous family heads. Beautifully ornamented houses of a more modest type, moreover, are found everywhere, in every section or stratum of the population. Now, one of the most convincing proofs of the universality of these economic wants is the absence of all unfavourable comments, especially in the form of ridicule, with respect to individuals reaching out for goals not normally attained in their station of life. This is a significant illustration: in the small village of Doko I observed one house built in an unusually sumptuous style—with coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the walls of the *katamba*. It belonged to a musician, an ordinary 'commoner', who had been very successful in his profession. The people who told me about the house and its owner admitted that he was neither a titled elder nor in any way

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WANTS AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Let me repeat that all these wants and incentives which are realized in the social *élite* also represent common incentives of the society at large, and of every social stratum, unattainable though they may appear in actuality. They remain 'ideals', and the inability to realize them is regarded as a failure, a shortcoming in the socio-economic system. There exist, however, certain exceptions: instances of that divergence, or rift, in the appreciation of certain wants and incentives which divides town and country. Though few in number, they occur in widely different domains of social life—nutrition, recreation, sex morality.

Certain instances concern the form of a want, the conventionalized taste in which it appears, rather than its essence. I have spoken in an earlier context of the different taste in intoxicants typical of town and country. The Bida people prefer palm-wine to the sorghum-beer which is drunk commonly in the village. Palm-wine is the native drink in the oil-palm countries of Southern Nigeria; we also find it, side by side with sorghum-beer, in certain riverain districts of Nupe where the oil-palm is cultivated. Bida itself imports palm-wine from these districts and the south. The adoption of this, as it were, alien drink by the people of Bida was explained to me as being due to the demands of Islam, which forbids fermented drinks like sorghum-beer, but permits palm-wine—at least in the eyes of the Nupe followers of the Prophet. I do not know how far this vindication of palm-wine will pass muster with Mohammedan scholars. But I think we may accept the negative feature of this interpretation, namely, the condemnation on religious grounds of sorghum-beer, which, as we shall see presently, represents a drink closely associated with pagan religious rites. Or I might quote the instance of the different styles of dance and music appreciated in Bida and in the peasant districts: in the town we find the dance of professional women-dancers who are watched by an appreciative audience; in the village the dance of peasant men and women who are performers and public in one.

In other tastes and wants town and country differ fundamentally. Let me quote two striking examples: the attitude towards sexual licence (about which I need say no more here),[1] and the attitude towards travelling. What I have said above about the appreciation of travelling in the social *élite* of the country could be extended to apply to the whole of Bida. To have travelled widely, to have 'seen the world', helps to establish the social standing of the townsman. The interest in travels even outweighs other, similar, interests. When I was collecting Nupe folk-lore I met with almost complete failure in Bida, although the villages had proved a most fruitful field. And this was the explanation which my Bida informants gave me: 'You must go to the villages to hear folk-tales. We Bida people have forgotten them all. No one wants them now. Why? Because when we tell stories, in the evenings, we like to hear about travels, and about other towns; we listen to the people who

[1] See Chaps. IX, XIX.

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184 can tell us about Kano, Zaria, or Lagos.' The widespread familiarity
369 with travelling, indeed the love of travelling, which characterizes the
484 Bida people, has no counterpart among the peasants.[1] We have heard
517 that even journeys to another district are rare and of little appeal to the villagers.

184 How are we to explain this negative form of culture contact? Why did
369 cultural assimilation stop short of these few traits while so many other incentives and wants are spreading from the capital to the rural districts? When we examined, in a previous chapter, the different sex morality in town and country, we discovered its close functional interrelation with other social facts. Behind the divergent attitude we perceived the effectiveness of political and economic factors. This also points out the answer of the present problem. Sex morality can change only together with those other social determinants. Let me recall the main facts. Negative facts, such as the absence in the village of the 'double morality' of the capital, and also the absence of a large floating population which proved one of the incentives for the creation of semi-professional prostitution in the town. Positive facts, such as the more closely knit village life, which forbids the open and condoned matrimonial laxity characteristic of Bida; the efforts of peasant family heads to provide bride-price for an early marriage of the men, and thus to maintain the labour-unit; the conditions of labour in peasant households which tend to preclude sexual promiscuity among the women. The 'negative' culture contact which we are observing does not, then, represent a failure of assimilation in certain specific domains of culture, but the inertia of a cultural whole which cannot suffer changes in these domains without undergoing far-reaching changes itself.

The same is true of the incentive of travelling. In Bida, travelling serves the political interests of the ruling group; it is helpful to the productive enterprises of the town population; and it follows the political interests converging in the capital of the kingdom. None of these factors exists in the village. On the contrary, productive organization, political and religious life, move in a narrow compass beyond which the community affords no protection or promise of attachment.

In the case of the other, minor, instances of cultural divergence, which refer only to the form which a particular satisfaction takes, one might argue that the essential similarity of the wants themselves must tend to retard a more complete assimilation. But here again we must view the situation under the aspect of the cultural whole and the close integration within the whole even of apparently ephemeral traits. The appreciation of a certain kind of drink or a certain style of dance is indeed built firmly into the framework of village culture. Thus all religious rituals involve a libation of beer. The temptation to replace it with palm-wine would have to break down, not only an existing nutritive habit, but also, partly, the spiritual background against which the people (consciously or unconsciously) must regard their traditional beverage. The alternative solution of admitting palm-wine, and having different drinks for ritual and profane purposes, would involve an equally radical change in other

[1] See p. 39.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

505 world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a 226 few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of 439 the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come 505 from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admit- 505 ting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently 484 dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of [376] the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

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trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálémi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
621 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
554 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accor-
571 dance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpā*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'corporate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esozi*, where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esozi* is placed under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esozi* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esozi* has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch with his *esozi*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esozi*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esozi* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil.

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

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reckon, we make the somewhat surprising discovery that here the more refined work is not only not more highly paid but partly even worse paid than the cruder industry. Both as regards profits per day and profits per article produced the brass-smiths work on the whole with lower profits than the blacksmiths.[1] Why, then, does the calculation of price and profit allow for an appreciation of the specific artistic qualities of the work of tailors and embroiderers but not in the analogous instance of brass-smith work? But is it an analogous instance? In the case of tailors and embroiderers both the cruder and the more refined technique belong to the same class of production: they are both what we may loosely call luxury industries. In blacksmith and brass-smith work we have fundamentally different industries, one supplying necessities, and the other a typical fashion and luxury industry. The explanation thus seems to be that indispensability may equal aesthetic value; and that where these two diverse types of industry compete side by side the factor of necessity may balance or outweigh the appreciation of artistic qualities.

MARKET AND TRADE

We have had frequent opportunity to speak of the complexity of Nupe economics and of the far-reaching specialization of Nupe production, which must express itself most forcibly in the wide scope of trade and marketing. In a wider sense Nupe country itself is one big market. For Nupe is a country which exports and imports, and represents, besides, an important station on the route of transit-trade across Nigeria. The ancient trade-routes have to some extent been adjusted to-day to the new forms of communication, motor-roads, steamers, and railways. But to a large extent they have remained the same, for now as of old a large proportion of this transit-trade is carried to, and by, the water-way of the river Niger.

The following are the traditional trade-routes through Nupe. They run mostly roughly from north to south. One, coming from Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi, goes through Kontagora and reaches Nupe north of Mokwa; from here it goes either west, crossing the Niger at Jebba (formerly at Buka, five miles up the river) into Yoruba, or east through Laboži, Sakpe, to the Kaduna, which it crosses at Gbara, then south to Muregi and, after crossing the Niger, on to Yoruba and Kabba. A second route from Kontagora reaches Nupe Emirate north of Kutiwengi, passes through Dabbā and Kutigi, and crosses the river Niger at Ogudu, on the way to Ilorin. An alternative to this route branches off at Dabbā, crosses the Kaduna at Wuya, and ends at Bida. A third trade-route passes through Birnin Gwari and Wushishi, and reaches Bida via Gbangba. There are three routes from Bida to the south and south-east: one through Jima and Dokomba, down the Kaduna by canoe to Muregi,

[1] The profits of blacksmiths per object are: 3*d.*, 3½*d.*, 6*d.*; per day, 6*d.*, 7*d.*, 1*s.* The profits of brass-smiths per object are: 1½*d.*, 2*d.*; per day, 3*d.*, 6*d.* Higher profits are only realized in the casting of bangles in precious metal, in the casting of brass figures for tourist trade, and also in the production of ladles in the modern cheap material, aluminium.

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where the route crosses the Niger and goes on to Ilorin and Yoruba; a second, to Badeggi and Kacha, where it crosses the Niger to Eggã and Yagba country; the third route goes from Bida to Kacha, or Giddi, farther down the river, where the trade-goods are loaded on canoes on their way south to Lokoja, Idah, and Onitsa. In addition to these land routes we have also an 'all-water' route, the north terminus of which used to be at Rabá or Ogudu.[1]

Let me summarize the main facts concerning the 'international' commerce in Nupe. Nupe country exports a certain proportion of its agricultural produce, especially rice and Laboži kola-nuts, smoked fish, and a large variety of its industrial products. It imports various foodstuffs, especially palm-oil and European salt, cheap southern kola-nuts, potash, and live stock. It re-exports potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, European salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. This commerce follows certain interesting traditional patterns. A simple export trade from Nupe to another country is the exception: of this kind is the trade in smoked fish from the riverain districts of Nupe by rail to Ilorin and Ibadan, or the trade in Nupe glass, beads, brass, and silverware, which goes by canoe to Lokoja. In the majority of cases the import or export trade in a certain commodity is combined with a definite return trade in another commodity. Here we find the following regular 'patterns': donkey caravans from Hausa bring beans to Bida and return with kola-nuts (either the local Laboži nuts or the cheap southern variety). Other donkey caravans go north from Nupe; they are loaded in Kacha with palm-oil and salt, which arrive on the Niger Company steamers from the south, and return from the north with *kanwa* (potash) from Bornu. In Kacha the riverain Kakanda buy Nupe-grown rice, which comes down by canoe from Patigi and the Kaduna, and take it south to Onitsa, whence they return with palm-oil. Hausa traders from Kano bring horses and sheep and goats to Bida, to return to their country with Nupe straw hats. Another exchange pattern between Hausa and Nupe is the trade of potash against Bida embroidered gowns. In this trade the imported goods are invariably first sold for money, with which the goods for the return voyage are then purchased. All the variations that are theoretically possible in this threefold export and transit-trade are found to occur in practice. In other words, the Nupe merchant plays three different roles: he is either the local broker who arranges the sale of goods between importer and exporter; or he acts as wholesale trader and buys himself the imported goods to re-export them (himself supplying the transport) to their eventual destination; or he acts as retail trader and sells the imported goods either directly to the customer (on the Bida markets) or to other retail traders, who will dispose of them on the various village markets of the country.

We will begin our study of the marketing system of Nupe with the

[1] To-day the 'all-water' route goes to Jebba, the new railway and steamer station, and even farther north, the water-way north of Jebba having been made navigable for canoes. I have described this river-trade more fully in 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria' (in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 165).

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sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallize, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe-
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their 631
neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralized political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *ndáduma*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361]
Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [487]
were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (Africa, VIII, 3).

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

MARKETS AND TRADE[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go 443 outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for market- 49 ing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Masu Kolo Kolo*, "the hagglers."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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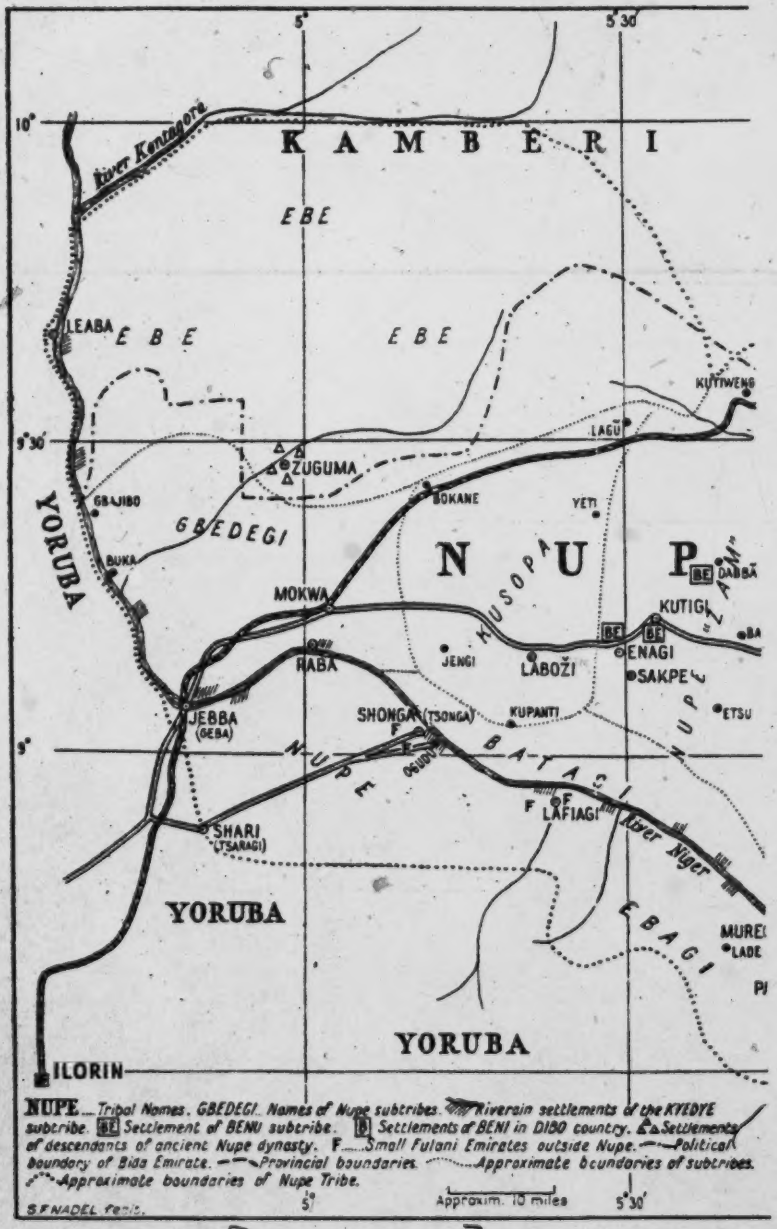

NUPE — Tribal Names. GBEDEGI. Names of Nupe subtribes. Riverain settlements of the KYEDYE subtribe. BE Settlement of BENU subtribe. B Settlements of BENI in DIBO country. Settlements of descendants of ancient Nupe dynasty. F Small Fulani Emirates outside Nupe. Political boundary of Bida Emirate. Provincial boundaries. Approximate boundaries of subtribes. Approximate boundaries of Nupe Tribe.

S.F. NADEL fecit.

Approxim. 10 miles

[End Map I (A)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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MAP OF NUPE

[End Map I (8)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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THE *ETSU* NUPE

[facing p. i]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

235 There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are
438 kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most
[82] important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as house-
hold-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most
[267] desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make
[842] men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

231 About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders,
492 pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number
231 of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol
554 of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

231 Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital
471 in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic
433 stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[422] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
492 which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
534 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

442 It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials
452 from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run
[444] lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an extremely low price—in certain cases only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

439 The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and,
177 generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

435 4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7s. 6*d*.; one bottle is sold for 6*d*., giving a profit of 8s. The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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548 dark and quiet. After 9 o'clock the market-place and the streets are almost deserted.

But let us return to our daylight inspection of the town: we were 361 standing at the crossing of the four main streets of Bida. Turn to the 363 north, and you come to *ldlemi*, the strangers' quarter of Bida, where Hausa and Yoruba are living in houses and huts built in their own tribal style and fashion. They are traders by profession, and shops and stalls line the long road to the north gate—shops in which you can buy everything at every hour of the day, from native food to a European wristwatch, from the powders and amulets of the Hausa medicine-man to brass buttons or bicycle spare parts offered for sale in a Yoruba man's shop. The road to the east bridges a stream and a stretch of marsh-land that runs across the town, with its fields of rice and sugar-cane; it runs past another quarter of brass-smiths, skirts the quarter of the *masagá*, the Bida glass-makers, and leaves the town by the Badeggi gate, so called [446] after a village thirteen miles from Bida on the small rickety railway line (the oldest railway line in Nigeria) which links Baro on the Niger with Minna on the main line of the Nigerian Railway. The south road crosses another stream, with yellowish, dirty water in which children are bathing, grooms watering horses, and women washing their clothes and cleaning pots and pans. It runs on through a thickly populated part of the town, past a beautiful old mosque perched precariously on the edge of a deep trench; another day-market, and another royal residence. Another weavers' quarter, and another group of blacksmiths. Old Bida and New Bida mix for a while: still inside the town walls are Prison and Hospital; on the other side the Native Administration Workshops and the Middle School. And beyond this, the European Reservation, the Government Offices, and then open fields and farms.

This, then, is Bida. Like all large towns it is both more and less than 361 one community. More, in that contacts, communications, and forms of intercourse stretch far beyond the town boundaries; and less, in that within the town walls of Bida there exists a vast number of different, almost independent, strata and 'areas of common life'. Some, perhaps the weakest and least tenacious, are defined by tribal origin. The social differentiation of rich and poor, of social status and political rank, create others—strata in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different values are valid and different patterns of behaviour accepted as normal. But we have also observed the division of the town into three large districts, almost exact copies of each other, each with its day-market, its quarter of craftsmen, and its royal residence. The three districts are separated, geographically, by the two streams which run through Bida, and they are spoken of as three *ekpã*, 'banks', and given the name of the royal house that stands on their ground. Here we deal with units of a different order: they represent political factions, organizations of partisanship and patronage, which cut across the other social, cultural, and tribal strata. They reflect specific political and economic interests, they are vested, ultimately, in that paramount political organization, the state. But that we shall understand more clearly as this description proceeds.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

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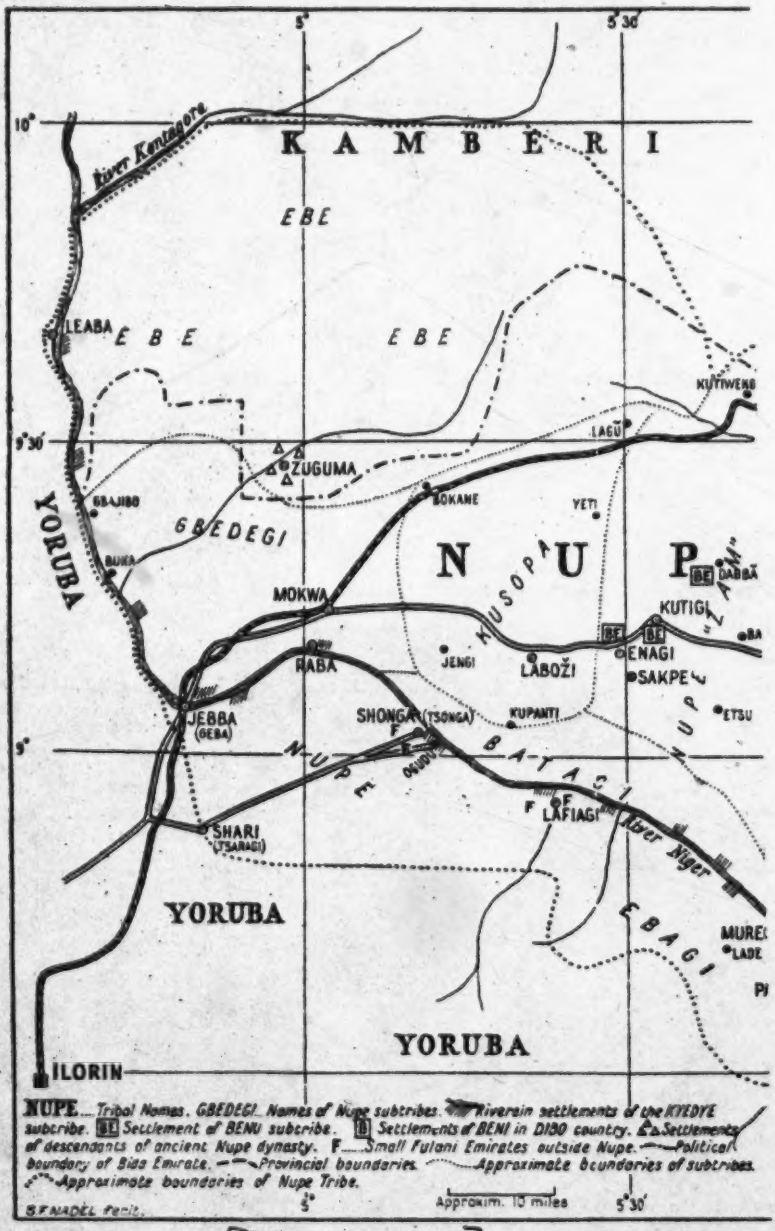

NUPE....Tribal Homes. GBEDEGI. Names of Nupe subtribes. Riverain settlements of the KYEDYE subtribe. BE Settlement of BENU subtribe. B Settlements of BENI in DIBO country. Settlements of descendants of ancient Nupe dynasty. F....Small Fulani Emirates outside Nupe. Political boundary of Bida Emirate. Provincial boundaries. Approximate boundaries of subtribes. Approximate boundaries of Nupe Tribe.

S.F. NADEL Fecit.

Approxim. 10 miles

[End Map I (A)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

MAP OF NUPE

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[End Map I (B)]

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[253] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is 776 said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

The Position of the Chief. The Kede chief, or *Kuta*, resides in Muregi. In his hands used to lie the ultimate decision on all matters concerning country and tribe as a whole—above all, war and the founding of new colonies. The *Kuta* was also the judicial head of his country. The larger part of taxes, duties, and other revenues used to flow into his private treasury. He was (and still is), finally, the official representative of his country *vis-à-vis* the overlords of Kede, the Emirs of Nupe. Impressive paraphernalia and forms of ceremonial serve to display the exalted position of the Kede chief, the most imposing perhaps being the enormous State canoe, propelled by twelve paddlers (two to three is the normal crew of the Kede canoes), in which the *Kuta* travels. The authority of the Kede chief rests in the main on three facts: first, a moral sanction of Kede chieftainship lies in its hereditary nature and the fact of its being derived, in a straight line, from a mythical first *Kuta*, who had been invested with the rule over the Kede by Tsoede himself, the ancestor-king and culture-hero of the Nupe. (We shall hear more of him later.) Another support of Kede chieftainship, of more practical order, lies in the overwhelmingly strong economic position of the Kede chief. His resources allow him to acquire a large fleet of canoes—not only the chief means of livelihood, but also the mainstay of all military action in this riverain country[1]—and to attach to his household a host of followers and henchmen. The position of the Kede chief is made finally secure by the fact that the most important political offices in the Kede State are allotted to his blood relations.

The 'Offices of State'. Political offices among the Kede fall into two categories. One comprises a small group of rank-holders, *ticiji* ('titled ones'), who reside in the capital and represent the councillors of the Kede chief. A second category comprises titled official emissaries of the *Kuta*, *egbaji* ('delegates'), who are in charge of the various Kede settlements and colonies. To these two groups of 'real' office-holders we must add a third group of what the Nupe call 'private' or 'household' ranks, which the Kede chief bestows on faithful and able followers. The majority of them live with the *Kuta* in Muregi, acting as his messengers, councillors of a lesser order, and such like; a few are entrusted with emissaryships.

[1] Laird and Oldfield (op. cit., ii, p. 279) mention that the Kede chief 'had twenty canoes of retinue'.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GEBEB, ONE OF THE KIBBU VILLAGES.

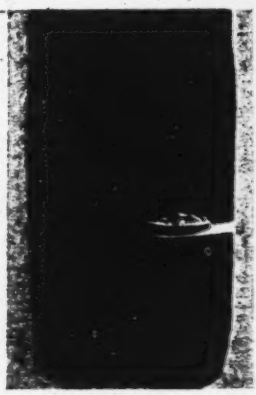

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TROUBLE."

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FIG. 3. THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES AT JEBBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH [illegible] TROUBLE.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

[Facing page 129]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

814 Certain progressive Bida Mallams include the teaching of Hausa and elementary arithmetic in their syllabus, and many adults, traders and other native business men, attend their classes to acquire knowledge so invaluable to their trade.[1] In certain Bida schools you will find young girls being taught together with boys. They come from the families of the nobility, which, conscientious Mohammedans, insist on elementary [562] religious instruction being extended also to women. Girls, however, are only taught the Koran, and do not study 'knowledge'.

Adult students, specially those who study the Koran or 'knowledge' for their edification, following another profession besides, visit the house of the teacher only for their lessons, which take place mostly in the evenings, once or twice a week, or even at longer intervals, according to the leisure which their occupation allows them.[2] Young pupils who live in the neighbourhood attend their classes daily while living with their family. Pupils whose family live some distance away will stay in the house of the teacher as members of his household

815 The teacher of the Koran may not demand special payment for the tuition; according to Mohammedan principles religious instruction must 814 be free—*ebo albarka*, 'for the sake of blessing'. The wealthy Mallam, in fact, scorns all such payments as contrary to the spirit of religion. The poorer Mallam depends on what the family of the pupil offers him as *sádaka*, alms: a penny or twopence every two months, or a bundle of grain (worth 9*d.* or 1*s.*) once a year. Even these small gifts are very irregular; in the school of a Bida Mallam of good reputation, whose pupils numbered thirteen, half of the parents had sent nothing for over a year. Sometimes it happens that a boy's father dies while the boy is still studying, and his relations are unwilling to pay for his education. In this case the Mallam will continue to teach the orphan, let him live in his house and give him food and clothing, again *ebo albarka* only. Koran teachers in the country are worse off than their colleagues in Bida. In Kacha a Mallam who taught Hausa and arithmetic in addition to the Koran and 'knowledge', and who had eight young and fifteen adult students, received no payment from his students except an occasional gift of kola-nuts. If he asked for money, the students would indignantly threaten to leave and to seek another teacher. But both poor and wealthy Mallams receive a final gift from the parents of the student who has completed his studies, either money (in Bida), between 5*s.* and 10*s.*, or (in the village) grain or a goat. The teachers can also obtain a certain indirect remuneration by letting their pupils work for them. School-work does not take up the whole day, nor every day in the week. In their

[1] The Education Department in Bida has arranged special evening classes for these enterprising Koran school teachers, and gives them also certain practical assistance, for example, by supplying them with blackboards. This scheme of adult education is of considerable value in the spreading of elementary education among that section of the population which has not had the advantage of education in the Government schools.

[2] Students in a Koran school in Kacha, who were canoe-men by profession, [505] attended the school whenever they returned to Kacha from their voyages, interrupting their classes for weeks and months at a time when they were out on a canoe expedition.

x796 strangers. Indeed, it is not supposed to be seen by strangers, and these are driven away with much shouting and angry gestures; the contingency arises quite often, for the place of the sacrifice is fairly public, being situated on the open bank of an arm of the [505] Niger, close to the landing place of a canoe ferry.

The ritual takes place in the morning and lasts about four hours. Eight elders accompany the priest to the *kuti* place, where a mound of earth has been thrown up close to the edge of the water. Water, fetched from the river in gourds, is first poured over the mound, followed by a little honey, the rest of which is thrown into the river. Then the white cock is beheaded over the mound so that his blood drips on to the earth; the head is left lying on the mound and the feathers are planted around it in a circle; this is done as a sign that the ritual has been performed and as a suggestion to passers-by to leave a gift to the spirits. A libation of beer follows, the rest of the beer being passed round among the elders. Meanwhile the preparation of the meal has begun, the cock being cooked in corngruel over an open fire; while this goes on, the old men chat freely, without any signs of awe or restraint. When the meal is done, the priest throws a few morsels on the mound and into the river, and the rest is eaten by all present. Finally, all wash their hands in the river and a last gourd of river water is poured over the mound. At each offering the priest repeats the same brief prayer, which is of the usual informal kind; one prays that God may give health, that there should be plenty of food, and that the women may have children. Though the prayer starts with the invocation of 'Father Niger' no further mention is made of the river. During the sacrifice I witnessed a sentence was added *ex tempore*—'God give health to the White Man', a reference to my recent illness. Such special appeals, I was told, were quite in order; though no individual could order the *ndáduma*, the health or fate of any member of the community (which status was accorded to me) can suitably be brought to the notice of the river spirits and of God.

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

x796 The *kuti mamma* is supposed to start the cycle of rites linked with the 9th month. Once more, however, the ritual time table 751 is not rigid; the performance I saw, for example, fell on the 16th November 1934, i.e. in the middle of the 8th month in Nupe reckoning. Also it lasted one day, more precisely one night, instead of the traditional week. The ritual, which is again in the charge of the *Tswanya*, includes two distinct observances which appear to have been merged in a purely fortuitous fashion. The first, called *zumácikã* ('Back of the Bush'), is concerned with the

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634 its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political
184 supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

12i A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

241 We can be very short as regards the economic system of the
226 semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

226 The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of
505 renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

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484 trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

361 Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for
505 the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe
634 expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

173 We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

173 According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the
361 confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

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But we must reckon also with another ideological rift in tastes and desires, which would affect all three stages of our investigation, namely a rift which might be involved in the complex and composite nature of Nupe culture. It would separate, not social strata, but different sections of the population, different cultural groups within Nupe society. A rift of this kind does, in fact, exist with respect to the different cultural standards valid in town and country, in the Mohammedanized capital and the pagan or semi-pagan districts.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: NECESSITIES OF LIFE

The extent to which the economy of an individual or a family group is able to incorporate into its 'balance' wants placed lower or higher on the scale of cultural values gives us what is generally called the 'standard of living'. We shall find that it is possible to arrange these varying standards in certain well-defined groups or grades, and to embody them in a comprehensive economic stratification of the society.

It will be best to begin with concrete illustrations of the economic balance achieved in Nupe households. Out of fifty household budgets which I have recorded I propose to select five representative examples, taken from different localities and differently organized household groups, in which we can study the main variations that occur. All these examples refer to peasant households. Unfortunately I found it impossible to work out budgets of this kind also for craftsmen and 'free professions' (with two exceptions to be quoted later). Their extremely fluid economy presented great difficulties; to reduce, in their case, income and expenditure to exact figures would have demanded much more time than I was able to devote to this task. However, just because these types of economy are more fluid and more easily adjustable to varying wants, they are of less interest to us than the more restricted and more rigid economy of the agriculturist.

Let me say a few words about the method by which I arrived at these records of Nupe household economy. I have examined households in Bida, Doko, Lemu, and Kutigi. The figures referring to the total farm-yield, and to the proportion of the produce kept for consumption or set aside for sale, were ascertained by inquiry. The nature of Nupe agriculture—the series of successive harvests, and the widely varying arrangements with regard to storage and sale of produce—precluded any more direct approach (e.g. by measuring the yield or the stores). However, there were important safeguards: first, as we have seen, the Nupe farmers are well acquainted with the use of standard measures, and indeed themselves use them to calculate their yield. Moreover, after a number of preliminary inquiries (in which I was helped by reliable informants) I could already form an opinion as to likely averages and individual deviations. Finally, whenever any dubious figures emerged I could verify them by independent inquiries of other household members. In this respect the tendency of the Nupe farmers to keep track of the contributions of the various family members to the common store proved of considerable assistance.

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Household A

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: one man. Family of four

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	5 loads	All	..	Mat-weaving, for 9*d.* apiece. Total earnings 5*s.*
Late millet	3 ,,	,,	..	
Sorghum	8 ,,	5 loads	3 loads, for 2*s.*	
Beans	v. little	All	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	..	All, for 3*s.*	
Cassava	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 1*s.* 3*d.*	

	s.	*d.*
Income from farm produce . . .	6	3
Total income	11	3
Money expenditure: Tax . . .	9	6

Household B

Bida. Labour unit: father and boy. Family of three

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Occasionally straw hat-making. Borrowed 1*s.* from relations for tax.
Late millet	6 loads	All	..	
Sorghum	6 ,,	,,	..	
Beans	?	..	All, for 2*s.*	
Yam	6 loads	All	..	
Rice	31 gourds	10 gourds	21 gourds for 3*s.* 6*d.*	
Locust-beans	..	..	Sold the whole tree for felling to the Bida brick-works, for 4*s.* 6*d.*	

	s.
Income from farm produce	10
Total income (incl. money loan) . . .	11
Money expenditure: Tax	11

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Household C

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: father (old) and married son (invalid). Family of five

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Sold 2 young goats for 3*s.* each, in order to obtain the rest of the tax.
Late millet	10 loads	..	9 loads, for 9*s.*; 1 load given as *dzanhá* to *Makû*	
Sorghum	5 "	1 load	3 loads, for 3*s.*; 1 load given as *dzanhá* to *Makû*	
Beans	7 "	..	All, for 5½*d.*	
Locust-beans	9 "	..	All, for 3*s.*	

	s.	*d.*
Income from farm produce . . .	15	5½
Total income	21	5½
Money expenditure: Tax . . .	21	0

Household D

Kutigi. Labour unit: father and two sons, one of them married. Family of seven

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	20 loads	All	..	Family head: occasional hunting. Hides sold for 2*d.* to 4*d.* apiece, total earnings 1*s.* 3*d.* Sons: mat-weaving, for 6*d.* apiece; total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a. (i.e. *bucá* income). Each son contributes 3*s.* towards the family tax.
Late millet	15 "	13 loads	2 loads, for 1*s.* 4*d.*	
Sorghum	20 "	10 "	10 loads, for 7*s.* 6*d.*	
Yam	7 "	All	..	
Cassava	?	"	..	
Beans	2 loads	"	..	
Ground-beans	1 load	"	..	
Sw. potatoes	little	"	..	
Ground-nuts	5 loads	Only seed	Rest, for 3*s.* 6*d.*	
Bananas	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 1*s.* 3*d.*	
Palm-kernels	?	..	All, for £1 or 25*s.*	
Kola-nuts	5 loads	..	All, for 6*s.* 3*d.*	

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Income from farm produce	2	4	10
Total income (incl. contribution from sons)	2	12	1
Money expenditure: Tax	1	13	0
Egbe work		6	8
Final instalment of bride-price for younger son		10	0

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Household E

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Lemu. Labour unit: father and four sons, two of them married. Family of ten

Crops and trees	*Total yield*	*Kept for household consumption*	*Sold*	*Additional income*
Bulr.-millet	50 loads	20 loads	30 loads for 15*s.*	Family head: trade in rams and sheep. Total earnings approx. 10*s.* p.a.
Late millet	30 ,,	10 ,,	20 loads for 10*s.*	
Sorghum	40 ,,	20 ,,	20 loads for 13*s.* 6*d.*	Sons: *buca* farm-work. Total earnings approx. 4*s.* p.a.
Beans	6 ,,	All	..	
Yam	?	A little	8 loads for 4*s.*	
Cassava	?	Eaten at once	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	,, ,,	..	
Cotton	10 loads	..	All, for 15*s.*	
Red pepper	4 ,,	..	All, for 8*s.*	
Locust-beans	6 ,,	..	All, for 4*s.*	

		£	*s.*	*d.*
Income from farm produce		3	9	6
Total income	approx.	4	0	0
Money expenditure: Tax		2	7	0
Egbe work			6	6
Name-giving ceremony for grandchild			8	0
First instalment of bride-price for younger son			17	0

511 The construction of these household budgets is designed to show the main division of resources into those which are utilized in kind, i.e. for food consumption, and those utilized for exchange, i.e. for the acquisition of commodities and the satisfaction of other, non-nutritive, wants. We have said that the latitude in satisfying wants beyond the 'minimum level' gives us the standards of living and economic stratification.

511 Now, it is characteristic that Nupe society, which is so conscious of its class stratification, is equally conscious of its economic stratification and
262 the varying standards of living. Even the principle of the 'minimum point' of the scale of values, the existence of a minimum cost of living, is clearly understood and, what is more important, generally accepted. I have worked out questionnaires referring to this minimum standard of living and collected answers from twenty men in Bida and the villages, of different classes and different degree of wealth. They all were in agreement on the essential points. Expressed in agricultural produce, i.e. staple food crops, calculated for a small family of four, the minimum annual cost of living amounts to 12 to 15 bundles of grain (of any variety) or 90 loads of yam, if the household relies on one of the two staple food crops; or, if both are combined, 6 to 8 bundles of grain and 40 to 50 loads of yam. Expressed in money, 1½*d.* per day is the lowest cost of living per adult. But this food, as my informants added, will hardly be nutritive, it would only 'make the belly swell'. With more nutritive food, the lowest cost of living is 3*d.* per day. Even this is not yet a high standard, for it excludes *na ma re na*, things 'that taste nice', e.g. sweetmeats, savouries, and suchlike. For a family of four or five I was given

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the following daily 'menu' corresponding to a standard of living slightly above the minimum:

Morning meal:	corn-water or gruel with 'bread' (*fura*)	1½*d.*
Midday meal:	cassava, beans, or rice	3*d.*
Evening meal:	corn porridge	1½*d.*
Total cost		6*d.*

If fats, shea-butter, or palm-oil are added in form of sauce, the bill increases by another 1½*d.*; meat or fish, the addition of which would raise the meal to a much higher 'standard of living', cost 6*d.* a day extra. For example:

Morning meal:	corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	1½*d.*–2*d.*
Midday meal:	corn porridge	1½*d.*
	palm-oil, greens, and spices	1–2*d.*
	fish	3*d.*
Evening meal:	rice	4*d.*
	palm-oil, &c. (partly left over from midday meal)	0·3*d.*
	meat or fish	2–3*d.*
Total cost		1*s.* 1·3*d.*–1*s.* 3·8*d.*

Calculating the cost of food for a family of this size for a week and taking into account that the morning meal often consists of food left over from the previous day, and that meat, fish, and certain savouries are only bought occasionally, we arrive at the sum of 8*s.* 9*d.* per week, or 1*s.* 3*d.* per day.

These figures refer to the cost of living in Bida, where the majority of the population have to buy their whole food. But in the village, food other than the staple crops—including fats, fish, and meat—has also to be bought for money. On the other hand, cost of living in the villages is slightly cheaper, as is shown in the following example, which is again calculated for four or five persons, and corresponds to a fairly high standard, comparable to the elaborate Bida 'menu' just quoted:

Morning meal:	corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	0·8*d.*
Midday meal:	corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices	4*d.*
Evening meal:	the same	4*d.*
Total cost		approx. 9*d.*

The standards of living in the village are also lower than in Bida: an average standard in the village would correspond to a low standard in Bida. Dried fish rather than meat is the main item on the menu, meat being eaten not more than once a week or, in poorer households, once in several weeks. Rice, which appears fairly regularly on the Bida menu, is rare in the village; sorghum-beer, on the other hand, which may replace a regular meal in the village, does not figure on the menu of Bida households. But if the very high standard of living characteristic of the Bida upper classes does not occur in the peasant households, the same is true of the other extreme, the very low standard of living; for although I have found many households in or near Bida which live on the very minimum level, these very low standards seem absent in the village.

Let me give a few concrete examples to illustrate the food economy in

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typical Nupe households. They are taken from four households in Bida (Nos. 1 and 2) and in the country (Nos. 3 and 4). 'Menu' No. 1 is that of a wealthy noble household, No. 2 that of an average trader's household, No. 3 that of a prosperous peasant household in Kutigi (household D in the list of household budgets given above), and No. 4 that of an average peasant household in the same village. All four examples were obtained about the same time, the end of May and beginning of June. B = morning meal (i.e. 'breakfast'), M = midday meal, E = evening meal.

No. 1

19.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Rice and fish.
E. Rice and meat with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Rice and meat with shea-butter, onions, and spices.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and chicken.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with greens and spices.

22.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and fish.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

23.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

25.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

No. 2

18.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

19.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Cassava with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.
B. Beans cooked in thick palm-oil, with salt and pepper.
M. Boiled cassava, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.
B. Bean-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, &c.—left over from previous day.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

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22.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Corn-porridge.
E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil and spices.

23.5.1936.
B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.
B. Hot corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Sweet potatoes and palm-oil.
E. Corn porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

Note that ground-nut cakes, though eaten repeatedly for the morning meal in this household, are absent in Menu No. 1. In the latter household it was explained to me that ground-nuts were 'out of season', and no longer good for making cakes—a culinary distinction which the less well-to-do (and less sophisticated) households do not follow.

No. 3

31.5.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

1.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

2.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Corn-porridge and meat, from previous day.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

3.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Boiled yam with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

4.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel and beans.
M. Beans with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

5.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

6.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Boiled yam, with palm-oil.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

No. 4

13.6.1936.
B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Cassava.
E. Porridge and fish, with palm-oil (no greens).

14.6.1936.
B. Corn-porridge, from previous day.
M. Corn-porridge, left over from morning meal.
E. Fresh corn-porridge with greens (no fish).

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15.6.1936.
B. Corn-porridge and very little fish (bought for 0·1*d.*), with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
M. Sorghum beer.
E. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.

16.6.1936.
B. Nothing.
M. Raw cassava.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

17.6.1936.
B. Corn-gruel.
M. Corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes.
E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

18.6.1936.
B. Hot corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
M. Corn-porridge.
E. Corn-porridge, left over from midday meal.

19.6.1936.
B. Cold corn-water and corn-cakes.
M. Cassava boiled in water.
E. Corn-porridge and palm-oil (no fish).

511 In examining the budgets from the viewpoint of food economy, we find that in this one domain of wants they are already representative of widely varying standards of living. Measuring the produce available for food consumption in the various households against the standard of 12 to 15 bundles (loads) of grain per family of four, or 3 to 4 bundles of grain per head, we obtain the following relations:

Household A: family of four—13 loads, or over 3 loads per head.
Household B: family of three—12 loads, or 4 loads per head.
Household C: family of four—1 load, or ¼ load per head.
Household D: family of seven—43 loads of grain (also yam), or over 6 loads per head.
Household E: family of ten—50 loads, or 5 loads per head.

In other words, we find poverty, i.e. 'insufficiency of means', a certain marginal sufficiency, and also ample and prosperous, standards of living.

We can correlate the prosperity in this sense with certain other social factors.[1] The most prosperous households are found in Trans-Kaduna and in the country north of Bida (e.g. Lemu) where land is fertile and plentiful. Households with a large labour-unit are invariably more prosperous than households with a small labour-unit. The budget which expresses real poverty and insufficiency (C) comes from Bida, and from a small labour group whose efficiency was abnormally reduced: one of the two men who formed the labour unit was old and past work in age, and the other an invalid. I have spoken on different occasions of the detrimental effects upon production of the spreading dissolution of the large labour-unit. That a situation such as this could occur, that this prima facie inefficient productive arrangement which leads an old man and

[1] It will be understood that in this as in similar general statements I am referring not only to the selected examples, representative though they are, but to the whole material which I have examined.

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an invalid to work on their own, could at all be tolerated, reveals most conspicuously the inherent weakness in present-day labour organization.

We turn now to the examination of the money surplus achieved in the various households. Here we find the same wide variations as in the examination of the output which was retained for food. But the two ranges of variation do not run parallel; which means that the Nupe peasant does not divide his above-minimum-output equally between nutritive wants and wants demanding money surplus. He may accumulate food-supplies up to what we may regard as the maximum at the cost of the money surplus (as in D); or he may go below the maximum in food-supplies in order to obtain a higher money surplus (as in E); or he may be forced to fall even below the minimum standard of food-supplies for the sake of a certain necessary money surplus (as in C). In order to understand the full significance of this we must anticipate here another demand upon resources which, though not expressing 'primary needs', possesses in native economy the same urgency and inevitability—tax. This demand was, in fact, already embodied in the budgets which we have drawn up. For when measuring 'sufficiency of means' with regard to the primary necessities of life we measured not ability to reach an adequate level of production, but ability to retain an adequate supply of produce after this other rigid demand had been met. Normally, every farmer would retain at least the necessary minimum supplies, which is easily achieved in the ample husbandry of prosperous households, but may prove impossible in the households which keep close to the margin. Here the free planning of the balance between essential food stores and produce for sale may be restricted by the necessity of providing the money 'surplus' for tax, even (as in C) to the degree of reducing food-supplies below the minimum level. Only after deducting the tax can we thus speak of 'real' surplus, in the sense of money resources that can be applied freely to wants, and only with respect to this final surplus can we speak strictly of sufficiency and prosperity.

With regard to surplus in this sense the correlation between large labour-units and high degree of 'sufficiency' is no longer true. In household D the family head could secure a money surplus only by claiming contributions from the *bucá* work of his sons—against the rules of *efakó* collaboration. In a great many cases (not recorded here) large labour-units, though able to produce a large surplus output, could not secure a corresponding money surplus. The explanation lies in the low market-price which ordinary agricultural produce commands. If large quantities have to be sold at once—as they must be where a large sum of money (e.g. for tax) has to be found by a single producer (i.e. the head of the labour-unit)—the price will be even more unfavourable. Only where the production comprises commercial crops, or generally crops commanding a high market-price, will it be possible to combine both aspects of surplus. We find, on the other hand, that households in which a handicraft is practised in addition to farm-work attain a higher measure of prosperity than households of farmers pure and simple. A profitable handicraft can procure ready money for certain urgent expenses, above all, tax, and thus free the household from the necessity of selling a too

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large proportion of the produce, or selling it in a hurry, at unfavourable prices.

From nutritive wants we proceed to the wants involved in the 'primary need' of shelter. The upkeep or building of houses represents a want which, occurring at much longer and more irregular intervals, does not figure conspicuously in the annual household budget. In the village, upkeep and building of houses is mainly a question of co-operative labour, involving little or no money outlay. Smaller house repairs, above all thatching, become necessary every three to five years; more complete repairs, such as rebuilding of huts or of the compound wall, are reckoned to occur every ten to twelve years. The small repairs are carried out by the household group, and take rarely more than two or three days. For larger repairs the help of neighbours and relations must be enlisted on *egbe* scale; they last much longer, according to the body of workers that can be mustered, and the work may often have to be interrupted for a day or two if the workers have other tasks in hand. Most building work in the village is left till the beginning of the rains, when the ground (from which the clay for building is dug) is soft, the grass for thatching not too dry (such grass is said to last less long), and when the people are still free from more exigent farm-work. We may add that the building of more elaborate houses of the kind that is found in the town and also in certain villages entails the employment of expert labour, and thus money expenditure, which varies widely with the style and scale of the work.

Finally, we add the 'derived wants' involved in agricultural production. Under this heading we include repairs and purchase of tools and the financing of *egbe* work. In the same category falls the payment of a fixed land rent in kind which obtains in the area round Bida (as in our example C). I have only partly been able to include these wants in the household budgets. However, the widespread efforts to economize, for example, on the cost of *egbe* work, or the neglected appearance of many of the sumptuous Bida houses, reveal the difficulties which many households find to-day in coping with these wants.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

The next step in our inquiry is to ascertain the demands embodied in cultural standards which the Nupe peasant has to meet out of the surplus (if surplus there be) derived from his production. We can group these demands under three headings. (1) Demands implied in kinship duties. In so far as the household or kinship group coincides with the labour-unit these demands overlap with those we listed under 'maintenance of labour'. (2) Demands implied in duties towards the community—religious, political, or social. (3) Certain personal requirements which are regarded, by convention, as essential, and even indispensable.

Under the first heading we list the expenses of kinship ceremonies and feasts—the name-giving ceremony for a new-born child, wedding feasts, and burial and funeral ceremonies. These expenses are borne primarily

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by the family head in whose house the ceremony is performed; but he can also count on contributions from the various relations and friends who attend the ceremony as guests of the house. We have noted the modern tendency among peasants to replace the traditional gifts in kind with contributions in money, which are customary in Bida. These expenses vary widely with wealth and status. The minimum costs—which interest us here—amount to about 3*s*. to 5*s*. in the name-giving ceremony and 8*s*. to 10*s*. in marriage and funeral ceremonies. In the case of junior family members this group of kinship expenses also includes certain occasional gifts in kind to elder relatives, especially the family head. In one Doko household (not quoted among our examples) a young farmer who worked on his own gave his whole produce of beans (worth 2*s*.) to his father and elder brother. In another household, in Bida, a man shared his crop of maize with his elder brother, who was the family head. Family heads, on the other hand, have to provide for the costs of education of their children or younger brothers (so far as it involves expenditure), e.g. the apprenticeship in the workshop of a craftsman, or the attendance at a Koran school or the Government school. They must bear the expenses that might be caused by illness—the purchase of medicines or of the services of diviner or barber-doctor. 'Pocket-money', finally, for children or junior family members is, as we have seen, supplied in the form of *bucá* work, which they are encouraged to take up.

Bride-price

The largest item under this heading is the payment of bride-price, which devolves, in traditional practice at least, on the head of the family section that is united in the labour-unit. I have pointed out already that the bride-price also involves the accumulation of wealth, and comparatively long-range planning and saving.

The bride-price is always reckoned in money, although it may be paid partly in kind; the gifts in kind, however, which may form part of the bride-price, such as cloth and beads, all have a definite money value, and must be bought for money. The Nupe bride-price, called *ewó yawó*, 'money of marriage', comprises a series of payments of varying amount, each of which is known by a special name: we have, first, the gift of the Greeting; we have further two gifts called Small Thanks and Great Thanks, respectively, the latter which represents bride-price proper, being sometimes referred to by the modern Hausa-Mohammedan term *sadeiki*; then there is the Money for Henna, to buy the henna with which the bride will adorn herself for the marriage ceremony, the Money for Pots, with which pots and cooking utensils will be bought, and finally a small gift to the bridesmaids who accompany the bride when she enters her husband's house for the first time. In the country these last two gifts are a comparatively recent introduction, having originated and spread from Bida. In addition to these various 'part payments' there is an annual gift of produce which is presented by the father of the bride-groom to the father of the bride during the period between the formal betrothal and the final marriage ceremony. The whole bride-price is

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511 583 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks		10	0
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of [656] the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3) —which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

	£	s.
Gba (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or *gbaota* (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks	2	10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

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of living. To-day a distinction which did not exist in former times is universally recognized, between bride-price entailed in ordinary marriage and bride-price paid in the case of *yawó dengi*, marriage in the family: the latter commands a lower bride-price, approximately £3, i.e. the original uniform bride-price. In every case in which I examined the relation of 'marriage in the family' to outside marriage my informants emphasized that there were more family marriages to-day than formerly because it had become so difficult to pay the high bride-price. We see, then, that the bride-price was not simply reduced in amount uniformly; rather a certain context was introduced—invented almost—in which a lower bride-price could be legitimately accepted. The lower bride-price, which would run counter to traditional cultural standards, was thus given a certain qualified sanction by the society. However, even the low bride-price cannot always be provided by the family head. And here we find another adjustment to the lower standards of living, namely, the spreading practice to pay bride-price only for the eldest son, while younger sons must either contribute to, or bear themselves, the cost of their bride-price. The traditional duty of the family head is expressed only in a symbolic transaction: the young man who has to contribute his own bride-price in many cases still hands over the amount to the family head, who will then take all the necessary steps and carry through all the negotiations.

To the bride-price we must add its counterpart, the dowry which the bride brings into marriage and which is paid by her father. Though paid over in one, immediately before the marriage ceremony, the dowry like the bride-price also implies accumulation of wealth over a long period. The amount of the dowry used to correspond exactly to the low, traditional bride-price. Although it fell short of the exorbitant bride-price of recent years, it has been adjusted to the level of a moderately high bride-price (as represented in our example), which proves clearly the underlying intention to balance it against the bride-price even to a degree of mathematical exactitude. Unlike the bride-price, the dowry does not consist in money payments, but in various gifts and contributions in kind. It is reckoned to provide the young bride with cooking utensils, pots, and clothes, sufficient to last her for the first four or five years of the marriage; it also provides food—very excellent food—for the newly wedded couple, so that for the first month or two they are independent of the earnings of the husband or contributions by his family. This is the dowry that corresponds to the example of bride-price quoted above:

	£	s.
10 large pots, costing 1s. each, representing a value of		10
Beads, to wear round the waist, worth	1	15
5 pieces of cloth, worth between 5s. and 7s. each, representing a value of	1	10
Two months' food-supply, worth	1	10
Total	£5	5

Let us for the moment interrupt this description and examine the economic and sociological significance of the changes in bride-price. The question of the sociological significance or 'function' of bride-price

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511 583 has greatly engaged the attention of anthropologists. Yet the various answers which have been found, showing no little disagreement, mostly disregard the fact that institutions never subserve one single purpose, but rather combine ('amalgamate' as Malinowski puts it) a number of social purposes in their structure. The overt purpose of bride-price is clearly that of securing to a man the various legal rights over a woman which are embodied in marriage. Marriage marks the end of certain rights held over the woman by her own kin, above all, her parents, and their replacement by the new rights vested in the husband and his kin. Bride-price in this sense is adequately defined as 'an indemnification for . . . a . . . surrender of rights'.[1] However, as the bride-price is not supplied and received by bridegroom and bride themselves but by their parents or other senior family members, the transaction also has the two-fold social significance of actuating existing kinship bonds (between the bridegroom and his relations who provide the bride-price for him, and similarly between the bride and her family), and of confirming new kinship bonds which stretch, not between the two individuals, but between their families and kinship groups. The transaction of bride-price in this sense has the significance of a contract, to which the two families are the guarantors. The same applies to the parallel transaction of the dowry. Finally, a bride-price, or dowry, of considerable dimensions necessitates the accumulation of wealth and careful economic planning. Bride-price can thus also be said to provide a stimulus for production and economic enterprise in general—one of the motives which every society provides, and needs, to impel it to 'produce, to muster, to count, and publicize its wealth'.[2] This last aspect of the purposefulness of bride-price is, of course, not present in the conscious thought of the people themselves. It expresses a purpose or need read into the facts by the student of society. The first two purposes of bride-price, on the other hand, represent conscious motives of conduct, and the degree of their consciousness becomes evident in the changes which bride-price has undergone in Nupe.

Now, in the traditional Nupe bride-price the aspect of 'indemnification' is greatly overshadowed by the other two aspects. As we have seen, wealth was not 'given' but merely exchanged in the strict sense of the word, the bride-price being balanced exactly against the dowry. When bride-price increased disproportionately, far outstripping the dowry, the element of indemnification and payment as such came to the foreground. The people themselves link this surprising rise with the new economic and political development under British rule: 'Prices were high, and everyone had money.' To some extent this was no doubt due to an increased demand, the greater prosperity showing itself in a rising scale of polygamy. Partly also the motive of 'indemnification' gained a new, additional, significance, that of display for the sake of prestige. But the higher bride-price also showed the effectiveness of the third, economic, factor: for in the highly stimulated economic system the traditional stimulus embodied in the bride-price had to be increased in order to keep pace with the new, higher, level of production and expenditure.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935, p. 295.
[2] D. M. Goodfellow, op. cit., p. 132.

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This interdependence of bride-price and level of production also explains the limited success, among the more prosperous sections of the population, of the attempts of the Administration to fix the bride-price at a lower and, as it were, arbitrary figure. 511 583

Indeed the development of bride-price under the economic stress of the last decade shows how firmly the new 'want' of higher bride-price had struck root. The solution which the people themselves worked out left the 'indemnification' and the 'economic' aspect of the bride-price intact; it achieved the necessary adjustment by reassessing the 'sociological' or kinship aspect. The contribution of the family to the bride-price of its junior members was reduced to the symbolic transaction of the family head acting on behalf of the bridegroom who must himself provide the bride-price; above all, the new rules allowed a reduction in the bride-price in family marriages, i.e. marriages in which the marriage ties do not establish new, but utilize already existing kinship bonds.

We may mention here certain marriage rules customary among the upper classes of Nupe in which an outwardly similar result is achieved by a somewhat different process of reasoning. We have learned that bride-price is kept low in class endogamous marriages among the nobility; a man of status may also marry his daughter to one of his *bara*, and himself put up the bride-price, so that in effect no exchange of wealth takes place; and there is, finally, the custom among the upper classes to marry their daughters with a very low, nominal, bride-price to Mallams—the remission of the bride-price being regarded as a pious act. In these cases the bride-price is kept artificially low in order to ensure that the women of the aristocracy should all be married to men of the same class, or should marry certain men whom they would be unable to marry if the bride-price were high: the political and religious gain balances the material sacrifice.

The institution of bride-price in Nupe gives us an exceptionally clear picture of the multitudinous structure of institutions. It also illustrates the discriminating action of economic evaluation, which, out of the number of social purposes subserved in the institution, fastens upon certain specific purposes for transformation into concrete economic wants. Yet those that are not thus transformed need not be purposes which have lost their significance entirely, but may reveal it indirectly, in the form of 'theoretical values'. We recall the disintegration of the institution of bride-price in present-day Bida, in the case of those young labourers who spend their money among other things on 'women' instead of saving it for bride-price. Let us realize that in a society like Nupe, in which traditional morality forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse, the 'indemnification' aspect of bride-price also implies the purchase of legitimate sexual satisfaction. Now, these young labourers have discovered that to-day sexual satisfaction can be bought more cheaply, and without incurring the obligation of marriage. Short-sightedly, they perceive only this one need and disregard the other aspects of marriage and bride-price—the need of founding a family, of establishing new kinship bonds, and of ensuring continuity of the group. They admit these other needs—in theory; yet these needs are present, concretely, in 511 583 836

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d.* and 6*d.*). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s.*, which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s.* and 6*s.*[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s.*, and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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can change one's profession and try new means of livelihood, these 'minimum' wants can be studied most profitably in the individuals who have abandoned their original occupation in order to better their standard of living. When discussing with labourers the reasons for their change of profession, I was given this as a typical reply: 'We are Bida people, not peasants; we are not satisfied to live as peasants do. We are not content with one gown and one cap; we want to go to the evening market and spend money; we want to make presents at the feasts in the houses of our friends, and we also want women.' Over half of these men were unmarried. Although their wages were comparatively high (7*s.* a week), they could not save enough for the bride-price—'our money disappears at once', they said.

The examples of household budgets from Bida which I have given above must then be interpreted with these viewpoints in mind. I will add here two more examples, of typically urban households, i.e. non-farming households, one of a weaver, and the other of a hat-maker, in Bida. The scope and money surplus of these budgets does not differ essentially from that of the peasant households. But even where the surplus seems larger, in figures, it is in effect more restricted. Note that the more prosperous of the two men, the weaver, is as yet unmarried. The less fortunate of the two, the hat-maker, had moreover given up hat-making this same year, and had become a labourer. It is not a paradox to say that the poor in Bida are poorer than the poor in the rural districts.

Household F

Bida. Profession: weaver, aged 30, unmarried

Output	*Income*	*Additional income*
48 pieces of cloth p.a., sold for 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.*	Profit per cloth 8*d.* to 1*s.* 2*d.*	Farming on garden-plots close to the house, producing about a quarter of the annual food consumption.

Total earnings . . £2. 8*s.* p.a.

Money expenditure:	£	*s.*	*d.*
own tax		11	0
contribution to tax of father (shared with brother)		2	6
contribution to costs of food and clothing of father		4	0
minimum cost of living for himself		8	0
Total	£1	5	6

Household G

Bida. Profession: hat-maker, aged 35, one wife

Output	*Income*	*Additional income*
Approx. 50 hats p.a., sold for 8*d.* each	Profit 5*d.* per hat.	Borrowed 2*s.* from wife

Total earnings . . £1

Money expenditure:	£	*s.*	*d.*
tax		9	6
minimum cost of living		12	0
Total	£1	1	6

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It is impossible and unnecessary to reduce to £ *s. d.* the multitudinous forms of expenditure which fall under the heading of 'cultural requirements'. We have already seen that most often the surplus which can be derived from the main occupation is not large enough to cover them all. The various attempts to reduce or avoid expenditure, or to discover additional sources of income, are convincing evidence of this. To us, the most essential question is the selection and order of preference of expenses on which the hard-pressed household decides to economize. Individual differences play, of course, a certain part. In the quarter of the Bida beadworkers, for example, I saw among a number of dilapidated and neglected houses one whose excellent condition and nicely ornamented *katamba* spoke of the care which the inhabitants devoted to its upkeep. The financial position of the different families in the quarter was the same, yet one, to use the familiar Nupe expression, had 'made an effort' while the others had let things drift. Nevertheless, individual variations appear to be of little account in the general picture. The main differences occur, not between individuals, but between groups, that is, between the urban and rural population. I have just spoken of the young men of Bida who will forgo marriage (involving the bride-price) rather than the pleasures of town-life; they will spend money on dresses and feasts rather than contribute to the cost of the repairs of the family home. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this attitude was the utterly neglected state of the house of the guild-head of the carpenters and builders. Although the family numbered eight adult men apart from the old family head (two of whom had jobs in the workshops), and although house repairs were their profession, the men did not devote more than the absolutely necessary time and labour to the upkeep of the house, keeping the sleeping-huts in repair but letting compound wall and entrance hut go to rack and ruin. With a little money in hand, most Bida men will insist on a sumptuous marriage feast or naming ceremony for child or grandchild rather than save it for other expenses. I have twice attended such lavish feasts in neglected houses, in families whose income I knew to be small and precarious. But even the men with large and secure incomes will live above their means. Certain highly paid officials of the N.A. were heavily in debt to local traders and the European stores, having spent lavishly on dresses, luxuries, gifts to friends, and various forms of entertainment.

If in Bida expenditure on ostentatious display and on social obligations conforming to the standards of living which spread downward from the top of the social scale takes precedence of the more sober demands of bride-price, maintenance of the house, or saving in general, the villagers take the opposite view. In a small pagan village, for example, an annual ceremony had been postponed for three months for lack of money; in another case the same ceremony had been performed for three years in succession on a very small scale, owing to 'bad times'. Economies of this kind occur even in prosperous households: in the family whose budget I have quoted above under E the marriage feast of the eldest son had been postponed for one year so that it could be celebrated together with the naming ceremony of the first child, thus

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

[1] It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase
556 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of
554 wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the
595 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more
554 personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the
565 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank
484 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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rulers, with whom they stay as honoured guests, and whom they will repay, one day, by similar hospitality extended to their young relations. (I have mentioned, in a different context, how I met two princes from Sokoto whose Grand Tour had taken them to the court of the *Etsu* Nupe in Bida.) The noble tourists enjoy their travels and enjoy—as they put it—'seeing the world'. But this incentive of travelling for travelling's sake with which their education and cultural background inculcate them also serves, indirectly, the political purpose of fostering personal contacts and ties of friendship between the ruling families of Nigeria and, more specially, the widespread Fulani empire.

We must now ask ourselves to what extent these wants and incentives apply to the society at large and determine (more or less) the economic decisions of the people. We must ask, more particularly, whether there do not exist 'upper limits' by which the economic ambitions of the various classes are bounded—whether by choice or of necessity. Such limits exist in the form of objects and values which have come to be regarded as fixed symbols of political status and which, like status itself, are excluded from free economic choice, being attainable only by the ladder of social promotion. As fixed symbols of status, much as a uniform or decoration in our society, the glazed turban of the nobility, or the right to carry a silver sword, cannot be coveted as such. This limitation has also been accepted with respect to the recent innovation, the clock in the glass case carried by the body-servant of a noble master: the people outside the ranks of the nobility have not attempted—as well they might—to possess themselves of this new emblem of rank.

But though promotion to political status and acquisition of its paraphernalia represent things that 'cannot be bought' (we shall discuss certain exceptions later), most of the features characteristic of the social life on these more exalted planes are, in theory, of the nature of universal economic wants. Beautiful clothes, costly turbans, and the possession of a horse are widely desired and can be acquired by anyone who can afford the expense. Even wants which are so far beyond the means or labour which commoners and peasants can muster that for this reason alone they seem unlikely to become concrete ambitions outside the *élite* of the country, represent yet common wants and ideals. Thus we find the ornate high-gabled square or round entrance hut which is typical of the large houses of the Bida nobility also in certain villages, put up by chiefs or prosperous family heads. Beautifully ornamented houses of a more modest type, moreover, are found everywhere, in every section or stratum of the population. Now, one of the most convincing proofs of the universality of these economic wants is the absence of all unfavourable comments, especially in the form of ridicule, with respect to individuals reaching out for goals not normally attained in their station of life. This is a significant illustration: in the small village of Doko I observed one house built in an unusually sumptuous style—with coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the walls of the *katamba*. It belonged to a musician, an ordinary 'commoner', who had been very successful in his profession. The people who told me about the house and its owner admitted that he was neither a titled elder nor in any way

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he
554 should have built himself such a pretentious house. We shall also hear later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale poly-
554 gamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even
595 be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status. Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they express the effectiveness of this incentive.[1]

511 We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog-
554 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant
574 households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly, they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer in-
461 vestigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest' borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept. In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time represents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe, as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid. The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure, members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers, craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the spreading of the Mallam profession.

[1] It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such questions of historical truth.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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gourd or his straw hat, keeping a ready supply in his left hand. In his 243
right he carries the light hoe used for planting. With it he scratches the top or flank of the mound, while with his left, almost simultaneously, he throws the seeds into the newly made hole. The hole is then flattened out with the back of the hoe. Thus the farmer proceeds from mound to mound and row to row, working with amazing speed and ease: one man is able to sow about one acre in from five to six hours, with hardly any rest. This is the method used for sowing on mounds; sowing on ridges is even easier and quicker. No hoe is used, and the farmer can make use of both hands for the sowing, the seeds being pressed into the soft soil with the heel. The distance kept between two plants is a little over 2 feet. The sowing of one field with millet or sorghum is invariably done in a day or two, and is nearly always carried out single-handed. Where normally a larger group would be working together—brothers or a father and sons—the rest of the team would be occupied on another field, carrying out ridging, i.e. work for which co-operation is more urgently required. But when for one reason or another a farmer falls behindhand with his planting, ridging and sowing may have to be done at the same time. Once I saw a man and his two sons of 10 or 11 years [857]
carrying out this combined and hurried work: the boys were hoeing, preparing the ridges; the father followed in their tracks, sowing. After every ridge they had completed the boys waited for the man to catch up with the sowing. The ridges were crooked, irregular.

In these first days of the planting season the Nupe keep short days: 243
they start comparatively late, about 8 a.m., and rarely return later than 512
2 or 3 o'clock. As the season wears on their working day extends. They start at daybreak and often do not return till 5 or 6 in the afternoon. They have their midday meal out on the farm, some bringing their own food, others having it brought out to them by their wives or daughters. At that time of the year, when fresh leaves and herbs are plentiful on the farms, the men rarely return home without a fair supply of various [824]
kinds: broad leaves which the Nupe women like for wrapping food in, or a special kind of aromatic leaf which the women use for their bath, or occasionally medicinal herbs used for various purposes. The men tie the leaves round their straw hats, and thus pleasantly and ornately attired wander home. A bath, a change of clothes, and afterwards the evening meal concludes their day.

To return to sowing. A day or two after bulrush-millet has been 243
sown, maize is planted in very much the same fashion, again mostly in one day. Then one has to wait for another heavy rainfall before the next crops on the list, late millet and sorghum, can be sown. As a rule all four crops are sown within a week or ten days. These voluntary or involuntary waiting periods have their use: for often it becomes necessary to get one's tools repaired, perhaps a new blade fixed to the hoe, or to find new tools for the young boys who will, this year, join their fathers for the first time in the farm-work. By the time sorghum is planted the rains fall fairly regularly, and there is no need for further waiting.

The farmer turns directly to the planting of ground-nuts, which is 244
reckoned to take from five to ten days. Ground-nuts must be planted on

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [262]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [604]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'kingmaker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by covering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner. 565 576 516

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver. 565 576 431

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally, [643]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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COURT HOUSE IN BIDA

THE *ALKALI* OF MOKWA

[facing p. 170]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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MAT-WEAVERS ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE FARM

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A MACHINE TAILOR

[facing p. 290]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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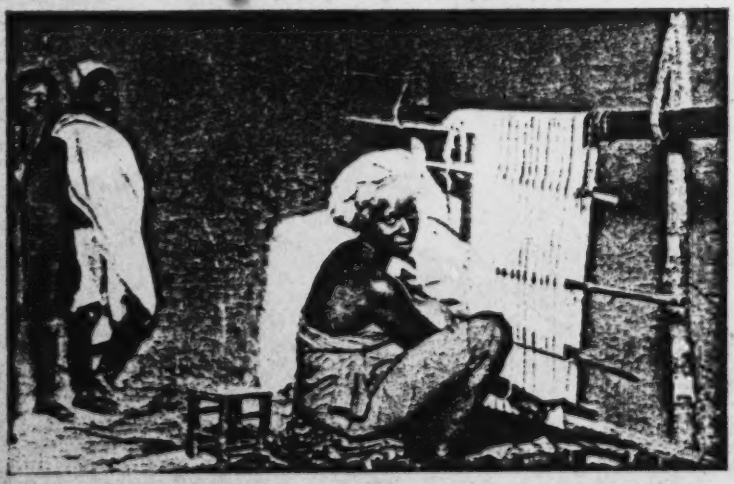
AN OLD POTTER WOMAN



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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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A BIDA MALLAM AND ONE OF HIS PUPILS

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AN AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATION DANCE

[facing p. 382]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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7. *Nddduma* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]

6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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15. Vendor of medicines

x796
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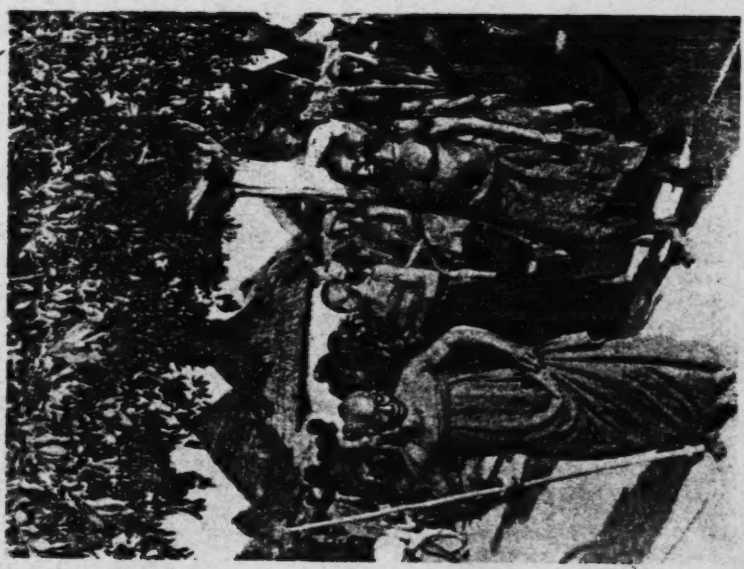

14. *Dzakó* dance

[p. 86(B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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18. Levelling the ground over a new grave

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19. The master of the *cigbeciři* in his 'dispensary'

[p. 118 (B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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22. The *Sagi* of Kpatsuwa

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23. *Gugu* dance of the Yoruba

[p. 134 (B)]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

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Bangles and bracelets of metal and glass, soup spoons of aluminium, all made in Bida

Glass-makers of Bida

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

"King of the dancers"—
a Bida brass spinning toy

Making a glass bangle. The bellows man sits behind the central furnace

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[p. 140]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Workers in brass and silver. The goat-skin bellows are similar to those of the glass-makers

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[p. 142]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiźi*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiźi* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241 for different kinds of crops. Ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and certain vegetables are always planted in ridges, yam always in mounds. As regards the other crops, the rule is that in a first cultivation, that is, on a plot planted for the first time after having lain fallow, mounds are thrown up; in the subsequent year the mounds are turned into ridges, as a result of the practice of 'shifting' the ridges and interplanting in the second half of the planting season. The throwing up of mounds is by far the heavier and longer work. 'Lazy' farmers—in the eyes of the people—thus sometimes prefer the easier job of making ridges even in a first year's cultivation.[1] Big trees are always left standing on the farms and cultivation is carried out round them. The Nupe farmers appreciate the shade of big trees during the heat of the day. Small trees on the farm-land which do not bear fruit are lopped or cut about 4 ft. from the ground. This becomes important in the period of lying fallow; for the tree-stumps and undergrowth which the farmer leaves standing on his fields help to put the fallow land under a growth of 'bush' rather than grass, thus assisting and speeding up the regeneration of the soil.[2]

241 The cultivation on the marsh-land farms is adapted to the conditions of a natural annual irrigation by the flooded rivers and watercourses.
312 The irrigated area is divided into square plots, approximately 6 ft. by 9 ft., each consisting of from four to six ridges running parallel and two ridges at right angles on the upper and lower end. The ridges are flat and narrow; they do not connect at the corners, but leave small channels open; by means of these ridges the water from the flooded river is distributed evenly on the cultivated plots, and at the same time kept standing there.

241 In the lay-out of the Nupe farms the aesthetic aspect is strongly pronounced. The farmers pay much attention to drawing their ridges nicely
517 parallel and as straight as possible, and to distributing their mounds symmetrically over the field. The nice rounding-off of the border of a field is specially appreciated. Frequently one finds ridges and cross-ridges arranged in a symmetrical and even conspicuously ornamental pattern. Similarly, the skill and keenness of the farmer is judged by the clean look of his farm, with all weeds, leaves, and brushwood cleared away. An overgrown, untidy looking farm invariably elicits the comment: *na-gá de kokari à*, 'that man makes no effort'.

ROTATION OF CROPS

242 The Nupe system of agriculture is based on shifting cultivation combined with a well-worked-out rotation of crops. Plots are kept under cultivation for from four to seven years (see p. 205), i.e. till the land 'grows tired', and then abandoned temporarily. The individual farmer does not, however, always wait until failing crops have warned him of

[1] The mounds represent the more thorough cultivation, utilizing a deeper and, I believe, also heavier layer of the subsoil. This is shown in the fact that yam, which demands a heavy and more humid soil, is always grown on mounds, while ground-nuts, for which light sandy soil is best suitable, are invariably grown on the low ridges. (Cf. Faulkner and Mackie, op. cit., pp. 147–8.)

[2] See op. cit., p. 44.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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WANTS AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Let me repeat that all these wants and incentives which are realized in the social *élite* also represent common incentives of the society at large, and of every social stratum, unattainable though they may appear in actuality. They remain 'ideals', and the inability to realize them is regarded as a failure, a shortcoming in the socio-economic system. There exist, however, certain exceptions: instances of that divergence, or rift, in the appreciation of certain wants and incentives which divides town and country. Though few in number, they occur in widely different domains of social life—nutrition, recreation, sex morality.

Certain instances concern the form of a want, the conventionalized taste in which it appears, rather than its essence. I have spoken in an earlier context of the different taste in intoxicants typical of town and country. The Bida people prefer palm-wine to the sorghum-beer which is drunk commonly in the village. Palm-wine is the native drink in the oil-palm countries of Southern Nigeria; we also find it, side by side with sorghum-beer, in certain riverain districts of Nupe where the oil-palm is cultivated. Bida itself imports palm-wine from these districts and the south. The adoption of this, as it were, alien drink by the people of Bida was explained to me as being due to the demands of Islam, which forbids fermented drinks like sorghum-beer, but permits palm-wine—at least in the eyes of the Nupe followers of the Prophet. I do not know how far this vindication of palm-wine will pass muster with Mohammedan scholars. But I think we may accept the negative feature of this interpretation, namely, the condemnation on religious grounds of sorghum-beer, which, as we shall see presently, represents a drink closely associated with pagan religious rites. Or I might quote the instance of the different styles of dance and music appreciated in Bida and in the peasant districts: in the town we find the dance of professional women-dancers who are watched by an appreciative audience; in the village the dance of peasant men and women who are performers and public in one.

In other tastes and wants town and country differ fundamentally. Let me quote two striking examples: the attitude towards sexual licence (about which I need say no more here),[1] and the attitude towards travelling. What I have said above about the appreciation of travelling in the social *élite* of the country could be extended to apply to the whole of Bida. To have travelled widely, to have 'seen the world', helps to establish the social standing of the townsman. The interest in travels even outweighs other, similar, interests. When I was collecting Nupe folk-lore I met with almost complete failure in Bida, although the villages had proved a most fruitful field. And this was the explanation which my Bida informants gave me: 'You must go to the villages to hear folk-tales. We Bida people have forgotten them all. No one wants them now. Why? Because when we tell stories, in the evenings, we like to hear about travels, and about other towns; we listen to the people who

[1] See Chaps. IX, XIX.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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184 can tell us about Kano, Zaria, or Lagos.' The widespread familiarity
369 with travelling, indeed the love of travelling, which characterizes the
484 Bida people, has no counterpart among the peasants.[1] We have heard
● 517 that even journeys to another district are rare and of little appeal to the villagers.

184 How are we to explain this negative form of culture contact? Why did
369 cultural assimilation stop short of these few traits while so many other incentives and wants are spreading from the capital to the rural districts? When we examined, in a previous chapter, the different sex morality in town and country, we discovered its close functional interrelation with other social facts. Behind the divergent attitude we perceived the effectiveness of political and economic factors. This also points out the answer of the present problem. Sex morality can change only together with those other social determinants. Let me recall the main facts. Negative facts, such as the absence in the village of the 'double morality' of the capital, and also the absence of a large floating population which proved one of the incentives for the creation of semi-professional prostitution in the town. Positive facts, such as the more closely knit village life, which forbids the open and condoned matrimonial laxity characteristic of Bida; the efforts of peasant family heads to provide bride-price for an early marriage of the men, and thus to maintain the labour-unit; the conditions of labour in peasant households which tend to preclude sexual promiscuity among the women. The 'negative' culture contact which we are observing does not, then, represent a failure of assimilation in certain specific domains of culture, but the inertia of a cultural whole which cannot suffer changes in these domains without undergoing far-reaching changes itself.

The same is true of the incentive of travelling. In Bida, travelling serves the political interests of the ruling group; it is helpful to the productive enterprises of the town population; and it follows the political interests converging in the capital of the kingdom. None of these factors exists in the village. On the contrary, productive organization, political and religious life, move in a narrow compass beyond which the community affords no protection or promise of attachment.

In the case of the other, minor, instances of cultural divergence, which refer only to the form which a particular satisfaction takes, one might argue that the essential similarity of the wants themselves must tend to retard a more complete assimilation. But here again we must view the situation under the aspect of the cultural whole and the close integration within the whole even of apparently ephemeral traits. The appreciation of a certain kind of drink or a certain style of dance is indeed built firmly into the framework of village culture. Thus all religious rituals involve a libation of beer. The temptation to replace it with palm-wine would have to break down, not only an existing nutritive habit, but also, partly, the spiritual background against which the people (consciously or unconsciously) must regard their traditional beverage. The alternative solution of admitting palm-wine, and having different drinks for ritual and profane purposes, would involve an equally radical change in other

[1] See p. 39.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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respects: not only in the productive arrangements which, in these circumstances, would no longer supply the ritual beverage as a matter of course, but also in the psychological attitude, which would have to admit a ritual beverage largely emptied of what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'social value', i.e. which would be nothing but a ritual beverage, completely removed from the habits of ordinary life. The village dance, again, is an expression of group co-operation and coactivity in the recreational sphere. Like the traditional occasions themselves on which it is performed—kinship feasts, *egbe* work, religious ceremonies, and so forth—the dance mobilizes and intensifies group sentiments. We might even go so far as to say that the unitary nature of the group which is thus mobilized forbids a division into neutral performer and aloof lookers-on. The correlation between professionalized performance and differentiation within the group is indeed clearly visible in Bida. An aloof aesthetic appreciation of professional dancers and musicians appears to represent the only form of entertainment acceptable to a society in which class prejudices and motives of status and prestige dominate all gatherings and festivities. Class prejudice has fostered a conception of dignity set against public exhibitions of this kind. The explanation is, I believe, that it would obliterate, even though only temporarily, the demarcation of rank and status. It is, in fact, quite inconceivable for a man of status to join in a dance, even in his own house, for example, at a family feast—to dance, that is, together with, and in front of, people who must invariably include persons of lesser station. Yet in the villages old men, even titled elders, commonly join in the dances of the younger folk, without danger to their dignity. To assimilate, then, the village dance to the performances which appeal to the 'sophisticated' people of Bida would mean assimilating the complete social organization.

For the sake of the theoretical argument I have stated the case of this negative form of culture contact a little more strongly than is warranted by actual conditions. Throughout this book we have found evidence of the gradual closing of the rift, and of the advancing assimilation even in these domains of culture. But indeed our argument is supported by this development. For the assimilation does not advance by the narrow channels of confined, specific, cultural changes. Rather these changes are carried by the tide of a far-reaching cultural adjustment which is transforming the whole productive system and the organization of labour as well as the social life at large in the Nupe village. The breaking up of the family labour-unit, and the appearance, in the country, of professional Bida musicians as spokesmen of what I have called the 'propaganda for the kingdom', are two convincing instances.

WEALTH AND STATUS

Hitherto we have been using the terms 'status' and 'prestige' as meaning one and the same thing. It becomes important now to distinguish between them. By 'status' we understand a more or less fixed place on the social ladder; 'prestige' represents a more fluid form of social recognition, gained by certain services or deeds in accordance with the

565 the highest *gitsú* ranks go with the title. First appointment to a title and promotion to a higher one are granted by the king in council with the royal princes and other officers of state. Any able-bodied man of senior age, proved loyalty, and ability, [62] and good health, of the Fulani families, is eligible for admission to a *gitsúlí* title, but favouritism, intrigue, and bribery also play a part, and the titles which a family has been able to accumulate are an indication of its influence at court and its favour with the ruling king. When a title-holder becomes incapable, through age or illness, of fulfilling his duties, a younger man is appointed, the former holder being styled [32] " old *Kpotug* " or whatever the title may be. Nobody with any kind of deformity can hold a title, since the system was originally based on service in war and offices vital to the safety of the state. Investiture takes place in the *Etsu*'s house, in the presence of the *Alkali* or *Liman*, a propitious day having first been selected by mallams or diviners. The candidate is addressed by the *Etsu*, then clothed in a cloak and embroidered gown by the *Alkali* who also places a turban on his head. After prayers in which all join, the new holder rides through the town accompanied by other title-holders, and dismounts to greet princes or heads of houses at their residences.

The second class is that to which the *ticiłi* or *rowni* (office-holding nobility) belong. The name *rowni* means " turbans " and refers to the fact that the bestowal of such a title is symbolized by the gift of a turban from the king. There are three groups of *ticiłi*, each of which is regarded as a sharply defined social order: the *sarakiłi*, the *ena manłi*, and the *ena wułi*. The *sarakiłi* is a group of civil and military nobility consisting of town elders (*ena ndeji*) and war leaders (*ena 'kug*). The second order, *ena manłi*, comprises the mallams, the religious and judicial officials, such as the *Alkali* (judge), and the *Liman* (religious head), with their assistants and scribes. The third order, *ena wułi*, which is the lowest in rank but still possesses great influence, consists of the court slaves.

Many of the *saraki* titles are identical in name with those bestowed on the village elders, but the symbols of status, even when similar, refer to very different social contexts. *Saraki* titles are, like *gitsú* titles, generally granted by the *Etsu* in council with princes and other officers of state. Theoretically, at least, outsiders, even commoners, who have won his favour may be admitted to the ranks. Only a few of the higher titles, which have become the prerogatives of certain families, are hereditary. Several titles cannot be accumulated in a single family. They are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group; no other close relative can then claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his " house." To-day wealth and financial influence are important factors in gaining titles and the *saraki* group includes rich traders, as well as descendants of the old official nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe, and Nupe families who became partisans of the Fulani conquerors. These *sarakiłi* received no salary, but were formerly granted land and slaves.

The *Ndeji* (" father of the town "), the head of the *ena ndeji*, is in charge of the affairs of Bida and the most powerful of the officers of state because he is closest to the king. At the head of the other civil title-holders he holds the daily council (*nkó*) with the king himself. The military titles (*ena 'kug*) were formerly those of war leaders, the different titles being associated with special responsibilities.

565 The *ena manłi*, the order of mallams, is " a class between classes, a mobile
● 517 privileged intelligentsia." It includes the *Alkali*, the *Liman*, and their assistants.
554 The detailed knowledge of Moslem law and literature and the specialized training required limits the number of candidates. But the offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* are sometimes hereditary, reflecting a tradition of learning in certain families, and political influence, for many eminent mallams are of Fulani stock. Mallams are highly esteemed by everyone and are placed about commoners even when they are without rank or title and have only little learning. They are allowed to marry daughters and sisters of higher born families.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" — A Bida brass spinning toy.

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The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

326 [433] made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental
326 178 changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine
[286] hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The
323 furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily 323
output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles.

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, 323
are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in 444
large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the 439
masagá quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work [527]
regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen.

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the 323
case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among 471
the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also 592
forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who 474
organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new [465]
arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production,

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [262]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [605]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

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342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated
[631] with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in
361 the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
[354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

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A VILLAGE *KATAMBA*

A *KATAMBA* IN BIDA

[Facing p. 38]

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326 Mohamadu before him, whose royal residence was not far from the brass-smiths' quarter. Here, as in many other instances, the invaluable royal patronage was extended primarily to the craftsmen living in the part of the town traditionally associated with the dynasty. With the change of the dynasty the royal patronage changed also, and under the late *Etsu* Saidu, of the house of Masaba, the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter captured the largest and most lucrative trade. A contributory cause lies in the lay-out of modern Bida. The motor-road to the centre [361] of Bida and the big market leads through the street of the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter, while the other brass-smiths' group is situated in an obscure corner of Bida, away from roads and markets. Now, the brass- and silver-ware manufactured in Bida consists to a large extent of ornaments for men and women and other 'luxury' objects. A large proportion [334] is intended for export, and certain goods are even made specially for tourists and European 'curio'-hunters. In either case the nearness of the big trading centre and the main thoroughfare of the town, with its opportunity for display and for attracting customers, must prove an advantage which is denied to the other, almost inaccessible, group of craftsmen.

The character of this luxury industry also explains its concentration in Bida. Its products find their way to villages and peasant districts as well. But a constant and large-scale demand exists only in the capital. Moreover, the concentration of this industry is, in sophisticated Nupe, a trade-mark of refinement and value, and a guarantee that its products express the latest fashions.

326 The technical equipment of the workshop of the brass-smiths differs in certain important details from that of the blacksmiths. The work-
531 shops of the brass-smiths, with their smaller and less smoky furnace, are more often housed in the compound itself, i.e. in the entrance hut. The tools are less heavy and adjusted to the finer technique. European hammers, chisels, and files are used to a much larger extent. The main products of the Nupe brass industry are sword-hilts and daggers,[1] horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles of various kinds, made mostly of beaten brass or copper; bangles and rings, which are cast in open clay moulds of bars of brass or silver or (nowadays) aluminium and then bent and twisted into shape; also hairpins and silver chains. Artistic decoration, especially ornamentation of the surface of these various objects, plays an important part. From old Nupe brass- and silver-work preserved in Bida and in European museums we learn the different styles in decoration which have succeeded each other in the course of the last hundred years. The style in fashion to-day is ornamentation in *pointillé* technique.[2]

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

[1] The blades are old, mostly of German or Austrian manufacture, and have been traded for centuries to Nigeria and Nupe, across the desert, from North Africa.

[2] The oldest style appears to be a fluted design which I have seen on certain brass bowls; a later style which flourished at the end of last century, consisted in embossed ornaments which made special use of the flower motif. The *pointillé* style appears to have come in about 1910.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

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No mechanical aids are used
to help achieve symmetry in design on trays

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries

Good examples of Bida silver work attain a high standard of craftsmanship

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[p. 144]

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

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Punching designs on brass bowls.
No trace of the pattern is made before the punch work starts

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :— 323 531

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

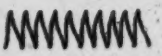


FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests. 323

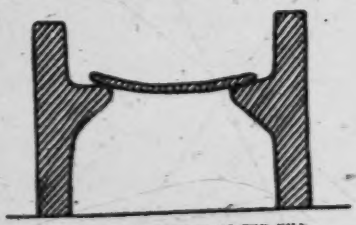


FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323 531

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

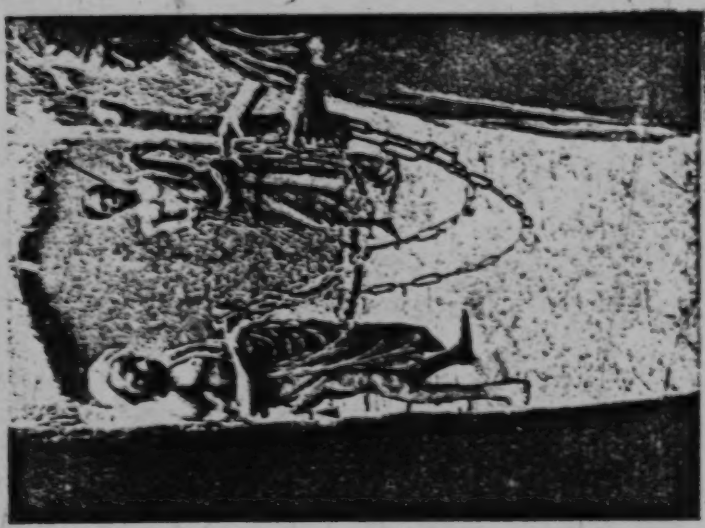
(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [384] [204]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]
(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

[p. 73]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe ~~FF52~~



THE *CHAIN OF TSOEDE*

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THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES ON JEBBA ISLAND

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[Facing p. 72]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

326 532 439 177

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and suchlike. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*sadigiti*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s.* for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank.

326 439

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d.* apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d.*; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d.* Silver bangles are sold for 12*s.* a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s.*, and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d.* to 1*s.* Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s.*; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the profit per

326 434 435

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

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3. Wall paintings in a Nupe house

[p. 22(B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

sacrifice to a *cigbe* shrine of that name, said to ward off smallpox; the other, the *mamma* proper, consists mainly in the appearance and dance of masked figures called *nāgbe*. The masks themselves are referred to as *kūyí* ('full garment') or simply as *ewo* ('dress'), and their appearance is meant to cleanse the village of evil influences. These are not further specified save negatively, in that they exclude witchcraft. The *zumácikā* is said to have been introduced by an old woman who, many years ago, happened to arrive in Jebba during a smallpox epidemic and taught the people the secret of the appropriate medicine; nothing further is known about her, about the manner of her death, or about her burial place. The medicine is contained (so it is said) in an earthen pot which now stands under a low grass roof in the middle of the village. It is in every respect an unusual version of *cigbe*. It cannot be utilized at will but only at this ceremonial; it belongs to the village and not to any individual owner; nor yet is it used in the manner of other medicines. For the substance in question is neither drunk nor otherwise applied to the body, since its effect would be deadly if it were so used; indeed no one has ever seen it. It is hidden inside the vessel, being periodically increased when blood and beer from the sacrifice are added, and its mere presence is magically effective. This effect bears on the prevention of the disease rather than its cure: smallpox is being 'kept away as you keep away a stranger'; which preventive aspect is also reflected in the date of the ritual, which falls towards the end of the cold season, while outbreaks of smallpox are believed to occur only during the hot season, in the 10th and 11th month.

The masks of the *kuti mamma*, on the other hand, are attributed, with so many other things, to Tsoede. They are made of dried grass, consisting of a skirt and a kind of veil covering face and chest, and during the year are stored in the houses of various elders. While the *cigbe* vessel stands on a public place and is in no way concealed, the masks must be kept hidden and may be put on only in a safe and secret place. The whole ritual is similarly veiled in secrecy; it takes place at night, the women having been warned to keep indoors, and out of the sight of strangers: if women or strangers were to see this *kuti*, they would be killed by its 'force'.[1]

The ceremonial I saw started about 8 p.m. on a moonless night,

[1] The fear of the *mamma* is a very real one. At the time of the performance here described the District Head from Mokwa, a Fulani nobleman, happened to stay in Jebba. He heard that a 'feast' was going to take place, and when he learned that I was going he decided to come also. He arrived when the dance was already in progress, gave one look, and literally fled. His hurried retreat was received with much hilarity by the men present, who added: 'This is how all strangers run away when they hear the *mamma*.'

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

*754 (a correct statement of the fact that the secret society is called in
794 by the *gunnu* priest), or 'the Great *gunnu* is the *Gboyá*'.

The full name of the cult means 'Grandfather' or 'Ancestor *Gboyá*'; the latter word is neither a personal name nor a word that has any other meaning, though it contains the recognizable root *gbo* 'to be large' (in a physical sense). The expression 'Grandfather' in this connection has no ancestral connotation but merely indicates a show of respect. The masked apparitions also command a special address or salute, namely, *nyentso sagba*, 'One who puts to flight'. The name *ndakó gboyá* is employed for the ritual performance as such, for the masks appearing in it, and for the 'spirit' the masks are thought to represent; the cult members are simply referred to as *ndakó gboyáži*, 'the *Ndakó gboyá*-ones', and their organization is called the 'society' of *ndakó gboyá*.

*754 The masks of the *ndakó gboyá* are unlike any other masks used
794 in the cults of Nigerian peoples. They bear no similarity to human
or animal features; each mask consists of a long tube made of white
● 532 cotton cloth, just wide enough for a man to stand inside, which is suspended from a wheel-shaped bamboo frame fixed to the top of a tall pole, about twelve feet in length. The man representing the spirit stands inside the cloth tube which comes down to the ground, holding the pole in his hands. He will move about with varying speed, occasionally jumping and running, and lift and lower the pole or incline it this way or that, making the cloth tube swing and sway: which motions make up the 'dance' of the *ndakó gboyá*. There are two small slits at eye-height in the cloth; but the dancer can see little through them, and depends on the help of assistants (two or four in number and known as the 'servants' or 'interpreters' of the *ndakó gboyá*), who lead him along and clear the way for him, carrying sticks to drive back the onlookers. In large ceremonials up to ten masks may be employed, though normally there will be two or three, or even one only.

*754 It is always a strictly kept secret who is inside the mask. Even
794 when you know every member of a local *ndakó gboyá* society (as I
did) and therefore know that one of them must be the dancer in the mask, the people will refuse to answer such questions. Nor will they agree to an informal rehearsal merely to show you the technique of the thing; for to step inside the mask is already a magic or mystic action, which requires the appropriate setting and preparations. The performer must first drink and wash himself with the *cigbe* which alone gives him the 'strength' to represent the *ndakó gboyá* and, before this, must sacrifice beer and fowl over the *cigbe* shrine and the cloth masks. Nor does the profane phrase 'to represent the *ndakó gboyá*', do justice to the situation. To begin with, the 'medicine' used by the performer is the *badúfu* kind

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

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effigies and cult objects.[1] It is unlikely, incidentally, that these figures are Yoruba in origin; but they are of the same kind as the effigies of deities worshipped by the Yoruba. Now, the Nupe do not regard their figures as representations of deities; indeed the whole question, what or whom they represent, evokes no great interest. For the Nupe, the figures are merely 'likenesses' of a man and a woman (who is sometimes called the man's mother) and, more importantly, relics of Tsoede. Their possession is understood to be exceptional and indeed unique; and even though they figure prominently in one of the Jebba rituals, they do not add anything relevant to the purely religious conceptions. The images are simply the unusual objects of an unusual, 'royal' cult, but not more magically effective or possessed of special meaning because they happen to be shaped in human likeness.

The second exception is more important. In Mokwa and one or two villages in the river valley, we meet with a masked dance called *elo* (a meaningless word in Nupe), which is quite unlike any Nupe dance or ritual.[2] It does, however, somewhat resemble the Yoruba *gugu*, which equally occurs in Mokwa, not only in its paraphernalia but also in certain gestures and motions of the dancers. [532] The *elo* dancers wear long-sleeved hoods of coloured cloth cut like those worn in the *gugu* and cover their faces with coloured wooden masks, carved in grotesquely human features and surmounted by horns. The masks resemble those of the *gugu* only in that both are meant to represent a human face; but in the *gugu* the design is produced by cowrie shells sewn on to the cloth, while the *elo* type is reminiscent rather of the masks used by the southernmost sections of the Yoruba, or by the Ibo and other tribes in Southern Nigeria. The people who perform the *elo* know little about the origin of the masks or, indeed, of the whole ceremonial. It is said that Tsoede brought it from the south and established it in certain villages of his small river kingdom 'because he liked the dance so much that he wanted to see it again and again'. The masks now used are the work of the wood-carvers of Shonga (a mixed Yoruba-Nupe village on the Niger), though this particular skill has since disappeared; one or two masks are quite recent, having been made by a craftsman at Rabah who has preserved the old art. The hoods of cloth, on the other hand, are an innovation; in the youth of one

[1] As has been mentioned, similar figures, though both smaller and cruder, are found in Tada, another riverain village. What is said here about the Jebba figures equally applies to the Tada 'idols'.

[2] I recorded the *elo* in Mokwa, in Rabah (a few miles away on the river) and in Gbajibo, north of Jebba. In addition, smaller villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood, which do not themselves possess the *elo* masks, perform the dance annually with masks borrowed from Mokwa.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

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28. Mask of the 'Great *elo*'

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29. Dancer at the Bida *salla* with headdress modelled on the *elo* mask

[p. 230 (A)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events.

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed.

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[352] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konu* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canôes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

● 532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 322; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

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SAME AS FIG. 4 IN "MAN," 1931, 201.

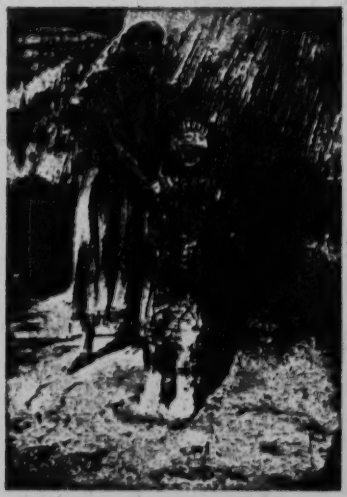

FIG. 4. (A). REAR VIEW.

FIG. 13. DARK BRONZE FIGURE OF ELEPHANT

SAME AS FIG. 6 IN "MAN," 1931, 201.

GABI FIGURES FROM JEBBA AND TADA, MIDDLE NIGER

Photographs by Mr. S. W. Walker.

[Facing page 169]

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

MAN

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XXXIV, 199-209 NOVEMBER, 1934

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Nigeria. With Plate L. Walker.

Gabi Figures and Edegi, First King of the Nupé. *By S. W. Walker, District Officer, Ilorin Emirate, Nigeria.*

TP8 539 193 [113]

In MAN, 1931, 261, Sir H. R. Palmer published an account of certain "representations of deities cast in metal . . . in the region round Jebba and Rába on the Middle Niger." I have recently had an opportunity of seeing these figures, and a fuller account of them may be of interest. For ease of reference the same numbers will be used as in Sir H. R. Palmer's article.

2. The two Jebba figures (Plate M 1, 2, 3) are well known and stand almost unprotected in the midst of the village on Jebba island, close by a dilapidated hut, alleged to be consecrated to their worship. The photographs accompanying the above-mentioned article are clear, and no further description is here necessary other than certain observations which a comparison with the other figures evokes.

3. The other photographs (Plate M 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) show four of seven figures at Tada, a small Nupé fishing village on the high bank of a backwater of the Niger, some 25 miles east of Jebba and some five north of Shonga. They are kept in a round hut and, unlike the Jebba figures, are carefully tended. They are taken out and scoured every Friday, and the floor is thickly spread with clean white river sand.

4. The most noticeable figure is one of dark bronze, 3 feet 8 inches high, bearing a general resemblance to the male figure at Jebba, both in technique, decorative treatment and conventional form. Its head dress consists of what appears to be a tight-fitting helmet, from which hang five coils reaching to the waist. To the front and rear of the helmet are attached medallions which bear the device illustrated in fig. 9, consisting of a horned and mustachioed face, surrounded by an interlacing design. Each medallion is surmounted by a crest behind which are models of birds as in fig. 10. The close-fitting gown reaches below the knees and is richly decorated with designs in low relief as in figs. 11 and 12. Round the neck hang a tasselled stole, a necklace and a chain bearing another medallion as in fig. 13. The design on the latter consists of a ramlike head surrounded by three birds which suggest the lesser hornbill.

5. Though the similarity of this figure to the male figure at Jebba is obvious, the differences are interesting. The quilted attire of the Jebba figure, with its dagger in front and quiver slung at the back, indicates a warrior in the act of drawing a bow, while the rich and perhaps magic ornamentation of the Tada figure may conceivably suggest a king, priest or civil official. The helmet of the former, like that of the latter, bears a medallion, but smaller, and decorated with the figure of a long-beaked bird similar to fig. 11. The top of the helmet is covered by what is now a tangled mass of bronze wire or 'shavings,' which, like the coils of the Tada figure, might be thought representations of hair, were it not for the fact that they appear attached to the cap or helmet.

6. Another of the dark bronze figures is of an elephant of somewhat slender body and long legs. It has a ridge along the back and is 2 feet high (Plate L, fig. 15).

7. The two remaining figures of dark bronze (Plate M 5) are of ostriches, 4 feet 4 inches and 3 feet 6 inches high respectively. Each has a curious plate on the back suggestive of a tortoise shell, only flatter.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

538 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crook and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[309] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

793 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Ghere and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Busa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Ghere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Rába, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 7 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rectangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

696 [681] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Ghere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Busa legend, Edegi was chief of Ghere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys.

When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutain Edegi.

8; Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52 .

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Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.

Fig. 11.

Fig. 12.

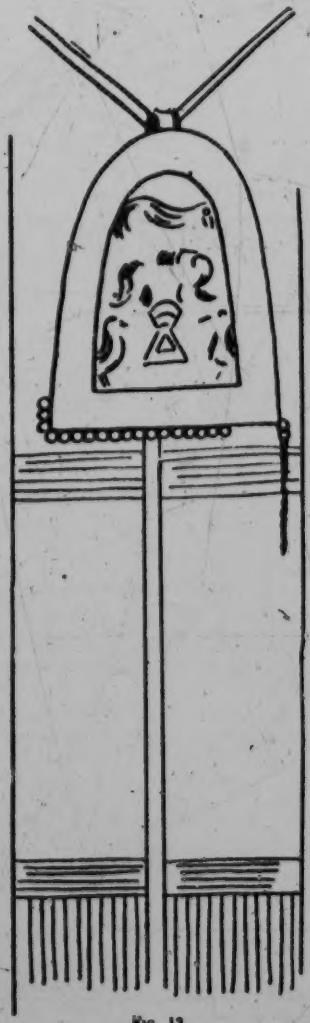

Fig. 13.

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FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GEBER, ONE OF THE LEDU VILLAGES.

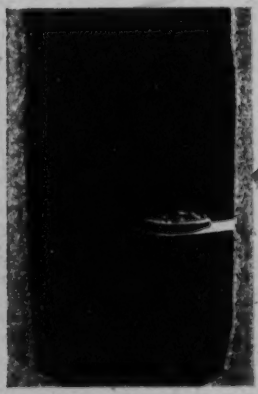

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TROUBLE."

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FIG. 3. THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES AT JEBBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH *dada* HOOKS.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

[Facing page 129]

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MAN

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa : West. With Plate I-J. Nadel.

131 **The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

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Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggã in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sûlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *égbã Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

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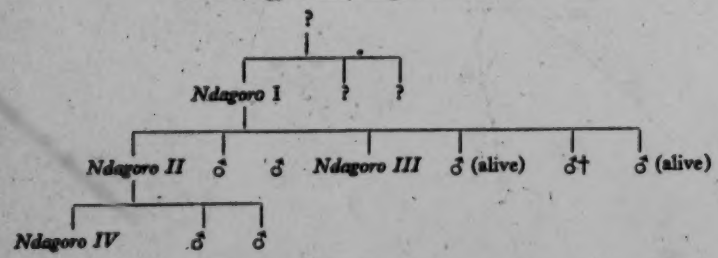
observe the general scheme of Nupe inheritance, one generation being run through before the next generation is admitted to the succession; but we notice also that the progress of succession left out two men of the older generation. 623

Genealogy of the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa



The same qualifications would also make a stranger who has settled for some time in a Nupe village eligible for a higher or lower *nūsa* rank. But 'good reputation' would be understood according to local standards, which may not be the standards of the applicant. A lute-player in Doko, who had been living there for some twenty years, a fairly prosperous and well-liked man, still went without title. Lute-playing, though appreciated in Bida, was not in the eyes of the villagers a respectable profession. Had he been a farmer, or even a drummer, he would have been awarded a title long before. 623 554 609 533

If a 'new man' desires to be granted a title he broaches the subject first with one of the titled *nūsa* with whom he is intimate; the latter will bring it before chief and council of elders, who will then discuss the question at their leisure. If, on the other hand, a rank falls vacant, especially one of the higher ranks, the official discussions will start at once, and all the men of the village will be talking about it and surmising likely successors. In the lowest ranks succession is a simple matter. In hereditary ranks, particularly in small families, the decision may also take but little time. When the *Ejukó* of Jebba Island—the hereditary Keeper of the Chain of Tsoede—died, his successor was known a week after his death, and the title was conferred upon him within a month. But sometimes the appointment of a successor is a serious and long-drawn-out business, and often enough, as we have seen, feuds may break out over the appointment of the most suitable candidate. Discussion follows discussion, often for weeks and months, especially if it happens to be the rainy season when everybody is busy and can spare only an evening or two in the week. The elders meet first, in small groups, in their own houses; later when the discussion has reached a more advanced stage they meet in the house of the *nūsa* of highest rank and finally in the house of the chief. As always in meetings of this kind the assembly gathers in the entrance hut of the house; the younger men sit near the outer door, the elder men on the inner side of the hut. They are rarely given anything to eat or drink except perhaps a few kola-nuts in the house of the chief. 623

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565 576 431 small kola-nuts, in fives or tens, were handed out to messengers, dancers, guild-heads, and other people of lower rank.

Even language and music are used as symbols of class. There exist in 565 Nupe special drum-rhythms, *take*, greeting formulae, *kirari* (Hausa, lit. 'calls'), and songs which are linked with certain noble families and im- 576 portant ranks. As soon as a family comes to power or a man receives 533 rank and title, the drummers of Bida will compose such *take* and *kirari* in their honour. You can, in fact, have them made to order, at various prices; but an influential person will not need to order them, for the drummers, counting on his patronage, will supply him at once with this musical salute. Some of the *take* and *kirari* which one can hear to-day date back to pre-Fulani times; others were composed recently. Whenever a member of these noble families attends a festivity, the drummers would announce his arrival by playing 'his' *take* and singing 'his' *kirari*, and the 'master of ceremonies', who is always present at such gatherings, would recite a long list of illustrious ancestors to whom the nobleman can lay claim, the ranks which he had held, and the deeds which he achieved. Lastly, the Nupe address each other by titles only, and never by name, if the person addressed bears a title. Special formulae of greeting are linked with every rank, and thus mark position on the social scale by the most obvious system of signs—everyday speech.

565 Class symbols and class etiquette shade over into the more substantial differences of class. Behaviour which is pressed into the service of class 576 manifestation becomes indistinguishable from behaviour which results from differences in social and economic advantage. The right to carry a sword or appear everywhere on horseback presupposes the economic ability to acquire these 'emblems of rank'. Submissive behaviour of a client towards his patron, or a member of the lower class towards a man of rank, is determined as much by the convention of class etiquette as by the special interest of gaining favour in the eyes of a person of consequence. Here we are dealing with the other aspect of class differen- 565 tiation, those 'cultural' differences which are, or become, typical of different classes. They revolve round the two pivots: political and economic structure.[1] They involve the existence of political prerogatives and the varying measures of individual liberty and mastery over one's own destiny, enjoyed by the different classes. Here we can outline the existing classes of Nupe society. We have met their protagonists already: the ruling class of the kingdom, rich absentee landlords, men whose occupation was war and slave-raiding, and, low down on the social scale, commoners and peasants, heavily taxed, and gaining a scanty livelihood rendered insecure by the very facts that add power and prestige to the ruling class. We have also met the craftsmen in the town, who share some of the privileges of the nobility, and the Mohammedan intelligentsia who can attach themselves to the highest stratum irrespective of

[1] The two structures do not define identical strata, nor is the economic differentiation invariably reducible to political prerogatives. However, we will leave the examination of the exact relation between the two 'pivots' of social stratification for a later chapter.

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against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotũ*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotũ*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotũ*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows: 182 144 533

> The needle is coming,
> The Mallam of the needle,
> The father of threading.
> O let me go,
> And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

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182 744 533

The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 642 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 642 186 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achieving, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *élite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1]

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiši* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'.

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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241 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-
592 time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the
178 town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supple-
476 mented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first
476 and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young
241 men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

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462 are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of 572 crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immedi- 443 ately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the 462 Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are 592 assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust- 422 bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

462 The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the 476 women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another 461 form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people them- 533 selves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the *egbe*: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing—the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs (no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contributions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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pays a small amount of money at regular intervals; the fund is administered by the guild-head; he deducts from it money for possible common expenses, and pays out the rest in full to every member of the guild section in turn, after every pay-day. This financial arrangement is fairly common in Nupe, specially among traders and labourers, and we shall discuss it in more detail later. The barbers, however, are the only professional group which has embodied it in its professional organization and utilizes it as a system of mutual financial assistance vested in the craft-guild.

The guild organization is restricted to Bida town. In the villages, even in the larger places, one or two barbers are sufficient to meet the normal demand. Besides, the medicine-man of the pagan districts would constitute a serious competition to the Bida doctors. But so far as barbers and barber-doctors are wanted in the country, the organization in the capital supplies them, either permanently or temporarily. Certain Bida barbers, for example, have settled in villages; others tour the country regularly, stopping in this or that place for longer or shorter periods. Even in these tours of the country districts round Bida, the barbers keep to the territory of 'their' royal house, i.e. the royal house on whose land in Bida their home stands. Although it clearly cannot be said of the barber-doctors that they 'serve the state' in the same way as blacksmiths or leather-workers, this arrangement is a striking evidence of the fact that their association with the political structure of the country is as strongly marked, and that they, again, are in certain respects the 'king's craftsmen'.

DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

The drummers in Bida, true to the more 'advanced' urban conception of art, are individualists; in the village, where the art of drumming belongs not only to the recreational side of social life, but also forms part of the organization of ritual and ceremony as well as production (we remember the part drumming plays in the farming *egbe*), it is less an 'art' in the modern sense of the word than a 'craft', working for well-defined institutionalized demands, and charged with responsibilities of a graver order. Drumming in the village thus moves in the framework of a close organization on guild lines. In every larger Nupe village we find a special group of drummers and musicians who, though belonging to different families and houses, yet recognize the authority of a common head, the *Etsu Dzã*, the King of the Drummers. Certain other, subordinate titles, are distributed, in guild fashion, among the other members of the craft. The art of drumming remains in the family and is handed on from father to son. You may see small boys practising drumming on little toy-like instruments under the eye of the father. They will go with him wherever he is called to perform, watching him and, when they are sufficiently advanced, accompanying him on their own drums. Sometimes boys from other families desire to become drummers. Their father will then get in touch with the head of the drummers, and give him his son as apprentice. The young apprentice will visit the drummer's house every day for his lesson. In the beginning

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533 467 he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy himself a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the woodworkers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable [322 435] wood. One large drum costs 10s. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever 533 taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain 467 bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be 178 paid 6s. to 8s. a night; to-day they receive 3s. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of 533 limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic 545 style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

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whose patronage they seek. Often the patron may order special compositions from 'his' drummers, for example, a personal drum signal, called *take*, for a new acquired nobility rank, or a song of praise on himself, or a friend or relation. 533 545

Between these different groups there is no co-operation. Each group is, economically, a closed unit. All earnings are divided equally among the members. This division of the income has no bearing on factors of family or household organization. Individual group-members may contribute to the expenses of their own families; but the 'company' is purely a professional association, to which the categories *efakó* and *bucá* do not apply. Professional and family concerns are, in fact, kept strictly separate, occasionally the two overlap, and we find a woman singer and a drummer of the same 'company' who are man and wife; but just as often a drummer has a wife, and the woman singer a husband, who are not members of the 'company', nor even of the profession.

Drumming in Bida is a full-time occupation (sometimes a drummer practises a little farming besides, but this is very infrequent). Each company regularly adopts new members as old ones retire. The novices serve their apprenticeship as minor performers of the 'company', until they become fully fledged members of the craft. Sons of drummers mostly follow the paternal profession; but many singers and dancers do not come from families whose women have practised this profession previously. Music and dancing in Bida is a vocation rather than a profession. The free competition of talent and individuality rather than family tradition determines professional success, and thus the professional association in which the craft organizes itself. Indeed the profession of Bida musicians and drummers represents the only instance in the economic organization of the country of a free association purely on a business basis, and without the support of the framework of kinship and hereditary tradition.

With regard to the profession of drummers and musicians town and country have exchanged roles: we find the closed and hereditary professional group (though of much smaller scale than guild organization proper) in the village, and the detached individual groups of craftsmen in Bida. But the principle of hereditary craft organization has remained essentially the same. We need only read village chief for king, and village community for state, and we understand the new situation. For the drummers, as we have seen, are as essential to the corporate life of the village as are the craftsmen proper to the political life of the state. In town-life, on the other side, drummers and musicians have no traditional duties assigned to them which concern the common interests of the group at large. Indeed the more varied social life of Bida, and the appreciation of new fashions and special styles typical of the cosmopolitan town, foster that spirit of originality and inventiveness which here as in all craft-work counteracts efforts at a closer co-operative organization. 533 545 369

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

[1] This song, which was composed by the *sonsoro* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows.

467
286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists
467 of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

323 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the
467 guild are Moslems. The head (*tsra*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same house-
467 hold may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or
[285] square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the
[282] Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut
759 the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger
467 nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system
535 of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for
467 ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 276–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[20]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[21]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[22]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[23]

[20] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below p. 35.
[21] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–5.
[22] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934, Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[23] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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asked to divine a victorious general. Invariably his rank would correspond to the importance and scope of the war that is planned. At the same time his office is only nominal. Although he would take the field at the head of the army, and although he would bear the responsibility for success or failure, the actual organization of the campaign is left to the professional soldiers: in an important war the *Maiyaki* himself would take command, in a minor war his next in rank, the *Dokoyiringi*. 721

Now the council of war meets in the house of the *Maiyaki* to discuss the question of raising the levies. The various feudal lords are informed that they are expected to produce so many guns and horses. Preparations take one or two months—the troops must be raised, recruits trained and equipped, and food supplies provided for the campaign. Finally diviners and Mallams are summoned again by the commander of the army to decide on a propitious day. On the appointed day, drummers and trumpeters sound the assembly, and the troops leave Bida on their march into enemy country.

The Nupe never fought by night. Their method was to move up as close as possible to the enemy, hiding in bush and scrub, camp for the night, and attack in the early hours of the morning. In open battle the attacking troops would be arrayed in a long straight line facing the enemy. But often the war would turn into the long siege of a walled village or town, close to which the army would put up its war camp, the troops surrounding the town and cutting the population off from their farms, supplies, and reinforcements. 726

This was the typical formation of the Nupe army in open battle: first came the foot-soldiers, the various household troops each under their *Etsu Dakári*, commanded by an officer of the king, the *Sónkali*. Behind them, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, a first troop of horsemen halted, under the *Sokyara*, and with it the lesser military and civil nobility. Behind this group again another, larger, detachment of cavalry was posted, under the highest generals of the army, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi*. With these troops were the higher civil and military nobility and certain princes of lesser rank. The infantry would move first, sent into the battle by the shouts of the *Sokyara*: '*Kay Dakári*', 'Forward! foot-soldiers'. When they had engaged the enemy, the cavalry of the *Sokyara* would charge after them, the *Dokoyiringi* giving the signal with shouts of '*Kay Sokyara*'. The *Dokoyiringi*'s own troops would charge last, to the signals of the long bronze trumpets which only the troops of the highest military ranks may carry. There would also be drums and flutes, and the soldiers would shout the *kirari* of their leaders and sing their war songs. [534]

In the rear of the troops the reserve was placed, which would come into the fight only if the other troops were unable to master the situation. It was commanded by the *Maiyaki*, with whom were also the princes of highest rank, including the commander-in-chief. In the last big war, against the Yagba (the same war which ended in the conquest of Bida by the British), the infantry is said to have numbered 6,000, the cavalry of the *Sokyara* 400, those of the *Dokoyiringi* 1,000, and the reserve 2,000 men.

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EFAKÓ WORK ON A FARM NEAR BIDA

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FARMING *EGBE*

[Facing p. 248]

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ONE OF THE *ETSU*'S *KAKATI* PLAYERS

A PROFESSIONAL SINGER WITH HER BAND

[Facing p. 300]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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X 796 sacrifice previously described; again, there is a big tree in the middle, this time adorned with a strip of white cloth, which is renewed at each ceremonial; if the village has a 'born' *Ndazo*, he will wear the new cloth round his waist while officiating, and put it back on the tree afterwards. Also tied to the tree are two tortoise shells, which will serve as drinking vessels during the sacrifice and afterwards as musical instruments, being beaten with small sticks. The other musical instruments used in the *gunnu* are as [534] unusual and are employed on no other occasion; they consist in two large and two small pot drums (of Gwari manufacture), and a raft-zither made of reed. During the year they are stored in the house of the *Žigí*, who has, however, no other function in the *gunnu*.

X 796 On the day of the *gunnu*, before dawn, the *gunnu* drums begin to play. This is the signal for the boys and young men to leave 881 their homes and to go to some secret place in the bush, led by the *Ndazo* and the *Ndakotsu* (the appointed leader of their age grades). Arrived in the bush, where they may only talk in whispers, they remove their caps and everyday clothes and dress in *gunnu* fashion, that is, in a loincloth of striped cloth such as the women wear round the waist. They break off twigs of the *nũbeci* tree, which will later serve as the 'whips of the *gunnu*'.[1] Then the novices are taught the deportment required of them at the ceremonial—to keep their heads bent, eyes on the ground, as one does in the presence of superiors; equally they are taught the *gunnu* salute, which consists in a fierce yell, accompanied by the throwing-up of both arms and a rhythmical stamping on the ground. During these proceedings the novices at least are visibly frightened, while the older boys try to show their unconcern. Finally, they leave the bush, walking in single file, the tallest first, to the place of the sacrifice; throughout the ceremonial the young men will move thus, in a long file, 'whips' in hand, led or sometimes driven by the priest and the *Ndakotsu*.

At the *gunnu* place they join the older men who have meanwhile assembled. The musicians sit under the tree and have started drumming and singing. Everyone is stripped to the waist and sits on leaves or branches, since it is sacrilege to sit on the bare ground of the *gunnu 'ba*. The older men form a circle round the place of the sacrifice; the youths sit some distance apart, though they will from time to time jump up to 'salute' late-comers or to drive away strangers who might trespass on the secret site. Soon the sacrifice follows, which varies from year to year, according to the advice of

[789] [1] This tree has no further ceremonial significance, though its twigs are sometimes stuck into the ground outside a house as a charm against thieves.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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x796
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4

Arato, one makes the *mamma*,
Arato, the drum of *mamma* (is playing).
By night, the drum of *mamma* is speaking.

5

They are making the *mamma* with it together,
They are making the *mamma* with it together
('it' refers to the *kuti*, the phrase meaning—
in the ceremonial masks and *kuti* are one).

x796
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The people have no theory why the cult should be particularly frightening to the women; on the contrary, they emphasize that the *mamma* is meant to frighten all evil doers and deny that it has any bearing on witchcraft (which is wielded essentially by women). Yet the cult is clearly the men's secret and seems to express male dominance and some antagonism between the sexes. Oddly enough, one of the ritual paraphernalia, the smallpox medicine, is described as a woman's gift. But let me leave this point for the moment and only point out that the *mamma*, which cleanses the community from evil influences, fittingly initiates the cycle of rites meant to procure more positive benefits—timely floods, as in the *ndáduma*, or health and fertility, as in the *dzakó*.

x796

The latter ritual is supposed to succeed the *mamma* by ten days, though the performance I witnessed took place seventeen days later, on 3rd December. The *dzakó* is performed in public, without secrecy, in front of the sacred relics of Tsoede, two bronze figures of a man and a woman. Special musical instruments are used, two gourd rattles, and three drums hung with brass bells and other ornaments again attributed to Tsoede. The congregation during the sacrifice itself consists of the thirteen elders of Jebba, as usual bareheaded and stripped to the waist, and carrying long staves; but other men and women, even children, may watch and will later join in the dance. The officiant of the ritual is the *Ndace* (the 'Father of Hunting'), though the ritual has nothing to do with hunting. Nor has the rank itself this particular connotation. In Jebba, it is an elder's rank among others, though one specifically connected with the relics of Tsoede; for the *Ndace* is one of the four men who serve (or used to serve) as the 'executioners' wielding the Chain of Tsoede.

[534]

The ceremonial starts in the afternoon, with a sacrifice in front of the bronze figures, during which the officiant has the two rattle players on his right and left. The place on the priest's left, opposite the female figure, signifies 'birth', the place on his right, opposite the male figure, 'health'; which symbolism of right and left is

[p.94]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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16. Circumcision operation

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17. A bridal procession

[p. 118 (A)]

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20. A noted medicine expert and 'wise man' from Jebba

21. The dance of the *ndakó gboyá*

[p. 134 (a)]
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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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of my Mokwa informants, a man of about sixty, the *elo* dancers used to wear skirts and cloaks made of dried grass, probably like those worn in the *mamma* ritual of Jebba; it was only later that the cloth hoods were adopted, 'because they looked nicer'. I have no doubt that they were modelled on the almost identical dress of the *gugu* dancers, with which the Mokwa people at least are so thoroughly familiar. They themselves disclaim any such connection, which is admittedly not borne out by any other features of the two cults. 771 177

Granting the alien origin of the *elo*, we must add that it has been fairly thoroughly Nupe-ized. To begin with, it has taken its place among the 'fixed' ceremonials, being performed annually in the 9th month (in Mokwa and Rabah) or 6th month (in Gbajibo). Like the other Nupe ceremonials, the *elo* is in the charge of one of the titled elders, whose office includes the responsibility for the annual performance and the tuition of the dancers. The most important mask, called *elokó* ('Great *elo*'), is also stored in his house, while the other masks and dresses are kept in the houses of other rankholders. When the masks appear in the dance they are addressed, in Nupe fashion, by a special salute, *elulo* ('Bird of *elo*'); the songs are in Nupe, the style of the music and most dance steps are typically Nupe, as are also the drums which are played throughout the dance.[1] But the dance performance itself has retained its uncommon character. All the dancers are men; but among them are three, wearing highly ornamented masks with curved twin horns, who are said to represent 'female' figures, the mask of the 'Great *elo*' belonging to this category. Two other dancers, wearing hoods pulled over their faces and head-dresses of feathers, are described as 'male'. Two more figures, wearing simple masks surmounted by one straight horn, are called *gara* (lit. 'robber'). These last figures are perhaps the most unusual; for while the 'male' and 'female' masks stalk about, or jump and dance much as do ordinary dancers or the masks in the *ndakó gboyá* and *mamma*, the *gara* plays the part of a bogey-man who frightens the children, and of a clown whose pranks delight old and young; which double role is otherwise unknown in Nupe dance ceremonial. The behaviour of the 'male' and 'female' masks, incidentally, is in no way suggestive of this ascription of sex. In addition, there are two unmasked young men who join in the dancing and clowning and wear fringed skirts made of leopard skin, their bare legs being painted with white spots ('like the spots of leopards')—another conspicuously non-Nupe feature. 771 177 535

The most incongruous aspect of the *elo* lies in its purpose, or [534]

[1] The *elo* includes only one musical instrument uncommon in Nupe, an iron double-bell, beaten with a stick.

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark. 462

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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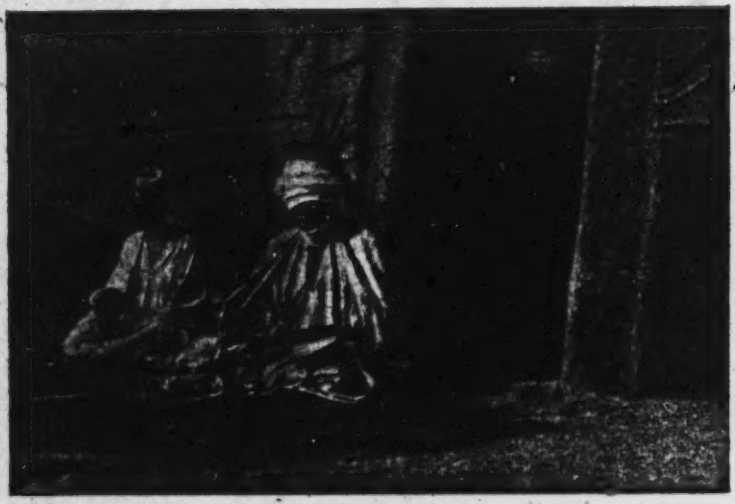

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A BIDA MALLAM AND ONE OF HIS PUPILS

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AN AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATION DANCE

[facing p. 382]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one
369 of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida
561 *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan religion.

561 I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the *ena* a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat [589] all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice as fast'.

561 Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional
574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*, *Etsu*, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food, drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the members of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited. At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred guests.

561 Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts
574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle, leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one
535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they
554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers.
369 There exist special *ena gbarúfuži* dances, performed at these occasions: they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena. Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

[1] This song, which was composed by the *zaworo* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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x 796 The dance frequently rises to feverish excitement, when the youths
881 will suddenly resume using their whips, violently and against anyone. The flogging now has a purpose: when directed against male adolescents it is thought to promote growth and maturity; when directed against women, fertility. But there are also phases of calm as well as humorous episodes, acclaimed by general laughter. One episode, in particular, may be mentioned: now and again, the young men will imitate, with comic exaggeration, a typical women's dance or caricature the walk and gestures of women.

I will not describe the dance further: it fills the rest of the *gunnu* festivities, being interrupted only for a brief night's rest, and ends when all the beer is exhausted and everyone too tired to carry on. I will only note these important and partly unique features. Some
x 796 time during the dance the young men form themselves into a
842 procession led by the *Ndazo* and march and dance through the village, still singing the *gunnu* songs, to give the 'salute' in front of
881 the houses of high-ranking elders. On the way they also visit the childless women of the village; for these are strictly forbidden to watch the *gunnu* dance and must hide in their huts until the ceremonial is over. These women may be unhappily barren; or they may be suspected of avoiding childbearing and family duties so that they might lead the immoral life of female traders and prostitutes (which, in Nupe, means one and the same thing). In either case the *Ndazo* will enter their house and encourage or admonish them, as the case may be; the woman, kneeling before him, will receive two lashes with the *gunnu* whip, administered by one of the young men, which is both a punishment and a promise of fertility. Women who have no taste for either will have to leave the village or hide in some other house during the critical period, as indeed quite a few are doing.

[535] Again, few other Nupe rituals include a mixed dance of the sexes; in the *gunnu*, this is not only permitted but considered a
x 796 relevant part of the celebration, as is the whole excited and aban-
881 doned tone of the dance. Always, when describing the *gunnu*, the Nupe will use some such phrase—'we make merry, we drink, we dance, men and women together without order, until we talk without sense'. This excitement is in no small measure sexual; not only is the attention of the young men constantly drawn to the other sex (even by the fact that they wear an item of women's dress), but the week preceding the *gunnu* and the whole period of the
834 celebration are also marked by a severe prohibition of all sexual
786 intercourse, lest death visit the community. Only when the dance
x 796 is ended and everyone has bathed, the men in a nearby stream,
881 the women at home, is the rule of chastity lifted; the same night men and women will again sleep together, matrimonially or promiscuously - No one cares.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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[535]

12. *Dzakó* dance

[304
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415]

13. Cutting of tribal marks

[p. 86 (A)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

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15. Vendor of medicines

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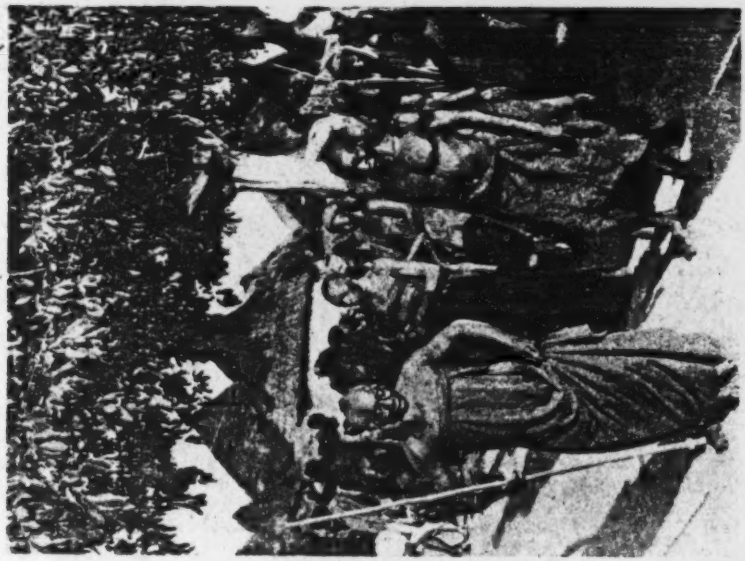

14. *Dzakó* dance

[p. 86(3)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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and was performed to the light of a hurricane lamp and a number of grass torches. About forty men were assembled in front of the *cigbe* shrine. The beating of drums and a high-pitched screech of the men announced the beginning of the ritual, giving also a final warning to women who might still be abroad. The *cigbe* pot had been decorated with a strip of white cloth tied round its neck, which was referred to as the 'dress' of the vessel, that is, by the same name as the masks worn by the dancers. These appeared later, accompanied by two older men, one of them the *Ndakotsu* of the senior age grade, and some youths, all carrying sticks to drive away and beat intruders. There were two masks, worn by young men of the senior age grade, who had dressed in the presence of the *mamma* priest while he spoke this brief prayer:

'Our Lord God, let us go out (as masks); men and women (who must not see the masks), God will kill them. Now the *kuti* enters (into the masks). May God cause that the thing (i.e. smallpox and evil in general) does not stay here (in the village).

At the place of the *cigbe* shrine, the masks keep at first in the shadow without moving. The officiant kneels down in front of the *cigbe* vessel, whose lid has been removed, while the rest of the men sit around him in a triple halfcircle, the old men on the inside, younger men in the middle, youths on the outside. The man who actually performs the sacrifice is the *Ndakotsu*, since the *Tswanya* is too old and weak; but he sits immediately behind the younger man and from time to time instructs or corrects him. Throughout the proceedings the drums continue playing, and repeatedly the congregation breaks out in a high-pitched scream or calls out '*gengebaru*' (a meaningless word)—the 'greeting' of the *cigbe*.

The officiant pours some beer into the *cigbe* vessel, saying—'*Kuti*, we brew beer, we give thee water (i.e. beer), so that the town may have health, everyone may have sweet things, the women may have children, everything may prosper'. The libation is repeated three times, then the officiant drinks a little of the beer and pours the rest into the *cigbe* vessel. He kills a black male kid, slitting its throat, and lets the blood run into the vessel. The body of the animal is removed to be roasted over an open fire while the libation of beer is repeated, the same prayer being now spoken by the old men, one after the other. Finally, the beer goes round according to age and rank, the *Tswanya* drinking first. The men clearly enjoy drinking the beer and behave much as they would at any ordinary drinking party. This concludes the first phase of the ceremonial; the proceedings that follow belong to the *mamma* proper.

[535] They begin with singing and a slow and dignified dance of a few old men. The masks soon join in, being acclaimed with shouts of

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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'mamari', the 'greeting' of the *mamma* masks. Later the masks, accompanied by all the young men, set out on a dance-procession through the village, where they beat with their sticks on the doors of houses, to frighten all evil persons (and all women). On the way they 'salute' the houses of chief and elders and also look out for strangers who might have strayed into the village. The dance procession is repeated several times, and on every return the masks join in the singing and dancing, which become more and more general. Let me stress that the dance preserves its restrained and quiet character throughout, the occasional shrieks notwithstanding. Altogether, the general mood is neither excited nor severe. The men who stay behind at the *cigbe* shrine, if they do not dance, talk in whispers but quite informally, about previous performances of the *kuti*, about old times, and so forth; one of the elders takes the opportunity of telling me about the meaning and rules of the *mamma*. Some time during the dance the meal has been prepared and is eaten by the congregation after some morsels of food are dropped into the *cigbe* vessel. It is by then 11 o'clock. There is no washing of hands, and no other formal conclusion of the sacrifice. Singing and dancing, and the drinking of beer while it lasts, go on in the same manner until dawn, though some old men, tired out, have fallen asleep. In the morning, the men return to their houses to sleep, while the womenfolk, now released from the night's prohibition, set about their day's work. Formerly, I was told, this went on for a whole week, with dancing at night and rest during the day. 796 x 751 535

The songs sung during the *mamma* refer, on the whole vaguely and obscurely, to the ceremonial and its rules, though the text is interspersed with meaningless words. 796 x 751 539

1

The person who offends the *mamma*,
He (the *mamma*) will hear it and tell it
(i.e. the person will be punished with death).

2

The *mamma* instructs the masks;
it is closed to the uninitiated.

3

The masks, *woro woro*,
The masks kill (evil) people,
Eyeh——

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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unique in Nupe religious practice.[1] First, water is sprinkled on the ground and a little beer poured out; immediately afterwards the priest kills a white cock, cutting off its head and letting the blood drip on the earth. The head of the cock is left lying there while the body is taken away to be cooked later in the evening. Before the meal, in which only the elders share, a further offering of a few morsels of the meat is placed before the bronze figures. During each offering the *Ndace* utters this brief prayer—'God, may the town have health; may the (several) towns prosper; may the women bear children; the children, may they be plentiful.[2] The killing of the cock concludes the sacrifice proper: what follows is '*dzodzo*', '*jī raha*', mere 'playing' and 'merry-making'. 796x

Even during the sacrifice an old woman and later an old man did a few dance steps. Afterwards more old women (bareheaded like the men) and all the old men, carrying their staves, join. Even very old men, who can hardly stand on their legs, try a few shaky steps. Later still, young women and girls form a ring round the musicians, singing and swaying rhythmically with the music without moving from the place; this motion is called the 'dance of the female bronze figure'. The two sexes never truly join in the dance; for the younger men do not dance at all, and the girls keep to themselves. Only old men and old women dance together, occasionally holding hands and behaving with jocular amourousness, almost like grandfather and grandmother remembering their youth; some such comments in fact come from the onlookers, who are greatly amused seeing 'the old people playing young couples'. Throughout, the dance is strikingly calm; nor is there any time for a more excited mood to gather force, for at dusk, after three hours, the ceremonial comes to an end. The songs sung at the *dzakó* are irrelevant little ditties, which have no bearing on the ritual. 796x 535

About the *gunnu* I can be brief. I saw it in its small-scale version, as part of the funerary rites for the *Ejukó* who died during my stay in Jebba. It included only the sacrifice of a fowl (on the village dancing ground), the mixed dance, and the playing of the *gunnu* drums; the young men carried their whips, and the dance was a close replica of the one in Doko, though the funeral version omits the sexual taboo and loses much of the hectic excitement typical of the true *gunnu*. From the description given me of the full-scale ritual I gather that it used to correspond closely to the one I saw elsewhere, being, however, more elaborate, comprising the vigil in the bush of the adolescents as well as the appearance of 796x 766

[1] *Eba* divination provides the only parallel, the slab called 'man' lying to the right of the slab called 'woman'.

[2] The plural in the second sentence is unusual; it refers to all the 'towns of Tsoede', that is, to all the settlements on the river possessing Tsoede relics.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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22. The *Sagi* of Kpatsuwa

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23. *Gugu* dance of the Yoruba

[p. 134 (B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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5. COUNTERMEASURES

x754 794 Neither the evidence which should precede the countermeasures nor these themselves are uniform or rigidly laid down; rather, there are a number of alternative procedures, employed as chance and expediency may dictate. One can, to begin with, rely on the official 'witchfinder', the *Lelu* or *Sagi*. Then there is that incontrovertible 'proof', the naming of the witch by the victim in dream or delirium, which must occur five times to be truly conclusive; but this testimony is not always applicable nor does one always wait for it. Nor yet does proof by ordeal seem indispensable, although the Nupe know two such methods. The first consists in the application of the snake-bite medicine *wasa* mentioned before, which the accused is made to drink, the belief being that a true witch would be killed by a snake. The second ordeal is administered by the masked members of the *ndakó gboyá* society, who would take the suspect woman into the bush and make her scratch the ground with her finger-nails; if after a time (left to the discretion of the inquisitors) blood comes out from under her finger-nails, this proves her to be a witch. No informant could remember a concrete case when the first ordeal was applied; while the second disappeared with the official ban on the *ndakó gboyá*.

683 x754 794 A witch convicted by one or the other method might be warned by the village chief, perhaps also fined, and if possible ordered to repair the harm she had done; an unrepentant witch was formerly flogged and driven from the village. Several informants maintained that a witch was never killed, since this would bring the revenge of all other witches upon the community; but according to others a dangerous witch was denounced to the *Etsu* Nupe, who would hand her over to his executioners. Above all, there are various magic means whereby witches are killed or at least frightened and subdued, though several of these have disappeared in most of Nupe country and are today known from hearsay only. One such method appears to have employed the bull-roarer (called *vúgu-vúgu*;[1] another consisted in a dance called *kútúkpa* (a word [535] denoting the clanging noise made by a galloping horse), which is said to have afflicted witches watching it with a swollen throat, so that they could not swallow or eat and must die of hunger.[2] Only

[1] I met with an amusing 'secularized' version of the bull-roarer in Katcha, where the nightwatchman of the Niger Company used it to frighten off burglars.

[2] This method, too, has in a sense been secularized. For the steps and passes of the dance and the fantastic dress worn by the dancers have been preserved in another dance, called *sorogi* (a species of tortoise), which is meant for entertainment only and is frequently performed by groups of young men touring the country after the end of the farming season.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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of my Mokwa informants, a man of about sixty, the *elo* dancers used to wear skirts and cloaks made of dried grass, probably like those worn in the *mamma* ritual of Jebba; it was only later that the cloth hoods were adopted, 'because they looked nicer'. I have no doubt that they were modelled on the almost identical dress of the *gugu* dancers, with which the Mokwa people at least are so thoroughly familiar. They themselves disclaim any such connection, which is admittedly not borne out by any other features of the two cults. 771 177

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The most incongruous aspect of the *elo* lies in its purpose, or [534]

[1] The *elo* includes only one musical instrument uncommon in Nupe, an iron double-bell, beaten with a stick.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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rather in its absence of purpose. Although it has a definite date like other rituals and although the masks must dress in secrecy, there is nothing sacred about the performance. No sacrifice or ritual preparations precede or accompany it; and the *elo* is positively stated to be nothing like a *kuti*, but merely *dzodzo*, 'play'. The dance seems to contain the remnants of some plot or dramatic theme; the various roles of 'male' and 'female' figures and of 'clowns' or 'robbers' can suggest nothing else. But again, the people deny that there is such a plot or that these 'roles' have any meaning. The *elo* songs, certainly, betray none. Here are a few of them, each consisting of a brief line which is endlessly repeated throughout the corresponding phase of the dance.

> *Zwákule, zwákule* (meaningless).
> I am calling Kolo (a name, here applied to *elo*),
> he is coming slowly.
> The *elo* matures every year.
> They are calling Kolo, he swings his leg,
> *ebi du, ebi du* (meaningless).
> Every year we are making *elo*.
> The *gara* appears, there is his face.

In a sense, the *elo* is a mixture of ritual and entertainment. But unlike the usual Nupe ceremonial, in which the ritual part precedes the 'play', the *elo* involves ritual only as it were in its administration (in the fixed date, the secret dressing-up of the actors, the formal apportionment of relevant duties); the rest is pure entertainment. Perhaps, in its original form, the *elo* was more fully a ceremonial, with some religious purpose as well as a plot. But even this the Nupe would deny; for although they sanctify the practice by ascribing it, in familiar manner, to the ancestor king, they impute to him no reasons other than (we might say) aesthetic ones. Nor have these reasons quite ceased to work. At the Bida *salla* in 1936 I saw a dancer with an unusual headdress which I had never seen before, neither at the previous *salla* nor on other occasions. The dancer himself was one of the *sorogi* dancers mentioned in a previous context;[1] but on his head he wore a brass cap with two horns. Subsequent enquiries elicited the fact that the headdress had been made by a Bida brass-smith to the specifications of the dancer: and the latter had meant to copy the horns of the *elo* masks which he had seen and admired in Mokwa.

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(iv) *The Gani of Kutigi*

I have elsewhere described this cult and the manner in which it took root in Kutigi and the adjacent communities, so that I need

[1] See above, p. 188.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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28. Mask of the 'Great *elo*'

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29. Dancer at the Bida *salla* with headdress modelled on the *elo* mask

[p. 230 (A)]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

467 286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[33] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 467 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[34]

323 467 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[35]

294 467 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 [285] *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

[282] *Leather-workers* formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[36]

305 754 467 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[37]

533 595 467 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[33] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[34] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[35] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–9; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[37] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konu* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–5.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934, Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 322; Meek, 1925, vol. I p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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Song of Etsu Bello

182 The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
643 The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
539 Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
186 The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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leaves are allowed to fall off and rot on the ground—an efficient system of natural fertilization, though not, apparently (unlike the 'green manuring' practised in agriculture), applied consciously. 246

Kola-nut

We have had occasion already to speak of the Kusopa, the kola-nut planters in the forest groves of Laboži. The Kusopa of Laboži and the neighbouring districts devote the larger part of their agricultural work to the cultivation of the kola-nut tree, growing little else besides—only a little millet and sorghum. The method of kola-nut cultivation is interesting. The trees are planted at the beginning of the rains. They flower for the first time after five years, about July, and after six years bear fruit, towards the end of October. The fruit is picked in February. From every harvest a gourdful of nuts is kept to be used as seeds, for nearly every year new trees are planted to replace old and barren ones. When planting a new tree the seed is buried hand-deep in the ground. To protect the seed the place where it was planted is covered with twigs; moreover, four banana plants are planted around it, in a square, about 6 feet by 6 feet. As the banana grows faster than the kola-nut the four banana plants provide shade for the tender young tree, and at the same time secure the necessary distance between newly planted trees. When the kola-nut tree reaches a certain height and no longer needs the shade of the banana plants, the latter are dug out and removed. The tending of the young kola-nut tree involves constant weeding—in which no hoe is used; only the 'bush-knife', so as not to hurt the delicate plant—and much watering. During the dry season the seedlings must be watered every four days. The need for humid soil explains the fact that the kola thrives only in the most humid part of Nupe, in the thick forest groves of Kusopa country.

This environmental factor is fully understood by the people. The failure of kola-nut cultivation in other districts of the Emirate (on which we shall have more to say presently) is partly attributed to the less favourable soil. But the traditional monopoly of kola-nut planting in Laboži is not, in their eyes, fully explained on such empirical grounds. A legend that has grown up round the cultivation of the kola-nut tree which tells about the discovery, by a Laboži woman, of the secret of kola-nut planting, supplies another explanation more convincing to their way of thinking. Let me quote this legend in full.

A woman was threshing grain for beer when a Hausa from Borgu, on his way back to his country, happened to pass. He crossed the threshing-ground and put down the load he was carrying. The woman went into the house to fetch water and to cook porridge for the guest. She brought the food and gave it to the Hausa. He ate the porridge and liked it very much. He opened his load, took out two kola-nuts, and gave them to the woman to thank her for the food. At that time there were no kola-nuts anywhere in Nupe country. The woman took the kola-nuts and put them on the threshing-ground. Later, when she took the grain into the house, she forgot the kola-nuts and left them lying there on the threshing-ground. One day, when she came out to the threshing-ground again, she saw these kola-nuts. She said: 'Look, the nuts which the Hausa gave me have come 245 539

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245 539 up.' She went and told the men of the house. They all came and looked. They cleared the ground around the young plants; they had two kola-nut trees then. After three years the trees bore fruit. The men picked the fruits and took them home. They broke the nuts open and ate them. They picked out the kernel, took it into the bush and planted it. When the kola-nut trees bore fruit again the men picked the fruits and took them to the king. This was the beginning of the kola-nut in Nupe. When they had taken the fruits to the king, he said: 'They are very nice indeed.' But the following year the trees did not bear fruit. So the men went to see the soothsayers. They said that the trees would not bear fruit again unless they sacrificed a human being. So the men went and told the king, and said: 'If we do not sacrifice a human being our trees will never bear fruit again.' Therefore the king gave them permission to take a human being and sacrifice it. They did so, and the trees bore fruit again. This was the beginning of human sacrifices in Nupe, with the permission of the king.

245 As the legend explains the origin of kola plantation in the country of the Kusopa, certain magic rites which are practised by that group—and by that group only—emphasize the unique position of the kola-nut planters. Only with the knowledge of that special magic can the success of the difficult and precarious cultivation be assured. The Laboži people practise two kinds of this professional magic. At the time when the kola trees are in bloom every planter will collect the dead leaves on his plantation, place them in a mortar, and pound and then burn them on the plantation. There is no spell or special ritual linked with this act, but by it, as by a magic act, the planter believes he will ensure a rich harvest. The second magic connected with kola-nut planting is performed for the whole group by the *Majī Tsuba*, the Master of Threshing (in the legend the first kola-nuts were growing from the threshing-ground), the village priest of Laboži. Annually, about two months before the picking of the [782] kola-nuts, he performs a sacrifice in front of the hut in which, as the legend has it, the woman lies buried to whom the Kusopa owe the knowledge of kola-nut planting. To-day a white ram and cock are sacrificed, the blood together with some beer is poured on the threshold of the hut, and *Sokó*, God, is invoked that he may let the kola trees thrive. Formerly this sacrifice is said to have demanded a human victim. (See p. 90, n. 2.)

This connexion between planting technique and mythical and magic ideas, common all the world over, needs no special explanation. But in the case of the kola-nut planters it gains an additional significance. The special nature of the rite, its infrequent occurrence, correspond to the special monopolized technique. In the eyes of the people who, not kola-nut planters themselves, accept the existence of these special rites, it confirms and endorses the exceptional position of the Kusopa as the masters of a unique craft. About fifteen years ago the Administration planned to introduce the cultivation of kola-nuts into the other districts of Nupe. A few expert planters from Laboži were sent round to teach the farmers in places where the soil looked promising the almost secret art of kola planting. These efforts met with but meagre success. Local conditions were to a large extent responsible: the soil in the other districts seemed capable of producing only the inferior kind of kola, and

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both on the same, profane, occasions.[1] More important, Nupe mythology is altogether flimsy and rudimentary. It illustrates only two tenets of the creed, the conception of a supreme deity and the role of 'medicine', while others, for example, the equally basic conception of 'ritual', are given no such expression. Nor does the mythology concern itself more than scantily with cosmological speculations or with the justification of particular ceremonies. 771

Certain legends meant to account for particular practices or ceremonials will be quoted later, in that context. Let me here illustrate my point by relating the one cosmological myth the Nupe possess. It is, strictly speaking, only 'near-cosmological', being concerned, not with the origin of the world and of all the things and creatures in it, but only with the origin of man, of the Nupe people, and of one observance (which is incorrectly stated). The myth, incidentally, may not be entirely a Nupe creation; the names of the first human beings mentioned in it have a Mohammedan flavour;[2] and certain details of the narrative (the bull who appears out of the water, and his strange language) occur in almost the same form among the Bororó Fulani.[3] However this may be, the myth is far from well known, so that for this reason also it cannot be considered a relevant expression of the Nupe creed. 771 773

'In the beginning, there was a man called Ancestor Adã and a woman called Ancestress Adama. They had two children, one male, one female, who in turn begot two children, male and female. The male child died immediately after birth, while the girl stayed alive. When she grew up she spoke a strange language which her parents could not understand. But a bull who one day rose from the river when the girl was standing on the bank understood the language. He talked to the girl, and the two became friends. Later the bull became the girl's lover, and she bore him a male child. This child again spoke and understood the strange language. When the boy grew up, he used to go to the bank of the river to talk to the bull, until one day the bull climbed out of the river and followed the boy on dry land wherever he went. This boy was the ancestor of the "Cow Fulani", and the bull the first of the Fulani cattle. 771 773 539

'Ancestress Adama had a third child, a girl called Mureamu (Miriam or Mary), who had three children, two sons and a daughter. When they grew up the two young men both desired their sister. They quarrelled and one was killed. It was thus that

[1] The word in question is *etã*, meaning 'stories of old times', and these are told in daytime, not at night (as are stories meant for amusement), when people would be 'too tired to listen to serious things'.

[2] See below, p. 247.

[3] See F. W. de St. Croix, *The Fulani of Northern Nigeria*, p. 8.

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death and murder first appeared in the world. The couple who remained did not know what to do with the dead body. They carried the corpse on their shoulders for three days, lamenting and crying, but could not get rid of it. At last, God caused the earth to open, and they placed the body inside. Thus the practice of burial and of the three days' mourning for the dead began.[1] The couple now stayed together and begot a male child, who became the ancestor of the Nupe people.'

If, then, Nupe mythology is a very inadequate guide to dogma and doctrine, this inadequacy is itself significant, revealing the Nupe attitude towards their creed and indeed the whole tenor of their religious thought in their true perspective. Mythology, as we have said, illustrates and exemplifies rather than enunciates the creed. We may go further and say that it expresses the creed in a form less abstract and theoretical than does formulated doctrine. For myths borrow the phraseology of realistic accounts, dealing as they do with near-humans and near-natural events; thus they make less demand upon sheer credence, compromise with ordinary imagination, and as it were vulgarize the dogma. If, then, primitive religions rely on mythical narratives rather than on dogmatic assertions they seem to discard the more abstract contents of religious thought. Yet Nupe religion, which does not employ mythology either to any great extent, is clearly not of this kind. If the Nupe do not attempt a specific, coherent formulation of their creed, neither do they seek to re-phrase it in more concrete and would-be realistic language. In other words, Nupe religion forgoes the means of 'vulgarizing' the dogma. Thus, though its creed may be inarticulate, yet it is held in all abstractness.

3. CATEGORIES

(i) *God and the World*

The most basic concept of Nupe theology, that of the supreme being, is also the widest. In a sense it stands for the whole realm of religion, serving to separate all things that belong to that realm from others that do not. For in order to express this distinction the Nupe say of an object, phenomenon, or type of action that it is, or is not, *nyá Sokó*—'of God' or 'belonging to God'. There are two inaccuracies in this broad category of things religious. The clause 'of God' in the sense here understood is properly applied only in the context of discussions turning upon the dichotomy of the religious and profane. In a wider context the phrase loses its disjunctive implication; for ultimately everything is 'of God', that

[1] There is no such rule of 'three days' mourning'.

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founder of Nupe kingdom and serving the interests of the state. We shall later deal with these 'exceptions'. Let me here stress that in calling them that I am taking my lead from the people. Indeed, the Nupe would altogether disregard these lapses from a wholly abstract creed, which seems to require no effigies or visible symbols; for when comparing their religion with that of other peoples, the Nupe will always emphasize that they have no sacred emblems, idols, masks, or 'little likenesses' (*zazagíži*).

It is perhaps not surprising that so abstract a conception as that of *kuti* should not be held with equal clarity by everyone. In particular, I met with two as it were heterodox notions; one was the idea that *kuti* represents a part of *Sokó*, or a *Sokó tetengi*, a 'Little God' (which, in Nupe language, is a contradiction in terms); according to the other, God was 'up above', but *kuti* was somehow of the earth, being a 'thing' buried in the ground, very likely in the places of ritual. These notions were always put tentatively, and were moreover voiced by individuals who could not claim the fullest knowledge available in the society, that is, by younger men or by Nupe under the influence of Islam; the older men, and especially the priests of *kuti*, declared such views to be false. But supernatural power understood more concretely and associated with specific material objects also has a place in the Nupe universe. This notion is embodied in the third tenet of the religion, which concerns the existence of *cigbe* or 'medicine'.

(iii) *Medicine*

Let me say, first of all, that 'medicine' is the literal translation of the vernacular term, which is applied not only to 'magic' substances but also to medicinal herbs or drugs of any kind, native as well as European, whose properties are assessed essentially empirically. Of the relation between the two we shall speak in a later context. Here we must note that the Nupe inventory of the 'things in the world' does not mention 'medicine', although in some respects it is an exact counterpart to *kuti*, that is, an agency meant to aid man in a universe governed by an all-too-distant deity. But unlike *kuti*, 'medicine' is not thought of as being part of the creation and a primordial gift of God. If it now exists in the world, it does so because of man's own endeavours. There is a legend, well known throughout the country, expounding this view.

'There was a certain younger brother, called Kpara, whose elder brother was Tswasha Malu. They lived in the time of *Etsu* (king) Shagó.[1] There existed a certain medicine, called *cekpyeca shina*

[1] The two brothers are mentioned in no other myth. The name of the king, Shagó, occurs also in the myth describing the origin of the

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779 *shina buburukun* (meaningless words). On the day when the two brothers were making this medicine, Kpara wished to climb up 773 into the sky. Kpara explained to the king that he needed a chain. 539 The king summoned the blacksmiths of the whole country and they forged a chain of seven links. Then Kpara tied the chain round his waist and went straight up, higher and higher, until he reached the sky. It took him three years to travel up to the sky, and people thought they would never see him again. At the end of the three years people beheld the chain dropping slowly down to earth, and 19 days later, Kpara himself dropped from the sky, sitting down, bang, on top of the chain. The people asked—Had he seen God? Kpara answered (this part is sung):

God is far away,
God is far away,
But medicines are applied on earth.

"The person who tries to eat porridge while shouting at the same time will get nothing into his stomach" (i.e. one must not attempt the impossible). Kpara then said to all the people that they must try and make medicine of ingredients. "For God is not watching man." This Kpara was the elder brother of the father who begot us—our tribe, that is.'

779 This legend or myth introduces two crucial features into Nupe doctrine. One is the assertion that 'God is not watching man', or literally, *Sokó nw' á yelé à*, 'God is not seeing'; the other is the notion that that powerful agency, *cigbe*, has been produced or discovered by man's own initiative. The two clearly hang together, both following logically from the root concept of the supreme being. The assertion that God 'is not watching' only expands and sharpens that other idea, that God, though creative and omnipotent, 'is far away'—too far away to follow closely his handiwork, and too impersonal to concern himself closely with all that happens on earth. And it is this extreme aloofness of the deity which justifies the further notion of human self-help. God, as we know, cannot be reached by prayers and invocations alone. Thus there have to be intermediaries, of which *kuti* is one and *cigbe* the other. But there is this difference. Only the *kuti* is 'of God'; equally, it provides only for the collective and unvarying needs of a people, not for the more variable and particular troubles of individuals. As regards these, God seems even more remote; for he has not thought of giving man the appropriate aids: rather, they had to be discovered by man left to himself. Here, then, we have

anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá* (see below, p. 173). Shagó is probably identical with the mythical hero and deity of Yoruba religion, Shangó, who, in Yoruba mythology, is described as a man or king of Nupe.

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'*mamari*', the 'greeting' of the *mamma* masks. Later the masks, accompanied by all the young men, set out on a dance-procession through the village, where they beat with their sticks on the doors of houses, to frighten all evil persons (and all women). On the way they 'salute' the houses of chief and elders and also look out for strangers who might have strayed into the village. The dance procession is repeated several times, and on every return the masks join in the singing and dancing, which become more and more general. Let me stress that the dance preserves its restrained and quiet character throughout, the occasional shrieks notwithstanding. Altogether, the general mood is neither excited nor severe. The men who stay behind at the *cigbe* shrine, if they do not dance, talk in whispers but quite informally, about previous performances of the *kuti*, about old times, and so forth; one of the elders takes the opportunity of telling me about the meaning and rules of the *mamma*. Some time during the dance the meal has been prepared and is eaten by the congregation after some morsels of food are dropped into the *cigbe* vessel. It is by then 11 o'clock. There is no washing of hands, and no other formal conclusion of the sacrifice. Singing and dancing, and the drinking of beer while it lasts, go on in the same manner until dawn, though some old men, tired out, have fallen asleep. In the morning, the men return to their houses to sleep, while the womenfolk, now released from the night's prohibition, set about their day's work. Formerly, I was told, this went on for a whole week, with dancing at night and rest during the day.

796 X
751
535

The songs sung during the *mamma* refer, on the whole vaguely and obscurely, to the ceremonial and its rules, though the text is interspersed with meaningless words.

796 X
751
539

1

The person who offends the *mamma*,
He (the *mamma*) will hear it and tell it
(i.e. the person will be punished with death).

2

The *mamma* instructs the masks;
it is closed to the uninitiated.

3

The masks, *woro woro*,
The masks kill (evil) people,
Eyeh——

RITUAL

x796
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● 539

4

Arato, one makes the *mamma*,
Arato, the drum of *mamma* (is playing).
By night, the drum of *mamma* is speaking.

5

They are making the *mamma* with it together,
They are making the *mamma* with it together
('it' refers to the *kuti*, the phrase meaning—
in the ceremonial masks and *kuti* are one).

x796 751 The people have no theory why the cult should be particularly frightening to the women; on the contrary, they emphasize that the *mamma* is meant to frighten all evil doers and deny that it has any bearing on witchcraft (which is wielded essentially by women). Yet the cult is clearly the men's secret and seems to express male dominance and some antagonism between the sexes. Oddly enough, one of the ritual paraphernalia, the smallpox medicine, is described as a woman's gift. But let me leave this point for the moment and only point out that the *mamma*, which cleanses the community from evil influences, fittingly initiates the cycle of rites meant to procure more positive benefits—timely floods, as in the *ndáduma*, or health and fertility, as in the *dzakó*.

x796 The latter ritual is supposed to succeed the *mamma* by ten days, though the performance I witnessed took place seventeen days later, on 3rd December. The *dzakó* is performed in public, without secrecy, in front of the sacred relics of Tsoede, two bronze figures of a man [534] and a woman. Special musical instruments are used, two gourd rattles, and three drums hung with brass bells and other ornaments again attributed to Tsoede. The congregation during the sacrifice itself consists of the thirteen elders of Jebba, as usual bareheaded and stripped to the waist, and carrying long staves; but other men and women, even children, may watch and will later join in the dance. The officiant of the ritual is the *Ndace* (the 'Father of Hunting'), though the ritual has nothing to do with hunting. Nor has the rank itself this particular connotation. In Jebba, it is an elder's rank among others, though one specifically connected with the relics of Tsoede; for the *Ndace* is one of the four men who serve (or used to serve) as the 'executioners' wielding the Chain of Tsoede.

The ceremonial starts in the afternoon, with a sacrifice in front of the bronze figures, during which the officiant has the two rattle players on his right and left. The place on the priest's left, opposite the female figure, signifies 'birth', the place on his right, opposite the male figure, 'health'; which symbolism of right and left is

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the servants, as though listening to the mask and translating its wishes, would order the drummers to change the rhythm; or the mask, silent until then, would stop and talk some gibberish in a falsetto voice, which meant another 'message' or salute, duly translated by the interpreters. Or finally, the mask would set out on a sudden excursion, breaking through the circle, run down a side-street and temporarily disappear. 794

The mood of the gathering grew more and more excited until, about noon, just when it seemed that the excitement would reach fever pitch, there was a sudden hush. The drumming paused, as did the dancing and singing. The mask stood still, flanked by the 'servants', and a number of old women walked up to it and, on their knees, with bent head, saluted the mask. They handed small gifts of money to the 'servants', which were meant to buy the 'protection of the *ndakó gboyá*'. (This, I was told, was only a token payment: formerly heavy sums were paid in the same fashion.) Soon afterwards the mask disappeared, now without returning, and the pause turned into a midday break, when everyone went home. At about 3 o'clock the mask reappeared on the market place, which soon filled with people, and the proceedings of the morning were resumed. The drumming and dancing went on into the night, to the light of torches and hurricane lamps, uninterrupted even by a gathering thunderstorm. At about 9 o'clock the mask danced out of the circle and disappeared in the dark, not to return. 'You see', a bystander pointed out, 'how it is swallowed up by the ground'.

The crowd of onlookers included not only every soul in Kutigi, among them all the local notables and the Fulani District Head (a 'royal prince' from Bida), the contingent from Shebe, but also many strangers who had learned of the forthcoming performance. The attitude of the crowd was an odd mixture of enjoyment and fear. Of the former there could be no doubt; for a long time afterwards people were talking about the 'nice' and 'beautiful' performance as though they were commenting on an ordinary festivity, and the 'servants' of the mask several times pressed me to say whether the '*ndakó gboyá* had pleased me'. But there was no question either of the fear. It was clearly voiced already in the women's songs; for unlike many ceremonial songs of Nupe, those sung at the *ndakó gboyá* are far from nondescript or ambiguous. 794 781 794 539 781

(1)

One does not call him friend
When he comes to stay in the bush:
A friend (he) is when he leaves.

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(2)

794 We are saying—'A stranger has come (in the night)'
539 He is greater than the chief.
781 We are saying—'being greater than the chief,
May he go away when day comes.'

(3)

We are desiring the cloth (mask)
Which covers the Great One.
God is in front,
He is in the back (i.e. being everywhere and all-powerful, God will protect us).

794 The attitude towards the *ndakó gboyá* could not be better
781 expressed: he is a 'friend' only when he leaves, a powerful 'stranger' whom one wishes to see gone; and while one must invoke the secret of the 'cloth', it is yet so terrifying that the thought of God alone gives comfort. But let me stress that this is not merely the unthinking expression of conventional sentiments; the fear and awe referred to in the songs were clearly visible even in this ceremonial, devoid though it was of the more sinister implications of witch-hunting and punishment. When the old women presented their gifts of a few pennies to the mask, they were acting genuinely and in all humbleness; and any person whom the mask approached, man or woman, was as genuinely terrified. Men whom I knew to be sophisticated and 'enlightened', such as the local dispenser and one of my servants, ran and hid behind a hedge when the mask suddenly towered over them.

794 Nor can there be any doubt but that the people believe in the magic effects of the ceremonial. Even after the mild version I happened to see I heard the remark that the village was now clear of witchcraft. This attitude does not really conflict with the well-known extortions practised by the *ndakó gboyá* society; the admission of the abuses is one thing, and the belief in the anti-witchcraft cult quite another. Thus the Government's ban of the *ndakó gboyá* was thought regrettable if indeed not disastrous; everywhere the people spoke with envy of their cousins in Patigi who had kept their *ndakó gboyá* and hence preserved 'the only sure protection against witchcraft'. Often have I been told that in the rest of Nupe there was now no means of fighting witches, and no protection 'save God', who, as we know, is inscrutable, idle, 'far away'.

To be sure, even the *ndakó gboyá* is not a full protection. Though it may frighten witches and temporarily 'cleanse' a community, it cannot exterminate witchcraft. For not only must the cere-

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533 he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy him-
467 self a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the wood-
[322 workers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable
435] wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever
533 taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain
467 bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be
178 paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a side-line.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of
533 limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic
545 style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

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whose patronage they seek. Often the patron may order special compositions from 'his' drummers, for example, a personal drum signal, called *take*, for a newly acquired nobility rank, or a song of praise on himself, or a friend or relation. 533 545

Between these different groups there is no co-operation. Each group is, economically, a closed unit. All earnings are divided equally among the members. This division of the income has no bearing on factors of family or household organization. Individual group-members may contribute to the expenses of their own families; but the 'company' is purely a professional association, to which the categories *efakó* and *bucá* do not apply. Professional and family concerns are, in fact, kept strictly separate, occasionally the two overlap, and we find a woman singer and a drummer of the same 'company' who are man and wife; but just as often a drummer has a wife, and the woman singer a husband, who are not members of the 'company', nor even of the profession.

Drumming in Bida is a full-time occupation (sometimes a drummer practises a little farming besides, but this is very infrequent). Each company regularly adopts new members as old ones retire. The novices serve their apprenticeship as minor performers of the 'company', until they become fully fledged members of the craft. Sons of drummers mostly follow the paternal profession; but many singers and dancers do not come from families whose women have practised this profession previously. Music and dancing in Bida is a vocation rather than a profession. The free competition of talent and individuality rather than family tradition determines professional success, and thus the professional association in which the craft organizes itself. Indeed the profession of Bida musicians and drummers represents the only instance in the economic organization of the country of a free association purely on a business basis, and without the support of the framework of kinship and hereditary tradition.

With regard to the profession of drummers and musicians town and country have exchanged roles: we find the closed and hereditary professional group (though of much smaller scale than guild organization proper) in the village, and the detached individual groups of craftsmen in Bida. But the principle of hereditary craft organization has remained essentially the same. We need only read village chief for king, and village community for state, and we understand the new situation. For the drummers, as we have seen, are as essential to the corporate life of the village as are the craftsmen proper to the political life of the state. In town-life, on the other side, drummers and musicians have no traditional duties assigned to them which concern the common interests of the group at large. Indeed the more varied social life of Bida, and the appreciation of new fashions and special styles typical of the cosmopolitan town, foster that spirit of originality and inventiveness which here as in all craft-work counteracts efforts at a closer co-operative organization. 533 545 369

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361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where [346] the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along 361 the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, 443 stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. 438 Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

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548 dark and quiet. After 9 o'clock the market-place and the streets are almost deserted.

But let us return to our daylight inspection of the town: we were 361 standing at the crossing of the four main streets of Bida. Turn to the 363 north, and you come to *ldlemi*, the strangers' quarter of Bida, where Hausa and Yoruba are living in houses and huts built in their own tribal style and fashion. They are traders by profession, and shops and stalls line the long road to the north gate—shops in which you can buy everything at every hour of the day, from native food to a European wristwatch, from the powders and amulets of the Hausa medicine-man to brass buttons or bicycle spare parts offered for sale in a Yoruba man's shop. The road to the east bridges a stream and a stretch of marsh-land that runs across the town, with its fields of rice and sugar-cane; it runs past another quarter of brass-smiths, skirts the quarter of the *masagá*, the Bida glass-makers, and leaves the town by the Badeggi gate, so called [449] after a village thirteen miles from Bida on the small rickety railway line (the oldest railway line in Nigeria) which links Baro on the Niger with Minna on the main line of the Nigerian Railway. The south road crosses another stream, with yellowish, dirty water in which children are bathing, grooms watering horses, and women washing their clothes and cleaning pots and pans. It runs on through a thickly populated part of the town, past a beautiful old mosque perched precariously on the edge of a deep trench; another day-market, and another royal residence. Another weavers' quarter, and another group of blacksmiths. Old Bida and New Bida mix for a while: still inside the town walls are Prison and Hospital; on the other side the Native Administration Workshops and the Middle School. And beyond this, the European Reservation, the Government Offices, and then open fields and farms.

This, then, is Bida. Like all large towns it is both more and less than 361 one community. More, in that contacts, communications, and forms of intercourse stretch far beyond the town boundaries; and less, in that within the town walls of Bida there exists a vast number of different, almost independent, strata and 'areas of common life'. Some, perhaps the weakest and least tenacious, are defined by tribal origin. The social differentiation of rich and poor, of social status and political rank, create others—strata in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different values are valid and different patterns of behaviour accepted as normal. But we have also observed the division of the town into three large districts, almost exact copies of each other, each with its day-market, its quarter of craftsmen, and its royal residence. The three districts are separated, geographically, by the two streams which run through Bida, and they are spoken of as three *ekpā*, 'banks', and given the name of the royal house that stands on their ground. Here we deal with units of a different order: they represent political factions, organizations of partisanship and patronage, which cut across the other social, cultural, and tribal strata. They reflect specific political and economic interests, they are vested, ultimately, in that paramount political organization, the state. But that we shall understand more clearly as this description proceeds.

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In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found
595 the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more
565 attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would
586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying
[832] age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphrodisiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and
837 the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral concepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which
831 legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-profes-
837 sional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing;
837 what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men
586 cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d*. and 1*s*.

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disposing of their goods—the peasant woman who walks eight to ten miles to the nearest local market, and the professional woman trader who travels to Lokoja or Ilorin by canoe or train—may seem but an external feature. Yet this factor of distance possesses a deeper significance. The essential difference between the professional and the occasional woman trader is embodied in the extent to which their trading and marketing becomes an independent, self-contained, and self-centred enterprise. Both the occasional and the professional trader are out for profit. But only the latter has adjusted her life fully to this aim. 'Proper' trade necessitates a freedom of movement, a full-time devotion to the task, which only women who have made themselves independent can afford. It means extensive journeys, and long absence from home. Obviously, the wife of a farmer or craftsman who must look after the house is less able to do this than the wife of a trader or a man of the leisured classes.

But the profession demands even more than comparative leisure. The long absence from home, the life on the road, in foreign villages and countries to which none of the normal contacts of the community stretch, means ultimately a dissolution of the bonds of marriage, household, and family. The disappearance of all moral control of the husband over his wife, or the local community over its women, expresses itself in the sexual licence claimed by these women. Female trade and immorality are in Nupe conception two things closely related. The women traders who go on these long expeditions and stay away from home for weeks, months, or even years, are commonly regarded as 'loose' women, as women who cannot help leading a 'loose' and 'immoral' life. The women traders prostitute themselves for money in the villages and towns where they stop on their trading expeditions. The money which they make is regarded by the people as legitimate a form of earnings as that gained from trade itself. When they return to their homes husband and family will receive them without question, and no blame would attach to them for the life which they had been leading while away. Public opinion, though outspoken in its general condemnation of moral laxity, yet countenances the sexual licence of women traders and accepts it almost as an institution. If people—men, as the spokesmen of public opinion—express their indignation at this danger to matrimonial morality, they attack, not the practice itself, but its disproportionate growth in recent times.

We have, in a previous chapter, discussed the social significance of this qualified admission of sexual licence in a certain limited social domain (see Chap. IX). Let me recall the salient facts: female trade, closely associated as it is with licentious living, provided the scope for that socially condoned sexual licence which other social forces seem to have made necessary. Thus female trade became in some respects a closed profession, the entrance into which was made dependent on the qualification of sterility. We may add here that, not unnaturally, women who were past child-bearing age could also legitimately join the profession of women traders. By means of these two qualifications an occupation which harboured some danger to common morality was limited to

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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [443] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were [778] entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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567 themselves; so were children born of a slave father who married a free woman, and also of a slave father who bought a girl slave for himself and married her. If, however, slave married slave, the marriage being arranged—i.e. the purchase price for the girl paid—by the slave's master, the children remained slaves. But these slaves in the second generation were slaves of a different kind. They were no longer called *wuzi*, but *mangi*, 'born as child' (i.e. as freeman). Though not really free they were exempted from many of the disabilities of slavery. The children of a *mangi* who married another *mangi* were themselves *mangi* slaves again. But a *mangi* could not be sold by his master, nor could he be maltreated or killed—in the latter case his parents could obtain legal [682] redress and would be paid the usual purchase price as 'blood-money'. At the death of a *mangi* only half of his property could be claimed by the master, the other half was inherited by his own family. The *mangi* also had family farms of their own, and were generally treated like full members of the household in everything except that they were not entitled to any share in the inheritance of their master's property. A *mangi* was brought up together with the children of the house, was given the same education, and, like the sons of the house, served in the mounted household troops. Many *mangi* would free themselves, or at least marry free women. But the names of these house-born slaves invariably betrayed their origin; for they were named by their masters, [551] and given not the usual Nupe names but names made up of some well-known blessing formula, of the first words of a proverb, and such like, for example: Adetsua, from *a de 'tsu à sei Sokó*, 'there is no Lord but God'; Barsu, from *bar su ga Allah* (Hausa), 'leave them to God'.

567 It would be wrong, however, to assume that slavery in Nupe carried with it a stigma. True, the people of Bida still speak with contempt of 554 the 'pagans' and 'slaves' (the two terms are almost synonymous) into whose countries their fathers had carried their profitable raids. But, characteristically for Nupe, the stigma attaches to the humble status rather than to the misfortune of having been made a slave. It disappeared with the signs of success and prosperity, open to slaves as to anyone. The wretched slave who could never rise above a menial labourer had to bear the ignominy of his position. But in the case of the trusted slave in a noble household, and above all the successful, freed slave, the taint of slavery meant little more than, in their own words, 'luck of war'. Slaves who served in the houses of the high nobility did indeed share some of the splendour that surrounded the position of their masters. Able and faithful slaves were rewarded with the position of head slaves, overseers, bailiffs; their masters bestowed upon them rich presents and gifts of land—more land than they cared to work with their own hands, having become men of wealth and importance. Their masters bestowed upon them, above all, special titles, household ranks—the ubiquitous symbol of social rise in Nupe, which in this case obliterated even the last external symbol of slave status, the typical slave-names.

000 The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host

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larger group, the guild section or guild). The work of the barbers is organized on the familiar lines of *efakó* and *bucd*. Although their work does not entail actually working together, a certain kind of work is regarded as a concern of the family group as such and as falling under the rules of *efakó*. The *efakó* principle itself is interpreted in an unusual sense. In the work of the barbers orders or summons do not usually reach the individual barber directly, but come to him via the head of the household, who allots the various tasks to the different family members. The proceeds from all work carried out on these lines are divided among the whole *efakó* group, in accordance with a certain schedule which takes into account the seniority of the different family members. The tasks which come under *efakó* rule are the most highly paid jobs: the shaving of the hair and the cutting of tribal marks at the name-giving ceremony, and the circumcision of boys. The first task is performed at the occasion of an important household feast, and the barber-doctors rarely fail to benefit from the generosity that goes with festal mood. These simpler operations are executed by the younger men of the family, but the family head and the older men will also be present, as guests quite as much as in their professional capacity—which latter may reveal itself in no more than an occasional hint thrown out to the young colleague. The barbers will all sit together, and in front of them there will be a bowl into which every visitor is expected to drop a coin, the largest contribution coming from the parents of the newborn child. Let us follow the fate of a shilling dropped into this bowl of the barbers at a name-giving ceremony in a Bida house: 2*d*. is retained by the grandmother, who held the infant during the operation; 1*d*. goes to each of the five junior members of the *efakó* group (including the young man who performed the operation); 1½*d*. each to two older men of the family, the family head and his younger brother; and 2*d*., finally, to the head of the guild section.

All other work of the barbers is regarded as *bucd*: ordinary haircutting and shaving as well as medical treatment.[1] The latter, more lucrative, work is a prerogative of the older men, who alone know herbs and drugs and can perform the *turare*. The younger men will be taught these craft secrets when they reach a certain age. And thus another principle of family work is realized in the organization of the Nupe barber-doctors, namely, the balance in favour of senior family members which we have observed in the organization of farm-labour and native industries.

We have seen that in the distribution of *efakó* income a certain contribution goes to the head of the guild section. This, then, is a first instance of economic co-operation of the large professional unit. This co-operation is visible also in another, external, feature of this professional organization. In each of the three day-markets of Bida there is a special barbers' 'hall', a spacious open hut, where all the barbers (specially the family heads) meet in the afternoon, and sit and wait for clients and summons. This hut is built and kept up from a common fund. The existence of this common fund is itself evidence of a close co-operation in the financial field. Into this fund, which is called *dashi*, every barber

[1] The barbers are usually paid in money; but when the Bida barbers tour the country villages they often take firewood or food in lieu of payment.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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843 He will consult the diviner again at the beginning of the confinement and before the child is named. The father will also buy 'medicines' to facilitate the birth and buy or collect herbs with which to prepare the new-born's first food. During the delivery 844 itself the father keeps away, leaving the scene to his elder sister, mother or aunt, and to his father or father's brother, who is called in to cut the umbilical cord and dispose of the afterbirth (which is buried outside the hut). Even afterwards the infant's [603] grandfather plays a more conspicuous part than does the father; while the latter goes quietly about his business, the grandfather [851] loudly announces to all friends and visitors that a grandchild has been born to him, and it is to him that all congratulations are addressed. The delivery and the treatment of the new-born represent essentially practical procedures devoid of ceremonial. We may [853] mention only that for four days the infant is fed on a boiled infusion of the herbs which the father has collected and given the mother's milk only on the fifth. On the same day the father sends 852 gifts of kolanuts to all relatives and friends, with the announce- 553 ment that the naming ceremony, meanwhile fixed, will take place on such-and-such a day.

This ceremony, known as *suna* ('name'), usually takes place eight days after the birth, and is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be re-born in the child. The ceremonial is brief and takes place in privacy, usually in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor lies buried, being attended only by the child's father and his nearest male relations. The father kneels down, a gourd with beer in his hand, and speaks this prayer (to quote a concrete instance):

'I am praying to *Sokó*. The child that has entered, Lord God, it is Landu returned (the grandfather's name). *Kuci*, hold him (the child) securely, do not permit that he falls sick. May he live, cause him to grow old'.

The ceremonial ends when beer is poured on the ground and the rest drunk in silence by the men present. As this brief ritual summarizes the whole conception of reincarnation, so it also betrays its ambiguity; for the *kuci* which is believed to have returned to the living is yet asked to take care of the living; and though one sacrifices to a particular ancestor, one yet invokes God.

The naming ceremony itself makes no further mention of these mystic notions, being concerned exclusively with formally announcing the name and identity of the new-born. This is done before a gathering of guests as large as the host can make it. The guests are relatives, friends, neighbours, and such important personages as the child's father may happen to know; they are expected to bring small gifts and will in turn be furnished with

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization. 852 553

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services 852 553 305 [302 304]

852 of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers
553 and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gather-
[305] ing and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests, will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptu-
553 ous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered
619 to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem
304 to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal
[619] throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several
[834] other puzzling features. It is called *zũ 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-
[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 304 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 565 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immediately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. 844 The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. 851 Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 852 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth. It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zuŋ'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.

[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–16.

[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.

[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 858
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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623 many elders. No 'house' may be excluded from the share-out of village offices, nor may one 'house' 'own' more than one title—at least not in theory. The senior members of the house sometimes accompany their family head to the meetings of the council in the chief's house. Or if an elder is himself too old, or an invalid, a younger relative may do his work for him; but there would not as a rule be two holders of a *nũsa* rank in the same house.[1] These rules, however, are not, in fact cannot be, rigid. A powerful chief may appoint a friend or favourite to a rank to which he would not normally be entitled, or refuse a rank to the legitimate claimant for reasons of private enmity or jealousy; an immigrant group may demand that a rank be conferred on its head as a confirmation of established citizenship; or an expanding family may claim additional titles for its members. New ranks may thus be created, new titles introduced, which do not correspond to the traditional system of village ranks.[2] On the other hand, titles may disappear with the family in which they were vested or with the special profession to which they referred. The title *Ndace*, Father of Hunting, originally a title common everywhere in Nupe, is missing to-day in many villages; the titles *Etsu Dzã*, Head of the Drummers, and *Majĩ Tswata*, Master of the Blacksmiths, have disappeared here and there where strangers (Hausa) have taken over the work of drumming and smithing and have disorganized this originally family-owned profession.

The equation: so many houses, so many titles, may also be upset (at least temporarily) by the opposite trend: in an expanding family group sections may split off from the main body, and build themselves a new house, without being awarded a separate rank. The *tunga* very rarely 'owns' a *nũsa* rank. Founded by young people, it usually keeps its status of a 'junior branch' even in subsequent generations. However, a son or younger brother may be called to succeed the family head in the village and leave the *tunga* to assume his inheritance and position in the 'town'.[3]

623 Thus the institution of ranks of elders has two aspects: one is the official
554 recognition, by the community at large, of the headship of certain individuals over the component groups of the community—kinship groups and 'houses'—a headship which implies both a certain moral control and control of the economic resources of the group; and the other the division of the political executive of the village between a number of selected individuals. The closer examination of the first aspect belongs to the chapters on kinship, land-tenure, and economics. We are concerned here more especially with the second aspect. But we shall see that the two are closely intertwined. The acceptance of a family head into the village executive enhances the position of authority which he normally occupies in his kinship group; but it signifies at the same time that he may be called upon to use this moral authority in the service of the village at large. Appointment to a village rank also strengthens the measure of

[1] Thus an old, blind *nũsa* in Jebba no longer took part in the meetings of the village elders. But no successor was appointed until his death.

[2] In Mokwa, for example, the new title *Majĩ Koshagba* (lit. Master of Grave Digging) was conferred on the head of a Hausa family which had settled there during the Fulani wars.

[3] See p. 37.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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623 economic control which he exercises, by granting him access to special
554 economic resources (above all, fruit-bearing trees) unattainable to the other members of his group. Thus supported, the titled family head is qualified to assume his double role, as official agent of the community at large and as representative of his group *vis-à-vis* the village community.

The relation between the two roles and their relative preponderance varies with the rank which an elder may attain. For the *nũsa* ranks are not of equal order. They are defined by strict order of precedence, and there is never any doubt which title ranks higher or lower. The measure of political responsibility closely corresponds to the place in the scale of village ranks. In some villages we even find a formal distinction between the 'great' and 'small' ranks, the former three or (more often) four in number, forming as it were the 'inner council'. Where the village is arranged in a number of separate large clusters of compounds (as in Doko, Kutigi, or Sakpe), the distinction between 'great' and 'small' ranks also implies a distinction between headship over the whole cluster of compounds, the *efu*, and headship over single compounds or 'houses' only.[1] The professional ranks of blacksmiths and drummers are always at the bottom of the list of village ranks. The political importance of the rank of the Head of the Hunters and of the ranks which are combined with priestly offices differs in different communities.

623 It would be wrong to think of the village council of elders as of an elaborate, rigidly formalized, instrument of government. The full council is rarely summoned except on important occasions, such as the election of a chief, or the visit of the *Etsu* and his delegates or the District Officer. The normal routine work of village government is carried on by the chief and his 'inner council' of two or three elders of highest rank. And here again we have no formal appointed assembly, but rather casual meetings in the houses of the chief or of one of the elders, at which current questions are discussed and the necessary decisions taken. If more elders have to be consulted or instructed, a messenger will be sent to their houses, or they will call individually at the house of the chief or the head *nũsa*. If in the case of the *nũsaẑi* of high rank their position of authority transcends the component groups to the headship of which they have risen in virtue of their kinship position, this latter aspect preponderates in the case of the *nũsaẑi* of lesser rank who are excluded from the 'inner council'. They are executive organs of the village in the indirect sense of intermediaries through whom decisions of the chief and the leading elders reach the various kinship and local groups, and through whom, in turn, these groups can voice claims and interests so far as they call for action on the part of the community.

623 The graded scale of village ranks does not command an unequivocal
554 corresponding system of appointment and succession. Succession to the
184 lowest, professional, ranks is invariably hereditary. So is succession to the priestly ranks or the ranks linked with a priestly office: the secret

[801] [1] In eastern Nupe, especially among Dibo and Beni, the number four plays an important part in the arrangement of *efu* as well as in the order of ranks. We find four *efu* and four ranks, or four head ranks and four secondary ranks, or four ranks plus the chief's rank.

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623 of the ritual office remains vested in one family group. But succession to
554 the other ranks involves a certain ambiguous situation. Only a few com-
184 munities have worked out the principle of precedence consistently, evolving a system of promotion from lower to higher rank—Jebba Island and Mokwa are examples. In these communities every vacancy is made an occasion for a reshuffle of the ranks. A *nūsa* whose seniority and standing qualify him for the rank that has fallen vacant is appointed, his own rank going to another *nūsa* deserving promotion, and so forth, till finally one of the lowest ranks becomes vacant, which is then duly bestowed on a fitting, as yet untitled, candidate. But in other communities all promotion from one rank to another is excluded, the titles in almost caste-like rigidity remain linked with 'houses', and a man can claim only this one title whether or not it is one for which his age, experience, and personality would qualify him.[1] The people are themselves well aware of this ambiguity. It is overcome, in practice, in various ways. First, the appointment to the rank which has fallen vacant may be postponed till the candidate has reached the age and gained the status appropriate to the rank; a 'young man' of Kutigi (he was about 45) had been waiting for ten years for the title which his father's brother had held before and which had been 'reserved' for him; every time I saw him and asked how his affair stood, he replied with the same words: *n'wa ke degi*, 'just a little longer'. Or one may introduce new titles, intermediary ranks, by which device the rigid order of traditional ranks is circumvented. Finally, hereditary succession in Nupe is never understood in the narrow sense of a quasi-automatic appointment. Often it is a selection from a number of candidates of suitable seniority—younger brothers or eldest sons (in the classificatory sense) of the deceased. Though seniority counts above all, old age and debility will disable a prospective successor to family headship. Apart from seniority, other attributes are also essential: good reputation, skill and experience as farmer, a friendly temper, and good health; a leper or a man suffering from elephantiasis or blindness is ineligible; so is a complete invalid. But so long as his impediment (e.g. a short leg, a crooked arm) does not interfere with his work on the land and his ability to move about, it does not matter. The main attribute is *ánkali*—intelligence. In Kutigi a serious quarrel had broken out between the chief and some of his elders who refused to give their consent to the appointment to a high rank of a man whom they considered 'to have no brains'.

623 The following genealogy illustrates the succession to the position of a certain titled family head, the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa. We

[1] An interesting transition from hereditary ranks to ranks of the promotion type has evolved in Faže, a village in Ebe country. Only recently the former system of hereditary ranks was replaced in this village by a promotion system, the depopulation of the village in the Fulani wars having made this step necessary; for some of the families in which the most important ranks had been vested had died out, and only promotion from lower to higher ranks could prevent this untoward vacancy. This local development cannot, for various reasons, be taken as affording the explanation of the origin of the promotion system of *nūsa* ranks in Nupe. But it clearly shows that the people are aware of the inherent conflict between the rank system based on precedence and the strict rule of hereditary succession.

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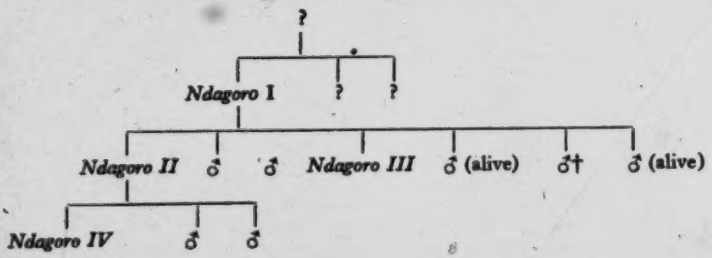
observe the general scheme of Nupe inheritance, one generation being run through before the next generation is admitted to the succession; but we notice also that the progress of succession left out two men of the older generation. 623

Genealogy of the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa



The same qualifications would also make a stranger who has settled for some time in a Nupe village eligible for a higher or lower *nūsa* rank. But 'good reputation' would be understood according to local standards, which may not be the standards of the applicant. A lute-player in Doko, who had been living there for some twenty years, a fairly prosperous and well-liked man, still went without title. Lute-playing, though appreciated in Bida, was not in the eyes of the villagers a respectable profession. Had he been a farmer, or even a drummer, he would have been awarded a title long before. 623 554 609 533

If a 'new man' desires to be granted a title he broaches the subject first with one of the titled *nūsa* with whom he is intimate; the latter will bring it before chief and council of elders, who will then discuss the question at their leisure. If, on the other hand, a rank falls vacant, especially one of the higher ranks, the official discussions will start at once, and all the men of the village will be talking about it and surmising likely successors. In the lowest ranks succession is a simple matter. In hereditary ranks, particularly in small families, the decision may also take but little time. When the *Ejukó* of Jebba Island—the hereditary Keeper of the Chain of Tsoede—died, his successor was known a week after his death, and the title was conferred upon him within a month. But sometimes the appointment of a successor is a serious and long-drawn-out business, and often enough, as we have seen, feuds may break out over the appointment of the most suitable candidate. Discussion follows discussion, often for weeks and months, especially if it happens to be the rainy season when everybody is busy and can spare only an evening or two in the week. The elders meet first, in small groups, in their own houses; later when the discussion has reached a more advanced stage they meet in the house of the *nūsa* of highest rank and finally in the house of the chief. As always in meetings of this kind the assembly gathers in the entrance hut of the house; the younger men sit near the outer door, the elder men on the inner side of the hut. They are rarely given anything to eat or drink except perhaps a few kola-nuts in the house of the chief. 623

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I

Rank System from Mokwa (Promotion Type)

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Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('efu' or 'emi')*	*Succession*	*Insignia, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Lile*	Chief	Efugbo or *efu* Lile	Promotion	..	Present chief was promoted to chieftainship from rank *Sarkin Zongu*
2	*Shaba Lile*	..	Gunmuba (so called because *gunnu* priest lives here)	"	..	Title introduced under Fulani influence; replaced original title *Sojeko.*
3	*Ndeshi* (Sheshi)	'King-maker'	Ilancita	Hereditary	Sacred chain, priesthood of Tsoede	Title *Ndeshi* corresponds to *Ndeki*, 'Father of the Town'.
3a	*Guye*	Successor to 3	Etisheshi and Korofugi	Hereditary in family of *Ndeshi*[1]	..	..
3b	*Tswashe*	Successor to 3a	Ntaci	As 3a	..	..
4	*Sdmaya*	..	Gbaye and Yafu	Promotion	..	Was promoted to present rank from *Tsonkwa.*
5	*Ndagoro*	..	Goro	"	..	..
6	*Maji Kothegbe*	..	Kpege	"	..	Newly introduced rank.
7	*Tsonkwa* (*Tsowa*)	..	*emi* Ndahogi	"	..	..
8	*Maji Bagidi*	..	Ilancita	"	..	..
9	*Maji Dende*	..	"	"	..	..
10	*Maji wya Kota*	..	Goro	"	..	..
11	*Maji Guye*	..	Kpege	"	..	..
12	*Maji Tswaci*	Head of Blacksmiths	Tswata	Hereditary	..	..
13	*Etsu Dzil*	Head of Drummers	*emi* Dzezi	"	..	..
13a	*Shaba Dzil*	Successor to 13	*emi* Dzezi	Hereditary in house of *Etsu Dzil*[2]	..	..
•	*Wangwa*	..	*efu* Wangwa	..	..	This rank no longer exists. The position of the head of the *efu* has fallen, quasi-unofficially, to the *Liman*, the Mohammedan priest, who is not yet, however, officially admitted into the village council.

[1] These secondary ranks defining succession to the hereditary rank of 'king-maker' I have found only in Mokwa. The *Sheshi*, *Guye*, and *Tswashe* regard each other as elder and younger brothers respectively. I was told that originally the office of *Sheshi* was inherited matrilineally, and that this is the explanation why it has become divided between three kinship sections living in different *efu*. Though this explanation is, logically, incorrect, and although these three offices have actually been inherited in paternal line since the people can remember, the fact remains that the three groups which succeed each other in rotation are vaguely thought of as of matrilineal origin. The aloofness from the other village ranks which characterizes the office of the 'king-maker' is thus further enhanced by the different conception of succession.

[2] Secondary professional ranks of this kind are found also in other craftsmen groups, e.g. blacksmiths. Sometimes there exists also a third rank of this order, with the title *Kpotu*. This organization of craftsmen ranks will be discussed in Chapter XIV.

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II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

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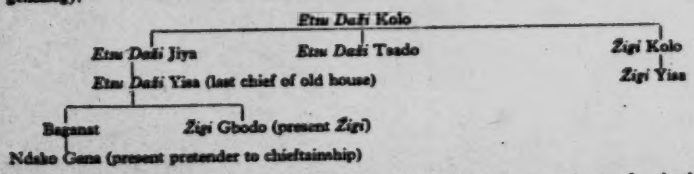
Rank order	Title	Office	Locality ('efu')	Succession	Insigma, magic, &c.	Remarks
1	*Etsu Dafi*	Chief	Dafi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Žigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dafi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotil*	..	"	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Maki*	..	"	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dasko*	..	Takogi	"	..	..
8	*Boke*	..	Kpacinefu	"	..	..
9	*Shebaafi*	..	Ndadofu	"	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dafi	"	..	..
11	*Žitsu Bebi*	..	Edokó	"	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	"	"	..	..
13	*Maji Egbe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	"	"	..	..
			"	"	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences. 622 793

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon 622 793 578

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chief's special income did not, normally, constitute an insurmountable economic barrier between himself and his subjects. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristic possessions of a chief—possession of things generally valued in the society—were not unattainable by others.

His surplus income the chief uses as follows: some of it he must devote to special expenditure attached to his office, the purchase of a goat or fowl for the annual sacrifices, or some other large contribution (larger than that of the other family heads) towards the cost of the village ceremonies. Occasional liberal presents to the elders, food, kola-nuts, beer, gowns are also indicated; a niggardly chief is much disliked. The larger part of his income the chief spends on himself, his family, and generally on things the possession of which are demanded by his status and prestige. Some chiefs, with a view to profit as well as prestige, have bought slaves or taken pawns. Every bigger chief possesses at least one horse. His dress is always of the more expensive kind—embroidered trousers, a turban, and an indigo-dyed gown, possibly an embroidered Bida robe. Many chiefs possess the beautifully carved staffs which are made by the craftsmen in the river valley and sold for sums up to two pounds. One or another chief owns an old flintlock gun, and some chiefs pride themselves on building bigger and more ornate houses than the majority of the people possess. Finally, as the most conspicuous symbol of economic advantage in this country of extremely high bride-price, two at least of the bigger chiefs I met had what among the Nupe peasants is considered a very large number of wives (5 or 6 as against the usual 1 or 2), and so had some of their sons and younger brothers.

Set against this the economic position of a well-to-do family head and rank-holder. He too used to own slaves or pawns. The higher rank-holders often possess large, imposing houses. They carry carved staffs, own a horse, turban and state gown, and a gun. Some of them may have three or four wives. With regard to the accoutrements of his office—the religious elements linked with chieftainship, its insignia and symbols of rank—the chief stands on a plane by himself; as regards things 'that money can buy', or liquid capital, he is placed only one step higher than his citizens of rank. The surplus capital which he derives from his office is not, as we can see, large enough to be turned into an effective instrument of political ambition.

Involved in this is the question how far the temporary economic benefits linked with the chief's office can be used so as to be turned into a lasting economic advantage, enjoyed by the descendants and the whole family of the chief. For the communities in which succession to chieftainship follows promotion or rotation the question answers itself: the surplus income vested in the chief's office is not sufficient, once acquired, to endow his whole 'house' permanently with economic superiority.[1] In

presided over by the *sūsa* ranks, and the smaller family groups (approximately 100 in number) with which we should have to reckon to-day.

[1] Here is a significant illustration: in Mokwa and Jebba, two villages of 'promotion type', the imposing houses of the late chiefs have fallen into disrepair; the descendants are no longer able to command the communal labour without which the upkeep of the large house is impossible.

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622 hereditary chieftainship, the accumulation of surplus renders such development more likely. But even here the existence of the special chief's cult, which imposes additional expenses on the chief (higher than in the case of cults to which he need only contribute his share), should tend to adjust more equitably the economic balance between chief and elders.[1]

622 However, we have other evidence to show that the chief's position, 576 economically privileged though it may be, is not *meant* to lead to the 554 formation of an essentially different, sharply separated, permanently privileged ruling class; evidence, in other words, to show that the political organization of the village is meant to preserve the social homogeneity of its community. This evidence lies in the rules of etiquette defining the behaviour of the people towards their chief. People everywhere show reverence to their chief: they kneel down by the door when entering his presence. Often there are raised platforms in the chief's entrance hut, near the door leading to the inner part of the house, on which he would sit, while the others are squatting on the ground in front of him. Or the chief would sit on a leopard skin or at least a cow-hide, while the others are assigned seats on grass-mats. The chief, finally, is addressed by special formulae of greeting reserved for his title. Yet again, this attitude of reverence represents only the highest grade of respect as it is shown similarly to all *nûsaži*, graded in accordance with age and rank. In every house young men or visitors of lower status and seniority would squat near the door while the head of the house, or honoured guests, occupy places on the inner side—the more honoured side. Special greetings of the same symbolic nature as the salute reserved for the chief are typical of the various ranks. Here as in the case of economic privileges etiquette marks off the chief not as standing on 'a plane by himself' but merely as the most prominent in a graded order of prominence. If on state occasions, wearing his state robe and turban, the chief is conspicuously marked off from the rest of the people, when going out to his farms there is nothing to distinguish him from an ordinary farmer; like him he carries his hoe across the shoulder, a straw hat on his head, and wears only the cheap blue cloth slung loosely round the body. There is thus ample 'neutral ground' in the matter of etiquette and distinction of status between chief, elders, and the rest of the people.

But above all, the attitude of reverence and the special chief's salute 622 are reserved for the chief's person; they are not enjoyed equally by his 565 relations merely in virtue of their being his relations. The exalted social 554 position of the chief does not extend to his family—there exist, even in hereditary chieftainship, no symbols of a hereditary class differentiation. Later, in the discussion of social classes in the kingdom, we shall understand fully the significance of this 'democratic' element in Nupe village chieftainship.

[1] In 1936 the chief of Doko bought five sheep for sacrifices connected with the 'chief's cult', contributed beer to other ceremonies, and presented two gowns to men with whom he was anxious to keep on good terms—not counting occasional small gifts and contributions, e.g. to family feasts, &c. Altogether an expenditure of approximately £2–3, or 30 to 40 bundles of corn, that is, roughly half of his income from tithe.

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etnu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nũsaẑi*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *eẑi u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunnu* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the commoners, men without name and rank—sit and stand outside, chatting and watching what there is to watch; the members of the privileged classes, titled nobility, and Mohammedan priests, are sitting in the inner courtyard and in *katamba* (entrance-halls), each *katamba* reserved for a special group. Only royal princes and the highest officers of state are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu*; they sit in the inner part of the house together with personal friends and favourites of the king.[1] All these people come to pay their respect to their sovereign, to see and to be seen, to exercise prerogatives, or to proclaim their connexion with the privileged and mighty. This external arrangement of the Friday ceremonial is indeed a symbol of the whole social structure of Nupe kingdom with its rigid system of etiquette and precedence, its differentiation of status, rank, and prerogatives, and its display of wealth and power. This structure we must now analyse in detail. 644

THE ROYAL NOBILITY

The descendants of the house of Mallam Dendo, under their three heads *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotũ*, form the royal nobility of Nupe, the *ena gitsúźi*, the Group of Those who will become King. They are *gitsúźi* in the sense that from their ranks the new king is elected. The titles of nobility which they hold by the privilege of birth may lead every one of them, by slower or more rapid promotion, eventually to the highest rank, kingship. In most cases the royal prince who succeeds to the throne has reached first the rank of *Shaba*; the change from old to new king is thus made almost automatic, a dangerous interregnum is avoided, and the fight between the rival factions is confined to the less dangerous sphere of competition for the ranks next to the king. Only twice was a man who had not reached the title of *Shaba* (or, if the *Shaba* had died, the title of *Kpotũ*) made *Etsu*.[2] In 1936 there existed, or more precisely, were actually held, 41 royal ranks, of which 10 fell to the house of Usman Zaki, 17 to the house of Masaba (the house which had supplied the last 565 554

[1] The arrangement at these receptions, the way in which the people who are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu* group themselves, is invariably the same. It is shown in this diagram:

Two bodyguards with ostrich fans
Etsu (on state bed)
Gitsúźi *Ndeji* *Sarakiźi*
Mayaki
Liman-Alkali
Mallams

[2] These exceptions were *Etsu* Mohamadu who, only *Makũ*, was appointed *Etsu* by the Niger Company, and the present *Etsu* who had been *Nágenu*, but had held the important office of a District Head of Jima. It is the present tendency of the Administration to abolish the office of *Shaba* and to make the appointment to kingship a free election from the royal ranks. After the death of the late *Shaba* in 1935 no new *Shaba* has been appointed. It is not yet clear what effect, if any, this innovation will have upon the internal dynastic organization. The threefold system is so deeply rooted that I believe the effect will be only to abolish a name, and that the rank next in order in the dynastic section will assume the main function of the abolished rank, that is, headship of the dynastic clan.

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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wúruwúru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsú* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wacī*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaži*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsúži*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [557] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotū*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [732] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Liman*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *lerama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsúži*.

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bearance; do not set the hearts of your men against each other; beware of conceit, and do not fail the people.' All present repeat, like a formula of confirmation: *Hakiḿa, hakiḿa*, 'verily, verily'. Drummers and musicians intone the songs and drum rhythms which are associated with the family and rank of the newly knighted; he mounts his horse and rides, accompanied by all rank-holders, through the town, dismounting at each house of a prince or *saraki*, making his greetings to the head of the house. If the newly appointed (or promoted) nobleman is a member of the royal dynasty he stops at each of the three royal houses and says a prayer at the grave of his ancestors. A great festivity in his house, lasting for several days, to which everybody in the town is invited, noblemen and commoners alike, concludes the ceremony.

Descendants of the men who conquered the country and appropriated all vacant land, the *gitsúži* may become, through ordinary inheritance, owners of land and considerable wealth. But the appointment to a royal rank meant more than this chance of inheritance: it meant status, influence, and access to increasing power and wealth. The princes of rank were admitted to the *nkó*, the Council of State, but had little influence, it seems, upon the actual government—this was entrusted to the council of the more competent, appointed, officers of state. The power of the *gitsúži* rested in the main on two things: the part they played in the wars, and their position as *egba*, royal fief-holders and delegates placed in charge of the districts of the kingdom. We shall speak presently in more detail of these services which the royal nobility rendered to king and state. I will give here a list of all the ranks held at present among the *gitsúži* of Bida. To illustrate the system of promotion I have indicated certain changes in the distribution of ranks which had been anticipated by the *Etsu* and his council after the death of the *Shaba* in 1935; as already said, the Administration was not prepared to endorse this reshuffle, which would imply the reoccupation of the post of *Shaba* (see p. 93, n. 2). The list also shows some of the fiefs which were connected with the ranks in pre-European times, and finally the offices under the present-day Native Administration which are linked with certain *gitsú* ranks.

Dynastic Ranks in Bida 1936

1. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Maru (House of Umaru Majigi)*

Etsu, appointed 1935, former title *Nágenu*.
Shaba, died December 1935; till 1934 District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: Mokwa.
'Old' *Makū*, till 1934 District Head of Kacha, then retired; previous title *Luhpā*. Fief in pre-European times: Kacha.
Makū, younger brother of 'Old' *Makū*; no official position.
Ginya, present District Head of Badeggi.
Cekpa
Gara
Lafyene (Lakpene)
Uban Dóma
Tswáyi

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565 *Táka*, held by eldest son of *Shaba*.
Sontwdraki
554 *Wacī Taba*, held by younger brother of *Shaba*.
Nda Iya
Nágenu, held by younger brother of *Etsu*, appointed 1935; no previous title; District Head of Jima.
'Old' *Natsu*, retired from office 1934.
Natsu, son of a former *Kpotū*, younger brother of *Ginya*; on the Bida Town Council.
Shabarabá, a new *ad hoc* introduced rank, bestowed in May 1936 on the eldest son of the late *Shaba*, as no higher rank was vacant.

2. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Usman* (*House of Usman Zaki*)

'Old' *Kpotū*, died in 1936; for some time District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: *Edupkā* (countries beyond the Niger).
Kpotū, son and nephew of former *Kpotū*; District Head of Kutigi. He will shortly be asked to resign, that is, to become an 'old' *Kpotū*, on the grounds that his health is not very good. The *Etsu* does not contemplate promoting him to the vacant post of *Shaba* in accordance with the general rules of succession.*
Nágya, till 1935 District Head of Mokwa, now member of the King's Council. He is chosen to succeed to the rank of *Shaba*. Fief in pre-European times: *Edukpā*.
Rani, since 1935 District Head of Mokwa.
Kusódu, younger brother of the late *Etsu* Bello, living in his Bida house. Fief in pre-European times: Kamberi country.
Wacī Tswa
Shaba Gini
Fogū
Lafarma
Kafa
Cata

[643] * The ground of ill health is a pretext rather than the true reason—and this is very significant. The *Kpotū* does not belong to the house of Usman Zaki, although he is generally regarded as belonging to this dynasty. He is a descendant of Abdu Gboya, one of the sons of Mallam Dendo whose offspring had failed to secure succession to the throne of Nupe. He is, in fact, the only member of these 'second-rank' royal families who had obtained, still in the fourth generation, one of the three highest dynastic positions. His premature resignation is a striking evidence of this dynastic policy to restrict succession to the throne to the three 'houses'.

3. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Saba* (*House of Etsu Masaba*)

(Late *Etsu* Saidu, died 1935.)
Wacimbe
Nákorji, District Head of Gbangba. Chosen to succeed to office of *Kpotū*. Fief in pre-European times: Yeti.
Lukpā
Tsaduya
Tsaci
Tswasha Giraba†
Tsuroma†

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Benú, Fief in pre-European times: Kin Agbadya (Lokoja).
Tswanku
Tsoyida
Tswankúku
Rofiẽ
Cecekó
Nkoci
Tswashakó
Yitsa
Nddma

† Two established *gitsú* titles, *Fokpo* and *Gbaruku* (a Dibo word, meaning Old One), are not represented in this list, i.e. are not held at present. On the other hand, new titles are constantly introduced to cope with an increased demand; e.g. *Tsuroma* is a Bornu title (*Ciroma*). The rank *Tswasha Giraba*, lit. '*Tswasha* bestowed in Rabá', seems to have been a newly introduced, additional, rank at one time, in Rabá, as the meaning of the title indicates. The *Etsu* bestowed a new title of this kind shortly before I left Bida on the younger son of the late *Shaba*, making him *Shabami* (lit. '*Shaba* of the House').

OFFICERS OF STATE

Placed under the royal nobility in rank but its equal in political influence is the titled office nobility of the kingdom. Its members are known as *ticiži*, the Titled Ones, or *rowni*, the 'Turbans', so called because the gift of a turban by the king is the symbol of the bestowal of rank and office. There are three groups of officers of state, each of which is thought of as a sharply defined social order or estate—*ena* in Nupe, which means 'group', 'society', 'order': first, the *sarakiži*, a twofold group of civil and military nobility, consisting of the *ena Ndeji*, the Order of Town Elders, and the *ena 'kũ*, the Order of War. Second, the *ena manži*, the Order of Mallams, comprising the judiciary and the clergy of the kingdom, the *Alkali*, judge, and *Liman*, religious head of the Nupe Mohammedans, with their scribes and assistants. The third class of state officials, lowest in rank but still possessed of great influence, is the *ena wuži*, the Order of (Court) Slaves; we shall deal with this group later, in the chapter on slavery.

We shall see that many of the titles of the *saraki* nobility are identical with the ranks bestowed on the village elders. Of some ranks we know that they have been copied comparatively recently by the villagers. Whether this adoption of state ranks by the village communities explains all the existing correspondences, or whether they are due, historically, to the evolution of the kingdom from a village community, we have no means of deciding. To-day, it is a correspondence in name only. The identical symbols of status in the kingdom and in the village refer to very different social contexts. The differences in the official duties and in the rules of appointment will become clear presently. Here I will only mention the difference in the social conceptions upon which the two rank systems rest. Both must be interpreted as systems of selection by means of which the society obtains its leaders. But selection in the village means offering 13 ranks to, say, 200 adult men or—expressed more correctly—13 families; in the kingdom, it means admitting to

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565 554 leadership 30 men out of a population of hundreds of thousands. In the village, the position of importance and responsibility already attained by the individual who qualifies for the rank (through seniority, experience, and headship of a kinship group) is at least equal to the new benefits entailed in the appointment; in the state ranks these benefits far outweigh any position one could have made for oneself previous to the appointment—often the latter is negligible. At the same time many of the state ranks, subject to changing political fortunes, are held more insecurely. In the village, then, rank is essentially a form of assured public recognition: in the state it represents a hotly contested and often capricious elevation to the privileged *élite*.

I have called the *saraki* nobility an office nobility to contrast it with the hereditary nobility of the *gitsúži*. The *saraki* ranks are, at least in theory, always open to new blood. Only one or two of the higher ranks are to-day hereditary in practice, having become the prerogative of certain families which, once established in their influential position, secured these offices for their descendants and relatives. Civil and military nobility are mutually exclusive, and are ruled by rigid precedence and promotion. Promotions and first appointments are granted by the king in council with his princes and other officers of state. These ranks, unlike the *gitsú* ranks, cannot be accumulated in the same family; they are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group, and no other close relative can claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his 'house'. Only the less rigidly defined benefits of status and economic privileges that go with the elevation to the nobility extend, to a lesser or greater extent, also to the other members of the family group. Outsiders, even commoners, who have won the favour of the king may be admitted to the nobility of the *sarakiži*. Success in war and outstanding military achievement constituted formerly the main claim to *saraki* rank. Wealth and financial influence, which, under the old system were bound up with big land ownership and the slave-trade—prerogatives of princes and noblemen—have come into their own in modern times and are demanding recognition. The granting of titles to rich traders in return for huge presents has, in fact, become a new feature in the Nupe nobility.[1] The result is that the *saraki* group embraces people of very different origin: descendants of the old office nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe as well as families of Nupe commoners who had become partisans of the Fulani conquerors, and also strangers, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani mercenary soldiers, or rich traders who have earned the gratitude of this or that *Etsu* Nupe. The titles themselves equally reflect the situation, new titles being frequently invented or borrowed from Hausa or Bornu.[2]

[1] *Etsu* Bello and *Etsu* Saidu are said to have 'sold' certain titles for prices varying from £5 to £20 to ambitious, wealthy traders; they are even reported to have conferred important state offices, offices to which the candidate was entitled by birth and standing, such as the office of the *Alkali*, on the payment of a 'fee'.

[2] In present-day Nupe Hausa names have replaced to a large extent the original Nupe titles. The traditional Nupe name, for example, for *sarakiži* (which is a corruption of the Hausa *sarakuna*) is *agabi*, but this name is only pre-

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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*,' Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawaciši nya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kū*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manži* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somaši*, which is the old Nupe title.

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565 the *saraki* ranks and offices. Thus the present Chief *Alkali* of Bida as
555 well as his assistant is himself the son of an *Alkali*. The same few families
693 supply to-day the judges for the district courts in Nupe and indeed for
793 many courts outside Nupe country, where the reputation of Bida scholarship has found recognition. And, as a final result of this tendency to make these offices the prerogative of a small group, we find since the time of *Etsu* Mohamadu the two offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* combined in one person.[1]

565 The office of the *Alkali* in Bida, the highest Mohammedan judge of
557 the kingdom, dates back to the first period of Fulani rule. Its importance and distinction is expressed in the fact that Mallam Dendo's eldest
693 son chose for himself the office not of a temporal ruler but of judge of Nupe. Many of the men who held these offices were of great learning and outstanding ability. Some have left behind records of the history of

1. *Ranks of the Ena Ndeji*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Ndeji	Nupe from Dibo	*Magajin Gari*	Grandfather was *Ndeji*, appointed by *Etsu* Masaba; the father had no title. To-day highest official of the N.A.; head of the Emir's council.
Nyáfyenye	Fulani	*Magajin Gari*	Father and grandfather both *Ndeji*; first appointment under Usman Zaki.
Magajin Gari	Nupe	..	Father was *Nyáfyenye* and later *Ndeji*.
Sonfadakó	,,	*Gadza*	Father had no title; his first appointment was under *Etsu* Maliki, his second under *Etsu* Mamadu.
Gadza	No holder at present, but formerly a very important title.		
Sakiwa	Fulani	..	Father was *Ndeji*, titled under Umaru Majigi.
Mamasũ	,,	..	Father held a lower title; he himself was titled under *Etsu* Maliki.
Etsu Basa	Benu-Nupe	..	A hereditary title held in one family.
Etsu Gbari	Nupe	..	Father was *Uban Dawaki*.
Tsadza	Fulani	*Galadiman Gari*	Father and elder brother have held same title.
Ndasũ	Hausa	..	Newly introduced title.
Galadiman Gari	Fulani	..	Father was *Gadza*; he himself was appointed under *Etsu* Bello. He became later a 'ward-head' of the modern town-administration.
Kotonkomu	Nupe	..	Father held same title.

[1] There exist two different kinds of *Liman* offices: the *Liman Ratibi*, the minister of the weekday service held in the various mosques of the town, and the *Liman Jemaa*, the minister of the Friday service, which is held in the big city mosque, in the presence of the king. In every part of the town there is a *Liman* of the first kind; but there is only one *Liman Jemaa*. And it is to this highest priestly office that we referred above.

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2. *Ranks of the Ena Maiyaki*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Maiyaki	Hausa	*Dokoyiringi, Uban Dawaki*	Father received title of *Maiyaki* in the war. To-day official of the N.A.; on the Emir's council.
Uban Dawaki	Nupe	*Sokyara*	Father *Maiyaki* and *Uban Dawaki*. To-day on the Bida town council.
Sokyara	"	*Wambayi*	Father was *Sokyara, Uban Dawaki*, and finally *Maiyaki*. He himself was formerly on the Bida town council.
Dokoyiringi	"	*Wambayi*	Father was *Uban Dawaki* and *Maiyaki*.
Ejukó	"	*Tiwakoko*	Father already *Ejukó*.
Sondzamitsu	"	..	Father had no title; son got his under the late *Etsu* because of his wealth.
Sonlawu	"	*Sarkin Barayi*	Father had no title; son received his in the war.
Sarkin Barayi	Hausa	..	Father was *Maiyaki*.
Tiwakoko	Nupe	..	Father was *Nagun*.
Nagun	"	..	Father was made *Nagun* in the war.
Sagamawa	Hausa	..	This title is hereditary in one family, followers of the Hausa general and relative (by marriage) of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Wambayi	"	..	Father was a serf (*bara*) of *Etsu* Abubakari.
Sanaji	Nupe	..	..
Galadiman Masū	*Komi-Yoruba*	..	Held in Bida now instead of the old Nupe title *Somasū* (the Nupe equivalent of *Maiyaki*), but is to-day a very small and unimportant title.
Luci	Nupe	..	Formerly a powerful man; lives to-day on a farm in Trans-Kaduna.
Rwafi	Hausa	..	An hereditary title, held by relatives of the Hausa general of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Sonfaddkwa	Nupe	..	..
Bariże	"	..	Father was *Sojetsu*.
Sojetsu	"	..	Received title from *Etsu* Bello; rich landowner.
Magayaki	"	..	Received title in the war, under *Etsu* Maliki.
Sougubi	"	..	..
Sówhali	"	..	..
Maulawo	"	..	..
Mamasū	"	..	Father was *Soulawu*, a title which he received in the war.

Nupe. The judicial organization of the kingdom left them free hand to interpret and apply, even to alter and create laws. The names of past *Alhalai* are known to everybody, and are associated with certain new

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565 laws or special judicial practices. Of this aspect of their activity we shall hear more at a later stage. But one point (already mentioned) must be
554 stressed here. The office of *Liman* and *Alkali* could become hereditary;
693 many judges and Mohammedan scholars are of Fulani stock; but this reflects only the political influence and partly also the tradition of learning in these families. As representatives of Mohammedan scholarship *Liman* and *Alkali* are only the most exalted exponents of a professional class which comprises men of every status and birth—the Mallams, 'learned men', who are held in high esteem by everyone. Even without rank or title, when of little and insignificant learning, they are placed above the ordinary commoner. They may marry the daughters and sisters of the high-born. The *Etsu* himself, descendant of a Mallam, puts a 'Mallam' before his name. Like his ancestors he honours and receives at his court all Mallams of reputation. They are a class between the classes, a mobile, privileged intelligentsia.

565 The description of the hierarchy of Nupe kingdom is incomplete without the mention of a last group of minor rank-holders, composed of
554 the heads of the Bida craft-guilds. The guilds are closed occupational groups, the members of which live together in one locality and practise
467 certain hereditary crafts such as glass-making, brasswork, weaving, &c.[1] The guild-heads receive their titles, together with the usual gift of a turban, from the *Etsu*. Though low down in the scale of ranks, they have yet an official standing, and are raised above the ordinary commoner and peasant. Their headship implies authority over all the members of their craft in town and village. Formerly the guild-heads received a small annual tribute of products of their craft from their fellow craftsmen. Like the members of the nobility, the titled guild-heads are summoned to the *Etsu*'s Council at the *Sallah*, the great Mohammedan festival; and,
[651] like the privileged nobility, they are exempted from taxation. Their only tribute takes the form of an annual gift—an *emisa*, or 'salute'—again of products of their craft, the cost of which is borne jointly by the whole guild, and which is presented to the *Etsu* at the *Sallah*.

Certain craft-guilds are linked with the dynastic division of the capital and are divided into three sections each of which resides in a different *ekpã*. The groups of craftsmen also bear more special allegiance to the royal house in whose *ekpã* they live and with the ancestor of which they associate their coming to Bida and the foundation of their guild. But over and above this party allegiance guilds and guild-sections are closely linked with the ruling king of Nupe. For the king and the court represent the most important customers of the Bida craftsmen. All orders which the court intends to place are given through the guild-head, who guarantees their execution and acts as an official 'controller' of his group of craftsmen.

A position similar to that held by the guild-heads is also assigned to the head of the Bida brokers, the *Etsu Dilali*, who again plays the part of an agent of the king in all matters concerning commerce and trade in the capital.

[1] The organization of the Bida craft-guilds will be described in more detail in Chapter xiv.

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We shall see later that the explanation of this incorporation of artisans and brokers in the rigid bureaucracy of the kingdom lies in the control which the state exercises over crafts and merchandise; only by means of a control of this kind could the head of this warlike state secure an unimpeded supply of the commodities that were vital to the court and the state: arms, clothes, and saddles for the soldiers, food for the huge capital, and the luxuries that were needed for the display of royal power and wealth. We find convincing evidence for this interpretation in the fact that the different crafts are not of equal standing. Some rank higher than others, and this grading is not correlated with economic success: the very prosperous butchers are last on this list, blacksmiths and brassmiths, on the other hand, head the list, 'for they are makers of arms'. Only the glass-makers, a strongly independent and important craft, stand aloof from this order of craft-guilds. This is a list of the craft-guilds in Bida, with the titles of the guild-heads, arranged in order of precedence. 565 554 467

The figure in brackets shows the number of *ekpã* in which they live. The titles of the guild-heads are given in italics.

Brassworkers (2): *Muku.*
Blacksmiths (3): *Dokodza.*
Carpenters and Builders (1): *Egbaba.*
Barber-Doctors (3): *Sokyara.*
Beadworkers (2): *Majĩ Lantana.*
Leatherworkers (scattered in the town): formerly *Majĩ Kimpa.*
Weavers (3): *Leshe, Majĩ, Ndakó.*
Butchers (3): *Sonfawa.*
Glass-makers (1): *Masagá.*

SLAVERY

The lowest in the complex order of social classes in Nupe are the slaves (*wuši*, as against *egi*, freeman, lit. child). But in this one class there are shades and distinctions of social status. Some slaves have risen to positions of wealth and influence. Others have remained menial workers in the households and on the farms of their masters. Pre-British Nupe numbered its slaves by the thousands. Twenty to thirty slaves was a moderate average for the household of a man of consequence. The prosperous craftsmen of Bida town, blacksmiths and weavers, always had slaves to work for them; even in villages one found households with one or two slaves. 567

The people of Nupe obtained their slaves by two methods: first, there were the slaves captured in the war, who became the property of the man to whose share in the booty they had fallen; and second, there were slaves bought in the markets of Bida.[1] The majority of the latter, it seems, were slaves sold by their captors—noblemen who had taken more slaves than they needed for their household. Slaves were also sold abroad, mostly to the south. Many Nupe men of rank were engaged in

[1] Lander reports that 200 slaves were on sale in the market of Rabá, the then capital of Nupe (op. cit. iii, p. 313).

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567 themselves; so were children born of a slave father who married a free woman, and also of a slave father who bought a girl slave for himself and married her. If, however, slave married slave, the marriage being arranged—i.e. the purchase price for the girl paid—by the slave's master, the children remained slaves. But these slaves in the second generation were slaves of a different kind. They were no longer called *wuzi*, but *mangi*, 'born as child' (i.e. as freeman). Though not really free they were exempted from many of the disabilities of slavery. The children of a *mangi* who married another *mangi* were themselves *mangi* slaves again. But a *mangi* could not be sold by his master, nor could he be maltreated or killed—in the latter case his parents could obtain legal [682] redress and would be paid the usual purchase price as 'blood-money'. At the death of a *mangi* only half of his property could be claimed by the master, the other half was inherited by his own family. The *mangi* also had family farms of their own, and were generally treated like full members of the household in everything except that they were not entitled to any share in the inheritance of their master's property. A *mangi* was brought up together with the children of the house, was given the same education, and, like the sons of the house, served in the mounted household troops. Many *mangi* would free themselves, or at least marry free women. But the names of these house-born slaves in- [551] variably betrayed their origin; for they were named by their masters, and given not the usual Nupe names but names made up of some well-known blessing formula, of the first words of a proverb, and such like, for example: Adetsua, from *a de 'tsu à sei Sokó*, 'there is no Lord but God'; Barsu, from *bar su ga Allah* (Hausa), 'leave them to God'.

567 It would be wrong, however, to assume that slavery in Nupe carried with it a stigma. True, the people of Bida still speak with contempt of 554 the 'pagans' and 'slaves' (the two terms are almost synonymous) into whose countries their fathers had carried their profitable raids. But, characteristically for Nupe, the stigma attaches to the humble status rather than to the misfortune of having been made a slave. It disappeared with the signs of success and prosperity, open to slaves as to anyone. The wretched slave who could never rise above a menial labourer had to bear the ignominy of his position. But in the case of the trusted slave in a noble household, and above all the successful, freed slave, the taint of slavery meant little more than, in their own words, 'luck of war'. Slaves who served in the houses of the high nobility did indeed share some of the splendour that surrounded the position of their masters. Able and faithful slaves were rewarded with the position of head slaves, overseers, bailiffs; their masters bestowed upon them rich presents and gifts of land—more land than they cared to work with their own hands, having become men of wealth and importance. Their masters bestowed upon them, above all, special titles, household ranks—the ubiquitous symbol of social rise in Nupe, which in this case obliterated even the last external symbol of slave status, the typical slave-names.

000 The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host

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The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their best of slaves: slaves for menial work—in the house and on the land—as well as the titled slaves of respected position. At the court this latter group of slaves formed the *ena wuši*, the Order of Court Slaves, a distinguished slave *élite* into which only few selected slaves could ever hope to be admitted. From the slaves captured in war those of high birth and status, chiefs or distinguished warriors, were selected for the court. These, too, were given ranks and titles, and could rise high in the service of the king. Theirs was the specialized service of officials and trusted royal agents. There were those who looked after the king's vast household; those who were in charge of the *Etsu* Nupe's no less imposing harem—both offices formerly entrusted to eunuchs.[1] Other slaves formed the king's bodyguard and police force; they were provincial delegates, tax collectors, trusted messengers, 'liaison officers' between the king's palace and the houses of his noblemen, and between the king and the army in the field. These slaves, like the other rank-holders, owned land and held fiefs. The Nupe kings in Rabá are said to have had only four titled court slaves; the slave ranks that existed at the court of Bida some thirty years ago (and the ranks still exist, although their holders are no longer slaves) were more than three times that number. Under *Etsu* Maliki, one of the last independent kings of Nupe, the most responsible state offices were taken from royal princes and *sarakiži* and entrusted to slaves. The position of the slaves as officers of state thus seems to have overshadowed more and more all other state ranks. Slave ranks were ranks bestowed *ad personam*, and ranks bestowed by the king personally, independent of the council of princes and ministers; and this gives us the explanation for their rise in importance. The offices linked with civil and military rank also depended to some extent on the personal favour of the king. But once appointed, these men stayed on, servants of the kingdom rather than of the king. They had behind them the claims of powerful families, they were exponents of political factions, and could play on that 'balance of power' between the dynasties. The slaves were personal servants in the full sense of the word. They were brought into office, not by family claims or promotion or a rigid rule of succession, but by personal appointment, selection, and trial. They were bound to the king's service generation after generation, by the strongest bond: their position of unfree men. It frequently happened that a new *Etsu* took over the slaves who had served his predecessor and left them their ranks and possessions. The rise of the slave officials at the Fulani court is the counterpart of the rise of a powerful, dangerously independent feudal nobility.

The following is a list of slave ranks held to-day, not by slaves, but by former slaves or descendants of slaves at the court of the *Etsu* Nupe. I have again tried to indicate in what manner they received their title, and also in certain cases the office which some of them are holding to-day in the Bida Town Administration. That so many of these former slaves

[1] In the pre-Fulani kingdom the court is said to have employed only a few slaves—all eunuchs. All slave ranks which have a *nda* in their title, meaning 'father' (ranks that are still in use—see attached chart), were originally ranks reserved for eunuchs.

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had been placed in responsible positions proves what I have said about the selection and rise of slave officials at the court of Bida.

Slave Ranks

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Present office*	*Biographical remarks*
Gabi Seidi	Kupa	'Officer of Liaison' between *Etsu* and District Officer	A rich slave who under *Etsu* Bello bought his title for £16.
Ndatwaki	Yagba	On the Bida Town Council	Father was *Ndatwaki* under *Etsu* Maliki; he himself received the same title under *Etsu* Bello.
Dzwodfu	,,	,, ,,	An hereditary slave title, first granted under *Etsu* Usman.
Ndamáraki	Bunu	,, ,,	Father was *Ndamáraki* under *Etsu* Masaba.
Sántali	Benu-Nupe	..	Grandfather was a slave of Usman Zaki; they remained slaves of this house.
Masántali	Yagba	..	Grandfather was a slave of *Etsu* Umaru Majigi; they remained slaves of this house.
Swajiyd'tsu	,,	..	Father held same slave rank.
Ndatódo	,,	..	Father held the same title and also title of *Ndamáraki*.
Manfáda	,,	..	Another slave title which has become hereditary in one house.
Sonmáži	Kusopa-Nupe	..	Id.
Ndádari	Nupe	..	Id.
Shangbo	Nupe from Rabá	..	Father was a *saraki* (*Somasũ*) of *Etsu* Majiya. He was made prisoner in the war and became a slave of *Etsu* Masaba.
(*Sarkin Dogari*	Hausa	Head of police force	To-day not regarded as slave title. Formerly bestowed on a personal slave of the ruling king.)

WAR

It will be understood that this description is based entirely on information and the historical recollections of informants. However, the wars that were fought in Nupe and by the Nupe are not so far distant that there are no longer eyewitnesses left, or people who have themselves borne arms in these wars. Thus information could be checked and cross-checked. For certain details I could, moreover, count on most authoritative informants, who had played a leading part in the last wars of the kingdom; the description of the military organization, for example, is based on information obtained from the late commander of the *élite* troops of Nupe, the king's bodyguard.

War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state. No warfare or organized fights occurred between the villages or tribal sections of the

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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

 632

'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and 651
tunga which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the [436] *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 [285] mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order 632
in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the 692
right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, 631
relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These 651
fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king 554
after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832–4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

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631 became too great. The towns or villages which were granted as such
651 personal fiefs could lie anywhere within the boundary of the kingdom, on the royal domains as well as in the areas held as office fiefs by *egba*. The
554 personal fiefs involved no legal or administrative authority, only the authority of levying an additional tax called *edugi* (small tax) over and above the royal tax, *edukó* (big tax), after the latter had been collected. There was no limitation to this additional tax, which must often have exploited the peasants ruthlessly. Yet I have also seen close personal attachment between villages and their lord still existing to-day, bearing witness to the existence of more friendly ties between feudal lord and tenants.

It is clearly impossible to state in more detail how this administrative
631 system worked, and especially how far the administrative and judicial
554 authority of the feudal delegate worked in harmony with the existing traditional authority vested in village chief and elders. Later on, I shall give more data about the working of this legal machinery. But it is easy to understand that the powerful feudal lord and his delegate could uphold political and legal authority by the very fact of their power and influence. They could, for example, secure redress or punishment where the village chief's limited power might be too weak to enforce judgement or arbitration. But this intervention might easily distort justice rather than further it. As aliens, never linked permanently with the people over whom they rule, the fief-holders were bad guardians of tribal law and traditional justice. This, in fact, reflects the fundamental conflict involved in the system of feudal administration. The feudal lords were officially responsible for the well-being of their subjects; they were agents of a central authority which was vitally interested in the maintenance of peace and order; they themselves, like their royal master, depended on the people of the fief for tax, supply of food, and supply of men for their armies and wars. But the connexion of fief with rank, involving as it did a change of the fief with every promotion, did not allow the mutual attachment between the feudal lord and his subjects to grow really strong and permanent—too strong and permanent for the safety of the king and the unity of the state. To balance the danger that might arise from a too firmly entrenched feudal lord, the kingdom had to risk the other danger of maladministration and discontent among the people on the fiefs.

642 This policy of preserving the balance of power between dynastic and
631 feudal interests which had to be re-established and readjusted with every change of régime is reflected in the many changes which the administration of the kingdom has undergone in the hundred years of Fulani rule. *Etsu* Masaba, intent on building up an enormous dynastic power, divided the whole of Beni and Kusopa country, town for town, among his sons and daughters and other followers as personal fiefs. There was no place in the kingdom, the Nupe say, which had not its private 'owner'. The Nupe nicknamed this generous king *ndã na ma gã na*, Father of Distributing. *Etsu* Umaru, who succeeded him, adopted the opposite policy in order to win the support of the native tribes against the feudal lords who had supported his predecessor. He abolished all private fiefs in

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lālemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
621 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
554 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyarā*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accor-
571 dance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpā*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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566 patron's family. If he has been accepted as *bara* by an influential feudal lord, he may hope to be rewarded with the grant of land or a sub-fief. A title, finally, bestowed by patron on client proclaims publicly the *bara*'s position as a henchman of a man of rank. These are the titles which are usually bestowed on *bara: Sonfada*, *Mižindadi*, *Tsowa*, *Tswanya*, *Tsadú*.[1]

566 In all these cases the benefit is mutual. The *bara* receives material support and possibly a rank; the patron gains servants, soldiers for the
554 contingent which he is to muster for the king's army, and followers and henchmen to add to his prestige. The patron will choose his clients and will not accept everyone. A young man of about 25, who had become a labourer, told me that he intended eventually to attach himself as *bara* to a certain nobleman, but he was as yet too young and no one wanted him. To have gathered around oneself a large number of *bara* and *egi kata* is the final, most undeniable, mark of success. Whenever you visit the house of a nobleman, at any time of the day, you will find him surrounded by some of his *bara* or *egi kata*: possibly they have just returned from an errand or have come to discuss important questions with him, or simply to pay their respects and share, as they regularly do, his meal.

566 Often the loyalty of clients to their patrons extends to the whole family of the *bara* and is transmitted from generation to generation. But loyalty and ambition may come into conflict. Sons may choose a new patron for themselves, hoping for increased benefits from the new association; or the *bara* himself may leave his own protector when the influence of the latter decreases and look for another more influential patron.

566 The *élite* of clients are the *bara* of the royal princes. Not only are they servants of masters who have ample land and sub-fiefs to bestow, but they may also rise, with their masters, to the highest positions and
554 become, some day, *bara* of a ruling king. These royal *bara* are almost equal in rank to the nobility of the officers of state. The *Etsu* Nupe has only two *bara*, the *Mižindadi* (lit. equal to major-domo) and *Sonfada* (lit. companion on travels—the present holder of this rank sits beside the chauffeur in the *Etsu*'s car), not counting the freed slaves who play to-day more or less the role of *bara*. But the lowest *saraki* titles which the *Etsu* may bestow on his favourites are nearer clientship than nobility proper. Social climbers, rich and ambitious men, could buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or the king: *Etsu* Saidu, the late Emir, sold the title of *Mižindadi* three times over. Wealth buying a serf's title—this is indeed a paradoxical result of a social system which, intent on promotion and social rise, turns even the humiliation of clientship into a vehicle for a social career.

566 The complex pattern of clientship and the various motives which make free men seek patronage are illustrated in the following list of *bara* who were in the service of the late *Shaba*.

[1] Political ranks are frequently distinguished from *bara* ranks using the same title by adding the suffix *-kó*, meaning great, or the word *tsu*, meaning 'of the king', e.g. *Sonfada* and *Sonfadokó*, *Soje* and *Sojetsu*.

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CHAPTER IX
THE POSITION OF THE WOMEN

RANKS AND OFFICES

It speaks for the consistency of the political system of Nupe that the position of the women, too, should be drawn into its orbit and even into the framework of official grades and ranks. Among the women of royal blood in pre-Fulani Nupe three women's ranks existed: *Nimwoye*, *Sagi*, and *Wogbo*. Precedence and succession in these three ranks corresponded to the succession in the three highest *gitsú* titles. At the court of ancient Nupe the titles were bestowed by the king on his mother or father's sister, elder sister, or daughter. The holder of the title had to be a *nyisagi gbahó*, a 'strong woman', that is, a woman of about 40–50 years. She had to be unmarried, or else her marriage would be formally dissolved on her appointment to the rank, and she would forthwith be regarded as unmarried. She lived, not in the house of her husband or father but in the *Etsu*'s own house. The Fulani adopted the first two ranks, abandoning, however, the condition of celibacy or nominal celibacy, and made the two daughters of Manko the first *Sagi* and *Nimwoye*. The two ranks have remained in the royal house of Nupe since then. After the split of the dynasty into three branches the women's ranks followed the new dynastic division, the title *Nimwoye* being assigned to the women of the royal house of Masaba, and the title *Sagi* being taken, in rotation, by the women of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman. This rule still holds good: the present *Sagi*, for example, is a sister of the late *Etsu* Bello of the house of Usman, and the *Sagi* before her was an elder sister of the *Shaba*, of the house of Umaru.

The women rank-holders occupied an extremely influential position at the court. They took part in the king's council, they could join in the war with their own troops of slaves and serfs, they held fiefs and owned land. Theirs was the position of 'kings over the women of Nupe'. Although these political prerogatives have disappeared, the position of authority vested in these women's ranks is unimpaired. All quarrels between women, especially women of the noble families, are brought before them; the women of Bida and the villages send them presents and receive counter-presents from them, much as is the custom between the noblemen of Nupe and their king. *Sagi* and *Nimwoye* are often the official representatives of the court at the family feasts of the Bida nobility. At the name-giving ceremony which was celebrated in the house of the *Shaba* in 1936 the *Sagi* came to bring presents and congratulations from the *Etsu*—an honour which was duly appreciated by all who were present.

Among the Bida women of low birth, the wives and daughters of commoners, we find another women's rank, *Sonya*.[1] She is, as the Nupe

[1] The Nupe word *Sonya* corresponds to the Hausa word (and the equivalent women's rank) *sarauniya*, lit. queen. *Sá* or *So* is a Nupe root meaning head or chief.

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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she 554 advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The [443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business [651] transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women', 662 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about 624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a 754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

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of the office of the village *Sagi* and to emphasize its harmless business side instead.

Thus we find that in many Nupe villages an efficient business-like head of the women has succeeded the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the old type. In other places, again, the people would not admit the magic significance of the woman's rank. Yet the strength of the belief, concealed though it may be, was shown in a witchcraft case which I happened to witness in Gbajibo, a small village on the Niger above Jebba. Here the *Sagi*, the very business-like head of the local women, was yet behind the public outcry against an alleged witch. The women much more than the men were leading in this persecution; they had been the first to ostracize the victim; and when I questioned them about their motives, they all referred me to the *Sagi*. Her own motive appeared to be jealousy of the other woman, the alleged witch, in whom she saw a dangerous rival, possibly even for the position of a *Sagi*.

The office of the *Sagi*, modern or traditional, is invariably a much-coveted one. Her moral hold over the women, as our example has shown, is complete. It is equally strong in the less sinister spheres of communal life: like the *Sonya* in Bida, the village *Sagi* advises the women, organizes women's work, arbitrates between them, and receives small presents from every business transaction which they carry through.

MARRIAGE AND STATUS

The ranks and offices already discussed all belong to married women. But we have seen that they represent forms of status which the women acquire in their own right, on the grounds of descent, or personal ability, or both, independent of their status as wives of men who occupy this or that social position. We shall see later that the same principle applies also to the status won by wealth. In particular the status by descent of the Nupe women is affected but little by marriage, i.e. by the social status of their husbands; in so far as it is so affected, this change is in the direction of social advancement. Women of low birth who marry above their status into the aristocracy can claim the status of their husbands; and women who marry beneath their station do not lose their status but raise their husbands to their own social level. The men will be allowed to share most of the social and political privileges of the class into which they marry. Two cases were reported to me in which the men could even acquire *saraki* ranks after marrying a woman of the *saraki* nobility. But even if the men are not admitted fully into the titled class, their children would always acquire the status of their mother. Daughters may thus inherit the status of their fathers, and both sons and daughters that of their mothers; husbands may be adopted into the social sphere of their wives and parents-in-law. This social regulation may seem surprising in an otherwise strongly patrilineal society. But this one-sided interpretation of the change of status that goes with marriage is not an expression of matrilineal kinship tendencies, nor of 'feminist' leanings in Nupe society (though we shall find ample evidence of these, too); rather it expresses political

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interests, deep-seated class sentiments, which cannot admit of a lowering of status in any one high-born. Yet if, owing to the rigid class system, marriage between the classes is thus turned into a potential instrument of social advancement, its utilization in this sense is also rigidly controlled.

For marriage in the aristocracy, especially in the royal nobility, is to a very large extent endogamous—'family marriage' as the Nupe call it. As the Nupe-Fulani regard themselves all as related, and as most families of the nobility are more or less closely related by marriage, practically all 'family marriages' of this kind are at the same time marriages within the ruling class. The Fulani in Nupe, moreover, following Mohammedan practice, encourage parallel cousin marriage (which is forbidden by the traditional marriage rules of the country) as well as cross-cousin marriage, and thus widen enormously the scope of 'family marriages', especially between descendants in the male line. Family marriage in Nupe, finally, is characterized by a much lower bride-price than that paid in ordinary exogamous marriage. This leads to the rather paradoxical situation, on which my informants invariably commented, that the wealthiest and proudest classes of the country favour 'cheap' marriage, while the humble commoners and peasants are committed mostly to a very high bride-price. The explanation is that the low bride-price in this case supplies an additional incentive for endogamous marriage—'class endogamous' marriage, as it were—and thus for the preservation of the social identity of the ruling classes (as well as, incidentally, a strengthening of their group solidarity).[1]

Indeed the counterpart of the incentive of a low bride-price in 'class endogamous' marriages is the 'deterrent' of an exceptionally high bride-price demanded in the case of marriages between the classes, i.e. between men of the *tálaka* class and girls or women of the nobility. Such cases are accordingly rare. Yet we may note that if a chance of such marriage exists, if the girl loved the man sufficiently to overlook the difference in social status, the high bride-price alone proves no obstacle. For friends and relations would join forces to find the money and to enable the ambitious suitor to make his luck by this advantageous marriage. The benefits of his new position would be considered sufficient promise of an eventual ample gratification. One of my Bida servants was an example: the son of a commoner, he had succeeded in winning the love of the daughter of a very high *saraki* and eventually, after considerable difficulties, in marrying her with money borrowed from friends and relations.

The endogamous marriage rules only ensure that the women of the ruling classes should marry within the class; they do not attempt to exclude the less dangerous form of dilution implied in the marriages of the men to women from other classes and strata. Indeed, the polygamous nature of marriage in Nupe, which forces the men to seek wives

[1] One of my informants who belonged to the *saraki* class even went so far as to explain the whole principle of having a different bride-price for 'family' and 'outside' marriages as a political measure taken by the *saraki* and Fulani nobility with the purpose of preventing commoners from marrying into their class. Though incorrect as regards the facts, this interpretation is significant as an expression of the dominant class sentiments.

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from outside their social group, precludes an application of 'class endogamy' in this sense. Marriage of this kind between the strata has reached enormous dimensions. And this shows, incidentally, that the rule of 'class endogamy' serves, even in the case of the Fulani rulers, the interest only of a social identity and solidarity and not, as one might perhaps assume, of racial purity.

POLYGAMY AND SEX MORALITY

In Nupe as in most polygamous societies in which marriage is by bride-price (and by high bride-price at that) the number of wives a man possesses becomes an infallible index of wealth and status. In the peasant districts, where we find comparatively little inequality of wealth, the range of polygamy also varies in narrow limits. Genealogies which I collected in the two Nupe villages Doko and Kutigi show the following range of polygamy (the figures refer to middle-aged or old men, both of the living and previous generation):

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	68	96	20	11	1	1	179

The average is thus 2.1 wives per man.[1] To quote a similar average for Bida would be meaningless: the great inequality of wealth and status is reflected in the widely varying range of polygamy. In the houses of the *talakaži*, the 'poor ones', monogamy is the rule; in the 'middle class' the conditions are much the same as in the peasant districts; but as regards the men of substance and rank, though it would be correct to say that they have rarely less than four wives, the upper limits of their polygamy are very fluid, and cannot even be ascertained with any accuracy. Popular notions attribute to certain royal princes and, above all, to the kings of Nupe, numbers of wives varying between 100 and 200. Even the late *Etsu* Saidu is reported to have had sixty wives. Discretion forbade any direct inquiries. Besides, the vagueness in the legal definition of 'wife' and 'marriage' in these cases would have detracted from the value of the information. According to Mohammedan law a man may have four wives only. But this rule is easily circumvented by limiting the number of legal wives whom one marries with religious rites to four (or four at a time), and relegating the rest to the position of mere concubines. In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found

[1] The range of polygamy varies to some extent locally. In Mokwa, for example, I obtained the following figures:

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	44	28	3	3	..	..	60

The average is, again, 2 wives per man.

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difference in quality and value to a much greater extent, namely, fruit-bearing trees. 423 621

In most districts the chief has a special title to certain economically valuable fruit trees wherever they grow, on vacant land or on people's farms. In Doko and Shebe this special chief's tree is the locust-bean, in Kutigi and Wuna the oil-palm. In Mokwa there exists another regulation, namely, that all shea-nut and locust-bean trees inside the town belong to the chief, while the trees outside are the full property of the man on whose ground they stand. Also there is in many places the general rule that no fruit tree on village land may be cut down without the special permission of the chief. Sometimes family heads exercise a restricted right to the 'chief's trees' growing on their land, i.e. they return two-fifths of the crop to the chief and keep the rest. But the chief may also grant the full possession of these trees as a separate right; thus he bestows the property of a certain number of valuable trees on an individual—young or old—as a recognition of higher civic status, together with the promotion to rank and title. The right to the trees, coupled with the rank, remains the property of the 'house', conditional upon the renewal of the appointment (to the same or a similar rank) after the death of each holder.[1] The shea-nut trees—to-day of considerable commercial importance—occupy everywhere in Nupe a special position. The trees on vacant land (virgin village land or no-man's-land) are common property. The women who collect the fruit go out in small parties and share the crop among them. The shea-nut trees on occupied farm-land belong to the owner of the farm.[2] In either case the exploitation of the crop is the exclusive prerogative of the women. [554] [562]

A few words may be given to a special variety of village land, the plots that are situated in the village itself, round the compounds and between the village *efu*. This land is owned by the people who live in the compounds adjoining the plots. Its inheritance and apportionment is ruled by the same regulations as the inheritance and apportionment of the houses themselves and will best be discussed in a later section. The land inside village and town differs only in one respect from the village land without: it is never left uncultivated. Manured as it is by the refuse from the houses it can be used continuously without the necessity of being left fallow for a period. If the owner of such plots leaves the village or the town and does not return for some time, leaving no one behind (which has happened frequently in Bida during the last twenty years), the neighbours will use the farm-plots; they are always ready,

[1] A certain complication arises when the modern official Village Head is not identical with the traditional chief, for the former may assume control over the land only, not over trees—he may indeed not possess any 'chief's trees' himself, at least not at the time of his appointment. There is no evidence as yet to show how this contradiction will be solved in the course of time—except an indirect evidence to be mentioned presently (see p. 189, n. 2), which tends to show that this separation of land- and tree-rights is allowed to last for several generations.

[2] The facts mentioned here will correct the statement made by some students of West African agriculture, that 'shea-nut trees are generally regarded as entirely common property' (O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, *West African Agriculture*, 1933, p. 27).

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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

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561 working party follow the musicians, the rest meet later out on the farm.
476 When all have assembled the young men start work. They work in a
241 group of ten or twelve, starting on the same side of the field, leaving plenty of space between each other. Everyone is working his own ridge and, having finished one, he turns to the next with hardly any pause. The drummers and flute-players walk alongside the field abreast of the workers. Older men stand at the side, watching, criticizing, commenting. Often you can hear them call one of the workers by name, exhorting him to ever greater efforts, or shouting impatiently: 'Quicker, quicker!' When one field is finished some of the young men, the captains of the age-grade association among them, will execute a short dance, balancing their heavy hoes in the air and heavily stamping on the tilled field, while the drummers are arrayed behind them, beating the rhythm of the age-grade *take*.[1] Then workers and audience—and every *egbe* attracts a large audience—move on to another field, while some of the older men may stay behind to sow the newly tilled plot. On another occasion I saw the young men working in two groups of about equal strength, each under its own leader—one of the captains of the age-grade association. The groups started on opposite ends of the field, working towards each other. Now and again a worker would get up, survey with one glance the work which his group had been doing, and cry out in a long high-pitched yell; others were shouting with deep hoarse voices at every stroke of their hoe. The speed with which they worked, the whole atmosphere of the *egbe*—the constant drumming, the shouts from the audience—had something deeply exciting, almost feverish. I have seen a team of fifteen young men, the oldest between 19 and 20, the youngest 14, clear and till a farm-plot of one acre in two and a half hours.[2]
561 The *egbe* work still more than *efakó* work is animated by an intense spirit
476 of competition. The worker who has quickly finished his ridges will
241 stand up and look round, proudly showing off his splendid work; he will chaff his fellow workers about their clumsy progress, their crooked
● 554 ridges; he executes a little dance, singing, and shaking his hoe to show how leisurely he can work and still beat the others. When all the work is finished the whole party, musicians, workers, and onlookers, repair to the house of the owner of the farm. Here the feast which concludes the *egbe* is celebrated with plenty of food, corn-beer, and dancing, and much boasting and prancing of the young men, who are the heroes of the occasion. Nor is their boasting and prancing without significance. In the village communities where the traditional age-grade system is still practised, one of the important side-issues of the *egbe* is that it represents a regular test in which the young men establish their qualification as farmers. From *egbe* to *egbe*, every year, their skill and their achievements are watched, compared, and judged by the older people. In the last *egbe* of the season, or some other outstanding *egbe* (e.g. on the farm of the chief),[3] the results of this competition are made known and the young

[1] See p. 395.
[2] In another case I saw six young men clearing a densely overgrown bush-plot for yam-cultivation of about a third of an acre in one hour.
[3] An *egbe* of this kind near Bida at which new titles were bestowed was

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561 farmer who did best is given by his age-grade association the title *Sode*,
476 the second highest title that can be bestowed on young men. A man who
241 is once made *Sode* keeps his rank until some other claimant snatches the
554 title from him, or if he had no competitors, until he joins the 'old men' and retires from the arena of the *egbe*. In the urbanized age-grade associations of Bida this title and the whole usage have disappeared. In other large places which follow Bida fashion, the title *Sode*, though still in existence, has become a title of minor importance, a long way down the list of age-grade ranks.

241 The primary advantage of collective farm-work lies evidently in the
476 time-saving which it makes possible. The second weeding, for example, which normally takes from five to ten days, can be done by *egbe* in one day. But this valuable help must be paid for. The cost of an *egbe* of from fifteen to twenty workers—the cost of food and drink for the guests and the pay of drummers and musicians—is between 6*s*. and 8*s*. *Egbe* work, then, implies a calculation of investment and return, cost and profit. To-day, farmers try to lower the cost of *egbe*. In an *egbe* near Bida (the *egbe* just described, in which the workers were grouped in two teams) the owner of the farm contributed music and food for thirty people, but no beer or palm-wine. The fare was simple—no meat or fish—but plentiful: porridge cooked in palm-oil for the men, half a bowl per head (1 lb.), and corn-gruel for the women. This cheap *egbe* cost only 4*s*. yet proved still sufficiently attractive to make a large group of workers attend.

Yet there is one element of 'profit' in this calculation which cannot be put down in shillings and pence, and which is of utmost sociological significance. *Egbe* work is performed only on family farms, i.e. on the farms of family heads and old men in general. Younger people, whether they still work under the family head or have made themselves independent, are not entitled to the help of the *egbe*. Thus the *egbe* provides a twofold balance, in favour of the old men who cannot work as efficiently as the young, and in favour of the sociological head of the family group who, though perhaps no longer able to command the services of a large body of co-workers, can still command the assistance of collective farm-work.[1] How real this balance is was illustrated in the example given before (p. 244) of an old man, the family head, cultivating fields equal in size and yield to the fields worked by his two adult sons. With the splitting-up of families and the reduction of the *efakó* group, with the disappearance, that is, of the clear-cut distinction between family and individual farms, the significance of the *egbe*, too, must weaken. Information gained from a large number of independent witnesses testifies to the gradual loss of importance of *egbe* work in Nupe productive life. Once practised regularly on every farm it has now been

performed on the new experimental farm of the Agricultural Department which was tilled in collective work.

[1] Recognition of this privileged position of the sociological head of the group in a wider sense is expressed in the traditional rule, still valid in most peasant communities in Nupe, that the first *egbe* of the season is performed on the chief's land.

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one piece of

cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material 443
is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* 435
a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the 434
cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold
for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a
profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing 294
together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full- 443
length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into
caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) 435
each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five 434
days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*,
are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of
the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.*
and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last
kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand,
is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, [554]
my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for
trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order
to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed- 286
cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material
costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth 435
that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a 434
cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of sup- 288
porting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group prac- 592
tised a little farm-work as *bucd*. The family head did not join in this
additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take 467
part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
735 procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other
558 household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

426 Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for
735 which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

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trained, slave; for a pawn, with his restricted usefulness, one might have to pay more than twice the amount. There is no doubt, then, that the institution of pawning represented not only a profit-making, 'capitalist' investment, but also, to some extent, a 'humanitarian' duty linked with status and prestige, a crude attempt at alleviating the hardships involved in the unequal distribution of wealth. Well-educated Nupe men, themselves members of the wealthier classes, with whom I discussed pawning, even went so far as to explain pawning (at least on a moderate scale) as an institution of considerable educational value enabling the sons of the poor to study farm-work and husbandry in the houses of prosperous and enterprising men. They would admit drawbacks only in the excessive practice of pawning, which, they maintained, was a recent development, brought about by rising prices and rising cost of living. These drawbacks, as they saw them, were that with the increase in their numbers, the pawns, many of whom frequently worked together in the same household, grew lazy and irresponsible, and showed openly their resentment at having to work for strange masters. The complaints of my informants were thus that in the combination of material and moral rewards which the people of wealth and status expected from the institute of pawning, the material rewards had completely to give place to moral rewards.

A similar combination of material returns from invested wealth with benefits of a more abstract order—status and prestige—is also characteristic of the institution of clientship (already explained in Chap. VIII). The share of the 'abstract' benefits becomes larger the closer we approach forms of expenditure and investment bound up with social status: display of wealth in household arrangements, festivities, the equipment of one's retinue, and so forth. To this and similar questions we shall return later.

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunni*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase 556 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of 554 wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the 595 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of 554 Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more 565 personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the 484 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

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rulers, with whom they stay as honoured guests, and whom they will repay, one day, by similar hospitality extended to their young relations. (I have mentioned, in a different context, how I met two princes from Sokoto whose Grand Tour had taken them to the court of the *Etsu* Nupe in Bida.) The noble tourists enjoy their travels and enjoy—as they put it—'seeing the world'. But this incentive of travelling for travelling's sake with which their education and cultural background inculcate them also serves, indirectly, the political purpose of fostering personal contacts and ties of friendship between the ruling families of Nigeria and, more specially, the widespread Fulani empire.

We must now ask ourselves to what extent these wants and incentives apply to the society at large and determine (more or less) the economic decisions of the people. We must ask, more particularly, whether there do not exist 'upper limits' by which the economic ambitions of the various classes are bounded—whether by choice or of necessity. Such limits exist in the form of objects and values which have come to be regarded as fixed symbols of political status and which, like status itself, are excluded from free economic choice, being attainable only by the ladder of social promotion. As fixed symbols of status, much as a uniform or decoration in our society, the glazed turban of the nobility, or the right to carry a silver sword, cannot be coveted as such. This limitation has also been accepted with respect to the recent innovation, the clock in the glass case carried by the body-servant of a noble master: the people outside the ranks of the nobility have not attempted—as well they might—to possess themselves of this new emblem of rank.

But though promotion to political status and acquisition of its paraphernalia represent things that 'cannot be bought' (we shall discuss certain exceptions later), most of the features characteristic of the social life on these more exalted planes are, in theory, of the nature of universal economic wants. Beautiful clothes, costly turbans, and the possession of a horse are widely desired and can be acquired by anyone who can afford the expense. Even wants which are so far beyond the means or labour which commoners and peasants can muster that for this reason alone they seem unlikely to become concrete ambitions outside the *élite* of the country, represent yet common wants and ideals. Thus we find the ornate high-gabled square or round entrance hut which is typical of the large houses of the Bida nobility also in certain villages, put up by chiefs or prosperous family heads. Beautifully ornamented houses of a more modest type, moreover, are found everywhere, in every section or stratum of the population. Now, one of the most convincing proofs of the universality of these economic wants is the absence of all unfavourable comments, especially in the form of ridicule, with respect to individuals reaching out for goals not normally attained in their station of life. This is a significant illustration: in the small village of Doko I observed one house built in an unusually sumptuous style—with coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the walls of the *katamba*. It belonged to a musician, an ordinary 'commoner', who had been very successful in his profession. The people who told me about the house and its owner admitted that he was neither a titled elder nor in any way

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511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he should have built himself such a pretentious house. We shall also hear 554 later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale polygamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other 554 classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status. 595 Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they express the effectiveness of this incentive.[1]

We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog- 511 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these 554 demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been 574 adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly, they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer investigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of 461 the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest' borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept. In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time represents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe, as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid. The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure, members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers, craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the spreading of the Mallam profession.

[1] It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such questions of historical truth.

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respects: not only in the productive arrangements which, in these circumstances, would no longer supply the ritual beverage as a matter of course, but also in the psychological attitude, which would have to admit a ritual beverage largely emptied of what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'social value', i.e. which would be nothing but a ritual beverage, completely removed from the habits of ordinary life. The village dance, again, is an expression of group co-operation and coactivity in the recreational sphere. Like the traditional occasions themselves on which it is performed—kinship feasts, *egbe* work, religious ceremonies, and so forth—the dance mobilizes and intensifies group sentiments. We might even go so far as to say that the unitary nature of the group which is thus mobilized forbids a division into neutral performer and aloof lookers-on. The correlation between professionalized performance and differentiation within the group is indeed clearly visible in Bida. An aloof aesthetic appreciation of professional dancers and musicians appears to represent the only form of entertainment acceptable to a society in which class prejudices and motives of status and prestige dominate all gatherings and festivities. Class prejudice has fostered a conception of dignity set against public exhibitions of this kind. The explanation is, I believe, that it would obliterate, even though only temporarily, the demarcation of rank and status. It is, in fact, quite inconceivable for a man of status to join in a dance, even in his own house, for example, at a family feast—to dance, that is, together with, and in front of, people who must invariably include persons of lesser station. Yet in the villages old men, even titled elders, commonly join in the dances of the younger folk, without danger to their dignity. To assimilate, then, the village dance to the performances which appeal to the 'sophisticated' people of Bida would mean assimilating the complete social organization.

For the sake of the theoretical argument I have stated the case of this negative form of culture contact a little more strongly than is warranted by actual conditions. Throughout this book we have found evidence of the gradual closing of the rift, and of the advancing assimilation even in these domains of culture. But indeed our argument is supported by this development. For the assimilation does not advance by the narrow channels of confined, specific, cultural changes. Rather these changes are carried by the tide of a far-reaching cultural adjustment which is transforming the whole productive system and the organization of labour as well as the social life at large in the Nupe village. The breaking up of the family labour-unit, and the appearance, in the country, of professional Bida musicians as spokesmen of what I have called the 'propaganda for the kingdom', are two convincing instances.

WEALTH AND STATUS

Hitherto we have been using the terms 'status' and 'prestige' as meaning one and the same thing. It becomes important now to distinguish between them. By 'status' we understand a more or less fixed place on the social ladder; 'prestige' represents a more fluid form of social recognition, gained by certain services or deeds in accordance with the

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556 accepted code of society. Status in Nupe is determined by descent or
554 formal promotion to rank and office. One of the accepted and most important means by which prestige can be gained is wealth. This raises the question of the closeness of the relation between status, and prestige gained through wealth. In other words, we must ask to what extent prestige gained through wealth tends to facilitate the attainment of status, and may even come to be regarded as its equivalent, or, conversely, to what extent high social status can be reached and maintained without adequate financial support.

556 Under traditional conditions social status and wealth could hardly
554 become separated as political rank implied far-reaching economic privileges—the acquisition of fiefs and land, the chances of booty, profits
565 from slave-trade, and so forth. Even assuming that considerable wealth could be accumulated also by groups outside the recognized social *élite*, such as traders and craftsmen, it is clear that their highest income could not rival the resources vested in a privileged political position. In present-day Nupe traditional political ranks and wealth are no longer inseparably linked. High social status does not invariably guarantee the demands of prestige also. The members of the *élite*, no longer in a position to combine the satisfaction of the more concrete wants with that of the demands of prestige, will have to choose between the different forms of expenditure. Yet here we find, rather surprisingly, that the expenses for the sake of prestige can be very considerably reduced without affecting the conception of status. The fixed symbols of status, the glazed turban and the silver sword, are either comparatively cheap or are heirlooms. The house, also inherited, may have to be left in disrepair; but its layout would still betray the status of its owner. Polygamy can be maintained to a certain extent thanks to the practice of marriage in the family, with low bride-price, which is customary among the *élite*. Horses, new dresses, ornaments, lavish hospitality—they all have to go. But travelling and leisure need not disappear. The former is satisfied by claiming hospitality from relatives or friends in distant parts, or even from social inferiors, who would not think of refusing such flattering requests. The latter manifests itself in the choice of profession of impecunious noblemen: very few have taken to farming or tried to learn a craft; theirs are mostly the unskilled 'free' professions of the leisured class. Thus even on the decline, the social *élite* secures the satisfaction of certain wants which to the lower orders of the society are permanently unattainable. Nupe society built up a strong defence of the prerogatives of status in the form of class-obligations and the utilization of inheritance. With its help the social *élite* of the country can hope to weather at least temporary difficulties and set-backs.

That this defence of class prerogatives has not yet lost its strength is evident in the hesitant attitude of the people towards accepting the new evaluation of wealth as independent of traditional status. The issue is by no means clear; it is confused by various concomitant factors, specially by the introduction of the new official ranks and positions under the N.A. some of which are vested in the old ruling class, while others have been bestowed on 'new men' from outside the traditional *élite*. But

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there is convincing evidence to show that high social status still attaches to traditional ranks, though they may no longer command their former financial reward, rather than to wealth alone. Evidently this is only a transitional solution. In a society in which high status is so closely identified with a definite standard of living the separation of the two cannot be maintained indefinitely, at least not without some radical change in the whole concept of the *élite*. Theoretically, had their ranks not been divided by the appointment of some of their members to modern official posts, the Nupe aristocracy could have chosen the diehard solution of reinterpreting the whole concept of status and making it independent of economic advantages. As it is, the old *élite* must either win back its economic supremacy (which is impossible, though the attempts have never been given up), or else admit the new nobility of wealth into its ranks. We can observe this new conception taking shape. The respect for the traditional values is only strong enough to maintain an external continuity—the continuity of the symbols of status. And the 'new men' are the first to submit to this rule which allows them to legitimatize their position: they buy the titles which are the only passports to acceptance among the social *élite*. Here then, we have a final, and most modern, use of capital investment, for the sake of social advancement in its purely abstract and symbolic form.

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456 request to be considered out of his turn. He can thus put his hands at once on a sum of money for which, normally, he would have had to save for weeks or months. In this, then, lies the benefit of the *dashi*. The administration of the *dashi* association is entrusted to a man of good reputation, for example, a well-known trader or the head of a craft-guild. People who decide to form a *dashi* request such a man to undertake its organization. He will summon the first, and only, general meeting of the group, at which all the important points are settled, and afterwards arrange all matters on his own. People who learn from neighbours or friends that a certain *dashi* is being formed are, up to the date of the first subscription, free to join it; after that, while the *dashi* is running, no new members are accepted. The 'chairman' of the association, the *Etsu Dashi* (King of the *dashi*) as the Nupe call him, is responsible for the collection of the subscriptions and the regular paying out of the fund. He does not himself pay into it, nor does he receive any money payment for his trouble. He is recompensed by being allowed to borrow from the fund occasionally for himself and his own business provided that the general arrangement on which the group had agreed, and the duration of the *dashi*, are not altered. Sometimes he also receives gifts from members who desire an early share without being able to show serious reasons for this request. When money is needed, for example, for a funeral, in the case of illness, or for the payment of bride-price, no gifts or bribes are necessary to secure immediate consideration. *Dashi* chairmen who have the reputation of being good organizers are in great demand, and may be continuously engaged in organizing and supervising *dashi* associations, often several at the same time. Women are regarded as specially able organizers: one of the most successful *dashi* 'chairmen' I met in Bida was a woman; she was actually living in Doko, where she had lived since her marriage, but organized a *dashi* in Bida, sending her messenger, a young girl, every Friday into Bida to collect the subscriptions.

Although the benefits of the *dashi* embrace every variety of risk and expense, its practice is limited to the professions which depend on regular money earnings and money investments. It is practised by traders and brokers, both men and women, by certain groups of craftsmen, the wives of farmers, canoe-men (who are enabled to buy their canoes with the help of the *dashi*), labourers, and officials. The schoolboys in Bida Middle School have a little 'pocket-money' *dashi* of their own, the subscription being 1*d*., paid every Friday. The farmers, although familiar with the *dashi*, do not practise it, nor have they apparently ever done so. Clearly their stores of produce are regarded as sufficient reserve, and their labour organization as sufficient 'insurance'.

456 554 The number of members and the amount of the subscription vary widely. The sharp distinctions of social and economic stratification are visible also in the organization of the *dashi*. A well-to-do trader or nobleman would never join one of the petty *dashi* associations of small craftsmen or tradesmen in which the contribution is a few pennies. They would form a small *dashi* of their own, with a high subscription, even if they have to be content with five members only. During my stay

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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3*d.*: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4*d.* weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by N.A. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10*s.* per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7*s.* 6*d.* per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years.

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8*s.* and 9*s.* from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions.

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance —borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of

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CHAPTER XXII

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

871 As education in the widest sense must be described all efforts, organized or otherwise, which tend to impart to individuals habitual forms of acting and thinking. Understood in this sense, every social institution involves educational activities by means of which individuals are led to acquire the behaviour-patterns that make up the institution. Thus our description of economic life has involved the description of certain educational techniques—the training in productive methods, the imparting of economic knowledge, or of concepts of property and wealth. But most societies also operate with more formalized methods of education, specific educational institutions which make it their business to train the rising generation in forms of acting and thinking regarded as essential by the society. We shall deal in this chapter with these formalized educational institutions, of which there are two in Nupe: the institution of the Koran school, concerned with Mohammedan religious teaching, and the institution of age-grade associations. The shortest definition of an educational institution is by the 'type' which it is meant to produce. In this sense we can say that Mohammedan religious education produces the Mallam, the Mohammedan scholar, and the age-grade associations the *zoon politikon* as understood in Nupe. We shall see that in certain respects both types of education can be identified with motives and aims underlying the political system, and thus with institutions devoted to what I have called in the heading of this chapter 'Education for Citizenship'.

MALLAM SCHOOLS

814 875 554 There are many degrees and varieties of Mohammedan learning. The title 'Mallam'—*mân* in Nupe—which one encounters so often among the Nupe, is by no means a safe guide. For the man who has gone through a few years' study of the Koran, having learned by heart a few *sura*; the sand-diviner or charm-seller who writes out verses from the Koran and sells them as amulets; the man who has acquired real learning and scholarship, and who can read and write in Arabic and possibly in Hausa—they all are called Mallam. Though the title is used indiscriminately, no Nupe ignores the essential difference between scholarship and the thin veneer of semi-learning. The Nupe distinguish two grades of learning: the lower grade is the study of the Koran (*kurani*), which consists mostly in the memorizing of prayers and whole pages and chapters from the Koran; the higher grade is called *kpikpe*, knowledge, or *litafi* (Hausa), book, and consists in the study of Arabic and the careful reading of the Koran and the better-known commentaries. The most advanced scholars would study, in addition to these books, also the historical records of the Nigerian Emirates which have been compiled (in Hausa, written in Arabic script) by scholars of former days. Only a student of 'knowledge' can claim to be a 'real' Mallam. While there are

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hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaka*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katũ*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe.

The Mallams are, above all, teachers. They teach both children and adults, the former the Koran and the latter 'knowledge'. Every Mallam may, besides, be called in to perform a marriage ceremony or to officiate at a funeral—services for which they are remunerated according to their status and reputation. A few are well-to-do and own land, which is worked by their sons and pupils or, in some cases, by wage-labour. But most Mallams practise, in addition to teaching, some other occupation, which may or may not be associated with their scholarly profession, to supplement the meagre income of a Koran teacher. Some write out and illuminate pages of the Koran, or copy Arabic manuscripts, for sale. You can buy a sheet of this sort, very beautifully illuminated, for 5*d.* on the Bida market; more ambitious scribes would sell a whole copy of the Koran and receive for it—the work of five months—£1. Students of 'knowledge' eagerly buy these copies and use them in their studies. Other Mallams, again, embroider gowns, make straw hats or saddle-cloths, or do tailoring.

The size and standard of the Koran schools varies as widely as the status and standard of learning of the Mallams. You find 'schools' with two little boys for pupils, and these close relations of the teacher; and you find others—the schools of famous Bida scholars—the classrooms of which (as a rule the *katamba* in the Mallam's house) are crowded with pupils. The teachers are very jealous of the reputation of their school. When I was a regular visitor to Bida Koran schools the Mallam of one which I had not yet visited came to me complaining that I had left out his school, and quoted as reference a Bida Mallam of very high standing who was a special friend of mine. In the large Koran schools the Mallam himself teaches only the adult students of 'knowledge', while the elementary teaching is carried out by his sons or certain advanced pupils.

[1] Bida learning has a great reputation even outside Nupe; Mallams from Bida have been given important posts in other countries, and several Bida Koran teachers have established flourishing schools in Ilorin.

[2] One aspect of this spiritual advice is divining, which, as we have seen, plays an important part even in such political activities as the election of a high officer of state or the preparation for war.

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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working
565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran
555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan
875 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarúfuži*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

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them in advance. Shortly before the existing associations are dissolved 561
previous to their reorganization on a higher grade, the outgoing presi-
dents of the different grades appoint, as a last official act of their term of 369
office, one of the members of their group as '*Ndakotsu*-elect' of the next junior group, i.e. the group which, in the new term, will take the place of the outgoing group. The *Ndakotsu*-elect will then take charge of the organization or reorganization of the new *ena*, and also of the appointment of a captain for the new association.

In these age-grade associations which rise *en bloc* to higher grades there 561
is no gap between the termination of the old and the foundation of the new *ena*. The association which is about to be dissolved and promoted stages a last public appearance in a great feast, with music and dancing, to which all friends and relations are invited. A few days later the members of the *ena* meet again for the preliminary discussion in the house of the new *Ndakotsu*, for the distribution of the age-grade ranks which will be assigned to them in the new *ena*. When all ranks have been satisfactorily allotted the group arranges another large festivity, which is to announce publicly its reorganization and to inaugurate the new term. I had the good fortune to be in Kutigi in 1936, the year when the six years' term of the local *ena* came to an end and the general 'change-over' took place. It fell in the middle of March; the last public meeting of the old association was on the 7th of March, the session in the house of the *Ndakotsu* took place five days later, and the inaugurative meeting of the group in its new form as a senior grade on the 2nd of April.

Now, what are the qualifications for the position of a *Ndakotsu* and 561
Etsu, and according to what principles are the *ena* ranks distributed?
For the election of the *Ndakotsu* a well-established social position, good 554
reputation, intelligence, and also a pleasant nature and, if possible, an 369
open hand, are regarded as essential qualifications. A satisfactory financial position is essential because the *Ndakotsu* will be expected to entertain and to organize parties—and to do it in style. Most of these conditions also apply to the election of the group captain. The members of a newly founded Bida *ena* explained to me: 'We made Mohamadu our *Etsu* because he is a nice fellow. We all like him. He has good connexions; you see he is invited to the court; besides, he has plenty of money, and both his father and his mother are rich. He is also ready to spend it when we have a feast and want drummers and dancers.' On the other hand, a very ambitious young man who had been *Etsu* of an *ena* (of the second grade) and who hoped to be made *Etsu* again in a new, senior, association whose captain was resigning shortly, complained to me that his chances were slight, for he had not much money and could not afford the expenses which he would be expected to meet. It is implied in the nature of these qualifications that the *Etsu* is not always the oldest member in the group. In one *ena* which I analysed the *Etsu* was 20 when the *ena* started, and there were three members older than he. But as a rule he is of higher social position, and often better educated, than the rest of the members. Thus in a Bida *ena* which consisted almost entirely of tailors and embroiderers the captain was a weaver, the son of the Bida guild-head. In another group of a similar composition the

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561 captain was an expert cap-maker, who made the expensive, fashionable embroidered caps. And in a group the members of which came mostly 554 from the classes of the nobility, the captain was the son of a late Emir. 369 It has become the fashion for captains of Bida age-grade associations to adopt an additional, allegoric or symbolic, title, which would also give the *ena* its name. Bida associations compete with each other in the invention of high-sounding names, which should evince the refinement and selectness of the *ena*. Thus one *Etsu* was known as *Etsu Yimani*, 'King Faith', as the *ena* over which he presided prided itself of the piety of its members; another captain called himself *Etsu Hankuri*, 'King Forgiveness', for more or less the same reason; a third *Etsu Turu*, 'King of the Europeans', a title which was meant to bear witness to the fact that this *ena* was organized on 'European lines' (to be explained presently).

The financial qualifications and those of status are of less importance in the village, where inequality of wealth and status are much less strongly marked, although even in the village *ena* the captain may be of a somewhat higher social position than the rest of the members, e.g. the son or brother of a village elder of high rank. The symbolic names of age-grade associations are absent in the village, where age-grade associations are neither as numerous as in Bida nor as interested in advertising their refinement and selectness.

561 The allotment of ranks in a newly founded association of the youngest 554 grade is largely a formality—although the popularity and influence of the young boys among their age-mates will to some extent be taken into account. We have seen that these junior age-grades are generally regarded as representing a preparatory stage rather than a fully fledged *ena*. In the higher grades the distribution of ranks becomes much more serious. Change of rank during the lifetime of the *ena* occurs only when a member dies or withdraws prematurely, especially if he was holding one of the higher *ena* ranks, which must be represented. But when the *ena* terminates and the members form themselves into a new group, a complete reshuffle takes place. As the different grades use largely the same rank-system this redistribution of ranks at the end of an *ena* makes conspicuous the promotion, non-promotion, or degradation—as the case may be. These changes in the holding of *ena* ranks reflect faithfully the success or failure of individual members in the previous association, the capability shown in the performance of group activities, and the popularity enjoyed among comrades and superiors. The eager competition notwithstanding, the task of distributing ranks justly and to everybody's satisfaction does not, as a rule, take very long. I have seen these discussions carried through in one or two afternoons. But then, the general discussion is only a last, formal, step. Mostly, the two leaders of the group have decided the distribution at least of the more important ranks long before the first general meeting. The *Ndakotsu* of a prospective village *ena*, for example, knew a few months before the group was actually called into being exactly whom he was going to invest with the three highest ranks. As a rule the authority of captain and president is sufficiently strong to carry the vote. But instances of disagreement and

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long fruitless discussions also occur, both in town and village, and sometimes a compromise has to be effected by introducing a special title (with the word *Tsowa* before any rank, equivalent to 'vice-' or 'sub-'), which will satisfy a refractory member without upsetting the arrangement at large. Severe degradation, on the other hand, is rare, as it can be easily circumvented in these associations which are not compulsory, and cannot force members to accept their status. This is a typical instance: A very ambitious and vain young man of Bida who had held high ranks in previous *ena*, but was given a very low rank in a senior grade, resented this treatment as unjust; he could, however, do nothing except to show his disdain by disinteresting himself in the association, and staying away from all their meetings. Actually he never told me of his shameful treatment when we discussed his association with the *ena*; I learned of it only by chance when, examining a certain association, I came across his name on the list of members.

The village *ena* comprises one rank which can be won only in strict competition. We have spoken of this rank already (p. 250): it carries the title *Sode*, and is bestowed on the best farmer of the group. Sometimes there is also a second farmer's rank, won in the same way for which, rather incongruously, the title *Maiyaki*, 'Minister of War', has been chosen. These ranks are taken only in the highest and middle grade, and are won in open competition at the first of the more important *egbe* occasions of the season, frequently at the *egbe* performed on the farms of the village chief. Traditionally, the title *Sode* ranked next to that of group captain in importance and precedence. To-day it has been degraded to a lower place on the scale of ranks. Of course, neither the title nor the particular qualification for which it is bestowed is recognized in Bida. The rank of *Sode* is also the only rank that may change hands (at least in theory) during the term of the *ena*. Although this happens very rarely (I have not met with any actual instance), all people agree that if at one of the occasions of collective farm-work an appointed *Sode* proved himself to be inferior in skill to another member of the *ena*, he would have to surrender his title.

Age-grade ranks are largely copied from the political rank-system obtaining in the community to which the *ena* belongs. It is not a very exact copy—although the *ena* tends to arrange its ranks according to the order of precedence which they follow in the political hierarchy. In Bida the distinctions between the different classes of political ranks are not observed, and military and civil ranks, office titles and titles of the royal nobility, are bestowed indiscriminately. The village *ena* remains more faithful to the rank-system of the community, and would, for example, adopt its typical, possibly uncommon, titles of elders. But as the membership of the *ena*—especially of the junior grades—may be considerably larger than the number of titled village elders, ranks from outside the traditional rank-system may have to be introduced, preferably from the rank-system of the capital. The younger generation is indeed always ready and eager to adopt such innovations. Rank-systems of heterogeneous nature, and rather arbitrary precedence are the result. However, we must not forget that the rank-systems of many villages ar

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561 554 themselves similarly heterogeneous and arbitrary, including Bida titles among its traditional village ranks.

561 554 576 The system of precedence involved in *ena* ranks and grades is taken very seriously, and the rigid rules of etiquette which govern it are enacted with all solemnity. Much of the *ena* business takes place, as we shall see, within the single *ena*; but when members of different grades meet—for example, at family feasts in the house of a member, or at collective farm-work—submissive or condescending behaviour marks their relation towards each other. Members of a junior grade will never dance when members of senior grades are present, except with their special permission and at their request; in collective farm-work the junior grades work at the back of the team, at less important and less conspicuous tasks. Age-grade etiquette is even more emphatic within the individual association. At communal meals the 'subalterns' will wait till their superiors have eaten; at *ena* feasts subaltern and senior ranks will never dance at the same time; when greeting a superior, the age-grade member of lower rank will squat down and bend his head, exactly as prescribed for intercourse between superiors and inferiors in the social scale of 'real life'.

561 554 369 In the village *ena* it is only in general terms that the ranks indicate social position on the rank-scale of the association. In the town *ena* the ranks are sometimes chosen so as to indicate and do justice to the special gifts, or the special social position outside the *ena*, which characterize individual members. In this the organization of the town *ena* reflects the more highly differentiated social structure of urban society. Thus a Bida *ena*, composed largely of illiterate members, assigned to a young man who had been educated in the Government Middle School the title *Naibi*, a rank of the Mohammedan clergy which can be held only by scholars. The rank-list of another *ena* included the rank *Boroti*, lit. Head of the Bororó, its holder being the son of the late Emir's 'regent-delegate' for the Bororó Fulani. Some Bida age-grade ranks indicate a certain official capacity held by a member in the *ena*. Thus I found a rank *Dzufã* (lit. pocket) bestowed on a young man who acted as 'purser' of the group. All purchases and payments for *ena* purposes were made through him; when, for example, a member decided to give a party for the group he would place his money contribution in the hands of the *Etsu*, who would then hand it over to the 'purser' as the member responsible for financial arrangements. In one *ena* I found the rather curious rank *Mataushe* (Hausa, lit. 'the man who rubs', i.e. 'masseur'), by which name a certain slave or body-servant of the Nupe king was known whose special duty it was to massage the feet of his master. In like manner it was the duty of this 'office holder' in the age-grade association to massage the feet of his *Etsu* at meetings of the group when his master felt tired.

561 554 177 One group of ranks typical of the Bida *ena* deserves special attention, namely the ranks which are organized on 'European lines' and copy, not ranks and offices of Nupe society, but ranks, offices, and even names of Europeans with whom the Nupe had come into contact. Such titles are often amusing and even puzzling. In one *ena* the head of the group was

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in 561
the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), 554
Likita (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the
name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank 177
Borti (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the [576]
normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, 554
the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted,
forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. 561
Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and 177
achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and 154
forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tálaka* and *saraki* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world 369
of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real', 561
that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison 554
of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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369 and reality. The prototypes of *ena* ranks are all (at least theoretically)
561 within the reach of the individual members. Every one of the young
554 men who have gone through the *ena* may find when he reaches the suitable age that elimination by death or illness of senior relatives has singled him out for the position of a family head, and thus for a *nũsa* rank. Indeed, the promotion which accompanied his age-grade career will serve as an important qualification in the bestowal of the real rank by chiefs and elders. In certain respects all *ena* ranks of the senior grade retain their validity outside the *ena*, and after its expiry. The code of age-grade etiquette expires with the age-grade association. Not so the symbols of age-grade achievement: a man will be called by his rank rather than his name years after the *ena* has come to an end, often even for life—especially if he had held a very high rank. Men who have once been elected as *Etsu* or *Ndakotsu*, even when they are not, or not yet, appointed to a *nũsa* rank, will occupy a position of some distinction in their native village. Not only are they addressed and known by their *ena* titles, but village elders will pay attention to their opinion, and will entrust them with responsible tasks—in the organization of a ceremony, or of important collective work carried on outside the framework of the age-grade association. *Ena* ranks will never be confused with the political ranks of the village; they remain *tici nya ena*, ranks of the age-grade association. But although still only models of the 'real thing', they are 'real' in the sense that they indicate the varying qualification of individuals for access to the final social advancement. In the village *ena*, then, and similarly in the few age-grade associations in Bida which are recruited from the ruling classes, the *ena* rank-system anticipates a future social status; it introduces social concepts, and practises forms of conduct the effectiveness of which will be proved in adult life.

None of this is true of the average Bida association. Although here, again, the ranks attained in the senior grade accompany a man through life, they can claim no significance beyond that accorded to them by the rules of the game. A game indeed it is. These ranks let you enjoy fictitious contacts with a world of rank and power which you can never hope to enter in reality. Their upward trend, their incentive of competition, imply, not preparation or anticipation, but pretence, imitation—'substitution'.

561 Let us examine now the composition of the age-grade associations
571 with regard to the social groups and strata which they absorb. In
369 small villages a single age-grade association includes the youths of the whole village, and may even go beyond it, including the 'dependencies' of the village, the small *tunga* settlements, or linking a number of *tunga* settlements with one another. In the scattered hamlets round Bida the boys and young men of three to four hamlets join in a common *ena*. In very large villages (e.g. Kutigi) the age-grade is subdivided into a number of associations, each embracing one large, or two or three small, neighbouring, village *efu*. The age-grade itself, however, stretches across the whole village community, and the different associations conform to the same pattern with regard to the length of the term, and the time and year of the 'change-over' from grade to grade. In Bida the sub-

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one
369 of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida
561 *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan religion.

561 I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the *ena* a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known
[789] as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice as fast'.

561 Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional
574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*, *Etsu*, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food, drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the members of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited. At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred guests.

561 Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts
574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle, leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one
535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they
554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers.
369 There exist special *ena gbarifuši* dances, performed at these occasions: they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena. Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

[1] This song, which was composed by the *zanoro* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows.

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full-scale performance, while in the remaining cases there is a mere suggestion of the ritual.

This association of two fixed rituals with the funerary ceremonial presents several puzzling features. To begin with, the distribution of the two rituals among the thirteen ranks of Jebba is strikingly uneven, ten ranks being linked with the *gunnu* and only three with the *dzakó*. This, I was told, was not always so; but a more even distribution was upset in the course of time, when certain ranks originally linked with the *dzakó* were allowed to lapse because at the death of the incumbents there happened to be no suitable successors. This may be so; during my stay in Jebba, for example, three minor ranks of the *dzakó* group (not counted among the thirteen) were in fact vacant, and several more may have completely disappeared. Even so, the fact remains that no attempt was made to even out the inequality, though this would present no difficulty in this non-hereditary rank system. Furthermore, the dual division on the grounds of the suitable funerary ceremonial extends, not only to the men holding the respective ranks, but to their whole 'house' (i.e. lineage); thus the Jebba people generally class any individual or family as belonging either to the *gunnuciži* or *dzakociži* (the '*gunnu* people' or the '*dzakó* people'). This fits in oddly with a rank system based mainly on election and promotion; for it would imply that whole kin groups might have to change their religious affiliation if their titled head is promoted from a rank belonging to one section to a rank belonging to the other, or if a new family head is elected to a rank, say, of the *dzakó* group while his predecessor belonged to the *gunnu* section. Such promotions and elections do in fact occur and, as might be expected, entail considerable confusion. Most puzzling of all, this comprehensive division of the population into ritual moieties seems to have no relevant consequences, religious or otherwise. At least, the only consequence ascribed to it is both incongruous and obscure. It was claimed by most informants that the sons of *gunnuci* families alone were formerly allowed to join in the esoteric part of the *gunnu*, while no such rule applied to the *dzakó*.[1] One informant, an old man of high rank belonging to the *dzakó* section, maintained that that ritual was similarly exclusive. Since the rule concerning the *gunnu* is no longer in force (if it ever existed), it was impossible to verify the respective information; the *dzakó* ceremonial I witnessed certainly failed to

[1] If this were true it would obviously mean that boys and young men originally admitted to the secret part of the *gunnu* might be excluded from it when their family head changed his rank, or that boys not previously admitted might suddenly acquire the necessary qualifications. Either contingency is difficult to credit.

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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 796x
'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division. 766

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an 616
original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe com- 554
munities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular [184]
rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *žiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Ṣamaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements.

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be 796x
performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage.

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a 796x
disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and 773
brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the

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438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lah*),
241 and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work
476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by
[422] butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

[262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens
492] which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are
554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 236–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947; Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

643 The ndakó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuŋ* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

Status and Titles[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúši* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuŋ*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúši*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.

[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.

[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.

[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.

[9] See below, p. 35.

[10] See below, p. 36.

[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuŋ* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

565 the highest *gitsú* ranks go with the title. First appointment to a title and promotion to a higher one are granted by the king in council with the royal princes and other officers of state. Any able-bodied man of senior age, proved loyalty, and ability, and good health, of the Fulani families, is eligible for admission to a *gitsúlì* title, but favouritism, intrigue, and bribery also play a part, and the titles which a family has been able to accumulate are an indication of its influence at court and its favour with the ruling king. When a title-holder becomes incapable, through age or illness, of fulfilling his duties, a younger man is appointed, the former holder being styled " old *Kpotuŋ* " or whatever the title may be. Nobody with any kind of deformity can hold a title, since the system was originally based on service in war and offices vital to the safety of the state. Investiture takes place in the *Etsu*'s house, in the presence of the *Alkali* or *Liman*, a propitious day having first been selected by mallams or diviners. The candidate is addressed by the *Etsu*, then clothed in a cloak and embroidered gown by the *Alkali* who also places a turban on his head. After prayers in which all join, the new holder rides through the town accompanied by other title-holders, and dismounts to greet princes or heads of houses at their residences.

The second class is that to which the *ticiì* or *rowni* (office-holding nobility) belong. The name *rowni* means " turbans " and refers to the fact that the bestowal of such a title is symbolized by the gift of a turban from the king. There are three groups of *ticiì*, each of which is regarded as a sharply defined social order: the *sarakiì*, the *ena manì*, and the *ena wuì*. The *sarakiì* is a group of civil and military nobility consisting of town elders (*ena ndeji*) and war leaders (*ena 'kuŋ*). The second order, *ena manì*, comprises the mallams, the religious and judicial officials, such as the *Alkali* (judge), and the *Liman* (religious head), with their assistants and scribes. The third order, *ena wuì*, which is the lowest in rank but still possesses great influence, consists of the court slaves.

Many of the *saraki* titles are identical in name with those bestowed on the village elders, but the symbols of status, even when similar, refer to very different social contexts. *Saraki* titles are, like *gitsú* titles, generally granted by the *Etsu* in council with princes and other officers of state. Theoretically, at least, outsiders, even commoners, who have won his favour may be admitted to the ranks. Only a few of the higher titles, which have become the prerogatives of certain families, are hereditary. Several titles cannot be accumulated in a single family. They are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group; no other close relative can then claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his " house." To-day wealth and financial influence are important factors in gaining titles and the *saraki* group includes rich traders, as well as descendants of the old official nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe, and Nupe families who became partisans of the Fulani conquerors. These *sarakiì* received no salary, but were formerly granted land and slaves.

The *Ndeji* (" father of the town "), the head of the *ena ndeji*, is in charge of the affairs of Bida and the most powerful of the officers of state because he is closest to the king. At the head of the other civil title-holders he holds the daily council (*nkó*) with the king himself. The military titles (*ena 'kuŋ*) were formerly those of war leaders, the different titles being associated with special responsibilities.

565 517 554 The *ena manì*, the order of mallams, is " a class between classes, a mobile privileged intelligentsia." It includes the *Alkali*, the *Liman*, and their assistants. The detailed knowledge of Moslem law and literature and the specialized training required limits the number of candidates. But the offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* are sometimes hereditary, reflecting a tradition of learning in certain families, and political influence, for many eminent mallams are of Fulani stock. Mallams are highly esteemed by everyone and are placed about commoners even when they are without rank or title and have only little learning. They are allowed to marry daughters and sisters of higher born families.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 558 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 565 The most important women's titles are those of *nimwoye*, of the royal house of Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya*; she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not 554 reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 102–8, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 331–4, 147–50; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

factional splits within the hereditary ruling class. The recent history of the Kede contains indeed evidence of such rivalry between the Kede chief and his officers of State, or between different claimants to Kede rulership, and the ensuing division of the country into rival factions.[1] Attachment to one of the rival factions is also the only means by which the subject classes, the commoners with no rank and office, could exercise an indirect influence upon the political management of their country.

Administration of the 'Colonies'. The following chart illustrates the different grades in the rank list of Kede delegates. The ranks are given in order of precedence, each rank together with the district to which its holder is posted. The last five ranks on the list do not belong to members of the chief's family, but to that group of 'household' ranks which are also occasionally vested with emissaryships.

Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Egba	Elder brother's son (classific.)	Gbara	Kpatagban (right bank)
Sonfara	Son	Lives in Muregi, no emissaryship	(A newly introduced rank)
Kofiē	Younger brother (classific.)	Raba	Raba
Ekpā	Younger brother (classific.)	Kpacefu	—
Twadiya	Younger brother	Ketsogi	Ketsogi
Lefiti	Younger brother of *Egba*	Muregi, no emissaryship	Kpacefu
Liman Gyedwa	Distant relation	"	Kpasha (right bank)
Twadyagi	"	"	Kpasha

[1] Factional splits of this kind were occasionally utilized and fostered by outside Powers. Thus the Royal Niger Company supported an *Egba* in whom they found a valuable ally against the ruling *Kuta*, promising the former the chieftainship in return for the support of his faction. And once or twice the Emirs of Nupe backed the rival claimant of Kede chieftainship against the 'official' candidate.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

595 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
[554] the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable,
[272] (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Duff.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly* 634 554
Sodi	Younger brother	Katcha (unofficially)	Muregi, no emissaryship
Sheshi Kuta	Household-rank	Katcha	Eggan (right bank)
Tsowa Kuta	"	Muregi, no emissaryship	Egbagi (right bank)
Capa Kuta	"	"	Wunangi
Mijindadi Kuta	"	Jebba	Buka

The list shows that the assignment of posts to political ranks has undergone certain changes. They were due partly to the re-alignment of modern administrative divisions, which placed some of the former Kede areas outside of present-day Kede country (e.g. the Kede settlements on the right bank of the Niger). But partly also to changes in the economic and political importance of certain places and the corresponding change in their official 'appreciation'. Jebba and Katcha are illuminating examples. In Jebba we find a man of comparatively low rank in charge of the Kede community. He was posted there when Jebba was only just beginning to become the important place it is to-day. The *Mijindadi* is to-day a very old man, almost blind, and only nominally in charge of the 'colony'; he is generally expected to be succeeded by a high rank-holder whose rank would do justice to the importance of present-day Jebba. Katcha is, officially, in charge of the *Sheshi Kuta*, another 'household' rank; he is, however, unofficially assisted in his work by the *Sodi*, a relation of the *Kuta*, who also lives in Katcha and, in fact, only waits till this important Kede community will be handed to him as to the more suitable representative of the *Kuta*.

The dominion of the delegate varies in extent and composition. 634 His district (especially if he resides in one of the twin-villages) may comprise both tribal groups, Kede and non-Kede; or the boundary of his dominion may be drawn round the Kede settlement, while the 'native' village (which would be some distance from the Kede settlement or on the bank if the latter is on an island) belongs to the country and political district inland. In

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wúruwúru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsú* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wací*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaźi*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsúźi*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [557] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotú*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [732] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Liman*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *lerama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsúźi*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*, 'Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports ~~or~~ complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *ṣhawaciẓi ṣya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kũ*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejuhó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manẓi* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somaṣũ*, which is the old Nupe title.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 the *saraki* ranks and offices. Thus the present Chief *Alkali* of Bida as
555 well as his assistant is himself the son of an *Alkali*. The same few families
693 supply to-day the judges for the district courts in Nupe and indeed for
793 many courts outside Nupe country, where the reputation of Bida scholarship has found recognition. And, as a final result of this tendency to make these offices the prerogative of a small group, we find since the time of *Etsu* Mohamadu the two offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* combined in one person.[1]

565 The office of the *Alkali* in Bida, the highest Mohammedan judge of
557 the kingdom, dates back to the first period of Fulani rule. Its importance and distinction is expressed in the fact that Mallam Dendo's eldest
693 son chose for himself the office not of a temporal ruler but of judge of Nupe. Many of the men who held these offices were of great learning and outstanding ability. Some have left behind records of the history of

1. *Ranks of the Ena Ndeji*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Ndeji	Nupe from Dibo	*Magajin Gari*	Grandfather was *Ndeji*, appointed by *Etsu* Masaba; the father had no title. To-day highest official of the N.A.; head of the Emir's council.
Nyáfyenye	Fulani	*Magajin Gari*	Father and grandfather both *Ndeji*; first appointment under Usman Zaki.
Magajin Gari	Nupe	..	Father was *Nyáfyenye* and later *Ndeji*.
Sonfadakó	,,	*Gadza*	Father had no title; his first appointment was under *Etsu* Maliki, his second under *Etsu* Mamadu.
Gadza	No holder at present, but formerly a very important title.		
Sakiwa	Fulani	..	Father was *Ndeji*, titled under Umaru Majigi.
Mamasú	,,	..	Father held a lower title; he himself was titled under *Etsu* Maliki.
Etsu Basa	Benu-Nupe	..	A hereditary title held in one family.
Etsu Gbari	Nupe	..	Father was *Uban Dawaki*.
Tsadza	Fulani	*Galadiman Gari*	Father and elder brother have held same title.
Ndasú	Hausa	..	Newly introduced title.
Galadiman Gari	Fulani	..	Father was *Gadza*; he himself was appointed under *Etsu* Bello. He became later a 'ward-head' of the modern town-administration.
Kotonkonu	Nupe	..	Father held same title.

[1] There exist two different kinds of *Liman* offices: the *Liman Ratibi*, the minister of the weekday service held in the various mosques of the town, and the *Liman Jemaa*, the minister of the Friday service, which is held in the big city mosque, in the presence of the king. In every part of the town there is a *Liman* of the first kind; but there is only one *Liman Jemaa*. And it is to this highest priestly office that we referred above.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host of slaves: slaves for menial work—in the house and on the land—as well as the titled slaves of respected position. At the court this latter group of slaves formed the *ena wuzi*, the Order of Court Slaves, a distinguished slave *élite* into which only few selected slaves could ever hope to be admitted. From the slaves captured in war those of high birth and status, chiefs or distinguished warriors, were selected for the court. These, too, were given ranks and titles, and could rise high in the service of the king. Theirs was the specialized service of officials and trusted royal agents. There were those who looked after the king's vast household; those who were in charge of the *Etsu* Nupe's no less imposing harem—both offices formerly entrusted to eunuchs.[1] Other slaves formed the king's bodyguard and police force; they were provincial delegates, tax collectors, trusted messengers, 'liaison officers' between the king's palace and the houses of his noblemen, and between the king and the army in the field. These slaves, like the other rank-holders, owned land and held fiefs. The Nupe kings in Rabá are said to have had only four titled court slaves; the slave ranks that existed at the court of Bida some thirty years ago (and the ranks still exist, although their holders are no longer slaves) were more than three times that number. Under *Etsu* Maliki, one of the last independent kings of Nupe, the most responsible state offices were taken from royal princes and *sarakiži* and entrusted to slaves. The position of the slaves as officers of state thus seems to have overshadowed more and more all other state ranks. Slave ranks were ranks bestowed *ad personam*, and ranks bestowed by the king personally, independent of the council of princes and ministers; and this gives us the explanation for their rise in importance. The offices linked with civil and military rank also depended to some extent on the personal favour of the king. But once appointed, these men stayed on, servants of the kingdom rather than of the king. They had behind them the claims of powerful families, they were exponents of political factions, and could play on that 'balance of power' between the dynasties. The slaves were personal servants in the full sense of the word. They were brought into office, not by family claims or promotion or a rigid rule of succession, but by personal appointment, selection, and trial. They were bound to the king's service generation after generation, by the strongest bond: their position of unfree men. It frequently happened that a new *Etsu* took over the slaves who had served his predecessor and left them their ranks and possessions. The rise of the slave officials at the Fulani court is the counterpart of the rise of a powerful, dangerously independent feudal nobility.

The following is a list of slave ranks held to-day, not by slaves, but by former slaves or descendants of slaves at the court of the *Etsu* Nupe. I have again tried to indicate in what manner they received their title, and also in certain cases the office which some of them are holding to-day in the Bida Town Administration. That so many of these former slaves

[1] In the pre-Fulani kingdom the court is said to have employed only a few slaves—all eunuchs. All slave ranks which have a *nda* in their title, meaning 'father' (ranks that are still in use—see attached chart), were originally ranks reserved for eunuchs.

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group, the 'town culture' typical of Northern Nigeria. These habits and customs exist, as it were, in their own right, quite apart from questions of economic or political opportunity. But as in the growth of the kingdom certain customs and habits have become representative of the *élite*, they have set the standard of cultural desirability and superiority in general. They have imparted to habits and customs which differ from the standard the stigma of lower, less 'respectable' ways of life. In this sense, then, class differentiation as we find it in present-day Nupe can be said to represent a direct result of the growth of the state. 565 184

The intensity of class cohesion and the vividness of class consciousness are determined by 'the amount and ease of social mobility', that is, inter-class movement.[1] We have denied to the economic and social stratification that obtains in the Nupe village the character of a social class, on the grounds that the higher and highest social orders were potentially attainable to all—universal mobility contradicts the conception of social class. Exclusion of all social mobility, on the other hand, would turn social class into hereditary caste. Nupe society, a true class society, steers a middle course. 565

The social classes in Nupe represent to a large extent self-recruited, closed groups. A man born of commoners as a rule remains a commoner, a craftsman a craftsman, and the ranks of nobility are filled with men of noble birth. But there exists promotion from grade to grade within the class, and a certain amount of inter-class mobility. Inter-class mobility in the fullest sense, that is, formal adoption into the higher orders, is attained, as we have seen, through service in war and, to less extent, through wealth and clientship. Its scope is narrow and closely controlled: there exist only thirty to forty ranks to which an 'outsider' may aspire, and only seven out of the thirty-seven civil and military ranks enumerated in our lists were granted to men whose families had held no rank previously. Moreover, adoption into the titled classes means only gaining a first foothold on the long social ladder. All social rise possible in Nupe is rigidly canalized by the hierarchy of ranks and grades. Here, viewed from the angle of social mobility, the Nupe rank system reveals its full significance: it controls and restricts as much as it aids social advancement. In the interest of governing the extensive kingdom, carrying on its wars, and administering its subject groups, political power had to be distributed and delegated. Individuals whose services were of value had to be attracted by the promise of admission to privileged positions. But by making social rise subject to the formal investiture and, above all, by admitting individuals only gradually, through a step-by-step promotion, to increased power, the ruling class could regulate the infiltration of new blood as well as the accumulation of power by its members. We have seen that ranks and promotion are subject to changing political fortune; even the meaning of ranks and offices may change under different sovereigns. Recognition can be withheld or withdrawn from men who might prove dangerous or from families already too powerful. The hierarchy of ranks thus helps to pre- 565 555

[1] M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 163.

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serve the precarious balance of power in the feudal state. It becomes, in the hands of the established ruling group, an efficient weapon to safeguard their class privileges.

Social mobility of a more fluid, indirect kind, which admits individuals to a close association with the privileged classes and indirectly to a certain share in their privileges, reaches a much larger proportion of the population. It is upheld by the institution of clientship and by the existence of the Mallam intelligentsia 'between the classes'. The possibilities of social mobility, above all, the extensive possibilities of this indirect mobility, account for the lack of cohesion among the lower classes of Nupe, or at least of Bida. The conspicuous symbolism of rank and the rigid definition of the social estates cannot but stimulate class-consciousness: commoners will always describe themselves as *tálaka*, and men of rank will leave you in no doubt about their consequential position. But this class-consciousness is blurred by thoughts and prospects of a social career that might raise anyone to a higher estate. Concern about betterment rather than sentiments of group solidarity define the nature of class-consciousness in Nupe. This can be seen most clearly in the attitude of the younger generation, who are just planning their future career. Only in two social groups do we find a more strongly pronounced and self-contained consciousness of common fate and common, class-bound interests; they are characteristically groups in which mobility, direct or indirect, plays hardly any part—the closed group of guild-organized artisans and (in the framework of their scattered communities) the peasantry.

How far social mobility took the form of local mobility, that is, of a movement to the town in the attempt to bridge over the cultural and social gulf between townspeople and peasantry, we cannot say. If it existed, it could only have been of very limited scope. For there were strong natural limits to such a development, above all, the scarcity of land near the capital.

Now to be complete and convincing, social rise must go hand in hand with assimilation to the habits and modes of life typical of the higher classes. This, in Nupe, proves no stumbling-block. The familiar instances of 'parvenus' who, though adopted into the higher social order, do not fit into the picture of its social life are unknown. The explanation is that cultural assimilation of this kind is much more widespread than actual mobility. The mechanisms of social mobility which we have enumerated all accord their benefits to individuals, not to groups; on the contrary, individuals may succeed where groups (local communities, tribal sections) would fail to achieve that improvement of social conditions and that increased security bound up with classes. But the assimilation of which we have just spoken must be regarded as a qualified form of social mobility which includes groups and whole sections of the population. Whole groups are free at least to imitate the external characteristics of the higher social orders. Where economic conditions allow it commoners and peasants adopt habits and modes of life of their betters—fashions in dress and housing, their way of talk, their food habits, and the forms of entertainment which they patronize. They also

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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working
565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran
555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan
875 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarúfuẓi*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

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long fruitless discussions also occur, both in town and village, and sometimes a compromise has to be effected by introducing a special title (with the word *Tsowa* before any rank, equivalent to 'vice-' or 'sub-'), which will satisfy a refractory member without upsetting the arrangement at large. Severe degradation, on the other hand, is rare, as it can be easily circumvented in these associations which are not compulsory, and cannot force members to accept their status. This is a typical instance: A very ambitious and vain young man of Bida who had held high ranks in previous *ena*, but was given a very low rank in a senior grade, resented this treatment as unjust; he could, however, do nothing except to show his disdain by disinteresting himself in the association, and staying away from all their meetings. Actually he never told me of his shameful treatment when we discussed his association with the *ena*; I learned of it only by chance when, examining a certain association, I came across his name on the list of members.

The village *ena* comprises one rank which can be won only in strict competition. We have spoken of this rank already (p. 250): it carries the title *Sode*, and is bestowed on the best farmer of the group. Sometimes there is also a second farmer's rank, won in the same way for which, rather incongruously, the title *Maiyaki*, 'Minister of War', has been chosen. These ranks are taken only in the highest and middle grade, and are won in open competition at the first of the more important *egbe* occasions of the season, frequently at the *egbe* performed on the farms of the village chief. Traditionally, the title *Sode* ranked next to that of group captain in importance and precedence. To-day it has been degraded to a lower place on the scale of ranks. Of course, neither the title nor the particular qualification for which it is bestowed is recognized in Bida. The rank of *Sode* is also the only rank that may change hands (at least in theory) during the term of the *ena*. Although this happens very rarely (I have not met with any actual instance), all people agree that if at one of the occasions of collective farm-work an appointed *Sode* proved himself to be inferior in skill to another member of the *ena*, he would have to surrender his title.

Age-grade ranks are largely copied from the political rank-system obtaining in the community to which the *ena* belongs. It is not a very exact copy—although the *ena* tends to arrange its ranks according to the order of precedence which they follow in the political hierarchy. In Bida the distinctions between the different classes of political ranks are not observed, and military and civil ranks, office titles and titles of the royal nobility, are bestowed indiscriminately. The village *ena* remains more faithful to the rank-system of the community, and would, for example, adopt its typical, possibly uncommon, titles of elders. But as the membership of the *ena*—especially of the junior grades—may be considerably larger than the number of titled village elders, ranks from outside the traditional rank-system may have to be introduced, preferably from the rank-system of the capital. The younger generation is indeed always ready and eager to adopt such innovations. Rank-systems of heterogeneous nature, and rather arbitrary precedence are the result. However, we must not forget that the rank-systems of many villages ar

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former case, too, it is sometimes considered advisable to make sure of a propitious day; but in the latter case divination may be the only means for discovering the appropriate religious remedy. Let me mention in passing the widespread conviction that even the Emir of Nupe consults diviners (of the Mohammedan variety), in large numbers and 'for whole weeks at a time', to aid him in his multifarious problems: which belief, in spite of its circumstantial nature, is unsupported by such evidence as I could muster.[1] 787

One more word about the frequency of the visits one pays the diviner. For the townspeople no rule can be laid down; persons who seek advice on trade, travels, promotion in rank or other specific questions will obviously consult the diviner *ad hoc*, whenever the need happens to arise. It is somewhat different in the villages, where people also go to the diviner simply to have their fortunes told. Here individuals would pay fairly regular visits, once or twice a month, or at least once in two or three months. I have, however, spoken to villagers who had not been to the diviner for as much as five or six months.

The diviner is paid a small fee every time he is consulted. The fee is neither rigidly laid down nor claimed in advance. In Bida, the diviner is usually paid in money, though a bowl of rice or a few kolanuts may be thrown in, the client paying according to his ability, between a penny and sixpence. In the village one mostly pays in food or kolanuts. The diviners themselves regard the payments as 'gifts', and would strongly deny that they are divining 'for money'. No diviner could in fact live on what his skill earns him; nor does a diviner's reputation add in any way to his status in this rank-conscious society. Divining is merely an additional vocation, prized for the mystic wisdom and power it implies rather than for material or social gains. 791 [555]

This brings me to the last point, the social position of the diviner himself. Divination is essentially 'learning'—a skill that can be acquired by anyone having a 'good head'; if it is hereditary in a family it is so only incidentally. A great many diviners learned the art, in their youth, from another expert, paying for the tuition. One Bida diviner, for example, a man of about sixty-five, had learned divination when he was fifteen, studying for ten months, 'every day as in school'. Another had learned the craft from a stranger he met on his wanderings when a young man. Two diviners made an exceptional and unorthodox claim; while admitting that they had to acquire the skill, they maintained that they had 'learned it from God', by inspiration as it were. The majority of the diviners I met were also farmers; one was a barber by

[1] According to tradition, the old kings of Nupe had numerous official diviners among their retinue; this practice has certainly disappeared.

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CHAPTER XVIII

WEALTH

THE examination of the problem of labour may be fittingly concluded with a discussion of the role played by wealth, free capital, in Nupe economy. It is in keeping with Nupe production in general, with its emphasis on individual property and money profits, that the concept of wealth should be clearly pronounced. The principle of accumulation of wealth as free capital pervades Nupe economics and, in particular, serves to define the economic (and, indirectly, social) stratification of the society.

MONEY CAPITAL

The appreciation of wealth figures prominently in the educational conceptions of the people. Young boys of 8 or 10, when they are given a separate *bucá* plot to farm, are at the same time taught the value of money income and money capital. Mothers will help them to market their small produce for money, or will buy their produce directly from them. And fathers and mothers, as we have seen, equip their children with a first diminutive working capital, a penny or two, to start a profitable trade (see pp. 286–7, 331). These profits enable boys and girls to defray the expenses of the social obligations incumbent upon this tender age, namely, contributions to the costs of the age-grade associations of which they are members. Money expenses, partly involving the accumulation of reserves, accompany Nupe men and women all through their lives: money to meet the costs of kinship rituals—birth, weddings, and funerals—money for the maintenance of labour, the purchase of tools, &c., or for personal wants and the luxuries of life. Money also frequently forms part of the inheritance left by men or women.

Farm produce or gifts in kind in general cannot fully replace money expenditure. This is shown clearly in the nature of the universal gift in Nupe—kola-nuts. Gifts of kola-nuts are more or less regularly exchanged between friends and relations; a gift of kola-nuts serves as the traditional announcement, and invitation at the same time, extended to kinsfolk at the occasion of forthcoming kinship ceremonies. Gifts of kola-nuts also represent the traditional expression of political allegiance. And, with the insignificant exception of the kola-nut growers, the donor of the gift has to buy the kola-nuts on the market for money. The largest single expenditure of Nupe economy, finally, bride-price, is paid entirely in money (see the discussion of bride-price in Chap. XX). It involves, moreover, accumulation of money reserve, or, if the bride-price is paid in instalments, as it frequently is, careful planning of money expenditure over a considerable period.

Although none of the larger forms of traditional money expenditure were ever replaceable by gifts or contributions in kind, it is also true that the practice of money expenditure has been increasing with the spreading of cultural influences from the town. It is natural that Bida society,

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

[1] It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.

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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase 556 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-
554 price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the
546 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of
554 Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the
565 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank
484 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

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respects: not only in the productive arrangements which, in these circumstances, would no longer supply the ritual beverage as a matter of course, but also in the psychological attitude, which would have to admit a ritual beverage largely emptied of what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'social value', i.e. which would be nothing but a ritual beverage, completely removed from the habits of ordinary life. The village dance, again, is an expression of group co-operation and coactivity in the recreational sphere. Like the traditional occasions themselves on which it is performed—kinship feasts, *egbe* work, religious ceremonies, and so forth—the dance mobilizes and intensifies group sentiments. We might even go so far as to say that the unitary nature of the group which is thus mobilized forbids a division into neutral performer and aloof lookers-on. The correlation between professionalized performance and differentiation within the group is indeed clearly visible in Bida. An aloof aesthetic appreciation of professional dancers and musicians appears to represent the only form of entertainment acceptable to a society in which class prejudices and motives of status and prestige dominate all gatherings and festivities. Class prejudice has fostered a conception of dignity set against public exhibitions of this kind. The explanation is, I believe, that it would obliterate, even though only temporarily, the demarcation of rank and status. It is, in fact, quite inconceivable for a man of status to join in a dance, even in his own house, for example, at a family feast—to dance, that is, together with, and in front of, people who must inevitably include persons of lesser station. Yet in the villages old men, even titled elders, commonly join in the dances of the younger folk, without danger to their dignity. To assimilate, then, the village dance to the performances which appeal to the 'sophisticated' people of Bida would mean assimilating the complete social organization.

For the sake of the theoretical argument I have stated the case of this negative form of culture contact a little more strongly than is warranted by actual conditions. Throughout this book we have found evidence of the gradual closing of the rift, and of the advancing assimilation even in these domains of culture. But indeed our argument is supported by this development. For the assimilation does not advance by the narrow channels of confined, specific, cultural changes. Rather these changes are carried by the tide of a far-reaching cultural adjustment which is transforming the whole productive system and the organization of labour as well as the social life at large in the Nupe village. The breaking up of the family labour-unit, and the appearance, in the country, of professional Bida musicians as spokesmen of what I have called the 'propaganda for the kingdom', are two convincing instances.

WEALTH AND STATUS

Hitherto we have been using the terms 'status' and 'prestige' as meaning one and the same thing. It becomes important now to distinguish between them. By 'status' we understand a more or less fixed place on the social ladder; 'prestige' represents a more fluid form of social recognition, gained by certain services or deeds in accordance with the

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accepted code of society. Status in Nupe is determined by descent or formal promotion to rank and office. One of the accepted and most important means by which prestige can be gained is wealth. This raises the question of the closeness of the relation between status, and prestige gained through wealth. In other words, we must ask to what extent prestige gained through wealth tends to facilitate the attainment of status, and may even come to be regarded as its equivalent, or, conversely, to what extent high social status can be reached and maintained without adequate financial support.

Under traditional conditions social status and wealth could hardly become separated as political rank implied far-reaching economic privileges—the acquisition of fiefs and land, the chances of booty, profits from slave-trade, and so forth. Even assuming that considerable wealth could be accumulated also by groups outside the recognized social *élite*, such as traders and craftsmen, it is clear that their highest income could not rival the resources vested in a privileged political position. In present-day Nupe traditional political ranks and wealth are no longer inseparably linked. High social status does not invariably guarantee the demands of prestige also. The members of the *élite*, no longer in a position to combine the satisfaction of the more concrete wants with that of the demands of prestige, will have to choose between the different forms of expenditure. Yet here we find, rather surprisingly, that the expenses for the sake of prestige can be very considerably reduced without affecting the conception of status. The fixed symbols of status, the glazed turban and the silver sword, are either comparatively cheap or are heirlooms. The house, also inherited, may have to be left in disrepair; but its layout would still betray the status of its owner. Polygamy can be maintained to a certain extent thanks to the practice of marriage in the family, with low bride-price, which is customary among the *élite*. Horses, new dresses, ornaments, lavish hospitality—they all have to go. But travelling and leisure need not disappear. The former is satisfied by claiming hospitality from relatives or friends in distant parts, or even from social inferiors, who would not think of refusing such flattering requests. The latter manifests itself in the choice of profession of impecunious noblemen: very few have taken to farming or tried to learn a craft; theirs are mostly the unskilled 'free' professions of the leisured class. Thus even on the decline, the social *élite* secures the satisfaction of certain wants which to the lower orders of the society are permanently unattainable. Nupe society built up a strong defence of the prerogatives of status in the form of class-obligations and the utilization of inheritance. With its help the social *élite* of the country can hope to weather at least temporary difficulties and set-backs.

That this defence of class prerogatives has not yet lost its strength is evident in the hesitant attitude of the people towards accepting the new evaluation of wealth as independent of traditional status. The issue is by no means clear; it is confused by various concomitant factors, specially by the introduction of the new official ranks and positions under the N.A. some of which are vested in the old ruling class, while others have been bestowed on 'new men' from outside the traditional *élite*. But

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there is convincing evidence to show that high social status still attaches to traditional ranks, though they may no longer command their former financial reward, rather than to wealth alone. Evidently this is only a transitional solution. In a society in which high status is so closely identified with a definite standard of living the separation of the two cannot be maintained indefinitely, at least not without some radical change in the whole concept of the *élite*. Theoretically, had their ranks not been divided by the appointment of some of their members to modern official posts, the Nupe aristocracy could have chosen the diehard solution of reinterpreting the whole concept of status and making it independent of economic advantages. As it is, the old *élite* must either win back its economic supremacy (which is impossible, though the attempts have never been given up), or else admit the new nobility of wealth into its ranks. We can observe this new conception taking shape. The respect for the traditional values is only strong enough to maintain an external continuity—the continuity of the symbols of status. And the 'new men' are the first to submit to this rule which allows them to legitimatize their position: they buy the titles which are the only passports to acceptance among the social *élite*. Here then, we have a final, and most modern, use of capital investment, for the sake of social advancement in its purely abstract and symbolic form.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XXI

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

565 556 558 THE lack of tangible data makes it impossible to formulate any theory about the extent to which economic mobility, i.e. movement between the strata, was a reality in pre-European days. We can only make a few statements based on social and historical facts the economic significance of which we can, with some certainty, assess. Economic betterment in every society depends on the possibility of increasing one's hold over resources and means of production. The Fulani conquest, and the exploitation of land which followed it, restricted, for one part of Nupe at least, mobility with regard to the main resource, land. The restriction could, however, be circumvented by means of political allegiance, i.e. by becoming the client of an influential landowner. There is also evidence that certain peasants and craftsmen have owned slaves and taken pawns, thus acquiring interest-bearing capital, and so rising above the average level of a peasant's or artisan's livelihood. In the ruling classes and among their dependants careers involving increased economic opportunities were the normal thing, whether they were expressed in a share in booty and slave-trade or in rewards to warriors and political followers 'for services rendered'. The reverse process, loss of economic opportunities, and in the extreme case the loss of all possessions, was no less marked. In the life of the peasant, such changes occurred in the course of wars and raids involving the destruction of homesteads, farms, and stores. The peasants in Nupe kingdom proper, though safe from slave-raids, were still exposed to similar attacks: punitive expeditions which, directed against a rebellious feudal lord, were fought on their land, or the visitation of armies which marched through and foraged from their farms. In the ruling group economic downfall could mean only one thing: political disgrace, often accompanied by confiscation of their property.

565 To-day the risks of war and raids have disappeared, together with the exploitation and one-sided source of income which they represented. Thus the new rule has to some extent levelled down the old economic inequalities. Clearly this levelling-down cannot have been equally welcome to every section of the population. Let me quote here the very frank and, in fact, typical statement of one of my most honest informants, an influential village elder of Mokwa. He admitted the great benefits of the present rule, thanks to which the *tálaka*, the poor man, enjoys safety from wars, raids, and political abuses. But then he added (rather heatedly in fact): 'But you have turned us all into *tálaka*.' This view, coming as it does not from a member of the ruling class but from a typical Nupe peasant, makes it necessary to review more closely the economic effects of the new order.[1] All our data tend to show that, although trade

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[p. 366]

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
462 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
1139 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell groundnuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
●556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wiruwiru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsu* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wacī*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaži*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsiži*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [551] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotū*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [132] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Liman*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *b'rama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsiži*.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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*754 of the kind known as *nnákata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. Influential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

*754 Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 582
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage.

588
In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications, is practised 851
425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

595 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
[534] the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have
[772] "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable, (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Duff.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

either for oneself or for one's family. One young labourer from the country gave his father 5*s*. out of his weekly wages of 7*s*. to put by for his bride-price; another kept 2*s*. to 3*s*. a month for himself, and gave the rest to his father. Many Bida labourers, on the other hand, used the whole money for themselves; some explained that they had become labourers because there was no money in their old profession, others because they wanted to be independent and because their fathers or elder brothers could not give them as much money as they liked to have.

To summarize: as one would expect paid labour, especially temporary labour, does not represent a 'real' profession in the sense of an occupation involving special training and selection of workers. It is essentially a stopgap occupation chosen to supplement or replace a failing normal source of income. Owing to the specific composition of Nupe society the new profession is being adopted by certain social groups and strata more than by others. Yet in some respects paid industrial labour must be regarded almost as a modern continuation of forms of occupations which, in the traditional society, bore the same supplementary and stopgap character. As such it appeals strongly to the individual craftsman, to Mallams, and *bara*, who depend for their livelihood on similar forms of unskilled and partly temporary work. It differs from these other occupations, however, in that it is carried out on the road and in the workshop yard instead of in the home, and that it represents heavy manual labour, and not light work which it is easy to combine with a dignified social status. The labourers, unlike the individual craftsmen, can no longer pretend that they belong to the leisured class. If they receive better and more regular pay, they also lose caste. This explains why of the many hundreds of men who, once members of the privileged classes, are to-day men 'without occupation',[1] gaining a precarious livelihood from occasional work, only those coming from the lowest grade of the 'upper classes' have chosen the profession of labourers.

In the case of the peasants we can no longer speak of any inherent congruity between their work and the new temporary occupation. To them, especially to the peasants who do not practise a handicraft beside agriculture, paid labour in addition to farm-work, a form of labour, moreover, which keeps them for months from their homes, must appear as something quite new and unprecedented. If to-day paid labour is gradually attracting the peasant class as well, twenty or thirty years ago the (very prosperous) Nupe peasants had to be coaxed by all available means to undertake temporary paid labour, for example, in railway construction. The more 'sophisticated' Hausa and Yoruba were already then flocking in large numbers to work of this kind. Missionaries who knew Nupe country at that time told me that it was often impossible in the peasant districts to obtain even porters to carry loads; the promise of money did not attract them sufficiently to make them leave their homes even temporarily, to upset their whole routine of work or forgo their well-earned leisure. In certain backward and prosperous districts this

[1] An unofficial occupational census of Bida lists 1,130 men under the class 'no occupation'. They belong without exception to the titled leisured classes of the Emirate.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
735 procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike
558 slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of
426 money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for
735 which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

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CHAPTER XXI

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565 To-day the risks of war and raids have disappeared, together with the exploitation and one-sided source of income which they represented. Thus the new rule has to some extent levelled down the old economic inequalities. Clearly this levelling-down cannot have been equally welcome to every section of the population. Let me quote here the very frank and, in fact, typical statement of one of my most honest informants, an influential village elder of Mokwa. He admitted the great benefits of the present rule, thanks to which the *tdlaka*, the poor man, enjoys safety from wars, raids, and political abuses. But then he added (rather heatedly in fact): 'But you have turned us all into *tdlaka*.' This view, coming as it does not from a member of the ruling class but from a typical Nupe peasant, makes it necessary to review more closely the economic effects of the new order.[1] All our data tend to show that, although trade

[1] It incidentally supplies further evidence of the fact that a rise to superior economic position also occurred in the peasant classes.

SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before 555 its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 The most important women's titles are those of *nimuvoye*, of the royal house of 565 Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya*; she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not 554 reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 103–8, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 331–4, 147–56; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[13]

DIVORCE

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

BURIAL

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[13] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[14] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

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241 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-
592 time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the
178 town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supple-
476 mented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first
476 and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young
241 men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

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561 working party follow the musicians, the rest meet later out on the farm.
476 When all have assembled the young men start work. They work in a
group of ten or twelve, starting on the same side of the field, leaving
241 plenty of space between each other. Everyone is working his own ridge and, having finished one, he turns to the next with hardly any pause. The drummers and flute-players walk alongside the field abreast of the workers. Older men stand at the side, watching, criticizing, commenting. Often you can hear them call one of the workers by name, exhorting him to ever greater efforts, or shouting impatiently: 'Quicker, quicker!' When one field is finished some of the young men, the captains of the age-grade association among them, will execute a short dance, balancing their heavy hoes in the air and heavily stamping on the tilled field, while the drummers are arrayed behind them, beating the rhythm of the age-grade *take*.[1] Then workers and audience—and every *egbe* attracts a large audience—move on to another field, while some of the older men may stay behind to sow the newly tilled plot. On another occasion I saw the young men working in two groups of about equal strength, each under its own leader—one of the captains of the age-grade association. The groups started on opposite ends of the field, working towards each other. Now and again a worker would get up, survey with one glance the work which his group had been doing, and cry out in a long high-pitched yell; others were shouting with deep hoarse voices at every stroke of their hoe. The speed with which they worked, the whole atmosphere of the *egbe*—the constant drumming, the shouts from the audience—had something deeply exciting, almost feverish. I have seen a team of fifteen young men, the oldest between 19 and 20, the youngest 14, clear and till a farm-plot of one acre in two and a half hours.[2]
561 The *egbe* work still more than *efakó* work is animated by an intense spirit
476 of competition. The worker who has quickly finished his ridges will
241 stand up and look round, proudly showing off his splendid work; he will chaff his fellow workers about their clumsy progress, their crooked
554 ridges; he executes a little dance, singing, and shaking his hoe to show how leisurely he can work and still beat the others. When all the work is finished the whole party, musicians, workers, and onlookers, repair to the house of the owner of the farm. Here the feast which concludes the *egbe* is celebrated with plenty of food, corn-beer, and dancing, and much boasting and prancing of the young men, who are the heroes of the occasion. Nor is their boasting and prancing without significance. In the village communities where the traditional age-grade system is still practised, one of the important side-issues of the *egbe* is that it represents a regular test in which the young men establish their qualification as farmers. From *egbe* to *egbe*, every year, their skill and their achievements are watched, compared, and judged by the older people. In the last *egbe* of the season, or some other outstanding *egbe* (e.g. on the farm of the chief),[3] the results of this competition are made known and the young

[1] See p. 395.
[2] In another case I saw six young men clearing a densely overgrown bush-plot for yam-cultivation of about a third of an acre in one hour.
[3] An *egbe* of this kind near Bida at which new titles were bestowed was

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561 476 241 554 farmer who did best is given by his age-grade association the title *Sode*, the second highest title that can be bestowed on young men. A man who is once made *Sode* keeps his rank until some other claimant snatches the title from him, or if he had no competitors, until he joins the 'old men' and retires from the arena of the *egbe*. In the urbanized age-grade associations of Bida this title and the whole usage have disappeared. In other large places which follow Bida fashion, the title *Sode*, though still in existence, has become a title of minor importance, a long way down the list of age-grade ranks.

241 476 The primary advantage of collective farm-work lies evidently in the time-saving which it makes possible. The second weeding, for example, which normally takes from five to ten days, can be done by *egbe* in one day. But this valuable help must be paid for. The cost of an *egbe* of from fifteen to twenty workers—the cost of food and drink for the guests and the pay of drummers and musicians—is between 6*s*. and 8*s*. *Egbe* work, then, implies a calculation of investment and return, cost and profit. To-day, farmers try to lower the cost of *egbe*. In an *egbe* near Bida (the *egbe* just described, in which the workers were grouped in two teams) the owner of the farm contributed music and food for thirty people, but no beer or palm-wine. The fare was simple—no meat or fish—but plentiful: porridge cooked in palm-oil for the men, half a bowl per head (1 lb.), and corn-gruel for the women. This cheap *egbe* cost only 4*s*. yet proved still sufficiently attractive to make a large group of workers attend.

Yet there is one element of 'profit' in this calculation which cannot be put down in shillings and pence, and which is of utmost sociological significance. *Egbe* work is performed only on family farms, i.e. on the farms of family heads and old men in general. Younger people, whether they still work under the family head or have made themselves independent, are not entitled to the help of the *egbe*. Thus the *egbe* provides a twofold balance, in favour of the old men who cannot work as efficiently as the young, and in favour of the sociological head of the family group who, though perhaps no longer able to command the services of a large body of co-workers, can still command the assistance of collective farm-work.[1] How real this balance is was illustrated in the example given before (p. 244) of an old man, the family head, cultivating fields equal in size and yield to the fields worked by his two adult sons. With the splitting-up of families and the reduction of the *efakó* group, with the disappearance, that is, of the clear-cut distinction between family and individual farms, the significance of the *egbe*, too, must weaken. Information gained from a large number of independent witnesses testifies to the gradual loss of importance of *egbe* work in Nupe productive life. Once practised regularly on every farm it has now been

performed on the new experimental farm of the Agricultural Department which was tilled in collective work.

[1] Recognition of this privileged position of the sociological head of the group in a wider sense is expressed in the traditional rule, still valid in most peasant communities in Nupe, that the first *egbe* of the season is performed on the chief's land.

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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working
565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran
555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan
375 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarúfuži*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

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561 young man belongs to one or the other age-grade association, the age-grades are not a compulsory organization. No coercion is used to induce individuals to join the association, but failure to do so would be regarded as unusual, and under certain circumstances even suspicious. The constitution of the *ena gbarúfuži* is based essentially on the agreement of a group of individuals who, with clear knowledge of the purpose and the rules of the organization, form themselves into an age-grade association. Sociologically, then, our translation of *ena* as association is fully justified.

561 369 The description of the age-grade system of Nupe is complicated by the large number of variations that occur. There exist, above all, certain essential differences between the age-grade association in Bida and in the village; we shall, in fact, have to contrast the two throughout this discussion. The rules governing the internal organization of the age-grades are elastic: much more so in Bida than in the village. In the village association, too, minor differences occur, sometimes even between certain local associations in the same village. Thus, the age-factor itself is not rigidly defined, and the entrance age and age-limits of the different grades vary widely. Nor is the duration of the single age-grade fixed universally or permanently. In the village we find a more rigid arrangement: in Kutigi, for example, all age-grades last six years, in Jebba four years. In Bida the term of the age-grade association varies from four to ten years, and the duration may vary in different grades, in accordance with the wishes of the members.

In the village each grade is represented by one *ena* only, and age-grade associations ascend as a rule *en bloc* from grade to grade. Changes in the membership, so far as they occur, as the *ena* advances to higher grades, take the form of a slight decrease caused by death or emigration. In Bida each grade is represented by a number of associations, and prospective members have the choice of alternative associations. The rules of membership are more flexible in Bida. One may skip a grade—'rest', as the people say—one may start in a higher instead of the bottom grade, or one may leave the association before it advances to the highest grade, even before its term comes to an end. In two villages age-grade associations of which I examined the membership, which was 17 and 18 in the highest grade, had remained almost unchanged through the three grades of which the age-grade association is composed. In Bida there is much coming and going. In two *ena*, for example, the highest grade of which numbered 26 and 30 members, respectively, only 7 and 15, respectively, had gone through all three grades, 16 and 10 through two grades, and 3 and 5 had joined the highest grade without having passed through the lower grades.

561 The most common and, in the eyes of the people, normal type of age-grade association comprises three grades, which are numbered from the top downward: the senior grade is called First Grade, the middle grade, Second, and the junior grade, Third Grade or *ena dzakangiži*, Children's Grade. We shall deal, in what follows, with this most typical three-grade organization. The average age in the senior grade is 20 to 30, in the second 15 to 20, and in the junior grade 10 to 15. The age-limit for

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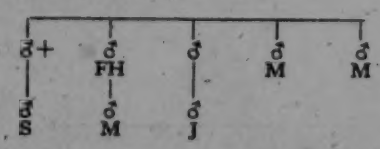
membership is about 30. It is interesting to note that the fact of marriage is of no significance—the highest grade comprises both married and unmarried men. The sign that a man is past the age of membership of 'young men societies' is the appearance of the external symptom of manhood, a beard—*za na de nũkpayi na da ena be à*, 'a man who has a beard no longer joins the association'. In certain small communities the age-grade system may be limited to the two higher grades; in other communities a fourth, junior, grade is added, called *ena wawaglži*, Association of the Small Children. This lowest grade is not taken seriously: it is regarded as mere *dzodzo*, play—of the children-playing-at-adults type—and shares with the other grades only their superficial external characteristics. The junior, third, grade is also in some measure regarded as less serious and significant than the higher grades, and as essentially a preparatory stage. Certain important activities of the higher grades are, as we shall see, of necessity excluded, or reduced to insignificant proportions, in associations which are composed of young boys. In one respect, however, the junior age-grade makes its own specific contribution to the age-grade system; it is the only one which has its counterpart also in the other sex. The highest age-grade, too, possesses certain specific features, in the form of certain age-grade ranks which are not bestowed on members of junior groups.

As *ena* membership is defined by age, and not by generation, it happens occasionally that, in large families, the young men of different generations but of approximately equal age belong to the same *ena*, and that young men of the same generation are members of different age-grade associations. The following genealogical diagram will illustrate a typical case. The letters S, M, and J indicate membership of the senior, middle, and junior age-grade, respectively; FH means family head, and a cross a deceased family member.



The separation from family and homelife is indeed one of the most characteristic features of the *ena gbarúfuži*. The people attach considerable weight to the fact that the bonds and forms of obligation which are implied in the *ena* are of an entirely different, and specific, nature. Even small boys, the youngest members of the junior *ena*, will tell you with an air of importance that the *ena* has nothing to do with family, home, or parents. The father? 'Yes, we tell him, and we ask him sometimes to help out with money or food for a feast which we arrange. But he has no say in our *ena*.' Fathers will confirm this. In Kutigi parents were quite surprised, and laughed uproariously, when I told them about the titles which had just been distributed in a newly started junior grade; the boys had gone with the times and introduced titles which did not exist in the days of their fathers' *ena*. But for my information the parents

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561 would have remained unaware of these changes, which were regarded as a purely 'internal' matter of the age-grade association.

561 Let us now see how an age-grade association starts its life. We will begin with the Bida *ena*. Here the procedure is the same both in the 369 foundation of a new *ena* and in its promotion to a higher grade. A number of boys or young men who have become well acquainted with one another in various walks of life, possibly when participating in a previous *ena*, decide to form themselves into an age-grade association. They meet in the house of one of them, a group of only six or seven members at first, and discuss how many more members they can muster. Each of the founders of the prospective *ena* then enlists other friends and acquaintances of the same age, till eventually the membership reaches the required number, twenty or twenty-five. The first thing now is to find a 'captain' and a 'president' for the new association, or, in native terminology, an *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* (lit. Grandfather of the *Etsu*). The *Etsu* is a member of the age-group itself, as a rule one of the original founders, who is elected by the group.[1] The *Ndakotsu* must be of senior age: in the junior grades he will be a member of the next higher grade, and in the senior grade an adult who has 'passed', *go ga*, i.e. already gone through all the grades. Under their *Etsu* the members of the prospective *ena* approach a certain young man whom they regard as a suitable candidate, and request him to accept the position of president in the new association. Every member of the Nupe age-grades is assigned a certain rank which defines his place on the miniature social scale of the age-grade association for the duration of the *ena*. It is the first official duty of the newly elected *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu* to call a general meeting in the house of the *Ndakotsu* at which the distribution of these *ena* ranks is to take place. The elastic rules which govern duration and membership of the Bida *ena* imply also that no fixed rules can be laid down with regard to the time when associations usually start or 'change over' to higher grades. Moreover, in these associations in which only a small nucleus of members may remain faithful to the *ena* throughout its three grades long waits are likely to occur between the termination of one *ena* and the founding of a new association of a higher grade.

In the village the procedure governing the foundation and promotion of the *ena*, although the same in principle, differs in certain significant features from that obtaining in Bida. To begin with, the time when age-grade associations are started and promoted to higher grades is fixed permanently: it falls towards the end of the dry season, an arrangement which gives the new association time to be fairly launched when the agricultural season begins, and ready to undertake the tasks which, in a farming community, fall to the age-grade associations. The enrolment of members for the new *ena* is much less selective and arbitrary. In a small community where most boys of approximately the same age know each other, and normally meet in work or play, there is no need to canvass the new *ena* among friends and acquaintances. Nor is there any special search for captain and president of the new association. The village associations have, in fact, their *Ndakotsu* and *Etsu* appointed for

[1] Sometimes the captain of the second grade bears a different title, *Sokyara*.

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them in advance. Shortly before the existing associations are dissolved 561
previous to their reorganization on a higher grade, the outgoing presi-
dents of the different grades appoint, as a last official act of their term of 369
office, one of the members of their group as '*Ndakotsu*-elect' of the next junior group, i.e. the group which, in the new term, will take the place of the outgoing group. The *Ndakotsu*-elect will then take charge of the organization or reorganization of the new *ena*, and also of the appointment of a captain for the new association.

In these age-grade associations which rise *en bloc* to higher grades there 56
is no gap between the termination of the old and the foundation of the new *ena*. The association which is about to be dissolved and promoted stages a last public appearance in a great feast, with music and dancing, to which all friends and relations are invited. A few days later the members of the *ena* meet again for the preliminary discussion in the house of the new *Ndakotsu*, for the distribution of the age-grade ranks which will be assigned to them in the new *ena*. When all ranks have been satisfactorily allotted the group arranges another large festivity, which is to announce publicly its reorganization and to inaugurate the new term. I had the good fortune to be in Kutigi in 1936, the year when the six years' term of the local *ena* came to an end and the general 'change-over' took place. It fell in the middle of March; the last public meeting of the old association was on the 7th of March, the session in the house of the *Ndakotsu* took place five days later, and the inaugurative meeting of the group in its new form as a senior grade on the 2nd of April.

Now, what are the qualifications for the position of a *Ndakotsu* and 561
Etsu, and according to what principles are the *ena* ranks distributed? 554
For the election of the *Ndakotsu* a well-established social position, good 369
reputation, intelligence, and also a pleasant nature and, if possible, an open hand, are regarded as essential qualifications. A satisfactory financial position is essential because the *Ndakotsu* will be expected to entertain and to organize parties—and to do it in style. Most of these conditions also apply to the election of the group captain. The members of a newly founded Bida *ena* explained to me: 'We made Mohamadu our *Etsu* because he is a nice fellow. We all like him. He has good connexions; you see he is invited to the court; besides, he has plenty of money, and both his father and his mother are rich. He is also ready to spend it when we have a feast and we need drummers and dancers.' On the other hand, a very ambitious young man who had been *Etsu* of an *ena* (of the second grade) and who hoped to be made *Etsu* again in a new, senior, association whose captain was resigning shortly, complained to me that his chances were slight, for he had not much money and could not afford the expenses which he would be expected to meet. It is implied in the nature of these qualifications that the *Etsu* is not always the oldest member in the group. In one *ena* which I analysed the *Etsu* was 20 when the *ena* started, and there were three members older than he. But as a rule he is of higher social position, and often better educated, than the rest of the members. Thus in a Bida *ena* which consisted almost entirely of tailors and embroiderers the captain was a weaver, the son of the Bida guild-head. In another group of a similar composition the

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captain was an expert cap-maker, who made the expensive, fashionable embroidered caps. And in a group the members of which came mostly from the classes of the nobility, the captain was the son of a late Emir. It has become the fashion for captains of Bida age-grade associations to adopt an additional, allegoric or symbolic, title, which would also give the *ena* its name. Bida associations compete with each other in the invention of high-sounding names, which should evince the refinement and selectness of the *ena*. Thus one *Etsu* was known as *Etsu Yimani*, 'King Faith', as the *ena* over which he presided prided itself of the piety of its members; another captain called himself *Etsu Hankuri*, 'King Forgiveness', for more or less the same reason; a third *Etsu Turu*, 'King of the Europeans', a title which was meant to bear witness to the fact that this *ena* was organized on 'European lines' (to be explained presently).

The financial qualifications and those of status are of less importance in the village, where inequality of wealth and status are much less strongly marked, although even in the village *ena* the captain may be of a somewhat higher social position than the rest of the members, e.g. the son or brother of a village elder of high rank. The symbolic names of age-grade associations are absent in the village, where age-grade associations are neither as numerous as in Bida nor as interested in advertising their refinement and selectness.

The allotment of ranks in a newly founded association of the youngest grade is largely a formality—although the popularity and influence of the young boys among their age-mates will to some extent be taken into account. We have seen that these junior age-grades are generally regarded as representing a preparatory stage rather than a fully fledged *ena*. In the higher grades the distribution of ranks becomes much more serious. Change of rank during the lifetime of the *ena* occurs only when a member dies or withdraws prematurely, especially if he was holding one of the higher *ena* ranks, which must be represented. But when the *ena* terminates and the members form themselves into a new group, a complete reshuffle takes place. As the different grades use largely the same rank-system this redistribution of ranks at the end of an *ena* makes conspicuous the promotion, non-promotion, or degradation—as the case may be. These changes in the holding of *ena* ranks reflect faithfully the success or failure of individual members in the previous association, the capability shown in the performance of group activities, and the popularity enjoyed among comrades and superiors. The eager competition notwithstanding, the task of distributing ranks justly and to everybody's satisfaction does not, as a rule, take very long. I have seen these discussions carried through in one or two afternoons. But then, the general discussion is only a last, formal, step. Mostly, the two leaders of the group have decided the distribution at least of the more important ranks long before the first general meeting. The *Ndakotsu* of a prospective village *ena*, for example, knew a few months before the group was actually called into being exactly whom he was going to invest with the three highest ranks. As a rule the authority of captain and president is sufficiently strong to carry the vote. But instances of disagreement and

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long fruitless discussions also occur, both in town and village, and sometimes a compromise has to be effected by introducing a special title (with the word *Tsowa* before any rank, equivalent to 'vice-' or 'sub-'), which will satisfy a refractory member without upsetting the arrangement at large. Severe degradation, on the other hand, is rare, as it can be easily circumvented in these associations which are not compulsory, and cannot force members to accept their status. This is a typical instance: A very ambitious and vain young man of Bida who had held high ranks in previous *ena*, but was given a very low rank in a senior grade, resented this treatment as unjust; he could, however, do nothing except to show his disdain by disinteresting himself in the association, and staying away from all their meetings. Actually he never told me of his shameful treatment when we discussed his association with the *ena*; I learned of it only by chance when, examining a certain association, I came across his name on the list of members. 561 554

The village *ena* comprises one rank which can be won only in strict competition. We have spoken of this rank already (p. 250): it carries the title *Sode*, and is bestowed on the best farmer of the group. Sometimes there is also a second farmer's rank, won in the same way for which, rather incongruously, the title *Maiyaki*, 'Minister of War', has been chosen. These ranks are taken only in the highest and middle grade, and are won in open competition at the first of the more important *egbe* occasions of the season, frequently at the *egbe* performed on the farms of the village chief. Traditionally, the title *Sode* ranked next to that of group captain in importance and precedence. To-day it has been degraded to a lower place on the scale of ranks. Of course, neither the title nor the particular qualification for which it is bestowed is recognized in Bida. The rank of *Sode* is also the only rank that may change hands (at least in theory) during the term of the *ena*. Although this happens very rarely (I have not met with any actual instance), all people agree that if at one of the occasions of collective farm-work an appointed *Sode* proved himself to be inferior in skill to another member of the *ena*, he would have to surrender his title. 561 555

Age-grade ranks are largely copied from the political rank-system obtaining in the community to which the *ena* belongs. It is not a very exact copy—although the *ena* tends to arrange its ranks according to the order of precedence which they follow in the political hierarchy. In Bida the distinctions between the different classes of political ranks are not observed, and military and civil ranks, office titles and titles of the royal nobility, are bestowed indiscriminately. The village *ena* remains more faithful to the rank-system of the community, and would, for example, adopt its typical, possibly uncommon, titles of elders. But as the membership of the *ena*—especially of the junior grades—may be considerably larger than the number of titled village elders, ranks from outside the traditional rank-system may have to be introduced, preferably from the rank-system of the capital. The younger generation is indeed always ready and eager to adopt such innovations. Rank-systems of heterogeneous nature, and rather arbitrary precedence are the result. However, we must not forget that the rank-systems of many villages ar 561 554

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561 554 themselves similarly heterogeneous and arbitrary, including Bida titles among its traditional village ranks.

561 554 576 The system of precedence involved in *ena* ranks and grades is taken very seriously, and the rigid rules of etiquette which govern it are enacted with all solemnity. Much of the *ena* business takes place, as we shall see, within the single *ena*; but when members of different grades meet—for example, at family feasts in the house of a member, or at collective farm-work—submissive or condescending behaviour marks their relation towards each other. Members of a junior grade will never dance when members of senior grades are present, except with their special permission and at their request; in collective farm-work the junior grades work at the back of the team, at less important and less conspicuous tasks. Age-grade etiquette is even more emphatic within the individual association. At communal meals the 'subalterns' will wait till their superiors have eaten; at *ena* feasts subaltern and senior ranks will never dance at the same time; when greeting a superior, the age-grade member of lower rank will squat down and bend his head, exactly as prescribed for intercourse between superiors and inferiors in the social scale of 'real life'.

561 554 369 In the village *ena* it is only in general terms that the ranks indicate social position on the rank-scale of the association. In the town *ena* the ranks are sometimes chosen so as to indicate and do justice to the special gifts, or the special social position outside the *ena*, which characterize individual members. In this the organization of the town *ena* reflects the more highly differentiated social structure of urban society. Thus a Bida *ena*, composed largely of illiterate members, assigned to a young man who had been educated in the Government Middle School the title *Naïbi*, a rank of the Mohammedan clergy which can be held only by scholars. The rank-list of another *ena* included the rank *Boroti*, lit. Head of the Bororó, its holder being the son of the late Emir's 'regent-delegate' for the Bororó Fulani. Some Bida age-grade ranks indicate a certain official capacity held by a member in the *ena*. Thus I found a rank *Dzufã* (lit. pocket) bestowed on a young man who acted as 'purser' of the group. All purchases and payments for *ena* purposes were made through him; when, for example, a member decided to give a party for the group he would place his money contribution in the hands of the *Etsu*, who would then hand it over to the 'purser' as the member responsible for financial arrangements. In one *ena* I found the rather curious rank *Mataushe* (Hausa, lit. 'the man who rubs', i.e. 'masseur'), by which name a certain slave or body-servant of the Nupe king was known whose special duty it was to massage the feet of his master. In like manner it was the duty of this 'office holder' in the age-grade association to massage the feet of his *Etsu* at meetings of the group when his master felt tired.

561 554 177 One group of ranks typical of the Bida *ena* deserves special attention, namely the ranks which are organized on 'European lines' and copy, not ranks and offices of Nupe society, but ranks, offices, and even names of Europeans with whom the Nupe had come into contact. Such titles are often amusing and even puzzling. In one *ena* the head of the group was

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), *Likita* (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank *Borti* (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted, forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tdlaka* and *saraki* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real', that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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369 and reality. The prototypes of *ena* ranks are all (at least theoretically) within the reach of the individual members. Every one of the young
● 561 men who have gone through the *ena* may find when he reaches the suit-
554 able age that elimination by death or illness of senior relatives has singled him out for the position of a family head, and thus for a *nūsa* rank. Indeed, the promotion which accompanied his age-grade career will serve as an important qualification in the bestowal of the real rank by chiefs and elders. In certain respects all *ena* ranks of the senior grade retain their validity outside the *ena*, and after its expiry. The code of age-grade etiquette expires with the age-grade association. Not so the symbols of age-grade achievement: a man will be called by his rank rather than his name years after the *ena* has come to an end, often even for life—especially if he had held a very high rank. Men who have once been elected as *Ètsu* or *Ndakotsu*, even when they are not, or not yet, appointed to a *nūsa* rank, will occupy a position of some distinction in their native village. Not only are they addressed and known by their *ena* titles, but village elders will pay attention to their opinion, and will entrust them with responsible tasks—in the organization of a ceremony, or of important collective work carried on outside the framework of the age-grade association. *Ena* ranks will never be confused with the political ranks of the village; they remain *tici nya ena*, ranks of the age-grade association. But although still only models of the 'real thing', they are 'real' in the sense that they indicate the varying qualification of individuals for access to the final social advancement. In the village *ena*, then, and similarly in the few age-grade associations in Bida which are recruited from the ruling classes, the *ena* rank-system anticipates a future social status; it introduces social concepts, and practises forms of conduct the effectiveness of which will be proved in adult life.

None of this is true of the average Bida association. Although here, again, the ranks attained in the senior grade accompany a man through life, they can claim no significance beyond that accorded to them by the rules of the game. A game indeed it is. These ranks let you enjoy fictitious contacts with a world of rank and power which you can never hope to enter in reality. Their upward trend, their incentive of competition, imply, not preparation or anticipation, but pretence, imitation—'substitution'.

561 Let us examine now the composition of the age-grade associations
571 with regard to the social groups and strata which they absorb. In small villages a single age-grade association includes the youths of the
369 whole village, and may even go beyond it, including the 'dependencies' of the village, the small *tunga* settlements, or linking a number of *tunga* settlements with one another. In the scattered hamlets round Bida the boys and young men of three to four hamlets join in a common *ena*. In very large villages (e.g. Kutigi) the age-grade is subdivided into a number of associations, each embracing one large, or two or three small, neighbouring, village *efu*. The age-grade itself, however, stretches across the whole village community, and the different associations conform to the same pattern with regard to the length of the term, and the time and year of the 'change-over' from grade to grade. In Bida the sub-

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division goes much farther, and we find a large number of disconnected associations, which are no longer co-ordinated or conform to a common pattern. I estimate the number of age-grade associations in Bida at 200. The individual *ena* is, again, bound up with locality, and includes boys and young men from the same part of the town. But here two new factors enter: social differentiation, and divided political allegiance. The very fact that the Bida *ena* finds its members among friends and close acquaintances already expresses the tendency to make it socially homogeneous, and to limit its membership to individuals from the same social stratum, or the same professional group. *Sarakiži* and *talakaži* never mix in the same *ena*. Nor do prosperous traders or Mallams join the same *ena* as peasants or small craftsmen; nor does, finally, the youth of the craft-guilds intermingle—glass-workers, blacksmiths, weavers, all have their separate age-grade associations. The limitation with regard to locality and close acquaintances is less rigid in the highest grades than in the junior grades. For as in the course of years the membership decreases, some members having died, others having left the *ena* or perhaps the town, it sometimes becomes necessary to open the membership of the higest grade to people from other parts of the town. Yet no *ena* would accept members from beyond the boundary of the town *ekpã*. The political solidarity of the three dynastic divisions of the town is thus reflected in, and even, as we shall see, actively supported by, the age-grade associations of the capital.

Here once more we gain insight into the social significance of the Nupe age-grade association: it underlines and fosters the solidarity of the existing social groupings. This means something different in the village and in the town. In the former it refers to the village community at large, and we find the age-grade associations stretching across it, and across the large kinship units and 'houses' into which the village society is divided. We can liken the age-grade system to a horizontal plane cutting across the separate structures of the extended families, with their wide base, tapering off to the apex of the one official representative of the family group, the titled elder. The age-grade association must thus counteract all possible separatist tendencies of individual kinship groups and sustain the large-scale integration on which the existence of the village as a social unit depends. In large villages this integrative scheme is in some measure narrowed down, owing to the size of the groups that can be absorbed effectively in a single age-grade association. It assumes, in fact, a somewhat different aspect, in uniting the extended kinship units within themselves—in the form of the large *efu* group—that is, in holding together the widely expanded structure which is to support the apex of a common official representative.

In the town the existing social grouping is created and held together by political and class interests. Here again, the age-grade association fosters the unity of a group which is to submit, in 'real' life, to a common head. But he no longer represents the 'apex' of an organically grown structure; as the *ena* is largely the product of a free, voluntary association, the group loyalty which it fosters is towards the freely chosen leader of a local political faction.

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round 369 the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is 561 raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan religion.

I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing 561 collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the *ena* a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known [789] as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice as fast'.

Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the 561 narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional 574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*, *Etsu*, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food, drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the members of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited. At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred guests.

Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the 561 courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts 574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle, leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one 535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they 554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers. 369 There exist special *ena gbarúfuži* dances, performed at these occasions: they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena. Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

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> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

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It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

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[1] This song, which was composed by the *zamoro* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows. [533]

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561 sub-tribe of Kutigi, Enagi, and Dabbā, the *gani* even dramatizes the age-grade structure itself, its system of ranks, and the promotion from grade
796 to grade. The *gani* assigns different ceremonial duties to the different grades, and involves certain symbolic tests of manhood of progressive severity which the different age-grades, one after the other, must undergo. The ceremony can, in fact, be regarded as a ritual of age-grade initiation. However, I must leave the description of this ceremony, closely associated though it is with the conception of age-grades, for a future occasion.

Let us turn to the Mohammedan religious ceremonies. At the celebration of the *Sallah* the age-grade associations play a much less specific role. They arrange a small festivity in the house of their group captains on the eve of the *Sallah*, at which—as in all houses of Bida and Mohammedan Nupe on that evening—a ram is killed and eaten. On the following morning the various *ena* of the town meet in the market to join the thousands of people who will follow the royal procession to the mosque and round the town walls, and gather later in front of the Emir's house, listening to drummers and musicians, and watching the display of the horsemen and the coming and going of the royal guests.

The celebration of the Mohammedan New Year, on the other hand, called *navū* in Nupe (lit. torches), represents the climax of the public appearances of the Bida *ena*. The *navū* is essentially a festival of youth. Its ritual acts, which appear to express, symbolically, the death and renewal of the year, are carried out by the young folk of Bida. On the eve of the New Year, at sunset, all the age-grade associations meet in the houses of their captains, and then march to the market of their town quarter, where all the associations of the *ekpā* forgather. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands, and are clad in simple, scanty garments. Three long processions, one in each *ekpā*, move slowly through the streets of Bida, down to the arm of the river flowing through that part of the town. The boys sing and dance while they walk, and throw their torches high up in the air, catching them as they fall. Arrived at the river, they take off their garments, and, clad only in a loincloth, wade into the water. There is no atmosphere of ritual or ceremony about it; they splash and play in the water, dance, wrestle, sing, and laugh at the clumsiness of those who drop and extinguish their torches. All the time the torch-play goes on; they play with the torches like balls, throwing and catching them. It is a dangerous game: I saw many lucky escapes, and quite a few incidents not so lucky.

561 Girls and young women, too, go to the river to bathe on the *navū*, and the sexual attraction adds its stimulus to the general excitement.
796 The *navū* is, in fact, the only occasion on which I have seen the Nupe indulge in open, undisguised, sexual play. Torches are thrown into the
786 water to light up the spot where girls are bathing almost naked; boys
519 accost girls in the water, and couples disappear in the dark of the riverbanks. But the *navū* is in more than one respect a period of licence. Indeed, more important than this amorous play is the licence which was extended till about fifteen years ago to all acts of violence and assault that might occur on *navū* night. And such liberty of action was not

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one *ena* would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age-grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the individual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which

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561 lays down the rules of behaviour for *ena* members, and which is again valid for life. These rules demand friendliness towards one another, and avoidance of all quarrels; mutual assistance in work (though not with regard to loans); respect towards one's superiors in the group; and respect also for the sanctity of marriage among all fellow members. The significance of this last rule, which applies to brides as well as wives, in age-grade associations the lifetime of which comprises the years when the adolescents first awake to the reality of sex, when they court and finally marry, need not be emphasized especially. Yet only in the village can the rule be regarded as tending to eliminate quarrels and feuds which must disrupt the community. In Bida it is in effect abetting matrimonial laxity outside the small group to which this code applies. The narrow political and class loyalty of the Bida *ena* has thus its counterpart in the no less narrow *esprit de corps* with its qualified respect for matrimonial rights.

In the case of a breach of the age-grade code the culprit is summoned before the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*, who have the right to punish him. A first, light offence may entail only a warning. Repeated offences will be punished more severely. If a young man shows himself lazy in *egbe* work or reluctant to fulfil the obligations of collective farm-work, it is regarded as sufficient punishment to order him to work in the back row, among the youngest and most inexperienced *ena* members. In the case of more serious offences the penalty may take the form of social ostracism: the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* would rule that no member of the *ena* must attend festivities in the house of the offender. This sentence, I was told, soon brings the culprit to heel; he will kneel down in front of the *Etsu* and ask him for forgiveness, protesting that he would henceforth mend his ways. In certain age-grade associations, especially in Bida, fines are inflicted in the case of graver offences against the *ena* code. Expulsion is never practised, not even as a penalty of the gravest of all age-grade offences—misconduct with the bride or wife of a comrade. However, my inquiries into the occurrence of this offence were invariably answered with a blunt denial. Whether or not it was founded on fact I have no means of deciding. Quite possibly the *esprit de corps* of the *ena* forbade admission of so shameful a charge. The rather too sweeping denial with which my questions were met makes it appear not unlikely: 'We are like brothers,' many of my informants said, 'who would steal a brother's wife?'

In one respect, at least, this statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration. Age-grade comrades are not 'like brothers'. The intimate relation between age-grade comrades which this simile suggests is not true to facts. The relationship existing between friends, on the other hand, is often likened to the relationship between brothers, and does in certain respects resemble it. But age-grade comradeship as all informants agreed, is sharply distinguished from friendship, and the mutual obligations of friendship in no way coincide with those implied in *ena* membership. The subject is worth pursuing.

A man (or woman) will never have more than one friend. The friend may come from a different locality, a different profession, even a differ-

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ent tribe. I have seen friendship between a Nupe and a Yoruba in Jebba, 561
and between a Kutigi farmer and a *koni* weaver, between a Bida tailor
and a peasant from Patigi. Only social class remains an effective barrier 572
even in friendship. Unlike age-grade comrades, friends will help each other with money. Friends may also exchange their children, that is, adopt each other's children, and marry them to their own children—as is also done by men who stand to each other in the relationship of classificatory brothers. This practice has the aim, as the people say, 'to increase friendship'. The essential difference between age-grade fellowship and friendship is thus clear: if the former fashions sentiments of 'belonging together' on the basis of similarities in outlook and interest, i.e. similarities involved in common locality, tribal origin, common occupation, the latter unites individuals *qua* individuals, in a union which is essentially new, and initiates rather than follows existing bonds and sentiments.

It remains to discuss the *ena nyentsugizi*, the age-grade associations of 561
the girls, and the relation between the parallel age-grades of the sexes. 571
I have said already that the girl's *ena* is limited to the youngest age-grade. As explanation of this different organization among the girls the people argue there can be no senior grades among girls, since the approximate age limit of the junior grade, 15 to 16 years, coincides with marriageable age. Unlike boys, the girls can no longer carry on in the *ena* once they are betrothed or married; their duties towards husband and family cannot be reconciled with age-grade activities. This explanation is borne out by the characteristic relations that unite the parallel *ena* of boys and girls. They both take exactly the same titles; and a boy and a girl who bear the same title enter a special, close, relationship: the boy calls the girl *nna*, mother, and the girl the boy *nda*, father. Girls' and boys' groups meet at the various feasts which age-grade associations arrange. It is the duty of the girls to prepare food and beer, the money being contributed by the boys, and to serve it at the *ena* feast. The *Etsu* of the boy's *ena* presents the girls with kola-nuts. The girls will sing and dance, and the boys will watch, and then, in their turn, the boys will perform before the audience of the girls. They all behave with utmost dignity, and even severity: the *ena* is quite obviously not the place for flirts and amorous play of the kind one can observe between boys and girls who meet in the street or market. The symbolism of the names by which girls and boys address each other—names which are never used by lovers or by husband and wife—emphasizes the 'respectable', non-sexual, nature of this relationship, even to the extent of excluding any reference to legitimate sex relations—marriage. It is supposed to happen occasionally that boys and girls who were brought together in the *ena* marry afterwards. I have not come across an actual case. The relationship between them, while the *ena* lasts, is definitely meant to be in the nature of comradeship, and must never lead to sexual relations. Yet once the girl is married, it may be difficult to maintain this aloofness. The danger of jealousy on the part of the husband, and possibly the temptation of carrying comradeship with the other sex to a more intimate relationship, forbid a continuation

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561 571 of the girls' *ena*. So much for the interpretation of the *ena nyentsugiži* on the lines of the Nupe argument.

561 But if for women the age-grade career comes to an end with marriage, while for men marriage represents neither a limit nor even a conspicuous grade in the age-grade career, this reflects also the different sociological significance that marriage has for women and men. For women, it is the end of one life and the beginning of another. It means change of home and family bonds, and initiation into new aims and duties. For men, marriage—a first marriage—does not even coincide with the periodical readjustments in the labour-unit, i.e. the release from the *efakó* group which, as we have seen, takes place as a rule when a man has two wives or grown-up children. The social career of the men—achievement of economic independence, promotion to office, and responsible position in the community—only begins to fulfil itself long after their first marriage; that of the women is meant to enter its last phase in marriage. Indeed we have seen that when the woman claims the right of an independent, continued, social career, she must buy it with the sacrifice of the marriage union.

561 864 As regards the institution of the parallel age-grades its practical value seems to be that it prepares the ground for the first experiences of sex relations. Or rather, it aims at circumventing, and dulling, this unsettling first experience. Enabling the sexes to meet in the critical age, between 13 and 16, as it were on neutral ground, openly and respectably, it tends to remove some of the secrecy and unhealthy curiosity that is part of the mental transition from the self-contained existence of early youth to the new awareness of the polarity of sex. Our study of adult sex morality has left no doubt about the restricted effectiveness of this native 'co-educational' scheme. It must fail because it is, like all faulty education, in the nature of a palliative. It breaks the adolescent, we might say, gently, to the moral code of adulthood, but it adopts this code in all its dangerous narrowness and its rigid exclusion of amorous experiments and pre-marital sex relations. If age-grade discipline paves the way for adult sex morality, it does so also with respect to its repressions and inhibitions, and that final sweeping reaction against conventional morality which we could study in the adult life of the Nupe people.

561 To summarize. The age-grade associations include the adolescent male (and to lesser extent female) population of Nupe from early youth up to the threshold of adulthood. The most vital years in individual development are thus brought under the influence of this institution. We have studied the decisive part which it plays in moulding the personality of its members and in defining their attitude towards tasks and problems which they are to face in adult life. The essence of the institution of age-grades is, then, preparation—a twofold preparation. Its first aspect is the fashioning in the framework of the age-grades of sentiments of solidarity which are to bind the group at large.

182 561 This involves an important theoretical problem which has greatly engaged the attention of modern sociologists and social psychologists, namely, the possibility of transferring co-operation and solidarity

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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.[1] Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

The second aspect of the preparation embodied in the age-grade system is the training of the adolescent, through discipline and certain concrete activities, in the tasks and duties which await him in adult life, and in the values and incentives which he will have to make his own. In the village this preparation represents a first step towards a final social career; in Bida it mostly implants in the mind of the adolescent values and incentives, as it were, *in abstracto*, without promising equally their fulfilment in later life. It teaches people who will never share in directing the fate of their country to appreciate, and make their own, the motives and values which govern the conduct of those who do. It imparts, if not claims to responsible citizenship, yet its spirit.

THE MEANING OF NUPE LIFE

If we compare Nupe religious teaching with the teaching implied in the age-grade system we find that the two educational institutions supplement each other in many respects and that, between them, they take in the whole field of 'education for citizenship'. The Mallam school offers promotion to one social plane; the age-grade association practises promotion in the framework of a complex scale of steps and grades. The promotion afforded by religious education is 'real', in the sense that it involves social privileges in adult life; that practised in the age-grades is fictitious, even vicarious, and concerns mental readiness rather than concrete achievements. Religious education, finally, creates a loosely organized professional group and at the same time fosters a much wider psychological unity, which embraces the whole of Nupe society, across tribal and class boundaries. The age-grades create an intensive solidarity, but only in a very narrow framework, and give tribal and class boundaries a wide berth. Common to both religious education and the age-grades is the social upward trend, the motive of rise and promotion. This upward trend appears indeed as the paramount motive in Nupe cultural life. If it is possible to reduce a whole culture to a single formula, to a fundamental unitary *ethos*, we find it in this *leitmotif* of

[1] Cf. F. C. Bartlett, in *The Study of Society*, 1939, p. 43: 'A specially interesting question is: if cooperation is established in one respect, when and how far does this help individual members of the groups concerned to cooperate in other respects?'

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rather in its absence of purpose. Although it has a definite date like other rituals and although the masks must dress in secrecy, there is nothing sacred about the performance. No sacrifice or ritual preparations precede or accompany it; and the *elo* is positively stated to be nothing like a *kuti*, but merely *dzodzo*, 'play'. The dance seems to contain the remnants of some plot or dramatic theme; the various roles of 'male' and 'female' figures and of 'clowns' or 'robbers' can suggest nothing else. But again, the people deny that there is such a plot or that these 'roles' have any meaning. The *elo* songs, certainly, betray none. Here are a few of them, each consisting of a brief line which is endlessly repeated throughout the corresponding phase of the dance.

> *Zwákule, zwákule* (meaningless).
> I am calling Kolo (a name, here applied to *elo*),
> he is coming slowly.
> The *elo* matures every year.
> They are calling Kolo, he swings his leg,
> *ebi du, ebi du* (meaningless).
> Every year we are making *elo*.
> The *gara* appears, there is his face.

In a sense, the *elo* is a mixture of ritual and entertainment. But unlike the usual Nupe ceremonial, in which the ritual part precedes the 'play', the *elo* involves ritual only as it were in its administration (in the fixed date, the secret dressing-up of the actors, the formal apportionment of relevant duties); the rest is pure entertainment. Perhaps, in its original form, the *elo* was more fully a ceremonial, with some religious purpose as well as a plot. But even this the Nupe would deny; for although they sanctify the practice by ascribing it, in familiar manner, to the ancestor king, they impute to him no reasons other than (we might say) aesthetic ones. Nor have these reasons quite ceased to work. At the Bida *salla* in 1936 I saw a dancer with an unusual headdress which I had never seen before, neither at the previous *salla* nor on other occasions. The dancer himself was one of the *sorogi* dancers mentioned in a previous context;[1] but on his head he wore a brass cap with two horns. Subsequent enquiries elicited the fact that the headdress had been made by a Bida brass-smith to the specifications of the dancer: and the latter had meant to copy the horns of the *elo* masks which he had seen and admired in Mokwa.

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(iv) *The Gani of Kutigi*

I have elsewhere described this cult and the manner in which it took root in Kutigi and the adjacent communities, so that I need

[1] See above, p. 188.

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only summarize the salient facts.[1] Unlike the *elo*, the *gani* can clearly be traced to its alien origin, and its importation into Nupe, by Moslem immigrants from the north, can even be dated with fair accuracy (having occurred probably about 1760–70). The Moslem character of the ceremonial is visible, above all, in the esoteric part, which takes the form of a symbolic burial in the Mohammedan manner; it is further emphasized by the often voiced claim that the whole ceremonial represents an observance of Islam, namely, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet—a claim which has little validity.[2] Even so, the *gani* has been firmly adopted also by the pagan population and, what is more important, has been adopted as a ritual or at least as a ceremonial of serious and sacred import. Yet in calling the *gani* a ritual or ceremonial I am stating my own conclusions, couched in our conventional terminology. The Nupe have no suitable name for this performance which has many aspects of a ritual act without conforming to a 'ritual' as the pagans understand it. They all emphasize that it is not a *kuti*; but neither do they call it *dzodzo*, mere 'play', in spite of the great scope given to mummery, display, crude pranks, and merry-making generally. They either use the non-committal term *nya'nya*, 'dancing', or simply argue that 'the *gani* is the *gani*', that is, unlike any other tribal festivity. Linguistic usage, it seems, has not quite caught up with this novel and ambiguous species of ceremonial.

The *gani* ceremonial has for its main theme the periodical reconstitution of the village age-grade associations, that is, the acceptance of novices into the first grade and the promotion of older boys and youths to higher grades. These corporate promotions go hand in hand with a reshuffling of the various ranks held in each age-grade association, and hence with an upgrading or downgrading of its members. If the age grades thus appear dominated by competition and the notions of rank and career, they merely mirror as well as anticipate interests paramount in Nupe political life. As I phrased it elsewhere, age-grade life serves as an 'education for citizenship';[3] and this aspect too is given expression in the *gani* ceremonial, together with other ideas of more general import, bearing on growth and maturity.

In the ceremonial each age grade is assigned a specific role, acting under its leader, who bears the title *Ndakotsu*—'Grandfather of

[1] See 'The Gani Ritual of Nupe', *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949.

[2] This is clearly shown by the discrepancy in the dates. The Birth of the Prophet (*Ma'ulid*) falls on the twelfth day of the first lunar month of the Mohammedan calendar (in 1934 the 29th March), while the *gani* celebrations start on the tenth day of the 4th month in Nupe reckoning (in 1934, the 25th June).

[3] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 383 *et seq.*

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771 the king'. Thus led, the age grades walk in procession through the
177 village to salute the chief and all the other notables of the com-
561 munity, join in the dancing, engage in wrestling matches, and meet one another in a realistic 'battle', to be described presently. The esoteric rite of the *gani*, the 'burial service' mentioned before, is performed by the leaders alone, in a secret place away from the scene of the public festivities. The younger boys are all dressed up as girls and imitate, in exaggerated and ridiculous fashion, the walk and dance steps of the women. This masquerade, though highly elaborate and considered a most relevant aspect of the celebration, is not further explained; but the context makes it clear that it carries the same meaning of a change of roles which underlies the similar mummery of the *gunnu*.[1] For this meaning is again expressed, now by means of a conspicuous symbolism which everyone understands, in certain other episodes of the *gani*, meant to dramatize the admission of the novices and the various promotions from grade to grade. There is the 'death and burial', loudly mourned by the crowd, of a 'little girl', indicating the abandonment of infancy by the young boys about to enter the first grade. In a preceding phase a 'little boy' is similarly buried and mourned, that is, shown to abandon boyhood for adolescence. Lastly, the youths of the most senior grade appear dressed up as 'warriors' and 'horsemen', meeting their juniors in a mock battle which seems to symbolize the final stage of adolescence, when youth must hold its own against adults, compete and struggle with them, and break into their ranks. All these things actually happen in the 'battle', whose very realism seems symbolic of the severe competition for position and power which characterizes Nupe life. In brief, the *gani* ceremonial is a typical *rite de passage*, dramatizing the crucial phases of male adolescence and adoption into manhood. Seen against this background, an ususual feature of the *gani*, too, falls into place. Obscene sexual jokes and allusions, normally never used, appear in the *gani* songs and are freely bandied about during the festivities, both by old and young: we may conclude that they serve to throw into relief a final aspect of adolescence, sexual maturity.

771 The ceremonial lasts three days, and each day concludes with a
177 hectic dance in which the sexes meet in utterly unrestrained
786 fashion. Nor does this unrestraint end with the dance; for during
561 the three nights all the normal rules of sex morality are in abeyance. This temporary abandonment of moral restraint, which applies to every person in the community, implies, of course, more than merely a symbolic reference to adolescence and sexual maturity. It represents one of those periodical concessions to moral

[1] See above, p. 113.

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or sexual licence which are familiar from many societies, primitive and advanced. We know that they occur also in the traditional annual celebration of the *gunnu*. And here it seems significant that the people of Kutigi and the other communities now performing the *gani* have abandoned the *gunnu* in this fixed, annual form.[1] Whatever other reasons have contributed to the abandonment of the annual *gunnu*, the fact that it shared with the *gani* this one feature may well have been decisive; for it would seem to be in the very nature of this concession to unrestraint that it must not be duplicated.

There is evidence to show that the sexual licence belonged to the *gani* already in its original form in which it reached Nupe country. This original *gani* equally included some connection, apparently broad and unspecific, with age-grade life and male adolescence.[2] To some extent, then, the Nupe found in the *gani* a cult fortuitously congenial to their own interests and ideas. But let us note that the *gani* expresses them with unaccustomed sharpness: the masquerade of boys as girls, sketchily treated in the *gunnu*, is fully exploited in the *gani*; and nowhere else is age-grade life dramatized with such effect.

Other 'Nupeisms' in the *gani* are clearly the result of adaptation and remodelling. Thus, though the ceremonial retained its original name, its songs and prayers are in Nupe; the latter, spoken at the secret 'burial service', conclude with the typical Nupe formula—'May the whole town have health'; the musical instruments, the music itself, the dance steps, and the whole design of the ceremonial, with an esoteric part preceding the public 'merry-making'—all these are taken from the traditional practice. Yet equally, the *gani* contains conspicuously novel and 'un-Nupe' features. The very notion of a ceremonial having a proper plot and being staged as a drama with consecutive scenes has no parallel in Nupe. The same is true of the precise symbolism of the *gani* and of the masquerade of warriors and horsemen: the latter, incidentally, appear as riders of hobby-horses, which mummery is equally unknown in the rest of Nupe. So are the standards with which the age grades parade during the ceremonial, some of which are combined with crude symbols of the sexes. The open eroticism of the *gani*, finally, contrasts strikingly with the normal mood of Nupe ceremonials.

[1] See above, p. 83. It will be remembered that the performance of the *gunnu* as a movable rite (which is still practised in Kutigi) does not include the 'mixed' dance and the period of erotic licence.

[2] The evidence in question is based on accounts of the *gani* celebrations in its country of origin and among the nomadic Fulani. See *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949, p. 177, n. 2.

565 Below the *sarakiši* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wuši*, whose
567 members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[13] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiši*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

PATRONAGE[13]

566 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society.
675 The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

AGE-SETS[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiši*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiši*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfuši*, of ages *c.* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

GOVERNMENT[15]

631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[13] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 383–401; 1935a, pp. 209–71, 292.
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–18

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CHAPTER IX
THE POSITION OF THE WOMEN

RANKS AND OFFICES

IT speaks for the consistency of the political system of Nupe that the position of the women, too, should be drawn into its orbit and even into the framework of official grades and ranks. Among the women of royal blood in pre-Fulani Nupe three women's ranks existed: *Nimwoye*, *Sagi*, and *Wogbo*. Precedence and succession in these three ranks corresponded to the succession in the three highest *gitsú* titles. At the court of ancient Nupe the titles were bestowed by the king on his mother or father's sister, elder sister, or daughter. The holder of the title had to be a *nyizagi gbakó*, a 'strong woman', that is, a woman of about 40–50 years. She had to be unmarried, or else her marriage would be formally dissolved on her appointment to the rank, and she would forthwith be regarded as unmarried. She lived, not in the house of her husband or father but in the *Etsu*'s own house. The Fulani adopted the first two ranks, abandoning, however, the condition of celibacy or nominal celibacy, and made the two daughters of Manko the first *Sagi* and *Nimwoye*. The two ranks have remained in the royal house of Nupe since then. After the split of the dynasty into three branches the women's ranks followed the new dynastic division, the title *Nimwoye* being assigned to the women of the royal house of Massaba, and the title *Sagi* being taken, in rotation, by the women of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman. This rule still holds good: the present *Sagi*, for example, is a sister of the late *Etsu* Bello of the house of Usman, and the *Sagi* before her was an elder sister of the *Shaba*, of the house of Umaru.

The women rank-holders occupied an extremely influential position at the court. They took part in the king's council, they could join in the war with their own troops of slaves and serfs, they held fiefs and owned land. Theirs was the position of 'kings over the women of Nupe'. Although these political prerogatives have disappeared, the position of authority vested in these women's ranks is unimpaired. All quarrels between women, especially women of the noble families, are brought before them; the women of Bida and the villages send them presents and receive counter-presents from them, much as is the custom between the noblemen of Nupe and their king. *Sagi* and *Nimwoye* are often the official representatives of the court at the family feasts of the Bida nobility. At the name-giving ceremony which was celebrated in the house of the *Shaba* in 1936 the *Sagi* came to bring presents and congratulations from the *Etsu*—an honour which was duly appreciated by all who were present.

Among the Bida women of low birth, the wives and daughters of commoners, we find another women's rank, *Sonya*.[1] She is, as the Nupe

[1] The Nupe word *Sonya* corresponds to the Hausa word (and the equivalent women's rank) *sarauniya*, lit. queen. *Sō* or *So* is a Nupe root meaning head or chief.

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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women
554 of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The
[443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding
[651] land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women',
562 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about
624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a
754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

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of the office of the village *Sagi* and to emphasize its harmless business side instead. 562

Thus we find that in many Nupe villages an efficient business-like head of the women has succeeded the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the old type. In other places, again, the people would not admit the magic significance of the woman's rank. Yet the strength of the belief, concealed though it may be, was shown in a witchcraft case which I happened to witness in Gbajibo, a small village on the Niger above Jebba. Here the *Sagi*, the very business-like head of the local women, was yet behind the public outcry against an alleged witch. The women much more than the men were leading in this persecution; they had been the first to ostracize the victim; and when I questioned them about their motives, they all referred me to the *Sagi*. Her own motive appeared to be jealousy of the other woman, the alleged witch, in whom she saw a dangerous rival, possibly even for the position of a *Sagi*. 624 754

The office of the *Sagi*, modern or traditional, is invariably a much-coveted one. Her moral hold over the women, as our example has shown, is complete. It is equally strong in the less sinister spheres of communal life: like the *Sonya* in Bida, the village *Sagi* advises the women, organizes women's work, arbitrates between them, and receives small presents from every business transaction which they carry through.

MARRIAGE AND STATUS

The ranks and offices already discussed all belong to married women. But we have seen that they represent forms of status which the women acquire in their own right, on the grounds of descent, or personal ability, or both, independent of their status as wives of men who occupy this or that social position. We shall see later that the same principle applies also to the status won by wealth. In particular the status by descent of the Nupe women is affected but little by marriage, i.e. by the social status of their husbands; in so far as it is so affected, this change is in the direction of social advancement. Women of low birth who marry above their status into the aristocracy can claim the status of their husbands; and women who marry beneath their station do not lose their status but raise their husbands to their own social level. The men will be allowed to share most of the social and political privileges of the class into which they marry. Two cases were reported to me in which the men could even acquire *saraki* ranks after marrying a woman of the *saraki* nobility. But even if the men are not admitted fully into the titled class, their children would always acquire the status of their mother. Daughters may thus inherit the status of their fathers, and both sons and daughters that of their mothers; husbands may be adopted into the social sphere of their wives and parents-in-law. This social regulation may seem surprising in an otherwise strongly patrilineal society. But this one-sided interpretation of the change of status that goes with marriage is not an expression of matrilineal kinship tendencies, nor of 'feminist' leanings in Nupe society (though we shall find ample evidence of these, too); rather it expresses political 562 554 565

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interests, deep-seated class sentiments, which cannot admit of a lowering of status in any one high-born. Yet if, owing to the rigid class system, marriage between the classes is thus turned into a potential instrument of social advancement, its utilization in this sense is also rigidly controlled.

For marriage in the aristocracy, especially in the royal nobility, is to very large extent endogamous—'family marriage' as the Nupe call it. As the Nupe-Fulani regard themselves all as related, and as most families of the nobility are more or less closely related by marriage, practically all 'family marriages' of this kind are at the same time marriages within the ruling class. The Fulani in Nupe, moreover, following Mohammedan practice, encourage parallel cousin marriage (which is forbidden by the traditional marriage rules of the country) as well as cross-cousin marriage, and thus widen enormously the scope of 'family marriages', especially between descendants in the male line. Family marriage in Nupe, finally, is characterized by a much lower bride-price than that paid in ordinary exogamous marriage. This leads to the rather paradoxical situation, on which my informants invariably commented, that the wealthiest and proudest classes of the country favour 'cheap' marriage, while the humble commoners and peasants are committed mostly to a very high bride-price. The explanation is that the low bride-price in this case supplies an additional incentive for endogamous marriage—'class endogamous' marriage, as it were—and thus for the preservation of the social identity of the ruling classes (as well as, incidentally, a strengthening of their group solidarity).[1]

Indeed the counterpart of the incentive of a low bride-price in 'class endogamous' marriages is the 'deterrent' of an exceptionally high bride-price demanded in the case of marriages between the classes, i.e. between men of the *tálaka* class and girls or women of the nobility. Such cases are accordingly rare. Yet we may note that if a chance of such marriage exists, if the girl loved the man sufficiently to overlook the difference in social status, the high bride-price alone proves no obstacle. For friends and relations would join forces to find the money and to enable the ambitious suitor to make his luck by this advantageous marriage. The benefits of his new position would be considered sufficient promise of an eventual ample gratification. One of my Bida servants was an example: the son of a commoner, he had succeeded in winning the love of the daughter of a very high *saraki* and eventually, after considerable difficulties, in marrying her with money borrowed from friends and relations.

The endogamous marriage rules only ensure that the women of the ruling classes should marry within the class; they do not attempt to exclude the less dangerous form of dilution implied in the marriages of the men to women from other classes and strata. Indeed, the polygamous nature of marriage in Nupe, which forces the men to seek wives

[1] One of my informants who belonged to the *saraki* class even went so far as to explain the whole principle of having a different bride-price for 'family' and 'outside' marriages as a political measure taken by the *saraki* and Fulani nobility with the purpose of preventing commoners from marrying into their class. Though incorrect as regards the facts, this interpretation is significant as an expression of the dominant class sentiments.

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Men who have to uphold their prestige and social position would never risk the publicity and ridicule of divorce proceedings in which they would have to appear in the role of the wronged husband.[1] The amorous affairs of Bida noblemen supply, in fact, an ever-welcome topic for the town gossips. When some years ago two popular noblemen quarrelled, everyone knew that it was about a girl and had the details at their finger-tips. Only the men of very great wealth and highest status are in a position to restrain or threaten their unfaithful wives. For one thing, they can afford to forfeit more than one bride-price, and can thus divorce their wives (according to Nupe Mohammedan law) without invoking elaborate public proceedings. Besides, wives and paramours would hesitate to provoke the enmity of these powerful personages. It is not unnatural, then, that (as my informants said) the wives of these men supply the only example of unimpaired marital fidelity in Bida—another no less striking instance of 'double morality'.

If the older married men are either resigned or complacent, the younger men see in illegitimate adventures only an exciting and tempting aspect of Bida life. We shall meet later with their ideal, the dashing young man 'about town' who can 'have' all the women he wants and can boast of his conquests. The women who avails herself of the loosened marriage ties may be talked about and called (behind her back) a 'bad woman'—*nyizagi banza*, a 'worthless woman'. But in their ordinary behaviour towards these women, when meeting them in the street or in the house of a mutual friend, the men will never fail in their respect towards them or betray by a sign their moral prejudices. This ambiguous attitude is symptomatic of a society which, though still conscious of its traditional dogmatic appreciation of chastity, is yet adapting itself to a spreading laxity of morals.

There is indeed evidence to show that sexual licence has been greatly increasing in the last generation or two. But there is also evidence of the fact that sexual licence on a smaller scale and within strictly defined limits enjoyed a legitimate existence in traditional Nupe society. The anomaly of public morals which would condemn sexual licence yet at the same time sanction it in a certain well-defined social domain is familiar to the student of society. In Nupe as in all other societies this qualified admission of sexual licence is due to various social causes. A first cause lies in the nature of sex itself, namely, in the reaction to the restraint on all pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations which characterizes the traditional sex morality of the people. Another cause is the large floating population in Bida, composed of traders, warriors (formerly), labourers (to-day), that is, men who come to Bida without their wives and depend on prostitution for the satisfaction of their sexual appetite. A third cause is embodied in the institution of female trade. We shall see later that women's trade involves a loosening of matrimonial and family ties and tends to become identified with licentious living. In female trade Nupe society thus has grasped a ready occupational framework for that domain of sanctioned

[1] Clear evidence of this is the scarcity of divorce cases, which form two-thirds of all court cases in Bida, from the houses of the nobility.

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sexual licence towards which the other social forces appear to be driving. The result is the close association between professional female trade and semi-professional licensed prostitution which we can observe to-day.

Yet admission into this 'domain' was in turn made dependent upon a certain qualification, namely childlessness. Here we can add a final, ideological motive to the social causes behind the moral development. It is embodied in the Nupe conception of barrenness as a state outside conventional morality, and its contribution is twofold: it helps to define more narrowly the group in which sexual licence shall be sanctioned, by making sterility of the women a criterion of admission; and it provides at the same time the spiritual framework for such social sanction, by linking it with certain religious or quasi-religious beliefs. To some extent the ideological association between barrenness and sexual licence can be reduced to certain obvious rational motives, which are, in fact, present in the minds of the people: childlessness is of great advantage in the life of the women traders whose profession involves constant travelling and long absence from home; moreover, the sexual indiscretions of sterile women are socially of less consequence than those of other women, being comparatively safe from discovery and precluding the more disturbing legal complications (i.e. birth of illegitimate children). But the social interpretation of barrenness also expresses certain more deeply rooted beliefs. To the Nupe marriage has no real meaning without progeny. Barrenness is regarded as a great curse and misfortune, and many cults and forms of magic are designed to secure fertility of the women or to cure barrenness. Traditional religious beliefs place barren women in a category apart and exclude them from participation in the most important annual cult of the country, the *gunnu*.[1] As the barren woman fails by the common standard of marriage and womanhood, she is also exempted from the standards of common morality. Adultery and unchastity count less in her than in other women. And although the stigma of immorality would still attach to the unchaste barren woman (she would still be called a 'worthless woman'), it would be, as it were, overshadowed by and fused with the other paramount stigma of barrenness itself.

The growth of sexual licence far beyond its traditionally sanctioned limits is again due to various causes, economic, political, and religious. The primary cause appears to be economic and will be discussed in that context. Its effectiveness, however, is greatly strengthened by the political and social factors which foster what I have termed the 'double morality' in Nupe society. We can also see that the Nupe conception of barrenness must itself indirectly aid these tendencies and defeat the limitations which it was meant to uphold. For in a country with spreading sterility and even birth restriction, a religion which withholds its sanctions of matrimonial morality in the case of childless women can prove but a weak bulwark against the tide of sexual licence. Mohammedanism in Nupe, committed as it is to that 'double morality', undermines rather than supplies forces of moral restraint.

[1] For a description of this aspect of barrenness see *J.R.A.I.* 1937, p. iii.

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A comparison between sex morality in the town and in the villages will bring the final proof of our interpretation of the social causes of moral laxity and publicly condoned sexual licence. For in the villages, where the political and economic factors to which we have attributed this development are much less conspicuous than in Bida, sexual licence in this sense is absent also. The same informants who declared that there were no 'good women' left in Bida maintained that the opposite was true of the country. Within limits, this is correct. Semi-professional prostitution is absent and adultery is far less frequent than in Bida. Above all, it is not glossed over for fear of publicity and ridicule: it leads to quarrels and frequently to divorce. Nor are illegitimate amorous adventures applauded and bandied about. The more closely knit village life renders sexual promiscuity both more difficult and more risky, and the danger of provoking serious conflicts forces it into the sphere of clandestine and disreputable activities. The ideal of the Bida Lothario is absent in the Nupe village.

It is largely true to say that among the peasant women also the Bida ideal of the glamorous 'fast' woman finds no following. Or, more correctly, it finds no following among the peasant's wives and daughters who have chosen village life. For especially in the larger trading-places there is a certain (increasing) minority of women who leave the village to join the army of 'loose' women traders. However, they do not introduce their ways into village life itself. To quote again from my informants: 'Peasant women are on the whole better wives than our women in Bida. You see it when you come to a village: you will not find women with whom you can sleep. But who would want to sleep with them? They are badly dressed, they do not wash, use no scent, and smell of sweat. There are a few exceptions, though, for example the women in the house of the chief of K.'—referring to a village in which the chief's family was in many ways emulating the standards of Bida life. There is good sense in these cynical (though not cynically meant) remarks. Hard work, lack of leisure, the inability to afford nice dresses or the help of cosmetics, make the peasant woman comparatively unattractive; she ages more quickly than her more fortunate sister in town. It is not surprising that she should come short of the sophisticated urban standards of taste. If the peasant woman thus succumbs less to temptation, it is also true that less temptation comes her way. Having chosen peasant life she can but choose peasant morality also. The different sexual morality in town and village is thus essentially an expression of differences in economic conditions and of inequality of wealth and status.

It is tempting to dwell on this relation between economic and political factors and the attitude of the society towards the problems of sex and morality. There has been the tendency in recent anthropological writings to regard the elaboration of the sex theme in different cultures, the temperamental and personality traits which, in a society, appear associated with sex, as the expression of some ultimate quality in culture itself —the genius or *ethos* of a culture. That women in one society are 'gentle' and 'aggressive' in another, that one culture regards them as masculine workers and another as feminine mothers or partners in love,

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POSSESSION OF LAND

In the discussion of the rights to land obtaining in Nupe two facts must be borne in mind. First, the Fulani conquest, which resulted in the appropriation of part of the vacant tribal land; and second, the very low birth-rate and sparse population of the country. These two factors limit each other's effectiveness; moreover, they affect different parts of the country in different measure. We have seen that the appropriation of tribal land took place only in the area east of the Kaduna (Cis-Kaduna).[1] In the area west of the Kaduna (Trans-Kaduna),[2] land-tenure on the traditional tribal or village basis still obtains, and here the population factor shows itself effective in that it eliminates almost all pressure on the land and all more severe competition for landed possession. Owing to the political factors the opposite is true of Cis-Kaduna, and here a complex system of land ownership and land transfer, which in the extreme case amounts to outright purchase for money, reflects the attempts of the people to counteract the pressure on the land. That land disputes are extremely rare in Trans-Kaduna, but very frequent in the 'conquered' territory, is evidence of the same development. One exception may be mentioned at once: the especially valuable marsh-land groves and plots near river-courses, which the Nupe call *bata* (the Hausa *kurmi*). Disputes about this valuable kind of land occur now and again even in the land-rich Trans-Kaduna, and they are fought with special bitterness in Bida and the crowded 'conquered' territory. The following figures may be quoted in support of this statement: in the years 1934 and 1935 24 cases of land litigation came before the *Etsu*'s Court in Bida; 21 referred to Cis-Kaduna and 3 to Trans-Kaduna; of the latter none was a land case in the narrow sense of the word—one was a dispute about trees, and two were disputes over marsh-land plots.

The description of Nupe land-tenure may start most profitably with an enumeration of the various methods by which a man, stranger or native of Nupe, may acquire land or has been able to acquire land in the past. It must be said first of all that under traditional conditions only men can hold or claim possession of land. The dynastic policy of the Nupe kings has first led to women being invested with fiefs and landed property. Mohammedan law, besides, is inclined to confirm land holding by women in their own right. But the holding of land by women is still extremely rare, and limited to Bida and the surrounding districts I have come across one case only—a court case in which sons and brothers of a recently deceased woman contested the inheritance of her landed property. Needless to say, none of the parties concerned were peasants; the land had been acquired first through the channels of clientship, and the present claimants—Bida Mallams—wanted it only in order to sublet it for profit.

To return to traditional land-tenure. For a Nupe man who comes

[1] The territory between Kaduna and Gbako river, i.e. Beni country, and the districts east of the Gbako river, i.e. Badeggi and Kacha districts.

[2] Trans-Kaduna is the literal translation of the Nupe name for the area: *Lavunkpā* (*Lavun* being the Nupe name for the Kaduna river).

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difference in quality and value to a much greater extent, namely, fruit-bearing trees. 423 621

In most districts the chief has a special title to certain economically valuable fruit trees wherever they grow, on vacant land or on people's farms. In Doko and Shebe this special chief's tree is the locust-bean, in Kutigi and Wuna the oil-palm. In Mokwa there exists another regulation, namely, that all shea-nut and locust-bean trees inside the town belong to the chief, while the trees outside are the full property of the man on whose ground they stand. Also there is in many places the general rule that no fruit tree on village land may be cut down without the special permission of the chief. Sometimes family heads exercise a restricted right to the 'chief's trees' growing on their land, i.e. they return two-fifths of the crop to the chief and keep the rest. But the chief may also grant the full possession of these trees as a separate right; thus he bestows the property of a certain number of valuable trees on an individual—young or old—as a recognition of higher civic status, together with the promotion to rank and title. The right to the trees, coupled with the rank, remains the property of the 'house', conditional upon the renewal of the appointment (to the same or a similar rank) after the death of each holder.[1] The shea-nut trees—to-day of considerable commercial importance—occupy everywhere in Nupe a special position. The trees on vacant land (virgin village land or no-man's-land) are common property. The women who collect the fruit go out in small parties and share the crop among them. The shea-nut trees on occupied farm-land belong to the owner of the farm.[2] In either case the exploitation of the crop is the exclusive prerogative of the women. [554] [562]

A few words may be given to a special variety of village land, the plots that are situated in the village itself, round the compounds and between the village *efu*. This land is owned by the people who live in the compounds adjoining the plots. Its inheritance and apportionment is ruled by the same regulations as the inheritance and apportionment of the houses themselves and will best be discussed in a later section. The land inside village and town differs only in one respect from the village land without: it is never left uncultivated. Manured as it is by the refuse from the houses it can be used continuously without the necessity of being left fallow for a period. If the owner of such plots leaves the village or the town and does not return for some time, leaving no one behind (which has happened frequently in Bida during the last twenty years), the neighbours will use the farm-plots; they are always ready,

[1] A certain complication arises when the modern official Village Head is not identical with the traditional chief, for the former may assume control over the land only, not over trees—he may indeed not possess any 'chief's trees' himself, at least not at the time of his appointment. There is no evidence as yet to show how this contradiction will be solved in the course of time—except an indirect evidence to be mentioned presently (see p. 189, n. 2), which tends to show that this separation of land- and tree-rights is allowed to last for several generations.

[2] The facts mentioned here will correct the statement made by some students of West African agriculture, that 'shea-nut trees are generally regarded as entirely common property' (O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, *West African Agriculture*, 1933, p. 27).

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front 462
and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the 476
women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the 461
egbe: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing— 533
the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs (no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small [857]
girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between 462
the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contribu- 562
tions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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462 *Women*: 'Yes, but *only* the grain. We have to contribute *kula*, *kuka*, salt, pepper and palm-oil.'

562 *I*: 'Surely you have locust-bean trees and red pepper in Leaba?'

Women: 'No, there are no locust-bean trees here, nor pepper.'

One woman: 'This is not true, we have pepper.'

Another woman (rather defiantly): 'Well, there still remains salt, *kula*, and palm-oil for which we, the women, have to pay.'[1]

[423] [1] Another example of the clearly defined economic rights of the women is this: in the Nupe communities in the forest groves on the Niger, where there are no shea-nut trees, the banana is the property of the women and supplies them with fruits which they can dispose of in their own right.

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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts, although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong
441 the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6
441 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which
868 they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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593 makes the women the main traders of the country that the women can as
562 a rule command more liquid capital than the men. In this sense, referring to the liquid resources, it can be said that the Nupe women are on the whole wealthier than the men. This does not mean that their financial position is entirely unaffected by the limited resources of the husband. The wives of small farmers and craftsmen or, generally, impecunious husbands, have little scope for their commercial activities, and may be unable to derive from the household resources the necessary working capital for a profitable independent enterprise. Where there is little to sell there can be little profit; and this small profit may be swallowed up by the normal household expenditure. Even the utensils and goods which constitute the wife's dowry may disappear gradually in a household where there is no money with which to replace the stock of pots, clothes, and ornaments—the woman's initial 'capital' (see p. 351). The household of a diviner in Bida, whom I knew well, was a typical case. The man was of poor health, unable to do any serious work, and had to rely entirely on his income from divining, which was small and irregular. The wife maintained the household, poor and simple as it was. She was about 40 years old; she had nothing left of her dowry save the few rags which she wore, and a few damaged pots. Every day she bought grain for 6*d.* on the market, made corn-gruel and corn-water, and sold this food in the mornings in the street, with a total profit of 2*d.* With this money she kept herself and her husband and a small child.

But usually the wives even of men whom one would hardly call prosperous attain an impressive degree of solvency. Solvency in this connexion is a relative term, as the pecuniary demands which the wives have to meet are much smaller than those which devolve on the men as the heads of the household. Yet in many cases the women come to the succour of their men even in expenses of the latter kind. It is by no means rare, especially in Bida, to find families in which a mother undertakes to pay the bride-price for the sons. Much more widespread is the practice of wives lending their husbands money, for example, for the payment of tax. Of this practice we shall hear more later. Let me emphasize here the dependence of the husband on his wife with regard to these monetary obligations—a dependence which must increase as the independent economic enterprise of the women, commerce, is increasing in scope. This fact is essential for the understanding of certain moral issues involved in the expansion of women's trade in Nupe.

441 I have stated earlier that the line of distinction between professional
462 and occasional traders is much more fluid among the women than among the men. Wives of farmers, craftsmen, Mallams, noblemen,
562 traders, officials—they all are, or may be, traders. The enormous variety in the trade which is carried out by the Nupe women, and in the degree of their 'professionalization', cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The woman who sells every morning two or three dozen packets of home-made *kamu* (corn-gruel) for a tenth of a penny each, and the woman who buys £5 worth of rice, kola-nuts, or European cloth, do not really differ in anything except in the amount of capital they can lay their hands on. The difference in the distance which they cover when

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disposing of their goods—the peasant woman who walks eight to ten miles to the nearest local market, and the professional woman trader who travels to Lokoja or Ilorin by canoe or train—may seem but an external feature. Yet this factor of distance possesses a deeper significance. The essential difference between the professional and the occasional woman trader is embodied in the extent to which their trading and marketing becomes an independent, self-contained, and self-centred enterprise. Both the occasional and the professional trader are out for profit. But only the latter has adjusted her life fully to this aim. 'Proper' trade necessitates a freedom of movement, a full-time devotion to the task, which only women who have made themselves independent can afford. It means extensive journeys, and long absence from home. Obviously, the wife of a farmer or craftsman who must look after the house is less able to do this than the wife of a trader or a man of the leisured classes.

But the profession demands even more than comparative leisure. The long absence from home, the life on the road, in foreign villages and countries to which none of the normal contacts of the community stretch, means ultimately a dissolution of the bonds of marriage, household, and family. The disappearance of all moral control of the husband over his wife, or the local community over its women, expresses itself in the sexual licence claimed by these women. Female trade and immorality are in Nupe conception two things closely related. The women traders who go on these long expeditions and stay away from home for weeks, months, or even years, are commonly regarded as 'loose' women, as women who cannot help leading a 'loose' and 'immoral' life. The women traders prostitute themselves for money in the villages and towns where they stop on their trading expeditions. The money which they make is regarded by the people as legitimate a form of earnings as that gained from trade itself. When they return to their homes husband and family will receive them without question, and no blame would attach to them for the life which they had been leading while away. Public opinion, though outspoken in its general condemnation of moral laxity, yet countenances the sexual licence of women traders and accepts it almost as an institution. If people—men, as the spokesmen of public opinion—express their indignation at this danger to matrimonial morality, they attack, not the practice itself, but its disproportionate growth in recent times.

We have, in a previous chapter, discussed the social significance of this qualified admission of sexual licence in a certain limited social domain (see Chap. IX). Let me recall the salient facts: female trade, closely associated as it is with licentious living, provided the scope for that socially condoned sexual licence which other social forces seem to have made necessary. Thus female trade became in some respects a closed profession, the entrance into which was made dependent on the qualification of sterility. We may add here that, not unnaturally, women who were past child-bearing age could also legitimately join the profession of women traders. By means of these two qualifications an occupation which harboured some danger to common morality was limited to

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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

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874 Certain progressive Bida Mallams include the teaching of Hausa and elementary arithmetic in their syllabus, and many adults, traders and other native business men, attend their classes to acquire knowledge so invaluable to their trade.[1] In certain Bida schools you will find young girls being taught together with boys. They come from the families of the nobility, which, conscientious Mohammedans, insist on elementary [562] religious instruction being extended also to women. Girls, however, are only taught the Koran, and do not study 'knowledge'.

Adult students, specially those who study the Koran or 'knowledge' for their edification, following another profession besides, visit the house of the teacher only for their lessons, which take place mostly in the evenings, once or twice a week, or even at longer intervals, according to the leisure which their occupation allows them.[2] Young pupils who live in the neighbourhood attend their classes daily while living with their family. Pupils whose family live some distance away will stay in the house of the teacher as members of his household.

875 The teacher of the Koran may not demand special payment for the tuition; according to Mohammedan principles religious instruction must 874 be free—*ebo albarka*, 'for the sake of blessing'. The wealthy Mallam, in fact, scorns all such payments as contrary to the spirit of religion. The poorer Mallam depends on what the family of the pupil offers him as *sádaka*, alms: a penny or twopence every two months, or a bundle of grain (worth 9*d*. or 1*s*.) once a year. Even these small gifts are very irregular; in the school of a Bida Mallam of good reputation, whose pupils numbered thirteen, half of the parents had sent nothing for over a year. Sometimes it happens that a boy's father dies while the boy is still studying, and his relations are unwilling to pay for his education. In this case the Mallam will continue to teach the orphan, let him live in his house and give him food and clothing, again *ebo albarka* only. Koran teachers in the country are worse off than their colleagues in Bida. In Kacha a Mallam who taught Hausa and arithmetic in addition to the Koran and 'knowledge', and who had eight young and fifteen adult students, received no payment from his students except an occasional gift of kola-nuts. If he asked for money, the students would indignantly threaten to leave and to seek another teacher. But both poor and wealthy Mallams receive a final gift from the parents of the student who has completed his studies, either money (in Bida), between 5*s*. and 10*s*., or (in the village) grain or a goat. The teachers can also obtain a certain indirect remuneration by letting their pupils work for them. School-work does not take up the whole day, nor every day in the week. In their

[1] The Education Department in Bida has arranged special evening classes for these enterprising Koran school teachers, and gives them also certain practical assistance, for example, by supplying them with blackboards. This scheme of adult education is of considerable value in the spreading of elementary education among that section of the population which has not had the advantage of education in the Government schools.

[2] Students in a Koran school in Kacha, who were canoe-men by profession, [505] attended the school whenever they returned to Kacha from their voyages, interrupting their classes for weeks and months at a time when they were out on a canoe expedition.

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in this or other female professions; all these things I found in fact to be true of the *Sagis* I met. And I would conclude further, that the position of leadership among the women who practise a trade or profession is apt to be identified with power of witchcraft, as the whole market organization of the women is in a sense identified with the fantasy organization of witches. So that the economic independence of women, which is so largely a moral independence as well, seems to furnish the logical basis for the ascription of witchcraft. Let me break off at this point, which we shall reach again by a different route.

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2. MALE AND FEMALE WITCHES

The Nupe text from which we started requires a final correction. Its summary assumption that only women are witches is somewhat inexact. Women alone are *evil* witches, who would desire to do all the things that witches are supposed to do; but there exist also male witches, who are in some measure their partners in crime. They are odd partners: they do not work evil themselves; they do not go out on the nightly search for human victims; on the contrary, the male witches are said to be 'good' people, who would curb the evil desires of the women. Yet precisely the most sinister effect of witchcraft, the killing of the victim (as against merely weakening his health), is thought to depend on the co-operation of both sexes.

We note the exact parallel to the two fatal 'diseases of God', leprosy and sleeping sickness. There, too, the two sexes appear as the two components of the supernatural threat, which is less grave if one alone is involved, and deadly only when the two are combined; and there, too, the female agent plays the decisive part. In the sphere of witchcraft, that part stands for the active evil will; while the role of the male agent is merely permissive or perhaps negative, that is, consists in *not* willing that the evil intentions be frustrated.

Thus far all Nupe are agreed. But on all other details concerning the alleged partnership of men and women opinions are once more divided. Only in Beni country and around Kutigi are the male witches called by a special name, *eshe*; elsewhere one uses *gaci*, and specifies the sex if necessary. If this is not done, the word is taken to refer to women. Most people hold that the male witches are much fewer in number than the female ones; thus it is thought that all the witches in a village, or seven, or three, share one male helper. They would visit him at night to solicit his help; but while some think that it is only the *fifingi* of man and woman who meet in this fashion, others are certain that it is the real persons who do

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The second legend, apart from being more widely known, is also more precise in its 'historical' allusions, naming the Nupe king in whose reign the critical events are said to have occurred; he is the same *Etsu* Shago whose reign saw the discovery of *cigbe*.[1] At the time, the people lived a lawless life, behaving insolently and 'refusing to listen to the Great Men'. Men would steal each other's wives and commit adultery without shame. The older women, especially, caused much trouble; they quarrelled among themselves and 'gave no peace'. The more law-abiding among the men grew angry and spoke harshly to the women; but these 'replied with insolence'. To continue *verbatim*: Now there was a young man, who had great strength. He set out and went into the bush. He then covered his head with cloth, like this (here the informant veiled his head with his gown, holding its end above his head, imitating the cloth mask of the *ndakó gboyá*). He reached the place where the women were causing a disturbance and yelled thus—'*Yi-i-i-i*' (the cry of the *ndakó gboyá*). When the women heard him they fled in fear. But one old woman did not run away. The old men also came, they waited for the woman to give way until they were tired: but she did not run away. The younger ones had all fled and left her alone. Thereupon the old men said to her—'*ezo, ezo*' (the ritual salute of the *ndakó gboyá*).[2] Thus they caught the woman. At last they killed her with an iron rod (*sãyi*). The men said: 'Even though she saw the *kuti* she did not run away; thus she was killed.'

We note two things: in the legend the evilness of the women implies striking at men or at least at their authority; also, the truly evil woman is pictured as old and as older than her victim or the man helpless against her (the king in the first legend and the young man in the second). On both points the legends side with the practice rather than with the theory of witchcraft, that is, with the concrete accusations, not with the formulated belief. According to the latter, the witch attacks human life at large, not only men, and she can be young or old, married or unmarried. The concrete case histories, however, show that the majority of victims are males, and usually younger men who have fallen under the influence of an older woman, who is then readily identified as the witch; while the alleged witch is always married, and often middle-aged or old. There is a further cleavage between 'theory' and 'practice'. As will be remembered, our text suggested that witches attack their own kin only exceptionally. This notion is

[1] See above, p. 17.

[2] This is not strictly correct. '*Ezo*' is the salute of the *gunnu* priest, but it is here used as though it belonged to the *ndakó gboyá* cult. These and other references to the cult will become clear later (see below, pp. 190 *et seq.*).

further elaborated in popular belief; for it is generally held that a witch who would attack her own flesh and blood cannot do so alone but must enlist the help of other witches, not related to the victim. Kinship, then, in some measure deflects and frustrates the evil designs of witches. It is in fact true that witches are only rarely accused of harming their own blood relations; I recorded only two cases of this kind, both referring to the witch's own children. But the victims are not necessarily strangers; as often they are affinal relations of the woman witch (her son-in-law, her husband, his brother or the brother's children, or the husband's children by another wife).

From this varied evidence the following picture of the witch emerges: she is the enemy of men and of male authority; she seeks to dominate men; her evilness is somehow bound up with married state and occasionally with old age, that is, age beyond child-bearing; and her evilness is often directed against a husband and his kin. Now all these traits fall into place against the background of that other belief which links witchcraft with the economic position of the women; for seen against this background, and allowing for the fantasy disguise, the witch is accused of doing mystically precisely what the women, in virtue of their economic power, are accused of doing in real life. So that the witchcraft beliefs and fears paraphrase a true state of affairs and the anxieties and frustrations arising from it. Consider, then, for a moment that 'true state of affairs'.

To begin with, a great many Nupe men, peasants as well as craftsmen or members of the 'free professions' in the town, are heavily in debt to their trader-wives, on whom they often have to rely for money for tools, for some unforeseen heavy expenditure, and even for such items as the brideprice of a son or funeral expenses, which it is the man's duty to defray. If this dependence on the wife must detract from the man's proper status as the 'breadwinner', his authority is seriously diminished also by another factor. In the Nupe kinship organization most rights and obligations descend in the paternal line; and as sons (to a lesser extent, daughters) derive their kin group membership (membership of a particular 'house') from their fathers, have a place in their father's home and labour team, and inherit his property, land or profession, so they normally look to him or his male kin for economic support. But where the mother is the richer, the inheritance she will leave will be at least as important, and even while she is still alive her sons or daughters will turn to her for financial help. Frequently, in fact, the mother will pay directly, and not only through loans made to her husband, for a son's marriage, buy him clothes or luxuries, or shoulder the cost of a more expensive

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education. Let me make it clear that the mother is always expected to do the best for her children, and to pamper them in small matters, by giving them sweets, tasty tit-bits, and occasional presents. Nor is her more consequential economic help strictly unexpected and against the rule: but it is a rule of *faute de mieux*, whose coming into play inevitably connotes the failure of the more basic rule, that it is the father's role to meet the economic requirements of the household. Here, as in the instance mentioned before, the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men.

There is a further point, already touched upon in a previous context. In Nupe, the women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes. This is true even of the many women who only visit the market in the town, the Bida night market being a recognized place of assignation. All this is bad enough in the case of childless women; but in their case such immoral conduct is condoned, if with a shrug of the shoulders. As proverbial, however, as the moral laxity of the women traders is their desire to avoid having children. It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'. They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness.

Whether the woman exceeds the proper role of a wife and mother or rejects it, in part or entirely, she has successfully set aside a believed-in social norm. Now, this is no longer an instance of social abnormality, rather the opposite, if by 'normality' we mean all that is common, usual, expected: but it is a normality one hates and regrets, and contrasts with a desired state of affairs unhappily uncommon. This is borne out in every conversation; in the many quarrels between husbands and wives; in the many divorces and separations (and equally in the resigned attitude of husbands); in the comments of the medicine experts which we quoted before; in nostalgic talks of the men about a happier past when 'women knew their place'; and in the exclusion of unchaste and childless women from religious ceremonials.

This, then, is a clash between ideal and reality. But it is in no sense seen as fortuitous or transitory, as the result of some unfortunate maladjustment which could have been avoided and can conceivably be set right if one only made the effort. The harking-back to 'the good old days' is merely an escape from a reality which one is helpless to alter. For no one speaks about a future when everything should be better than it is now; and though the

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*754 impact of alien influences and the vast increase in trade and traffic
562 in the last few decades may well have aggravated the situation, all
593 the available evidence (of genealogies and life histories) proves that
183 the morals of women and the fate of marriages were, for the last four or five generations at least, much what they are today. Nor is this harking-back more than half-hearted; no one would claim that there was a time when all women were chaste and submissive, when they did not trade and earn money, and when contraceptive practices were unknown. Indeed such a claim, were it ever made, would be belied by the character of the *gunnu* ritual and by various legends and stories. Briefly, for the people the ideal was always out of step with the reality; so that we must judge this conflict to be inherent in the make-up of the society, whose economic system (which has certain moral consequences) is as unquestioned as are its ethical conceptions (which condemn these consequences).

*754 This is important: for it is the inescapable nature of the conflict
154 which finds expression in the belief in women witches. Nupe
562 society, forced into an ambivalent attitude towards the role of women, which it cannot but accept and cannot but hate and call evil, also ascribes to them the powers of witchcraft. The coincidence as such is a matter of observed fact. But we can go further, and interpolate the psychological mechanism which turns the coincidence into a causal nexus, and hence enables us to call one thing the 'cause' and the other the 'symptom'. The mechanism is familiar: it lies in the projection of internal conflicts and of the frustrations so caused upon an external agent, real or imaginary. In our case, the awareness of an ideal state disturbed fastens upon the successful disturber; the helplessness in the face of a threatening situation turns into the positive fear of persons; and while one is incapable of dealing with the situation, one can at least deal with concrete individuals, whom one can accuse, persecute, and punish. So that in being made the witches of the society, the women are made to carry its fault or failure.

It is clear that this explanation holds good only on the assumption that the beliefs in witchcraft have been fashioned by men; for on almost every point we argued from a male standpoint. The legitimacy of this assumption need hardly be defended. The assertion of mundane morality, through legal institutions, falls to the men exclusively; above all, Nupe religion, its practices and doctrine, are fundamentally a male concern; and as it is the men who know and speculate about religion and have charge of the transmission of religious knowledge, so the notions of witchcraft must have been their creation. Situations of this kind are of course common; a great many societies are in this sense men-made and men-run; and if, like Nupe, they also afford considerable initiative and import-

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ance to women, they often, once more like Nupe, take back with one hand what they give with the other, that is, punish the permitted presumption by producing some belief in female witchery (whether taken literally or not). 754x 154 562

But the male standpoint does not hold throughout; for the Nupe condemnation of voluntary sterility represents the women's judgment as much as the men's. From earliest youth the women accept child-bearing as the mission of their sex. If later in life they deny it, they deny what they know to be 'human nature': hence their furtive dealings with the medicine-man abortionist and the admitted shamefulness of this traffic. Let me stress that this means more than an attempt to evade the moral judgments of others. The Nupe woman has her lovers openly, and as openly flaunts her wealth and independence, the adverse moral judgments of the men notwithstanding. So that, in hiding the shame of not wanting children she hides a shame of which she is aware and a guilt which she accepts. This guilt is probably shared much more widely; for every woman who takes concrete steps to avoid child-bearing there must be another who at least harbours the secret desire. However this may be, like the frustration of the men, the guilt of the women, open or secret, is projected into the picture of the female witch. For the women equally accept this picture. Though they may not have created the witchcraft beliefs, they yet have a hand in transmitting them and keeping them alive; at least, they share in gossip of this kind, if less openly than the men, and fabricate such stories. Whenever they do, they speak as accusers, vehemently denying that the role of the witch could apply to them. Even so, they accuse their own sex and, circuitously, themselves.[1] [837]

The men, then, in the witchcraft fantasies, condemn an antagonist; the women, in the same vicarious fashion, condemn their own guilt. In the concrete punishment, however, which witches are expected to suffer the male standpoint once more emerges paramount. It is the men alone who battle with witches, defeat and chastise them, through the male society of *ndakó gboyá*, as it is also the men who, in the legends about witchcraft, are credited with the discovery of this weapon; and this, as we shall see, is employed, not only to trace and punish the culprits, but also to threaten and to subdue the womenfolk at large.

There is a certain twist to this picture of male vengeance. In the legends the men, in the person of the diviner and the 'old man', are straightforward destroyers of witches. But general

[1] Margaret Mead has drawn attention to the nexus between witchcraft beliefs and willed female sterility (see *Male and Female*, 1949, pp. 232–3). Her views, stated in a broader context, bear out much of what I have tried to say.

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belief assigns to them a more ambiguous role, holding that some —the diviners, medicine-men, and 'male witches'—also assist the female witch and hence become her partners in crime. This may still seem to be only a fantasy paraphrase or 'projection' of real life, where the man's role is similarly ambiguous; for he will both claim domestic authority and surrender it, thus so-to-speak aiding and abetting the female ambitions. In a more subtle sense, however, the witchcraft fantasies stand for the triumph of the male. Consider that the woman witch, to be successful, must make a compact with men—diviners, *cigbeciži* or male witches. Her fullest, that is, deadly powers depend on male aid, so that the men can curb her activities and frustrate her designs. Indeed one firmly clings to the belief that this is nearly always so, and that the male witch is 'good' and the female alone 'evil'. If a few men, whom no one can name, are willing to 'aid and abet' women witches, they have as it were betrayed their own sex; even so, their help has to be begged by the female witch. In brief, the men, victims of female ascendancy in real life and victims of female witchcraft in fantasy, are on the same fantasy plane also the masters of the women; and if in one sense female evilness may prevail, in another it exists on sufferance, subject to male permission and, ultimately, revenge.

So understood, the fantasy picture of witchcraft conjures up a relationship between the sexes which reverses reality, putting power for helplessness and dominance for submission. The projection of the conflict between reality and ideal thus merges with its resolution in terms of a wish-fulfilment. We conclude that Nupe witchcraft beliefs afford a double relief: the frustrations caused by a hated 'normality' are not only externalized so that they can be vented on concrete victims, but also spirited away and compensated in fantasy.

Both the projective mechanism and this other mechanism of 'compensation', which we interpolated between 'cause' and 'symptom', between certain conflicts and frustrations and the belief in female witchcraft, operate unconsciously, though the conflicts and frustrations themselves are fully conscious. But it might be asked if the 'causes', too, are not likely to reach down into the unconscious and to a level deeper than that represented by conflicts over authority, kinship position, or morality. These are all motives entailed in a particular social organization. And since the belief in female witchcraft is widespread throughout human society it would seem legitimate to search also for a cause of a more fundamental order, over and above those peculiar to this one type of society. The Nupe witchcraft beliefs, with their dichotomy of 'good' male and 'evil' female witches, indeed seem to point in that direction, towards some basic antagonism of the sexes.

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To substantiate this hypothesis I may be allowed to digress a little. It is, I think, true to say that man surrenders to woman his virility in the sex-act and his independence and self-containedness in the love relationship; the fulfilment of his desires is thus bought with the sacrifice of Ego-completeness. If we take this sacrifice to be unconsciously hateful, as I think we must, and accept this ambivalence of love-hatred as the source of an inescapable antagonism having no normal or legitimate outlet, then the belief in female witches (of the Nupe or any other people) represents a 'displacement' and licensed expression of the repressed hatred. The phrase 'having no normal outlet' requires some comment. Different cultures fashion the normal social relationship between the sexes in widely diverse ways, as has been amply demonstrated in the work of Margaret Mead. But few societies can by this means fully resolve the conflict of sex antagonism. If the society makes the men the socially dominant sex, it is able to compensate for the surrender of virility but fails to express the importance of the woman as sexual partner and procreatrix, and hence invites male fears of female revenge; and if the social dominance of men is reduced, either by design (as in some societies) or in consequence of uncontrollable social processes (as in Nupe), this produces the kind of situation we have been discussing. There is some evidence that a carefully balanced relationship between the sexes can avoid this impasse.[1] But where it does not, the psychological mechanism of projection, with its offer of vicarious or fantasy hatreds, comes into play.

Now this is only a bare formula, couched in terms of universal validity. Let me fill it in with details from Nupe society. To begin with, the 'surrender' and loss of 'completeness' on the part of the men may be felt more strongly in some societies than in others, that is, reach consciousness to a different degree. The Nupe men, certainly, make much of the physically weakening effects of sexual intercourse, and teach the younger generation to husband their strength; they also, as we know, readily employ aphrodisiacs and so betray their fear of the loss of potency. At the same time, they will comment on the sexual voraciousness of the women, who never seem to have enough lovers. The Nupe, incidentally, do not conceive of erotic relationships that could avoid this threat to their virility: homosexuality among the men does not seem to occur and is thought absurd as well as repulsive. Yet again, homosexuality does occur among the women, which fact is well known to the men.[2] For the Nupe, then, the woman is more 'complete'

[1] See my chapter on 'Dual Descent in the Nuba Hills', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, pp. 354 ff.
[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 152.

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in herself than the man and her sex less vulnerable; above all, her satisfaction, more insatiable than the man's, threatens his virility. So that everything we said before, in general terms, about male 'surrender' and 'incompleteness' is sharply accentuated in Nupe culture.

Everything, too, reappears, appropriately rephrased, in the witchcraft fantasies: witches feed on the life and strength of a man as women do on his virility; and his anxieties are allayed or compensated in a wish-fulfilment which sees the female witch incomplete, possessed only of half her power without a help she must beg of men.[1]

Admittedly, the witchcraft legends fail to corroborate this view, containing nothing that could be construed into a reference to the sexual dominance of women. Rather on the contrary: in the first legend the witch is a 'mother' dominating her son; and though the second legend enlarges upon the licentiousness and sexual greed of the young women, the really dangerous 'witch' is pictured as an old hag against whom younger men are helpless. But the aspect of female dominance is there; and if it is removed from the sphere of sex it is brought closer to the overt anxieties and frustrations of the Nupe men. They face precisely this threat, from 'mothers' who assume an illegitimate power in the family, and from overbearing women who abandon their role of partners in marriage. Perhaps the 'old woman' too fits into the picture; for being 'old' means being beyond child-bearing; so that the figure of a woman who has left child-bearing behind would seem to stand for all the women who reject it. If then, the legends fail to express the antagonism between the sexes in its basic and universal form, they express instead the immediate, concrete conflicts of the society. In other words, of two possible motivations the legends embody one.

This leads me to my final point. This new explanation, in terms of a basic sex antagonism, neither overrules nor clashes with those previously suggested, in terms of other motivations. Rather, they are all valid, relating to different aspects or elements of that total phenomenon, the Nupe witchcraft beliefs. It is indeed a fundamental feature of social phenomena, if they are of any complexity, that they tend to embody a plurality of motives, belonging to varying levels of human concern, impulse, and consciousness. Our several explanations reflect this plurality of motives; more pre-

[1] I am aware that psycho-analysts may read the facts differently and relate the fantasy picture of female witches to a love-hatred of women which has its roots in the man's mother-imago, or in the conflict between 'tenderness' and 'sexuality' in love, or perhaps in the sadistic components of the sex act. I will only say, briefly, that my analysis of Nupe society does not bear out these alternative explanations.

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cisely, there had to be three explanations, corresponding to different levels of motivation, which are levels of generality as well. The first was concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to concrete individuals: this we related to the overt value judgments of the people, that is, to the conscious assessment of socially desirable conduct and character traits. The second explanation was concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to the female sex: here the processes creative of the belief were unconscious though set in motion by judgments on socially desirable behaviour and by the conscious conflict between ideal and reality. The third explanation, once more concerned with the ascription of witchcraft to women, was in terms of unconscious impulses springing from an unconscious conflict: and this we took to be determined, no longer by particular social circumstances, but by events on that 'deeper level' on which sex antagonism, in man everywhere, has its play. There is perhaps a further, most general level of enquiry; for we may clearly ask why there should be witchcraft at all? why people should believe in such a deadly evil inexorably vested in some of their kind? This question must for the moment be postponed.

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4. SYMPTOMATOLOGY: CASE HISTORIES

As has been said, only a witch, or a person possessing the appropriate *cigbe*, is able to tell a witch; others can only suspect the presence of witchcraft, however reliable the indications. The clues employed in this work of detection are similarly divided, into esoteric signs visible only to the fellow witch or sorcerer, and the crude indications which everyone can read. The former are, needless to say, entirely intangible and mystical. Thus at night you may see witches breathe fire (if you are yourself a witch); if a lesser witch meets a more powerful one, tears will spring to the eyes of the former; witches, finally, see one another in their dreams. Persons possessing a *cigbe* which makes them like witches should also be able to see or recognize them, and such medicines, as I have said, are in fact produced; but a few sceptics dismiss these claims as so much idle talk. It is a highly qualified scepticism, casting no doubts on the witchcraft beliefs as such. The Master of the *cigbeciki* summed it up most clearly, in this analogy: 'We see the lightning; we say *Sokó* causes it: but has anyone seen him do it? So we see what witches do, but who says he has seen a witch is lying.' The mystery which surrounds the manner of beholding witches extends also to their appearance; for the Nupe have no clear picture of what a witch looks like save that she looks horrid and fearful.

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Though ordinary persons cannot see witches, dogs and cats can,

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doctrine and uniformly transmitted through the teaching of the Qoran, even this teaching can vary within wide limits; above all, it can be reinforced or belied by the models of practical conduct exhibited by the teachers. Thus we shall presently speak of the confused notions of the Nupe on Moslem cosmology and hagiology, and of their lack of interest in the historical background of Islam. But how far this attitude reflects the Nupe reaction towards the new creed or merely their faithful acceptance of a creed loosely and confusedly taught, it is obviously difficult to say. Quite probably the latter is the true picture; for there is no reason to assume that the first emissaries of Islam were more erudite or theologically-minded than the majority of mallams today. According to some accounts, in fact, the famous Mallam Dendo was little better than a peddler of Mohammedan charms. However this may be, when it comes to the general moral precepts or codes of conduct that go with Islam, we are more uncertain still. Islam reached Nupe through many hands and by many stages, and in a form probably considerably affected by the modes of life of the Sudanese and West African societies where it first took root. Furthermore, many of these are closely akin to Nupe. If then, we find Moslem practices more or less closely attuned to Nupe traditional culture, this may only represent some previous 'remodelling' and, from Nupe point of view, a fortuitous correspondence, not any effort on their part to render the new creed more 'congenial'.

Let me illustrate this by one example, the position of women in Moslem-Nupe society. In orthodox Islam the woman is man's inferior by the will of God, and made to obey him (*Surah* IV). Though women may be as true believers, they are permitted no share in religious activities and rarely given the chance of religious tuition. Legally and socially they are subjected to various disabilities; women (not men) must 'observe continence and not display their ornaments' (that is, must be veiled before strangers—*Surah* XXV, 31); and Mohammedans marrying 'infidel' women must not let 'them go back to the infidels', being responsible for their spiritual welfare (*Surah* LX, 10). None of these tenets applies to Nupe Islam. Women are as free as men and legally as fully qualified; the veiling of the women is unknown; and though the Nupe do not admit women to the mosque or other religious observances, girls of the upper classes are often taught the Qoran. Is this, then, an adjustment of Islam to traditional Nupe notions? Hardly that, for this contrast is true only in comparison with Moslem practices, say in India or the urban society of Arabia and the Eastern Sudan. It disappears when we compare Nupe with the nomadic Moslem tribes in the Sudan or with the Mohammedan Emirates in the north of Nigeria. The Fulani invaders of Nupe,

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who started the great wave of Islamization, were probably as liberal or unorthodox in their attitude to women. So that the Nupe would have received their new creed already remodelled by the donors, and the true contrast would be, not between orthodox Islam and the Nupe version, but between the former and African Islam.

To turn to the other aspects of the Moslem 'way of life', first, to the high value placed on scholarship. Even the most humble follower of Islam is aware of it. Tuition in the creed and *jĩ katũ* (reading, book-knowledge in general) are to him almost one and the same thing; and greater religious perfection coincides with wider learning. The title mallam, 'scholar', freely accorded to the pious, already indicates the trend of thought. One mallam friend of mine expressed it aptly when he spoke of the *ciŋwa katũ*, the 'greatness of learning', which makes any Mohammedan scholar equal to the other great ones in the country—rankholders, noblemen, or wealthy landowners. Not that the mallam is necessarily poor or a commoner; many mallams are wealthy, and many members of the titled aristocracy pride themselves on being scholars as well. But the professional scholar does not require the badge or rank nor the backing of wealth to be granted the privileges of high status. His learning makes him the companion of the 'great ones'; his ministration at naming ceremonies, weddings or burials opens him their houses; and even a poor mallam can marry into rich or noble families if his scholarly repute is high; for in this case the bride's father will defray the costs of the brideprice, counting this expenditure as a pious gift of alms.[1]

There are, of course, degrees of learning, and hence distinctions in the status of mallams. In largely pagan villages anyone who has learned to recite a few *surat* of the Qoran and performs his daily prayers is called a mallam; in the Mohammedan capital the name is reserved for those who also teach the Qoran, though the adepts in the art of sand-divining and the sellers of charms are equally included in that class. Mostly a further distinction is drawn between the simple, humble mallam, who knows only the Qoran (or, more often, only small portions of it) and the true scholar, who must have studied *litafi* (books) or *kpikpe* (knowledge) as well. Men of the latter class read eagerly and widely, and acquire books where they can or copy out rare manuscripts. Ignoring, however, the few mallams who practice as judges and have studied the various relevant legal digests and commentaries, the reading of these 'learned men' tends to be indiscriminate and their 'know-

[1] The social position of the mallams and the whole question of Moslem learning and tuition has been fully discussed in *A Black Byzantium*; see especially pp. 102, 378–83.

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[562] Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still com-
425 paratively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.

(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* ("borrowing"); land thus acquired is also inalienable.

(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.

(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).

(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.

(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.

(7) By "primary" tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:
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(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).

(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).

(3) The fringe of "reserve" land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[30]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batac every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[31] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settle-
[431 ment. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers'
651] tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[32]

[30] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.

[31] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.

[32] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before 558 its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 The most important women's titles are those of *nimwoye*, of the royal house of 565 Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya;* she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not 554 reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 103–8, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 331–4, 147–56; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [884
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence [435]
his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [766]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), [562]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
462 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
439 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell groundnuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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He may go out to war himself, but more often puts the 701 operations under the War-Chief, Sarkin Yaki, who is himself 562 advised by the Wari-Yaki, a man chosen by the Mallamai for this purpose, and often of so humble a position that the warriors do not know who he is. The Sarkin Yaki, however, obeys him invariably, and indeed it is the Mallamai who direct when and where an attack should be delivered or a retreat made. If the 726 Sarkin Yaki should be killed in war, the army retires to await 562 another appointment by the Emir. It was the custom for the two eldest daughters of the Sarkin Nupe to go to war, each arrayed in two thick rigas, a cummerbund, and carrying a sword and spear. They had large followings, for they gave a big proportion of the spoils to their retinue, but they followed the direction of the Sarkin Yaki. No woman was allowed to accompany them into battle, but many of the sex were discontented with the restriction, and, in consequence, the practice became unpopular amongst the Nupe men. The general feeling became so strong that on the death of the Chief, Umoru Majigi, in 1884, these ladies were no longer allowed to go out to war. Their names were Atiba and Wodiko, names invariably given to the Chief's two eldest daughters. In other respects they lived ordinarily, and were married, but their husbands would never fight in the same war with their wives. Each Chieftain brings his following, and there are bodies of horsemen and footmen, the former armed with spears, the latter with bows and arrows. A war-camp is formed some seven to ten miles from where hostilities are expected to take place, and here the stores and women are left. The Mallamai and a large number of civilian hangers-on advance to the verge of the fight, and wait till success is attained, when they dash in to secure a share of the spoil, the Mallamai giving the word when it is safe to do so. Needless to say their presence is often resented. Envoys may be sent from one army to another in perfect safety, protected by the waving of a white flag, or of green branches; they generally dress in white for additional surety.

Before any campaign is undertaken the Emir consults a [721] Mallam gifted with the power of prophecy, and he says whether the 875 results would be good or bad. A hundred years ago the advent 787 of a fair race from the west was foretold by the prophets in a MS. still extant, and the resistance to their arms was forbidden. That was why the present Emir of Bida and his family, together with all the Mallamai, refused to come out against the British. There are some prophets who are above worldly interest and desire, and others who give advice for 1,000 cowries, or perhaps sixpence. It is a special art in which they receive instruction as youths, and there are books on the subject. The Mallams are consulted on such questions as marriage, trade ventures, and sickness. They look on the ground for about ten minutes and

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa : West. With Plate I-J. Nadel.

131 **The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

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Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggã in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

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778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sülati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *égbã Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

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619 to have crossed later to the other side where they settled and became, in
173 the course of time, independent sub-tribal sections.[1] In the case of the Kupa the tradition is more concrete; it describes them as Ebe people who have crossed the Kontagora river (called in Nupe Eku, to cross the river is, in Nupe, *lá 'ká pà*, and this is supposed to be the origin of their tribal name) in the time of the big Nupe wars of conquest, about 1800. The Kusopa, the Forest Tenders, appear in Nupe tradition out of nothing. Somehow they grew into a separate sub-tribe the identity of which is based on their habitat in the thick inland forest west of the Kaduna and also on their special occupation, which is the cultivation of kola-nut trees. Gwagba is a deprecatory nickname given originally to a small section of 'Nupe *zam*' from Gbara, followers and henchmen of the Nupe kings who, in the wars for the Nupe throne, fled to Zuguma. *Gwagba* means, literally, Those who threw up their Hands, the Defeated, but it is applied to-day to the whole group of Nupe living in and around Zuguma town. The Benu, finally, represent another sub-tribe of recent origin, formed in historical times. They are people of Bornu origin (*Benu* being the Nupe corruption of *Bornu*), from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Bornu, who came to Nupe country towards the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of *Etsu* Ma'azũ and settled, with his permission, in Trans-Kaduna. They came as wealthy traders, bringing with them certain new agricultural techniques—onion growing—horses and cattle (the latter soon disappeared in the tsetse-infested country). They soon became the dominant group, economically as well as politically, in the region where they settled, but they Nupe-ized themselves, intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their language, and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. Thus they are to-day a section of the Nupe, speaking the Nupe language, and conforming in their whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. Only their great annual festival, the *gani*, and the title of their chief, *Zonuwa*, are reminiscent of the ancient culture of Bornu.[2]

619 The name Nupe has also been extended to other originally alien
groups living in Nupe country, which have become Nupe-ized and are
563 hardly distinguishable to-day from the people among whom they live. In many villages and towns of Nupe we find groups known by the name of *Konú*, Prisoners of War,[3] or Eyagi-Nupe, Yoruba-Nupe, people of Yoruba origin, who are the descendants of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani kings of Nupe against the Yoruba; they were later freed and, by order of the king, settled in various districts of the kingdom. In Bida town I met the makers of horse-trappings—a craft imported from Hausa—who assured me that they were Hausa no longer. 'Yes, our fathers were Hausa,' they admitted; 'but we are Nupe'—claiming Nupe-

[1] They speak, in fact, the same dialect—proof that the tradition is not without historical foundation.

[2] See Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 148. I have given a more detailed description of this process of cultural fusion in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] *Konú* means 'war' in Fulfulde; the adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early times of the Fulani régime, when the rulers still used their own language.

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ization after barely one generation. The people in the north of Nupe country, near the boundary of Gbari, are known as *Gbari bautd*, Gbari slaves. They represent the original Gbari population of an area conquered by the Nupe and incorporated into the kingdom about 1800. In the north-east, too, Nupe culture is absorbing groups of Gbari, in a smooth and silent development which is still observable to-day. In Kataeregi, for example, in the north-east corner of Beni country, one or two old men still speak Gbari and remember their tribal origin; but the younger people speak only Nupe, regarding themselves, and being accepted, as Nupe and Beni full and proper. On the river, in the south, we have another group which has for some time been under Nupe political influence and has partly adopted Nupe language and culture: the Kakanda. They are not, however, regarded as part of the Nupe tribe —or not yet. Whether or not the consolidation of their cultural links will advance further and will eventually lead to an adoption into the tribe we cannot say for certain; perhaps the Kakanda will, with the completion of cultural assimilation, some day be regarded as another, thirteenth, Nupe sub-tribe.[1] In one or two cases, finally, people of one sub-tribe have emigrated into the district of another sub-tribe, living there as settlers in a 'foreign' land. Thus we find a group of Beni villages in Dibo country, emigrants from Beni during the Fulani wars, and also two small groups of Ebe in Trans-Kaduna, in the area of the section which calls itself 'pure Nupe'.

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Thus one can 'become' a Nupe—*a že Nupe*, they have become Nupe, is what the Nupe say of their cultural proselytes. It is, of course, impossible to define precisely the point when cultural assimilation warrants, or might warrant, inclusion in the tribe. But it may seem as if this elastic application of the tribal name, which takes into account *de facto* cultural similarities, contradicted the 'theoretical' and 'conceptual' unit in which we saw the definition of the tribe. The unobtrusive assimilation of a small group on the fringes of some Nupe section and its eventual absorption in this section (as in the case of the Kataeregi Beni) can be easily understood. But the so-to-speak official inclusion of a new section, under a separate heading, seems to presuppose something like a cultural tribunal which grants tribal membership to new, 'naturalized' groups. This contradiction is due not to an obscurity in our definition but to an obscurity in the facts themselves—and an obscurity which cannot be eliminated. The substratum with which we are dealing has, as it were, changed under our hands. The concept of tribal culture has changed into the concept of a culture vested in a political unit and its deliberate, conscious expansion. The proselytes of the Nupe tribe or Nupe culture were in reality proselytes of the Nupe kingdom.[2] (It is,

[1] A few informants, in fact, already classified them as a sub-tribe of Nupe—but these were informants from sub-tribes adjacent to the Kakanda, that is, from groups which, so to speak, could directly watch the cultural changes. Groups farther away kept to the established, traditional definition of the Kakanda as a separate tribe.

[2] This is the conception of the people themselves. All informants spoke to me of the various sub-tribes as having 'become one through Tsoede' (the ancestor-

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in fact, doubtful if a tribe not backed by any political organization could make proselytes on any larger scale.) Later we shall see more clearly how it happens that tribe and kingdom become, for the people, one and the same thing. But the mark of the 'theoretical' tribal distinction is not obscured completely. It is visible in the qualified adoption of these new 'naturalized' sections. They 'have become Nupe'; but they are still called 'Gbari slaves' or Yoruba-Nupe. And perhaps now, since the expanding Nupe kingdom no longer exists, there will be no thirteenth sub-tribe of Kakanda-Nupe, after all.

THE SUB-TRIBE

The fact of common origin which is excluded from the concept of the tribe becomes an essential element in the definition of the sub-tribe. The sub-tribe is thus not a 'tribe' on a smaller scale; it differs essentially from the wider unit of the tribe. If the Nupe tribe possesses no external symbols, costumes, or body markings, such emblems exist to some extent for the sub-tribe. The Nupe practise body and face markings, *etsa*, 'patterns', which are cut into the skin of newborn babies, male and female, and which differ in the different sub-tribes.[1] The sub-tribe, too, has its ideology in which the conception of unity and differentiation from other groups is expressed. The ideological criteria are two: one we have just discussed, the unity of origin and of historical continuity. The other is, again, the criterion of cultural unity. But the physical fact of the smallness of the group as compared with the tribe makes 'culture' here a more concrete, so to speak more concentrated reality. No Nupe term which corresponds to our 'sub-tribe' or 'section' exists. The Nupe refer to the various sub-tribes as to 'lands', they speak of *kin* Beni, land of the Beni, or *kin* Kusopa, land of the Kusopa, and even of *kin* Kyedye, land of the Kyedye, a 'land' which consists of a narrow strip of territory running across river banks and islets. The sub-tribe is thus, like the tribe, a territorial unit. But again the fact of physical size changes the meaning of the concept. The smaller locality is, in fact, more of one 'land'; it implies a more unified environment. This is partly expressed already in the names of the sub-tribes, some of which refer to the nature of the environment in which the group lives and to the nature of the occupation by which it earns its livelihood. The Bataci or Marsh Dwellers are a group of marsh-land farmers and fishermen whose hunting-grounds are the pools and backwaters of the Niger. The Kusopa or Forest Tenders work the famous kola-nut plantations of Laboži and

king of Nupe), or explained the development as due to the fact that '*one Etsu* established his rule (or law) over the whole country'.

[1] I must add, however, that even here these external symbols of group unity are not quite unequivocal. Fashion is changing the markings to-day—and there is no reason to assume that this has not always been so. I have seen fathers and sons whose faces bore different markings. The markings of the Bida people, like other fashions associated with the capital of the kingdom, have been adopted by the people of the districts. And the modern Bida and Beni markings are in turn said to have been adopted originally from the Yoruba, whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found 'nicer' than their own crude slashes. (See Appendix II.)

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121 origin and conquest, state organization and alien domination.[1] I will not go too deeply into this controversial question. But we cannot pass without comment the fact that the structure of the Nupe state as it exists to-day, with its ruling class of Fulani conquerors, and also its growth so far as we can with any claim to accuracy trace it back in history, indeed support this theory of the origin of the state.

Our discussion of the principles of state organization has thus led to an historical interpretation. Indeed the description of Nupe kingdom would be incomplete without the description of its growth and development. Its inter-tribal and inter-cultural nature cannot be fully understood without the inclusion of the historical viewpoint. Our three-fold conceptual system of cultural unit, community, and state must itself be envisaged under the aspect of a dynamic process rather than of a static differentiation. For the deliberate political co-ordination of forms of conduct must tend to influence other spheres of cultural activity as well. In Nupe as everywhere, social patterns, common ideal types, spring up by themselves as 'natural products of long association'.[2] Political unification goes hand in hand with dissemination of culture and with an extension and reinterpretation (in the widest sense of the word) of racial and community boundaries. The 'inter-cultural' and 'inter-tribal' state gives way to a new 'state culture' and a new paramount group-unit, the nation.

121 It will be for a later chapter to examine how and how far this unification has been achieved in the Nupe state. But we must point out at once
563 that this absorption of heterogeneous elements could only achieve a relative unity. The antagonism between the original heterogeneity and the subsequent unification is never allowed to disappear completely. It survives in certain forms of cultural and racial discrimination. The culture of Nupe, more correctly the culture typical of that section which formed the core in the historical growth of the kingdom, became the representative culture of the whole country, set up as a standard and 'ideal type' for the heterogeneous population. The sections of the Nupe tribe which were the carriers of this culture became the representative group of 'real' Nupe, sharply distinguished from the groups which have become Nupe-ized and absorbed in the state in the process of political expansion. A tribal and territorial section thus gained the position of a cultural *élite*, considerations of political status came to determine the evaluation of cultural features, and facts of cultural and tribal extraction were re-interpreted in the sense of political class distinctions. Here we understand the anomalies in the application of the name Nupe which we discovered in our discussion of Tribe and Culture: why the people in the capital regard the Nupe spoken in the districts and on the borders of the country as an inferior brand; or why the Nupe still speak of 'Gbari slaves' although culturally this tribal section has become indistinguishable from the Nupe proper. The 'real' Nupe call themselves *kintsoši*, Owners of the Land, as against all who have come later into the country —settlers, aliens, citizens of Greater Nupe. For all the groups outside of

[1] F. Oppenheimer, *The State*, 1923.
[2] A. E. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 222.

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the 'core' of the kingdom, whether they are Nupe, aliens, or Nupe-ized aliens, the Nupe have a common name: *zaži kati*, 'Outside Peoples', and the cultural evaluation implied in this term is felt acutely by these groups. It was extremely interesting to see how strongly the people of Lemu, Nupe-ized since three generations only, resented being called *zaži kati*, although they frankly admitted their Gbari origin. 'This name', they said, 'does not apply to us; we have been Nupe and Beni for a long time. The Gbari in the north and east, in Wushishi and beyond Kataeregi, they are Outside Peoples.'

The Fulani conquest added a new chapter to this ambiguous history of cultural and political unification. But here 'representative' and 'absorbed' groups have exchanged places. The Fulani conquerors of Nupe, numerically an insignificant minority, were absorbed completely by the culture of the people whom they subjugated. Some of the Fulani came from nomadic herdsmen stock; the majority belonged most probably to the 'town Fulani' (as they call themselves), who had long been settled in the northern Hausa states and whose culture had become identical with that of Hausa. The former surrendered their identity completely; the latter had little, if anything, of their own to give. The Hausa traits visible in Nupe culture to-day did not reach the country through the Fulani; and Mohammedanism, the religion of the Fulani conquerors, was firmly established already at the time of the early Fulani infiltration. In Nupe the Fulani lost their language[1] and the last characteristics of their race and original culture. Racially, after generations of intermarriage, they are indistinguishable from their subjects; culturally, they are as much Nupe as the Nupe themselves. Many are even eager to step into the cultural heritage of the country over which they rule. They read and quote the history of ancient Nupe with the same enthusiasm and pride with which they learn or talk about their own historical heroes, the first Fulani emissaries.[2] Yet they remain a separate social group, conscious of its alien origin, and still distinguished by a special tribal name: they call themselves, and are called by their subjects, *goiži* (a name which distinguishes these settled, 'town Fulani' from the nomadic cattle people, who are known as *bororóži*), never Nupe. They are a 'representative' group in a different sense—the small *élite* of conquerors and rulers. The historical memory of their alien origin—for it is only this to-day—buttresses their detached social position. Racial antagonism which might have disappeared in a homogeneous community here, in the framework of the state, blending with the antagonism of class, remains alive, and even strengthens with its sentiments the inner tension of the society. It flares up with every open friction between rulers and ruled. We have again a political and social cleavage in the guise of 'racial' discrimination.[3]

[1] *Etsu* Mohamadu (1897–1914) was given the nickname '*Etsu* with two tongues', being the last Fulani ruler who—already a striking exception—could still speak Fulfulde.

[2] For some time I carried on a correspondence (in Hausa) with two of the most prominent members of the Nupe-Fulani community who had asked me to let them have all information I could obtain on the ancient history of Nupe.

[3] The following is a significant anecdote: the *Etsu* Nupe once confided to me

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121 Visualize this intricate racial and cultural pattern: two *élites* of different order—*kintsofi* and Fulani—and surrounding them, almost in 563 concentric circles, ethnic groups of varying cultural dissimilitude, each cultural grade also a grade on the scale of political evaluation. This is indeed the exact picture of the historical growth of Nupe kingdom. Through conquests and expansion, with fluid, ever-changing boundaries, Nupe kingdom maintained its conspicuous centre, the core of its political and cultural growth. Like a tree, it grew from the centre, and you can still trace the rings which mark its growth.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

121 Before embarking on the historical account we must clarify the concept of 'history' as we propose to use it. For there is a certain ambiguity in the term 'history' as it is used by anthropologists. History can mean two things: first, what we may call 'objective' history, that is, the series of events which we, the investigators, describe and establish in accordance with certain 'objective', universal criteria of connexion and sequence. Second, the 'ideological' history, which exists in the society which we study, and which describes and arranges events in accordance with accepted traditions about past happenings and developments. The two may coincide (as they do in modern history); or the second may at least supply some source of information for the first. But also it may have significance only as a sociological datum *per se*, i.e. as a system of accepted beliefs and traditions influencing social behaviour in the group. As such, it is often indistinguishable from mythology and from what Malinowski has called significantly the 'mythical charter' of customs and existing cultural usages.[1] Different societies may stress in a different measure either the mythical, supernatural or the rational, pseudo-scientific nature of what they accept as an account of their past. The Nupe are what we may call an historically-minded people. The highest, constantly invoked authority for things existing is, to the Nupe, the account of things past—but an account which is clothed in terms of a sober, pseudo-scientific 'history'. Such is also the nature of the Nupe tradition of the origin of their kingdom. Only for the more recent periods do we possess 'objective' sources; the earliest period of Nupe kingdom is described only in their own 'ideological history'.

173 The earliest history of Nupe centres round the figure of Tsoede or Edegi,[2] the culture hero and mythical founder of Nupe kingdom. The genealogies of Nupe kings which are preserved in many places in Nupe country, and which have also found their way into the earliest written records of Nupe history which were compiled by Mohammedan scholars

his grievance against a certain little unruly relative of his whom he believed to have intrigued against him. He added: 'All Nupe are bad people, you know.' The said relative, himself, of course, as much Fulani as the *Etsu*, retaliated by informing me that 'all Fulani were liars'.

[1] B. Malinowski, in *Encycl. Soc. Sc.*, London, 1931, vol. iv, p. 640.

[2] Tsoede is, linguistically, a contraction of *Etsu*, or '*tsu Ede*;' the Nupe more often use the name Tsoede, the Hausa the name Edegi.

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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dahari* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 3,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaši kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoži*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
621 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
554 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
571 of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accordance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpã*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.' 696

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *shelá*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1] 671 563 696 565

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law. 694 687

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial 692

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciši*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft. 462

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d*. to 3*d*. per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and 462 386 563 476

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462 maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is
386 supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring
563 village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman
476 with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages.
462 Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the
323 river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in
438 these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the
317 excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps
462 and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions
323 are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

634 178 by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

634 565 563 The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565 563

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 182

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *kintsoji* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

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[Information on the Mallams, combination jurists and Mohammedan scholars, has been placed in category 875. -- Analyst]

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622 hereditary chieftainship, the accumulation of surplus renders such development more likely. But even here the existence of the special chief's cult, which imposes additional expenses on the chief (higher than in the case of cults to which he need only contribute his share), should tend to adjust more equitably the economic balance between chief and elders.[1]

622 However, we have other evidence to show that the chief's position, economically privileged though it may be, is not *meant* to lead to the 576 formation of an essentially different, sharply separated, permanently 554 privileged ruling class; evidence, in other words, to show that the political organization of the village is meant to preserve the social homogeneity of its community. This evidence lies in the rules of etiquette defining the behaviour of the people towards their chief. People everywhere show reverence to their chief: they kneel down by the door when entering his presence. Often there are raised platforms in the chief's entrance hut, near the door leading to the inner part of the house, on which he would sit, while the others are squatting on the ground in front of him. Or the chief would sit on a leopard skin or at least a cow-hide, while the others are assigned seats on grass-mats. The chief, finally, is addressed by special formulae of greeting reserved for his title. Yet again, this attitude of reverence represents only the highest grade of respect as it is shown similarly to all *nũsaži*, graded in accordance with age and rank. In every house young men or visitors of lower status and seniority would squat near the door while the head of the house, or honoured guests, occupy places on the inner side—the more honoured side. Special greetings of the same symbolic nature as the salute reserved for the chief are typical of the various ranks. Here as in the case of economic privileges etiquette marks off the chief not as standing on 'a plane by himself' but merely as the most prominent in a graded order of prominence. If on state occasions, wearing his state robe and turban, the chief is conspicuously marked off from the rest of the people, when going out to his farms there is nothing to distinguish him from an ordinary farmer; like him he carries his hoe across the shoulder, a straw hat on his head, and wears only the cheap blue cloth slung loosely round the body. There is thus ample 'neutral ground' in the matter of etiquette and distinction of status between chief, elders, and the rest of the people.

But above all, the attitude of reverence and the special chief's salute 622 are reserved for the chief's person; they are not enjoyed equally by his ● 565 relations merely in virtue of their being his relations. The exalted social 554 position of the chief does not extend to his family—there exist, even in hereditary chieftainship, no symbols of a hereditary class differentiation. Later, in the discussion of social classes in the kingdom, we shall understand fully the significance of this 'democratic' element in Nupe village chieftainship.

[1] In 1936 the chief of Doko bought five sheep for sacrifices connected with the 'chief's cult', contributed beer to other ceremonies, and presented two gowns to men with whom he was anxious to keep on good terms—not counting occasional small gifts and contributions, e.g. to family feasts, &c. Altogether an expenditure of approximately £2–3, or 30 to 40 bundles of corn, that is, roughly half of his income from tithe.

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nūsazi*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *eži u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunnu* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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the commoners, men without name and rank—sit and stand outside, chatting and watching what there is to watch; the members of the privileged classes, titled nobility, and Mohammedan priests, are sitting in the inner courtyard and in *katamba* (entrance-halls), each *katamba* reserved for a special group. Only royal princes and the highest officers of state are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu*; they sit in the inner part of the house together with personal friends and favourites of the king.[1] All these people come to pay their respect to their sovereign, to see and to be seen, to exercise prerogatives, or to proclaim their connexion with the privileged and mighty. This external arrangement of the Friday ceremonial is indeed a symbol of the whole social structure of Nupe kingdom with its rigid system of etiquette and precedence, its differentiation of status, rank, and prerogatives, and its display of wealth and power. This structure we must now analyse in detail.

THE ROYAL NOBILITY

The descendants of the house of Mallam Dendo, under their three heads *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotū*, form the royal nobility of Nupe, the *ena gitsúži*, the Group of Those who will become King. They are *gitsúži* in the sense that from their ranks the new king is elected. The titles of nobility which they hold by the privilege of birth may lead every one of them, by slower or more rapid promotion, eventually to the highest rank, kingship. In most cases the royal prince who succeeds to the throne has reached first the rank of *Shaba*; the change from old to new king is thus made almost automatic, a dangerous interregnum is avoided, and the fight between the rival factions is confined to the less dangerous sphere of competition for the ranks next to the king. Only twice was a man who had not reached the title of *Shaba* (or, if the *Shaba* had died, the title of *Kpotū*) made *Etsu*.[2] In 1936 there existed, or more precisely, were actually held, 41 royal ranks, of which 10 fell to the house of Usman Zaki, 17 to the house of Masaba (the house which had supplied the last

[1] The arrangement at these receptions, the way in which the people who are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu* group themselves, is invariably the same. It is shown in this diagram:

Two bodyguards with ostrich fans
Etsu (on state bed)
Gitsúži — *Nderi* — *Sarakiži*
Mayaki
Liman-Alhali
Mallams

[2] These exceptions were *Etsu* Mohamadu who, only *Makū*, was appointed *Etsu* by the Niger Company, and the present *Etsu* who had been *Nágenu*, but had held the important office of a District Head of Jima. It is the present tendency of the Administration to abolish the office of *Shaba* and to make the appointment to kingship a free election from the royal ranks. After the death of the late *Shaba* in 1935 no new *Shaba* has been appointed. It is not yet clear what effect, if any, this innovation will have upon the internal dynastic organization. The threefold system is so deeply rooted that I believe the effect will be only to abolish a name, and that the rank next in order in the dynastic section will assume the main function of the abolished rank, that is, headship of the dynastic clan.

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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wúruwíru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsú* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wacī*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaži*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsúži*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [557] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotū*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [732] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Liman*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *lerama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsúži*.

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bearance; do not set the hearts of your men against each other; beware of conceit, and do not fail the people.' All present repeat, like a formula of confirmation: *Hakíka, hakíka*, 'verily, verily'. Drummers and musicians intone the songs and drum rhythms which are associated with the family and rank of the newly knighted; he mounts his horse and rides, accompanied by all rank-holders, through the town, dismounting at each house of a prince or *saraki*, making his greetings to the head of the house. If the newly appointed (or promoted) nobleman is a member of the royal dynasty he stops at each of the three royal houses and says a prayer at the grave of his ancestors. A great festivity in his house, last[illegible] for several days, to which everybody in the town is invited, noblem[illegible] and commoners alike, concludes the ceremony.

Descendants of the men who conquered the country and appropriated all vacant land, the *gitsúži* may become, through ordinary inheritance, owners of land and considerable wealth. But the appointment to a royal rank meant more than this chance of inheritance: it meant status, influence, and access to increasing power and wealth. The princes of rank were admitted to the *nkó*, the Council of State, but had little influence, it seems, upon the actual government—this was entrusted to the council of the more competent, appointed, officers of state. The power of the *gitsúži* rested in the main on two things: the part they played in the wars, and their position as *egba*, royal fief-holders and delegates placed in charge of the districts of the kingdom. We shall speak presently in more detail of these services which the royal nobility rendered to king and state. I will give here a list of all the ranks held at present among the *gitsúži* of Bida. To illustrate the system of promotion I have indicated certain changes in the distribution of ranks which had been anticipated by the *Etsu* and his council after the death of the *Shaba* in 1935; as already said, the Administration was not prepared to endorse this reshuffle, which would imply the reoccupation of the post of *Shaba* (see p. 93, n. 2). The list also shows some of the fiefs which were connected with the ranks in pre-European times, and finally the offices under the present-day Native Administration which are linked with certain *gitsú* ranks.

Dynastic Ranks in Bida 1936

1. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Maru* (*House of Umaru Majigi*)

Etsu, appointed 1935, former title *Nágenu*.
Shaba, died December 1935; till 1934 District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: Mokwa.
'Old' *Makū*, till 1934 District Head of Kacha, then retired; previous title *Lukpā*. Fief in pre-European times: Kacha.
Makū, younger brother of 'Old' *Makū*; no official position.
Ginya, present District Head of Badeggi.
Cekpa
Gara
Lafyene (*Lakpene*)
Uban Dóma
Tsudyi

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565 *Táha*, held by eldest son of *Shaba*.
Sontwáraki
554 *Wací Taba*, held by younger brother of *Shaba*.
Nda Iya
Nágenu, held by younger brother of *Etsu*, appointed 1935; no previous title; District Head of Jima.
'Old' *Natsu*, retired from office 1934.
Natsu, son of a former *Kpotū*, younger brother of *Ginya*; on the Bida Town Council.
Shabarabá, a new *ad hoc* introduced rank, bestowed in May 1936 on the eldest son of the late *Shaba*, as no higher rank was vacant.

2. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Usman* (*House of Usman Zaki*)

'Old' *Kpotū*, died in 1936; for some time District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: *Edupkā* (countries beyond the Niger).
Kpotū, son and nephew of former *Kpotū*; District Head of Kutigi. He will shortly be asked to resign, that is, to become an 'old' *Kpotū*, on the grounds that his health is not very good. The *Etsu* does not contemplate promoting him to the vacant post of *Shaba* in accordance with the general rules of succession.*
Nágya, till 1935 District Head of Mokwa, now member of the King's Council. He is chosen to succeed to the rank of *Shaba*. Fief in pre-European times: *Edukpā*.
Rani, since 1935 District Head of Mokwa.
Kusódu, younger brother of the late *Etsu* Bello, living in his Bida house. Fief in pre-European times: Kamberi country.
Wací Tswa
Shaba Gini
Fogū
Lafarma
Kafa
Cata

[643] * The ground of ill health is a pretext rather than the true reason—and this is very significant. The *Kpotū* does not belong to the house of Usman Zaki, although he is generally regarded as belonging to this dynasty. He is a descendant of Abdu Gboya, one of the sons of Mallam Dendo whose offspring had failed to secure succession to the throne of Nupe. He is, in fact, the only member of these 'second-rank' royal families who had obtained, still in the fourth generation, one of the three highest dynastic positions. His premature resignation is a striking evidence of this dynastic policy to restrict succession to the throne to the three 'houses'.

3. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Saba* (*House of Etsu Masaba*)

(Late *Etsu* Saidu, died 1935.)
Wacimbe
Nákorji, District Head of Gbangba. Chosen to succeed to office of *Kpotū*. Fief in pre-European times: Yeti.
Lukpā
Tsaduya
Tsaci
Tswasha Giraba†
Tsuroma†

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Benú, Fief in pre-European times: Kin Agbadya (Lokoja).
Tswanku
Tsoyida
Tswankúku
Rofiẽ
Cecekó
Nkoci
Tswashakó
Yitsa
Ndáma

† Two established *gitsú* titles, *Fokpo* and *Gbaruku* (a Dibo word, meaning Old One), are not represented in this list, i.e. are not held at present. On the other hand, new titles are constantly introduced to cope with an increased demand; e.g. *Tsuroma* is a Bornu title (*Ciroma*). The rank *Tswasha Giraba*, lit. '*Tswasha* bestowed in Rabá', seems to have been a newly introduced, additional, rank at one time, in Rabá, as the meaning of the title indicates. The *Etsu* bestowed a new title of this kind shortly before I left Bida on the younger son of the late *Shaba*, making him *Shabami* (lit. '*Shaba* of the House').

OFFICERS OF STATE

Placed under the royal nobility in rank but its equal in political influence is the titled office nobility of the kingdom. Its members are known as *ticiži*, the Titled Ones, or *rowni*, the 'Turbans', so called because the gift of a turban by the king is the symbol of the bestowal of rank and office. There are three groups of officers of state, each of which is thought of as a sharply defined social order or estate—*ena* in Nupe, which means 'group', 'society', 'order': first, the *sarakiži*, a twofold group of civil and military nobility, consisting of the *ena Ndeji*, the Order of Town Elders, and the *ena 'kũ*, the Order of War. Second, the *ena manži*, the Order of Mallams, comprising the judiciary and the clergy of the kingdom, the *Alkali*, judge, and *Liman*, religious head of the Nupe Mohammedans, with their scribes and assistants. The third class of state officials, lowest in rank but still possessed of great influence, is the *ena wuži*, the Order of (Court) Slaves; we shall deal with this group later, in the chapter on slavery.

We shall see that many of the titles of the *saraki* nobility are identical with the ranks bestowed on the village elders. Of some ranks we know that they have been copied comparatively recently by the villagers. Whether this adoption of state ranks by the village communities explains all the existing correspondences, or whether they are due, historically, to the evolution of the kingdom from a village community, we have no means of deciding. To-day, it is a correspondence in name only. The identical symbols of status in the kingdom and in the village refer to very different social contexts. The differences in the official duties and in the rules of appointment will become clear presently. Here I will only mention the difference in the social conceptions upon which the two rank systems rest. Both must be interpreted as systems of selection by means of which the society obtains its leaders. But selection in the village means offering 13 ranks to, say, 200 adult men or—expressed more correctly—13 families; in the kingdom, it means admitting to

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leadership 30 men out of a population of hundreds of thousands. In the village, the position of importance and responsibility already attained by the individual who qualifies for the rank (through seniority, experience, and headship of a kinship group) is at least equal to the new benefits entailed in the appointment; in the state ranks these benefits far outweigh any position one could have made for oneself previous to the appointment—often the latter is negligible. At the same time many of the state ranks, subject to changing political fortunes, are held more insecurely. In the village, then, rank is essentially a form of assured public recognition: in the state it represents a hotly contested and often capricious elevation to the privileged *élite*.

I have called the *saraki* nobility an office nobility to contrast it with the hereditary nobility of the *gitsúži*. The *saraki* ranks are, at least in theory, always open to new blood. Only one or two of the higher ranks are to-day hereditary in practice, having become the prerogative of certain families which, once established in their influential position, secured these offices for their descendants and relatives. Civil and military nobility are mutually exclusive, and are ruled by rigid precedence and promotion. Promotions and first appointments are granted by the king in council with his princes and other officers of state. These ranks, unlike the *gitsú* ranks, cannot be accumulated in the same family; they are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group, and no other close relative can claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his 'house'. Only the less rigidly defined benefits of status and economic privileges that go with the elevation to the nobility extend, to a lesser or greater extent, also to the other members of the family group. Outsiders, even commoners, who have won the favour of the king may be admitted to the nobility of the *sarakiži*. Success in war and outstanding military achievement constituted formerly the main claim to *saraki* rank. Wealth and financial influence, which, under the old system were bound up with big land ownership and the slave-trade—prerogatives of princes and noblemen—have come into their own in modern times and are demanding recognition. The granting of titles to rich traders in return for huge presents has, in fact, become a new feature in the Nupe nobility.[1] The result is that the *saraki* group embraces people of very different origin: descendants of the old office nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe as well as families of Nupe commoners who had become partisans of the Fulani conquerors, and also strangers, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani mercenary soldiers, or rich traders who have earned the gratitude of this or that *Etsu* Nupe. The titles themselves equally reflect the situation, new titles being frequently invented or borrowed from Hausa or Bornu.[2]

[1] *Etsu* Bello and *Etsu* Saidu are said to have 'sold' certain titles for prices varying from £5 to £20 to ambitious, wealthy traders; they are even reported to have conferred important state offices, offices to which the candidate was entitled by birth and standing, such as the office of the *Alkali*, on the payment of a 'fee'.

[2] In present-day Nupe Hausa names have replaced to a large extent the original Nupe titles. The traditional Nupe name, for example, for *sarakiži* (which is a corruption of the Hausa *sarakuna*) is *agabi*, but this name is only pre-

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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*, 'Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawaciši nya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kū*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manži* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somasū*, which is the old Nupe title.

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565 the *saraki* ranks and offices. Thus the present Chief *Alkali* of Bida as
555 well as his assistant is himself the son of an *Alkali*. The same few families
693 supply to-day the judges for the district courts in Nupe and indeed for
793 many courts outside Nupe country, where the reputation of Bida scholarship has found recognition. And, as a final result of this tendency to make these offices the prerogative of a small group, we find since the time of *Etsu* Mohamadu the two offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* combined in one person.[1]

565 The office of the *Alkali* in Bida, the highest Mohammedan judge of
554 the kingdom, dates back to the first period of Fulani rule. Its impor-
693 tance and distinction is expressed in the fact that Mallam Dendo's eldest son chose for himself the office not of a temporal ruler but of judge of Nupe. Many of the men who held these offices were of great learning and outstanding ability. Some have left behind records of the history of

1. *Ranks of the Ena Ndeji*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Ndeji	Nupe from Dibo	*Magajin Gari*	Grandfather was *Ndeji*, appointed by *Etsu* Masaba; the father had no title. To-day highest official of the N.A.; head of the Emir's council.
Nyáfyenye	Fulani	*Magajin Gari*	Father and grandfather both *Ndeji*; first appointment under Usman Zaki.
Magajin Gari	Nupe	..	Father was *Nyáfyenye* and later *Ndeji*.
Sonfadakó	,,	*Gadza*	Father had no title; his first appointment was under *Etsu* Maliki, his second under *Etsu* Mamadu.
Gadza	No holder at present, but formerly a very important title.		
Sakiwa	Fulani	..	Father was *Ndeji*, titled under Umaru Majigi.
Mamasú	,,	..	Father held a lower title; he himself was titled under *Etsu* Maliki.
Etsu Basa	Benu-Nupe	..	A hereditary title held in one family.
Etsu Gbari	Nupe	..	Father was *Uban Dawaki*.
Tsadza	Fulani	*Galadiman Gari*	Father and elder brother have held same title.
Ndasú	Hausa	..	Newly introduced title.
Galadiman Gari	Fulani	..	Father was *Gadza*; he himself was appointed under *Etsu* Bello. He became later a 'ward-head' of the modern town-administration.
Kotonkomu	Nupe	..	Father held same title.

[1] There exist two different kinds of *Liman* offices: the *Liman Ratibi*, the minister of the weekday service held in the various mosques of the town, and the *Liman Jemaa*, the minister of the Friday service, which is held in the big city mosque, in the presence of the king. In every part of the town there is a *Liman* of the first kind; but there is only one *Liman Jemaa*. And it is to this highest priestly office that we referred above.

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2. *Ranks of the Ena Maiyaki*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Maiyaki	Hausa	*Dokoyiringi, Uban Dawaki*	Father received title of *Maiyaki* in the war. To-day official of the N.A.; on the Emir's council.
Uban Dawaki	Nupe	*Sokyara*	Father *Maiyaki* and *Uban Dawaki*. To-day on the Bida town council.
Sokyara	,,	*Wambayi*	Father was *Sokyara*, *Uban Dawaki*, and finally *Maiyaki*. He himself was formerly on the Bida town council.
Dokoyiringi	,,	*Wambayi*	Father was *Uban Dawaki* and *Maiyaki*.
Ejuhó	,,	*Tnwakoko*	Father already *Ejuhó*.
Sondzamitsu	,,	..	Father had no title; son got his under the late *Etsu* because of his wealth.
Sonlawu	,,	*Sarkin Barayi*	Father had no title; son received his in the war.
Sarkin Barayi	Hausa	..	Father was *Maiyaki*.
Tnwakoko	Nupe	..	Father was *Nagun*.
Nagun	,,	..	Father was made *Nagun* in the war.
Sagamawa	Hausa	..	This title is hereditary in one family, followers of the Hausa general and relative (by marriage) of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Wambayi	,,	..	Father was a serf (*bara*) of *Etsu* Abubakari.
Samaji	Nupe	..	..
Galadiman Masū	*Komi*-Yoruba	..	Held in Bida now instead of the old Nupe title *Somasū* (the Nupe equivalent of *Maiyaki*), but is to-day a very small and unimportant title.
Luci	Nupe	..	Formerly a powerful man; lives to-day on a farm in Trans-Kaduna.
Rwafi	Hausa	..	An hereditary title, held by relatives of the Hausa general of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Sonfaddikwa	Nupe	..	..
Baridè	,,	..	Father was *Sojetsu*.
Sojetsu	,,	..	Received title from *Etsu* Bello; rich landowner.
Magayaki	,,	..	Received title in the war, under *Etsu* Maliki.
Sengabi	,,	..	..
Sónkali	,,	..	..
Maslawo	,,	..	..
Mamasū	,,	..	Father was *Sonlawu*, a title which he received in the war.

Nupe. The judicial organization of the kingdom left them free hand to interpret and apply, even to alter and create laws. The names of past *Alkalai* are known to everybody, and are associated with certain new

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565 554 693 laws or special judicial practices. Of this aspect of their activity we shall hear more at a later stage. But one point (already mentioned) must be stressed here. The office of *Liman* and *Alkali* could become hereditary; many judges and Mohammedan scholars are of Fulani stock; but this reflects only the political influence and partly also the tradition of learning in these families. As representatives of Mohammedan scholarship *Liman* and *Alkali* are only the most exalted exponents of a professional class which comprises men of every status and birth—the Mallams, 'learned men', who are held in high esteem by everyone. Even without rank or title, when of little and insignificant learning, they are placed above the ordinary commoner. They may marry the daughters and sisters of the high-born. The *Etsu* himself, descendant of a Mallam, puts a 'Mallam' before his name. Like his ancestors he honours and receives at his court all Mallams of reputation. They are a class between the classes, a mobile, privileged intelligentsia.

565 554 467 The description of the hierarchy of Nupe kingdom is incomplete without the mention of a last group of minor rank-holders, composed of the heads of the Bida craft-guilds. The guilds are closed occupational groups, the members of which live together in one locality and practise certain hereditary crafts such as glass-making, brasswork, weaving, &c.[1] The guild-heads receive their titles, together with the usual gift of a turban, from the *Etsu*. Though low down in the scale of ranks, they have yet an official standing, and are raised above the ordinary commoner and peasant. Their headship implies authority over all the members of their craft in town and village. Formerly the guild-heads received a small annual tribute of products of their craft from their fellow craftsmen. Like the members of the nobility, the titled guild-heads are summoned to the *Etsu*'s Council at the *Sallah*, the great Mohammedan festival; and, [651] like the privileged nobility, they are exempted from taxation. Their only tribute takes the form of an annual gift—an *emisa*, or 'salute'—again of products of their craft, the cost of which is borne jointly by the whole guild, and which is presented to the *Etsu* at the *Sallah*.

Certain craft-guilds are linked with the dynastic division of the capital and are divided into three sections each of which resides in a different *ekpã*. The groups of craftsmen also bear more special allegiance to the royal house in whose *ekpã* they live and with the ancestor of which they associate their coming to Bida and the foundation of their guild. But over and above this party allegiance guilds and guild-sections are closely linked with the ruling king of Nupe. For the king and the court represent the most important customers of the Bida craftsmen. All orders which the court intends to place are given through the guild-head, who guarantees their execution and acts as an official 'controller' of his group of craftsmen.

A position similar to that held by the guild-heads is also assigned to the head of the Bida brokers, the *Etsu Dilali*, who again plays the part of an agent of the king in all matters concerning commerce and trade in the capital.

[1] The organization of the Bida craft-guilds will be described in more detail in Chapter xiv.

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We shall see later that the explanation of this incorporation of artisans and brokers in the rigid bureaucracy of the kingdom lies in the control which the state exercises over crafts and merchandise; only by means of a control of this kind could the head of this warlike state secure an unimpeded supply of the commodities that were vital to the court and the state: arms, clothes, and saddles for the soldiers, food for the huge capital, and the luxuries that were needed for the display of royal power and wealth. We find convincing evidence for this interpretation in the fact that the different crafts are not of equal standing. Some rank higher than others, and this grading is not correlated with economic success: the very prosperous butchers are last on this list, blacksmiths and brassmiths, on the other hand, head the list, 'for they are makers of arms'. Only the glass-makers, a strongly independent and important craft, stand aloof from this order of craft-guilds. This is a list of the craft-guilds in Bida, with the titles of the guild-heads, arranged in order of precedence. 565 554 467

The figure in brackets shows the number of *ekpā* in which they live. The titles of the guild-heads are given in italics.

Brassworkers (2): *Muku.*
Blacksmiths (3): *Dokodza.*
Carpenters and Builders (1): *Egbaba.*
Barber-Doctors (3): *Sokyara.*
Beadworkers (2): *Majī Lantana.*
Leatherworkers (scattered in the town): formerly *Majī Kimpa.*
Weavers (3): *Leshe, Majī, Ndakó.*
Butchers (3): *Sonfawa.*
Glass-makers (1): *Masagá.*

SLAVERY

The lowest in the complex order of social classes in Nupe are the slaves (*wuši*, as against *egi*, freeman, lit. child). But in this one class there are shades and distinctions of social status. Some slaves have risen to positions of wealth and influence. Others have remained menial workers in the households and on the farms of their masters. Pre-British Nupe numbered its slaves by the thousands. Twenty to thirty slaves was a moderate average for the household of a man of consequence. The prosperous craftsmen of Bida town, blacksmiths and weavers, always had slaves to work for them; even in villages one found households with one or two slaves. 567

The people of Nupe obtained their slaves by two methods: first, there were the slaves captured in the war, who became the property of the man to whose share in the booty they had fallen; and second, there were slaves bought in the markets of Bida.[1] The majority of the latter, it seems, were slaves sold by their captors—noblemen who had taken more slaves than they needed for their household. Slaves were also sold abroad, mostly to the south. Many Nupe men of rank were engaged in

[1] Lander reports that 200 slaves were on sale in the market of Rabá, the then capital of Nupe (op. cit. iii, p. 313).

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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaži kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoži*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopā.

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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

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565 chiefly political, economic, occupational, and educational.[1] But so is the widest constellation defined on the basis of similarity or diversity of conduct—culture. The essence of social class lies in the specific fashion in which these various factors appear combined. To understand it fully we must view social class under two aspects. The first is that of firmly established and comparatively permanent differences in actual conduct—differences in standards of living, in habitual behaviour, occupation, and moral values.[2] The second aspect is that of the social agency which attaches to these differences of conduct the index 'inferior' or 'superior', and makes them reflect different grades on a common scale of values. Were we dealing only with differences of the first order we should be describing merely different cultural groups in which life is lived in different fashion, in which different customs are observed and different values valid. What turns mere cultural differences into differences of conduct typical of social class is the loss or absence of their self-contained and largely unconscious nature. Their permanence is no longer, as it were, self-chosen. The 'cultural' differences are now conceived of as results of unequal advantage and opportunity, and they are never allowed to lose their significance as different grades in the 'common scale'. It lies in the nature of things that this common scale, which depends essentially on the demonstrability of unequal opportunities, should rest above all on political and economic factors. The essence of class (as of any group) lies in the consciousness of group membership; the consciousness of class is the consciousness of this 'common scale of values'.

Let us examine first the social mechanism which maintains and propagates the consciousness of the common scale. It is essentially an educational mechanism (in the widest sense of the word). While perpetuating the various cultural traits characteristic of social class it perpetuates at the same time the common perspective from which these traits are set off as traits valued more or less highly by the society. One of the most efficient instruments of this mechanism is the convention of class symbolism and class etiquette, which not only regulates the intercourse between the classes, but also serves to demonstrate the reality of class barriers.

Nupe society is plentiful in such symbols of class distinction. The collective name for nobility, *rowni*, 'turban', marks already one of these outward signs of class: it refers to the turban of glazed blue cloth which only members of the nobility may wear. Another prerogative of rank is the right to carry a sword, or rather, have it carried by one's sword-bearer, the *zagi* (lit. 'little person', i.e. 'page'), and to appear on horseback on all official occasions. With regard to these emblems of rank the Nupe have kept abreast of the times: a novel symbol of status is an alarum clock, put in a little wooden case, which body-servants of men of rank carry after their masters.

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[1] M. Ginsberg, *Sociology*, 1934, p. 162.

[2] Cf. M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 159: 'To the outward observer class is primarily a matter of behaviour, speech, dress, education, and especially habits of social intercourse.'

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Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by cowering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner. 565 576 516

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver. 565 576 431

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally, [43]

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small kola-nuts, in fives or tens, were handed out to messengers, dancers, guild-heads, and other people of lower rank.

Even language and music are used as symbols of class. There exist in Nupe special drum-rhythms, *take*, greeting formulae, *kirari* (Hausa, lit. 'calls'), and songs which are linked with certain noble families and important ranks. As soon as a family comes to power or a man receives rank and title, the drummers of Bida will compose such *take* and *kirari* in their honour. You can, in fact, have them made to order, at various prices; but an influential person will not need to order them, for the drummers, counting on his patronage, will supply him at once with this musical salute. Some of the *take* and *kirari* which one can hear to-day date back to pre-Fulani times; others were composed recently. Whenever a member of these noble families attends a festivity, the drummers would announce his arrival by playing 'his' *take* and singing 'his' *kirari*, and the 'master of ceremonies', who is always present at such gatherings, would recite a long list of illustrious ancestors to whom the nobleman can lay claim, the ranks which he had held, and the deeds which he achieved. Lastly, the Nupe address each other by titles only, and never by name, if the person addressed bears a title. Special formulae of greeting are linked with every rank, and thus mark position on the social scale by the most obvious system of signs—everyday speech.

Class symbols and class etiquette shade over into the more substantial differences of class. Behaviour which is pressed into the service of class manifestation becomes indistinguishable from behaviour which results from differences in social and economic advantage. The right to carry a sword or appear everywhere on horseback presupposes the economic ability to acquire these 'emblems of rank'. Submissive behaviour of a client towards his patron, or a member of the lower class towards a man of rank, is determined as much by the convention of class etiquette as by the special interest of gaining favour in the eyes of a person of consequence. Here we are dealing with the other aspect of class differentiation, those 'cultural' differences which are, or become, typical of different classes. They revolve round the two pivots: political and economic structure.[1] They involve the existence of political prerogatives and the varying measures of individual liberty and mastery over one's own destiny, enjoyed by the different classes. Here we can outline the existing classes of Nupe society. We have met their protagonists already: the ruling class of the kingdom, rich absentee landlords, men whose occupation was war and slave-raiding, and, low down on the social scale, commoners and peasants, heavily taxed, and gaining a scanty livelihood rendered insecure by the very facts that add power and prestige to the ruling class. We have also met the craftsmen in the town, who share some of the privileges of the nobility, and the Mohammedan intelligentsia who can attach themselves to the highest stratum irrespective of

[1] The two structures do not define identical strata, nor is the economic differentiation invariably reducible to political prerogatives. However, we will leave the examination of the exact relation between the two 'pivots' of social stratification for a later chapter.

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'. 565

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'. 565 369 186

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer. 565 262 184 [273]

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated 565 517 184

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565 517 184 people of Bida professional women singers, accompanied by their own drummers, perform for an audience which pays for its pleasures. The uneducated pagans like to sit together on afternoons and evenings in front of their houses, chat or weave mats, or just enjoy the peace of these hours of leisure. The educated Mohammedans meet in the house of a Mallam and read with him the holy books of Islam, using even their leisure hours for furthering their education.

565 291 184 As regards dress: a man of standing would always, even in the privacy of his home, wear trousers and the flowing white robe, and would never appear before guests and strangers without turban. Peasants and commoners normally wear a loin-cloth and a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder, and the blue Phrygian cap which is said to be the traditional head-gear of Nupe. Only on state occasions would they don robe and turban.

565 177 184 304 195 People of rank have adopted, with Mohammedanism, many features of Hausa culture. In their families the Hausa custom of removing the uvula of small children is practised—a custom absent among the lower classes and unknown among the peasants. They are fond of using Hausa words and phrases; for expressions concerning the delicate topic of sex they invariably use Hausa or Arabic circumlocutions. They despise the peasants and uneducated people of the lower classes who use the crude literal expression, and who cannot embellish their speech with the more elegant phrases borrowed from Hausa.

565 184 The various features enumerated above are clearly not of the same order. Characteristic though they are of the standards valid in the different strata of Nupe society they are not equally reducible to the central facts of class structure—political and economic conditions. The evaluation of certain habits as inferior or superior is as much a matter of convention as a result of social or economic inequality. That the poor man cannot afford meat or chicken-and-rice is due to his poverty; but the preference for milled or unmilled grain or for palm-wine or sorghum-beer respectively, is a matter of taste and habit, i.e. a 'cultural' trait pure and proper. Yet rendered permanent by education, linked with habitual group-behaviour which in other, more vital, spheres of life positively reflects economic or social prerogatives, these smaller traits, too, gain the significance of class-determined behaviour. Here we grasp another aspect of class differentiation. I have said that where the attribute of inferiority or superiority is disregarded, differences of habit and living conditions in general are reduced to cultural differences in the narrow sense. This gains special significance in a society like Nupe, which has grown out of a conglomerate of various tribal groups, each with its own more or less specific culture. Some of the food habits of the 'poor' peasants are indeed the original food habits of cultural groups which have been incorporated into the kingdom. I have mentioned that the Phrygian cap, worn by peasants and commoners, is regarded as the traditional head-dress of the country. Their 'uncouth' manners, their 'primitive' customs, are part of the pagan peasant culture of the country. Similarly turban and flowing robes, or the appreciation of professional musicians and Mohammedan learning, reflect the preferences of a specific cultural

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group, the 'town culture' typical of Northern Nigeria. These habits and customs exist, as it were, in their own right, quite apart from questions of economic or political opportunity. But as in the growth of the kingdom certain customs and habits have become representative of the *élite*, they have set the standard of cultural desirability and superiority in general. They have imparted to habits and customs which differ from the standard the stigma of lower, less 'respectable' ways of life. In this sense, then, class differentiation as we find it in present-day Nupe can be said to represent a direct result of the growth of the state.

The intensity of class cohesion and the vividness of class consciousness are determined by 'the amount and ease of social mobility', that is, inter-class movement.[1] We have denied to the economic and social stratification that obtains in the Nupe village the character of a social class, on the grounds that the higher and highest social orders were potentially attainable to all—universal mobility contradicts the conception of social class. Exclusion of all social mobility, on the other hand, would turn social class into hereditary caste. Nupe society, a true class society, steers a middle course.

The social classes in Nupe represent to a large extent self-recruited, closed groups. A man born of commoners as a rule remains a commoner, a craftsman a craftsman, and the ranks of nobility are filled with men of noble birth. But there exists promotion from grade to grade within the class, and a certain amount of inter-class mobility. Inter-class mobility in the fullest sense, that is, formal adoption into the higher orders, is attained, as we have seen, through service in war and, to less extent, through wealth and clientship. Its scope is narrow and closely controlled: there exist only thirty to forty ranks to which an 'outsider' may aspire, and only seven out of the thirty-seven civil and military ranks enumerated in our lists were granted to men whose families had held no rank previously. Moreover, adoption into the titled classes means only gaining a first foothold on the long social ladder. All social rise possible in Nupe is rigidly canalized by the hierarchy of ranks and grades. Here, viewed from the angle of social mobility, the Nupe rank system reveals its full significance: it controls and restricts as much as it aids social advancement. In the interest of governing the extensive kingdom, carrying on its wars, and administering its subject groups, political power had to be distributed and delegated. Individuals whose services were of value had to be attracted by the promise of admission to privileged positions. But by making social rise subject to the formal investiture and, above all, by admitting individuals only gradually, through a step-by-step promotion, to increased power, the ruling class could regulate the infiltration of new blood as well as the accumulation of power by its members. We have seen that ranks and promotion are subject to changing political fortune; even the meaning of ranks and offices may change under different sovereigns. Recognition can be withheld or withdrawn from men who might prove dangerous or from families already too powerful. The hierarchy of ranks thus helps to pre-

[1] M. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 163.

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565 serve the precarious balance of power in the feudal state. It becomes, in
555 the hands of the established ruling group, an efficient weapon to safeguard their class privileges.

565 Social mobility of a more fluid, indirect kind, which admits individuals to a close association with the privileged classes and indirectly to a
186 certain share in their privileges, reaches a much larger proportion of the population. It is upheld by the institution of clientship and by the existence of the Mallam intelligentsia 'between the classes'. The possibilities of social mobility, above all, the extensive possibilities of this indirect mobility, account for the lack of cohesion among the lower classes of Nupe, or at least of Bida. The conspicuous symbolism of rank and the rigid definition of the social estates cannot but stimulate class-consciousness: commoners will always describe themselves as *tálaka*, and men of rank will leave you in no doubt about their consequential position. But this class-consciousness is blurred by thoughts and prospects of a social career that might raise anyone to a higher estate. Concern about betterment rather than sentiments of group solidarity define the nature of class-consciousness in Nupe. This can be seen most clearly in the attitude of the younger generation, who are just planning their future career. Only in two social groups do we find a more strongly pronounced and self-contained consciousness of common fate and common, class-bound interests; they are characteristically groups in which mobility, direct or indirect, plays hardly any part—the closed group of guild-organized artisans and (in the framework of their scattered communities) the peasantry.

565 How far social mobility took the form of local mobility, that is, of a movement to the town in the attempt to bridge over the cultural and social gulf between townspeople and peasantry, we cannot say. If it existed, it could only have been of very limited scope. For there were strong natural limits to such a development, above all, the scarcity of land near the capital.

Now to be complete and convincing, social rise must go hand in hand with assimilation to the habits and modes of life typical of the higher classes. This, in Nupe, proves no stumbling-block. The familiar instances of 'parvenus' who, though adopted into the higher social order, do not fit into the picture of its social life are unknown. The explanation is that cultural assimilation of this kind is much more widespread than actual mobility. The mechanisms of social mobility which we have enumerated all accord their benefits to individuals, not to groups; on the contrary, individuals may succeed where groups (local communities, tribal sections) would fail to achieve that improvement of social conditions and that increased security bound up with classes. But the assimilation of which we have just spoken must be regarded as a qualified form of social mobility which includes groups and whole sections of the population. Whole groups are free at least to imitate the external characteristics of the higher social orders. Where economic conditions allow it commoners and peasants adopt habits and modes of life of their betters—fashions in dress and housing, their way of talk, their food habits, and the forms of entertainment which they patronize. They also

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adopt, even more eagerly, the religious practice of the higher and highest classes, Mohammedanism. This is not 'real' social mobility; it serves only to blur the border-line between the strata. It involves attachment to a higher stratum only in the sense of external closeness and assimilation. 565

The assimilation achieved is irregular and of very unequal significance. Yet it is prompted by a definite motive running through the whole society—self-enhancement. The readiness of groups to identify themselves culturally with the representative stratum reveals an incentive to overcome that heterogeneity of cultures and groups in which we have grasped the essence of state structure. Potentially, this incentive may carry forms of cultural reorientation capable of wielding more intensive, more real, commonness. To examine how and how far this potentiality is utilized by the political system is to examine the crucial problem of this discussion: the dynamic relation between political integration and the heterogeneous raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

BINDING FORCES

What then is the specific apparatus of control by means of which this heterogeneous society, severely divided by gulfs of culture, ethnic extraction, community, and class, maintains itself as a unit? And to what extent does it draw into its orbit and use for its own support these other non-political configurations and spheres of social life? When examining the political organization of the Nupe village from this viewpoint we discovered that there the basis of political control is extended to its widest possible limit: political organization utilizes the integrative forces of community life at large; it organizes into a unit what is integrated into the same unit by every existing institution. It might very well seem from our foregoing analysis of the Nupe state that here we have the exact opposite. A state machinery which concentrates political power in the hands of a small *élite* and ignores—save in order to transform into class barriers—tribal and cultural identity, seems committed to the narrowest system of political control: by coercion and physical force. 642 182

However, this section will show that such conclusions would be incorrect. One might, on general principles, reason that no state could afford to rely solely on coercive measures; and that it would rather utilize coercion only as a 'short cut' to bring about sentiments which, 'once established and sanctified, . . . may well flourish without compulsion, glorified as loyalty to a sovereign king or a national flag'.[1] A state that would disdain to call to assistance these bonds of inner unity seems to jeopardize continuously its safety, and to risk being shattered and broken up by unrest and revolts, possibly beyond repair. Such tension and unrest seems indeed characteristic of the political history of Nupe. But the historian would have to point out also that with all these grave disturbances Nupe kingdom yet maintained itself as a unit. Even when the Fulani took over the rule, testing most severely an already strained

[1] R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 117.

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of the office of the village *Sagi* and to emphasize its harmless business side instead. 562 624 754

Thus we find that in many Nupe villages an efficient business-like head of the women has succeeded the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the old type. In other places, again, the people would not admit the magic significance of the woman's rank. Yet the strength of the belief, concealed though it may be, was shown in a witchcraft case which I happened to witness in Gbajibo, a small village on the Niger above Jebba. Here the *Sagi*, the very business-like head of the local women, was yet behind the public outcry against an alleged witch. The women much more than the men were leading in this persecution; they had been the first to ostracize the victim; and when I questioned them about their motives, they all referred me to the *Sagi*. Her own motive appeared to be jealousy of the other woman, the alleged witch, in whom she saw a dangerous rival, possibly even for the position of a *Sagi*.

The office of the *Sagi*, modern or traditional, is invariably a much-coveted one. Her moral hold over the women, as our example has shown, is complete. It is equally strong in the less sinister spheres of communal life: like the *Sonya* in Bida, the village *Sagi* advises the women, organizes women's work, arbitrates between them, and receives small presents from every business transaction which they carry through.

MARRIAGE AND STATUS

The ranks and offices already discussed all belong to married women. But we have seen that they represent forms of status which the women acquire in their own right, on the grounds of descent, or personal ability, or both, independent of their status as wives of men who occupy this or that social position. We shall see later that the same principle applies also to the status won by wealth. In particular the status by descent of the Nupe women is affected but little by marriage, i.e. by the social status of their husbands; in so far as it is so affected, this change is in the direction of social advancement. Women of low birth who marry above their status into the aristocracy can claim the status of their husbands; and women who marry beneath their station do not lose their status but raise their husbands to their own social level. The men will be allowed to share most of the social and political privileges of the class into which they marry. Two cases were reported to me in which the men could even acquire *saraki* ranks after marrying a woman of the *saraki* nobility. But even if the men are not admitted fully into the titled class, their children would always acquire the status of their mother. Daughters may thus inherit the status of their fathers, and both sons and daughters that of their mothers; husbands may be adopted into the social sphere of their wives and parents-in-law. This social regulation may seem surprising in an otherwise strongly patrilineal society. But this one-sided interpretation of the change of status that goes with marriage is not an expression of matrilineal kinship tendencies, nor of 'feminist' leanings in Nupe society (though we shall find ample evidence of these, too); rather it expresses political 562 554 565

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interests, deep-seated class sentiments, which cannot admit of a lowering of status in any one high-born. Yet if, owing to the rigid class system, marriage between the classes is thus turned into a potential instrument of social advancement, its utilization in this sense is also rigidly controlled.

For marriage in the aristocracy, especially in the royal nobility, is to a very large extent endogamous—'family marriage' as the Nupe call it. As the Nupe-Fulani regard themselves all as related, and as most families of the nobility are more or less closely related by marriage, practically all 'family marriages' of this kind are at the same time marriages within the ruling class. The Fulani in Nupe, moreover, following Mohammedan practice, encourage parallel cousin marriage (which is forbidden by the traditional marriage rules of the country) as well as cross-cousin marriage, and thus widen enormously the scope of 'family marriages', especially between descendants in the male line. Family marriage in Nupe, finally, is characterized by a much lower bride-price than that paid in ordinary exogamous marriage. This leads to the rather paradoxical situation, on which my informants invariably commented, that the wealthiest and proudest classes of the country favour 'cheap' marriage, while the humble commoners and peasants are committed mostly to a very high bride-price. The explanation is that the low bride-price in this case supplies an additional incentive for endogamous marriage—'class endogamous' marriage, as it were—and thus for the preservation of the social identity of the ruling classes (as well as, incidentally, a strengthening of their group solidarity).[1]

Indeed the counterpart of the incentive of a low bride-price in 'class endogamous' marriages is the 'deterrent' of an exceptionally high bride-price demanded in the case of marriages between the classes, i.e. between men of the *tálaka* class and girls or women of the nobility. Such cases are accordingly rare. Yet we may note that if a chance of such marriage exists, if the girl loved the man sufficiently to overlook the difference in social status, the high bride-price alone proves no obstacle. For friends and relations would join forces to find the money and to enable the ambitious suitor to make his luck by this advantageous marriage. The benefits of his new position would be considered sufficient promise of an eventual ample gratification. One of my Bida servants was an example: the son of a commoner, he had succeeded in winning the love of the daughter of a very high *saraki* and eventually, after considerable difficulties, in marrying her with money borrowed from friends and relations.

The endogamous marriage rules only ensure that the women of the ruling classes should marry within the class; they do not attempt to exclude the less dangerous form of dilution implied in the marriages of the men to women from other classes and strata. Indeed, the polygamous nature of marriage in Nupe, which forces the men to seek wives

[1] One of my informants who belonged to the *saraki* class even went so far as to explain the whole principle of having a different bride-price for 'family' and 'outside' marriages as a political measure taken by the *saraki* and Fulani nobility with the purpose of preventing commoners from marrying into their class. Though incorrect as regards the facts, this interpretation is significant as an expression of the dominant class sentiments.

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from outside their social group, precludes an application of 'class endogamy' in this sense. Marriage of this kind between the strata has reached enormous dimensions. And this shows, incidentally, that the rule of 'class endogamy' serves, even in the case of the Fulani rulers, the interest only of a social identity and solidarity and not, as one might perhaps assume, of racial purity.

POLYGAMY AND SEX MORALITY

In Nupe as in most polygamous societies in which marriage is by bride-price (and by high bride-price at that) the number of wives a man possesses becomes an infallible index of wealth and status. In the peasant districts, where we find comparatively little inequality of wealth, the range of polygamy also varies in narrow limits. Genealogies which I collected in the two Nupe villages Doko and Kutigi show the following range of polygamy (the figures refer to middle-aged or old men, both of the living and previous generation):

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	68	96	20	11	1	1	179

The average is thus 2.1 wives per man.[1] To quote a similar average for Bida would be meaningless: the great inequality of wealth and status is reflected in the widely varying range of polygamy. In the houses of the *talakaži*, the 'poor ones', monogamy is the rule; in the 'middle class' the conditions are much the same as in the peasant districts; but as regards the men of substance and rank, though it would be correct to say that they have rarely less than four wives, the upper limits of their polygamy are very fluid, and cannot even be ascertained with any accuracy. Popular notions attribute to certain royal princes and, above all, to the kings of Nupe, numbers of wives varying between 100 and 200. Even the late *Etsu* Saidu is reported to have had sixty wives. Discretion forbade any direct inquiries. Besides, the vagueness in the legal definition of 'wife' and 'marriage' in these cases would have detracted from the value of the information. According to Mohammedan law a man may have four wives only. But this rule is easily circumvented by limiting the number of legal wives whom one marries with religious rites to four (or four at a time), and relegating the rest to the position of mere concubines. In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found

[1] The range of polygamy varies to some extent locally. In Mokwa, for example, I obtained the following figures:

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	44	28	3	3	..	..	60

The average is, again, 2 wives per man.

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In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphrodisiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral concepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-professional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d*. and 1*s*.

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Men who have to uphold their prestige and social position would never risk the publicity and ridicule of divorce proceedings in which they would have to appear in the role of the wronged husband.[1] The amorous affairs of Bida noblemen supply, in fact, an ever-welcome topic for the town gossips. When some years ago two popular noblemen quarrelled, everyone knew that it was about a girl and had the details at their finger-tips. Only the men of very great wealth and highest status are in a position to restrain or threaten their unfaithful wives. For one thing, they can afford to forfeit more than one bride-price, and can thus divorce their wives (according to Nupe Mohammedan law) without invoking elaborate public proceedings. Besides, wives and paramours would hesitate to provoke the enmity of these powerful personages. It is not unnatural, then, that (as my informants said) the wives of these men supply the only example of unimpaired marital fidelity in Bida—another no less striking instance of 'double morality'.

If the older married men are either resigned or complacent, the younger men see in illegitimate adventures only an exciting and tempting aspect of Bida life. We shall meet later with their ideal, the dashing young man 'about town' who can 'have' all the women he wants and can boast of his conquests. The women who avails herself of the loosened marriage ties may be talked about and called (behind her back) a 'bad woman'—*nyizagi banza*, a 'worthless woman'. But in their ordinary behaviour towards these women, when meeting them in the street or in the house of a mutual friend, the men will never fail in their respect towards them or betray by a sign their moral prejudices. This ambiguous attitude is symptomatic of a society which, though still conscious of its traditional dogmatic appreciation of chastity, is yet adapting itself to a spreading laxity of morals.

There is indeed evidence to show that sexual licence has been greatly increasing in the last generation or two. But there is also evidence of the fact that sexual licence on a smaller scale and within strictly defined limits enjoyed a legitimate existence in traditional Nupe society. The anomaly of public morals which would condemn sexual licence yet at the same time sanction it in a certain well-defined social domain is familiar to the student of society. In Nupe as in all other societies this qualified admission of sexual licence is due to various social causes. A first cause lies in the nature of sex itself, namely, in the reaction to the restraint on all pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations which characterizes the traditional sex morality of the people. Another cause is the large floating population in Bida, composed of traders, warriors (formerly), labourers (to-day), that is, men who come to Bida without their wives and depend on prostitution for the satisfaction of their sexual appetite. A third cause is embodied in the institution of female trade. We shall see later that women's trade involves a loosening of matrimonial and family ties and tends to become identified with licentious living. In female trade Nupe society thus has grasped a ready occupational framework for that domain of sanctioned

[1] Clear evidence of this is the scarcity of divorce cases, which form two-thirds of all court cases in Bida, from the houses of the nobility.

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of N.A. Hospital and dispensaries, schools, experimental farms, &c. Part of it is used to build up and maintain a substantial reserve fund to be used for unforeseen expenses, in the case of a famine, and suchlike. The apportionment of the tax revenue, above all the allotment of funds for new enterprises, is subject to the joint approval of *Etsu* and District Officer. It is, in fact, in matters of this nature that the harmonious collaboration of the two men is often put to its most severe test.

The far-reaching social change that the introduction of modern taxation has meant for Nupe kingdom cannot be easily exaggerated. The universal taxation under British rule has completely overthrown the former prerogative of tax exemption enjoyed by the nobility and the population of the town. It is not surprising therefore that these people should still strongly resent this abolition of their privileges. But those who resent it most strongly are not the men 'on the top', but rather the people of inferior status, such as guild-heads and Bida craftsmen, who had not been recompensed as many of the others had been in the share-out of new, well-paid official posts. The old guild-head of the Bida woodworkers once quite violently insulted and attacked me, and with me all White Men, for having robbed him of his former status and privileges. 'Formerly', he shouted at me, 'the other craftsmen would come humbly to my house prostrating themselves before me and would present me with gifts to show their loyalty. To-day I have to pay the same tax as they—can you wonder that they have become arrogant and simply ignore me?' One would expect, then, that peasants and small craftsmen and traders would appreciate the equalizing effect of the present system. This is not wholly so—partly for reasons to be explained presently, but partly also because the change had done away with the former system of voluntary gifts on which so much of their social security used to depend. By these gifts they established a personal link with the men of rank and influence, on whose assistance they could count in many situations when such assistance was of utmost importance. These situations have not and perhaps never will disappear completely. It is not surprising that the people cannot yet fully appreciate the 'impersonality' of the modern system, nor realize fully that in return for their tax-money, paid to an 'impersonal' Administration, they receive things no less valuable than the former personal link with powerful individuals: public security, law courts, roads, hospitals, schools.

Taxation is the most sensitive spot in any governmental system. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that the administration of taxes proved the most dangerous stumbling-block on the path of the young N.A. Native official after official, often in the highest position, has lost his post, and even gone to prison, for embezzling tax-money or levying illicit dues. However, there are two more serious weaknesses inherent in the taxation system—more serious because affecting more deeply the inner structure of the society.

The first concerns the (in my view) disproportionately high taxes in the Emirate. Bida Emirate as it exists to-day is not a rich country, the masses of the people are not well off; the discussion on the economic system will bring ample evidence of this. Nupe country is in this respect

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.' 696

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *shelá*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1] 671 563 696 565

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law. 694 687

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial 692

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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It will have been seen already that the land disputes which we have just described reflect more than merely disputable, equivocal land-contracts. The landlords who 'sell' the land are without exception men of the titled classes, courtiers, favourites, or former slaves of the king or of powerful noblemen, and the 'buyers' mostly commoners, peasants who have had no other chance of obtaining additional land. To-day they are coming to realize that their right to the land which they acquire is protected by the Native Court. But till very recently, in order to obtain their rights, they would have had to bribe their way through or to find a protector equal in rank and influence to the landlord who threatened to evict them—a typical source of the institution of clientship, which we discussed in a previous chapter.[1] A final example. A certain farmer had 'bought' land from D., a *bara* of the late *Etsu* Saidu. The *Etsu*, for reasons of his own, refused his confirmation of the deal—D., being a tenant of the *Etsu*, could not transfer the lease without the latter's permission—and the tenant had only one way open: he attached himself to another, more influential, *bara* of the *Etsu* and through him made various gifts to the *Etsu*, over £3 in money, a valuable civet cat, and promised besides an annual rent of two bundles of corn.

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Hereditary Land: Secondary Tenantship

Clientship, combined with a métayer arrangement, becomes a factor in land-tenure also in another respect. A commoner who desired more land, or a new piece of land, could give himself into the service or 'patronage' of a landowning overlord and thus secure land as well as political protection. The conditions were: an initial gift in kind as in all pacts of clientship, occasional presents, visits and other expressions of homage, and finally a tithe (*dzankd* again) from his millet or sorghum crop. This submission to patronage was often the only means by which the peasants in Cis-Kaduna could hope to retain their property when threatened with expropriation, and also the only means by which they could secure new land, that is, access to what under tribal conditions would have been a reserve of village land. The necessity of obtaining land and enjoying its secure possession thus constitutes another of the main roots of clientship. The lease of land obtained by these methods is hereditary, and remains in the family, a comparatively safe possession—unless political factors interfere. The tenants are rarely allowed to forget that the relationship between landlord and client implies more than merely a correct commercial relationship. Lack of respect, an apparent failure to render due homage, or behaviour suggestive of changed

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Etsu himself suggested that the disputed piece of land (a river grove that was claimed by two neighbouring villages) should be bought for money by one of the parties. The purchase price fixed was 15*s*.

[1] Till very recently no peasant tenant would have dared to invoke the *Etsu*'s or *Alkali*'s help against his landlord; he would have been looked upon as somebody who had broken away from a firmly established tradition of loyalty, one-sided though it was. The tenant in the last example quoted above kept silent for fifteen years; not till 1934 did he venture to bring his case before the court and thus to obtain a final confirmation of his ownership.

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294 They make as much as 1s. or 2s. on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4s. Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2d. to 4d. a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-
[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

435 You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-
294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his
593 mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never
[43] more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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462 three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single house-
323 hold. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular
462 section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide),
565 which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have
285 had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it
177 used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts.
[435] One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s.* to 15*s.*, the material costing 5*s.*; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d.* and 3*d.* This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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either for oneself or for one's family. One young labourer from the country gave his father 5*s*. out of his weekly wages of 7*s*. to put by for his bride-price; another kept 2*s*. to 3*s*. a month for himself, and gave the rest to his father. Many Bida labourers, on the other hand, used the whole money for themselves; some explained that they had become labourers because there was no money in their old profession, others because they wanted to be independent and because their fathers or elder brothers could not give them as much money as they liked to have.

To summarize: as one would expect, paid labour, especially temporary labour, does not represent a 'real' profession in the sense of an occupation involving special training and selection of workers. It is essentially a stopgap occupation chosen to supplement or replace a failing normal source of income. Owing to the specific composition of Nupe society the new profession is being adopted by certain social groups and strata more than by others. Yet in some respects paid industrial labour must be regarded almost as a modern continuation of forms of occupations which, in the traditional society, bore the same supplementary and stopgap character. As such it appeals strongly to the individual craftsman, to Mallama, and *bara*, who depend for their livelihood on similar forms of unskilled and partly temporary work. It differs from these other occupations, however, in that it is carried out on the road and in the workshop yard instead of in the home, and that it represents heavy manual labour, and not light work which it is easy to combine with a dignified social status. The labourers, unlike the individual craftsmen, can no longer pretend that they belong to the leisured class. If they receive better and more regular pay, they also lose caste. This explains why of the many hundreds of men who, once members of the privileged classes, are to-day men 'without occupation',[1] gaining a precarious livelihood from occasional work, only those coming from the lowest grade of the 'upper classes' have chosen the profession of labourers.

In the case of the peasants we can no longer speak of any inherent congruity between their work and the new temporary occupation. To them, especially to the peasants who do not practise a handicraft beside agriculture, paid labour in addition to farm-work, a form of labour, moreover, which keeps them for months from their homes, must appear as something quite new and unprecedented. If to-day paid labour is gradually attracting the peasant class as well, twenty or thirty years ago the (very prosperous) Nupe peasants had to be coaxed by all available means to undertake temporary paid labour, for example, in railway construction. The more 'sophisticated' Hausa and Yoruba were already then flocking in large numbers to work of this kind. Missionaries who knew Nupe country at that time told me that it was often impossible in the peasant districts to obtain even porters to carry loads; the promise of money did not attract them sufficiently to make them leave their homes even temporarily, to upset their whole routine of work or forgo their well-earned leisure. In certain backward and prosperous districts this

[1] An unofficial occupational census of Bida lists 1,130 men under the class 'no occupation'. They belong without exception to the titled leisured classes of the Emirate.

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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase 556 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of 554 wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the 595 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more 554 personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the 565 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank 484 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

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rulers, with whom they stay as honoured guests, and whom they will repay, one day, by similar hospitality extended to their young relations. (I have mentioned, in a different context, how I met two princes from Sokoto whose Grand Tour had taken them to the court of the *Etsu* Nupe in Bida.) The noble tourists enjoy their travels and enjoy—as they put it—'seeing the world'. But this incentive of travelling for travelling's sake with which their education and cultural background inculcate them also serves, indirectly, the political purpose of fostering personal contacts and ties of friendship between the ruling families of Nigeria and, more specially, the widespread Fulani empire.

We must now ask ourselves to what extent these wants and incentives apply to the society at large and determine (more or less) the economic decisions of the people. We must ask, more particularly, whether there do not exist 'upper limits' by which the economic ambitions of the various classes are bounded—whether by choice or of necessity. Such limits exist in the form of objects and values which have come to be regarded as fixed symbols of political status and which, like status itself, are excluded from free economic choice, being attainable only by the ladder of social promotion. As fixed symbols of status, much as a uniform or decoration in our society, the glazed turban of the nobility, or the right to carry a silver sword, cannot be coveted as such. This limitation has also been accepted with respect to the recent innovation, the clock in the glass case carried by the body-servant of a noble master: the people outside the ranks of the nobility have not attempted—as well they might—to possess themselves of this new emblem of rank.

But though promotion to political status and acquisition of its paraphernalia represent things that 'cannot be bought' (we shall discuss certain exceptions later), most of the features characteristic of the social life on these more exalted planes are, in theory, of the nature of universal economic wants. Beautiful clothes, costly turbans, and the possession of a horse are widely desired and can be acquired by anyone who can afford the expense. Even wants which are so far beyond the means or labour which commoners and peasants can muster that for this reason alone they seem unlikely to become concrete ambitions outside the *élite* of the country, represent yet common wants and ideals. Thus we find the ornate high-gabled square or round entrance hut which is typical of the large houses of the Bida nobility also in certain villages, put up by chiefs or prosperous family heads. Beautifully ornamented houses of a more modest type, moreover, are found everywhere, in every section or stratum of the population. Now, one of the most convincing proofs of the universality of these economic wants is the absence of all unfavourable comments, especially in the form of ridicule, with respect to individuals reaching out for goals not normally attained in their station of life. This is a significant illustration: in the small village of Doko I observed one house built in an unusually sumptuous style—with coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the walls of the *katamba*. It belonged to a musician, an ordinary 'commoner', who had been very successful in his profession. The people who told me about the house and its owner admitted that he was neither a titled elder nor in any way

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556 accepted code of society. Status in Nupe is determined by descent or formal promotion to rank and office. One of the accepted and most im-
554 portant means by which prestige can be gained is wealth. This raises the question of the closeness of the relation between status, and prestige gained through wealth. In other words, we must ask to what extent prestige gained through wealth tends to facilitate the attainment of status, and may even come to be regarded as its equivalent, or, conversely, to what extent high social status can be reached and maintained without adequate financial support.

556 Under traditional conditions social status and wealth could hardly become separated as political rank implied far-reaching economic privi-
554 leges—the acquisition of fiefs and land, the chances of booty, profits
565 from slave-trade, and so forth. Even assuming that considerable wealth could be accumulated also by groups outside the recognized social *élite*, such as traders and craftsmen, it is clear that their highest income could not rival the resources vested in a privileged political position. In present-day Nupe traditional political ranks and wealth are no longer inseparably linked. High social status does not invariably guarantee the demands of prestige also. The members of the *élite*, no longer in a position to combine the satisfaction of the more concrete wants with that of the demands of prestige, will have to choose between the different forms of expenditure. Yet here we find, rather surprisingly, that the expenses for the sake of prestige can be very considerably reduced without affecting the conception of status. The fixed symbols of status, the glazed turban and the silver sword, are either comparatively cheap or are heirlooms. The house, also inherited, may have to be left in disrepair; but its layout would still betray the status of its owner. Polygamy can be maintained to a certain extent thanks to the practice of marriage in the family, with low bride-price, which is customary among the *élite*. Horses, new dresses, ornaments, lavish hospitality—they all have to go. But travelling and leisure need not disappear. The former is satisfied by claiming hospitality from relatives or friends in distant parts, or even from social inferiors, who would not think of refusing such flattering requests. The latter manifests itself in the choice of profession of impecunious noblemen: very few have taken to farming or tried to learn a craft; theirs are mostly the unskilled 'free' professions of the leisured class. Thus even on the decline, the social *élite* secures the satisfaction of certain wants which to the lower orders of the society are permanently unattainable. Nupe society built up a strong defence of the prerogatives of status in the form of class-obligations and the utilization of inheritance. With its help the social *élite* of the country can hope to weather at least temporary difficulties and set-backs.

That this defence of class prerogatives has not yet lost its strength is evident in the hesitant attitude of the people towards accepting the new evaluation of wealth as independent of traditional status. The issue is by no means clear; it is confused by various concomitant factors, specially by the introduction of the new official ranks and positions under the N.A. some of which are vested in the old ruling class, while others have been bestowed on 'new men' from outside the traditional *élite*. But

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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there is convincing evidence to show that high social status still attaches to traditional ranks, though they may no longer command their former financial reward, rather than to wealth alone. Evidently this is only a transitional solution. In a society in which high status is so closely identified with a definite standard of living the separation of the two cannot be maintained indefinitely, at least not without some radical change in the whole concept of the *élite*. Theoretically, had their ranks not been divided by the appointment of some of their members to modern official posts, the Nupe aristocracy could have chosen the diehard solution of reinterpreting the whole concept of status and making it independent of economic advantages. As it is, the old *élite* must either win back its economic supremacy (which is impossible, though the attempts have never been given up), or else admit the new nobility of wealth into its ranks. We can observe this new conception taking shape. The respect for the traditional values is only strong enough to maintain an external continuity—the continuity of the symbols of status. And the 'new men' are the first to submit to this rule which allows them to legitimatize their position: they buy the titles which are the only passports to acceptance among the social *élite*. Here then, we have a final, and most modern, use of capital investment, for the sake of social advancement in its purely abstract and symbolic form.

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CHAPTER XXI

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

565 556 558 THE lack of tangible data makes it impossible to formulate any theory about the extent to which economic mobility, i.e. movement between the strata, was a reality in pre-European days. We can only make a few statements based on social and historical facts the economic significance of which we can, with some certainty, assess. Economic betterment in every society depends on the possibility of increasing one's hold over resources and means of production. The Fulani conquest, and the exploitation of land which followed it, restricted, for one part of Nupe at least, mobility with regard to the main resource, land. The restriction could, however, be circumvented by means of political allegiance, i.e. by becoming the client of an influential landowner. There is also evidence that certain peasants and craftsmen have owned slaves and taken pawns, thus acquiring interest-bearing capital, and so rising above the average level of a peasant's or artisan's livelihood. In the ruling classes and among their dependants careers involving increased economic opportunities were the normal thing, whether they were expressed in a share in booty and slave-trade or in rewards to warriors and political followers 'for services rendered'. The reverse process, loss of economic opportunities, and in the extreme case the loss of all possessions, was no less marked. In the life of the peasant, such changes occurred in the course of wars and raids involving the destruction of homesteads, farms, and stores. The peasants in Nupe kingdom proper, though safe from slave-raids, were still exposed to similar attacks: punitive expeditions which, directed against a rebellious feudal lord, were fought on their land, or the visitation of armies which marched through and foraged from their farms. In the ruling group economic downfall could mean only one thing: political disgrace, often accompanied by confiscation of their property.

565 To-day the risks of war and raids have disappeared, together with the exploitation and one-sided source of income which they represented. Thus the new rule has to some extent levelled down the old economic inequalities. Clearly this levelling-down cannot have been equally welcome to every section of the population. Let me quote here the very frank and, in fact, typical statement of one of my most honest informants, an influential village elder of Mokwa. He admitted the great benefits of the present rule, thanks to which the *tálaka*, the poor man, enjoys safety from wars, raids, and political abuses. But then he added (rather heatedly in fact): 'But you have turned us all into *tálaka*.' This view, coming as it does not from a member of the ruling class but from a typical Nupe peasant, makes it necessary to review more closely the economic effects of the new order.[1] All our data tend to show that, although trade

[1] It incidentally supplies further evidence of the fact that a rise to superior economic position also occurred in the peasant classes.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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and commerce have greatly benefited from the new development, the position of the peasants and craftsmen has not improved to the extent of enabling them to accumulate reserves and increase their resources to any considerable extent. The introduction of commercial crops, the cultivation of which is officially encouraged, represents a policy designed to open to the native cultivator the way to economic betterment. Yet the insecurity of these new resources may defeat their own ends. A more recent move to improve the economic position of the farmers was the launching of a policy to introduce mixed farming into Bida Emirate. Mixed farming, which had been adopted some years previously in certain northern Emirates, was started in Nupe towards the end of my second expedition. At that time only the demonstration farms of the N.A. and certain stretches of land belonging to the Emir, all worked by wage-labour, had been put under the new cultivation. While it is thus too early to describe actual results, it is possible to outline, from the study of the underlying principles, certain probable effects of this agricultural policy on the economic and social system of the country. They are sufficiently far-reaching to warrant here a more extensive examination.[1]

This policy envisages a gradual transformation of the whole of Northern Nigeria into arable country cultivated on Western lines, on the basis of individual landholdings. The working team should consist of one man and a boy. The 2 acres per head which have hitherto corresponded to an individual worker would be extended to 12, and eventually to 20 acres. The manure gained from the draught cattle would do away with the necessity of shifting cultivation and would allow practically unlimited cultivation of the same stretch of land. A four-field scheme of rotation is suggested, with one field manured, and the following crops grown on the different fields: sorghum and millet (on the manured field); cotton; ground-nuts; cassava and small crops. The most prosperous farmers in a district are to be persuaded to take up mixed farming first, thus giving an example which, it is hoped, many others will soon follow. The total cost of the draught cattle (two bullocks and one cow) and plough is £7 for an iron, and £5 for a wooden, plough. Farmers who are unable to buy the equipment outright will be given an advance on future profits of £1 to £1. 10s., or can pay an 'entrance fee' of approximately that amount, being expected to pay the rest, viz. repay the advance, in four yearly instalments which include a hiring charge of 5 per cent. The greatly increased yield should make these payments easy: it has been calculated that the farmer will be able to increase his production eightfold by the new method.

The scheme, admirable though its intentions are, may easily be wrecked if certain inherent dangers and difficulties are not carefully considered. Let us take the example of the most prosperous and progressive farmers of Lemu whose landholdings we have examined in an earlier chapter (see p. 212). We found that the total land under cultivation in the case of a working group of five and three men was 9½ and 6 acres,

[1] I am greatly indebted to the Superintendent of Agriculture in Bida for having allowed me access to the departmental files on mixed farming.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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their brains, and represent, in a society of peasants, craftsmen, and traders, the intelligentsia. This will become even clearer when we examine the motley rising generation of Mallams.

Koran teaching begins as a rule in early youth, when the child is 6 or even 5 years old. The teaching of the Koran itself is reckoned to take five to ten years. Some pupils learn quicker than others, and in one school I found a boy of 13 already studying 'knowledge', while one of 17 was still worrying his way through the Koran. But on the whole this elementary stage is considered mere routine work which most students can master in the given time. The teaching of 'knowledge', on the other hand, depends entirely on talent and individual inclination. Pupils may be eager enough to try, but will give up later when they discover that 'they have no head for it' (a literal translation of the Nupe phrase). Nor can the time taken by these higher studies be fixed precisely. Ten to fifteen years is an average estimate—at least, after fifteen years' study one is reckoned to have become 'fully a Mallam'. But only prospective teachers will take this advanced course systematically, and continue their study year after year. The *dilettanti* pursue their studies much more irregularly and leisurely, and students of 35 or more may often be seen in the schools of the teachers of 'knowledge'.

The Mallam schools receive pupils from every class and every walk of life. I have compiled some figures to illustrate the social origin of the pupils of Bida Koran schools:

Father's profession	*Mallams*	*Traders*	*Farmers*	*Guild-craftsmen*	*Individual craftsmen*	*Nobility*	*Clerks, messengers, &c.*	*Total*
Studying: Koran	49	16	30	6	20	22	8	151
'Knowledge'	28	4	2	..	20	8	10	72

That the sons of Mallams are in a majority is not surprising, nor that individual craftsmen and members of the nobility should come next in number. Of the twenty-eight sons of Mallams who were studying 'knowledge' six were going to adopt a different profession (of messengers, clerks, labourers, or servants to Europeans). Of the forty-four other students of 'knowledge' sixteen were going to become Koran teachers either in Bida or in the villages. These sixteen prospective Mallams included, incidentally, the two farmers' sons. None of the sons of guild-craftsmen took up teaching as a profession: a proof of the strong organization of these 'closed professions'. The large number of farmers who send their boys to Bida Koran schools may appear surprising; and even more so that a certain number of them should take up the study of the Koran professionally (for among the boys who are at present studying the Koran a few are likely to become Koran teachers). One example may serve: a boy of 13, the only son of a farmer, was studying to become a Mallam. He was well aware that at the death of his father the land would be lost to his family. Nevertheless he would not return to farm-work. His father had made him a Mallam, and that was all there was to it. Again and again, in similar cases, I was told: 'We are no longer strong enough to work on the land', or 'After all, is the profession of a Mallam

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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working
565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran
555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan
875 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarifuzi*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

LOCAL AND KINSHIP GROUPING

602 611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 592 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man, his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the "house" (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* ("owner of the house"), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 614 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or "clans," for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified "first ancestors."

FORMS OF SETTLEMENT: HOUSE TYPES[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*ezi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 25–33.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–32, 34, 36– , 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 324; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

643 The nǎaKó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[6] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[8] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuŋ* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *nǎakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

STATUS AND TITLES[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuŋ*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[6] See above, p. 22.

[7] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.

[8] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Laboshi.

[9] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.

[10] See below, p. 35.

[11] See below, p. 36.

[12] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuŋ* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

565 the highest *gitsú* ranks go with the title. First appointment to a title and promotion to a higher one are granted by the king in council with the royal princes and other officers of state. Any able-bodied man of senior age, proved loyalty, and ability, and good health, of the Fulani families, is eligible for admission to a *gitsúiži* title, but favouritism, intrigue, and bribery also play a part, and the titles which a family has been able to accumulate are an indication of its influence at court and its favour with the ruling king. When a title-holder becomes incapable, through age or illness, of fulfilling his duties, a younger man is appointed, the former holder being styled " old *Kpotuŋ* " or whatever the title may be. Nobody with any kind of deformity can hold a title, since the system was originally based on service in war and offices vital to the safety of the state. Investiture takes place in the *Etsu*'s house, in the presence of the *Alkali* or *Liman*, a propitious day having first been selected by mallams or diviners. The candidate is addressed by the *Etsu*, then clothed in a cloak and embroidered gown by the *Alkali* who also places a turban on his head. After prayers in which all join, the new holder rides through the town accompanied by other title-holders, and dismounts to greet princes or heads of houses at their residences.

The second class is that to which the *ticiži* or *rowni* (office-holding nobility) belong. The name *rowni* means " turbans " and refers to the fact that the bestowal of such a title is symbolized by the gift of a turban from the king. There are three groups of *ticiži*, each of which is regarded as a sharply defined social order: the *sarakiži*, the *ena manži*, and the *ena wuži*. The *sarakiži* is a group of civil and military nobility consisting of town elders (*ena ndeji*) and war leaders (*ena 'kuŋ*). The second order, *ena manži*, comprises the mallams, the religious and judicial officials, such as the *Alkali* (judge), and the *Liman* (religious head), with their assistants and scribes. The third order, *ena wuži*, which is the lowest in rank but still possesses great influence, consists of the court slaves.

Many of the *saraki* titles are identical in name with those bestowed on the village elders, but the symbols of status, even when similar, refer to very different social contexts. *Saraki* titles are, like *gitsú* titles, generally granted by the *Etsu* in council with princes and other officers of state. Theoretically, at least, outsiders, even commoners, who have won his favour may be admitted to the ranks. Only a few of the higher titles, which have become the prerogatives of certain families, are hereditary. Several titles cannot be accumulated in a single family. They are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group; no other close relative can then claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his " house." To-day wealth and financial influence are important factors in gaining titles and the *saraki* group includes rich traders, as well as descendants of the old official nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe, and Nupe families who became partisans of the Fulani conquerors. These *sarakiži* received no salary, but were formerly granted land and slaves.

The *Ndeji* (" father of the town "), the head of the *ena ndeji*, is in charge of the affairs of Bida and the most powerful of the officers of state because he is closest to the king. At the head of the other civil title-holders he holds the daily council (*nkó*) with the king himself. The military titles (*ena 'kuŋ*) were formerly those of war leaders, the different titles being associated with special responsibilities.

565 517 554 The *ena manži*, the order of mallams, is " a class between classes, a mobile privileged intelligentsia." It includes the *Alkali*, the *Liman*, and their assistants. The detailed knowledge of Moslem law and literature and the specialized training required limits the number of candidates. But the offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* are sometimes hereditary, reflecting a tradition of learning in certain families, and political influence, for many eminent mallams are of Fulani stock. Mallams are highly esteemed by everyone and are placed about commoners even when they are without rank or title and have only little learning. They are allowed to marry daughters and sisters of higher born families.

565 Below the *sarakiži* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 567 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wuži*, whose members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[13] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiži*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

PATRONAGE[13]

566 675 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society. The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

AGE-SETS[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiži*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiži*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfuži*, of ages *c.* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

GOVERNMENT[14]

631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[12] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 383–401; 1935a, pp. 209–71, 292.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–16

SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 558 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 565 The most important women's titles are those of *nimuwoye*, of the royal house of Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya*; she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not 554 reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 103–8, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 331–4, 147–56; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zug'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–16.
[3] Nadel, personal communication: Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[5]

584 According to Temple,[6] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[6] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

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634 178 by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

634 565 563 The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565 563

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 182

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *kintsoyi* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

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634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsozi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsozi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsozi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede
[552 marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
184] villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsozi*.

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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war,
642 and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
● 566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent
675 security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *egi kata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attaching oneself to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 363, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

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566 patron's family. If he has been accepted as *bara* by an influential feudal lord, he may hope to be rewarded with the grant of land or a sub-fief. A title, finally, bestowed by patron on client proclaims publicly the *bara*'s position as a henchman of a man of rank. These are the titles which are usually bestowed on *bara: Sonfada*, *Mižindadi*, *Tsowa*, *Tswanya*, *Tsadi*.[1]

566 In all these cases the benefit is mutual. The *bara* receives material support and possibly a rank; the patron gains servants, soldiers for the
554 contingent which he is to muster for the king's army, and followers and henchmen to add to his prestige. The patron will choose his clients and will not accept everyone. A young man of about 25, who had become a labourer, told me that he intended eventually to attach himself as *bara* to a certain nobleman, but he was as yet too young and no one wanted him. To have gathered around oneself a large number of *bara* and *egi kata* is the final, most undeniable, mark of success. Whenever you visit the house of a nobleman, at any time of the day, you will find him surrounded by some of his *bara* or *egi kata*: possibly they have just returned from an errand or have come to discuss important questions with him, or simply to pay their respects and share, as they regularly do, his meal.

566 Often the loyalty of clients to their patrons extends to the whole family of the *bara* and is transmitted from generation to generation. But loyalty and ambition may come into conflict. Sons may choose a new patron for themselves, hoping for increased benefits from the new association; or the *bara* himself may leave his own protector when the influence of the latter decreases and look for another more influential patron.

566 The *élite* of clients are the *bara* of the royal princes. Not only are they servants of masters who have ample land and sub-fiefs to bestow, but they may also rise, with their masters, to the highest positions and
554 become, some day, *bara* of a ruling king. These royal *bara* are almost equal in rank to the nobility of the officers of state. The *Etsu* Nupe has only two *bara*, the *Mižindadi* (lit. equal to major-domo) and *Sonfada* (lit. companion on travels—the present holder of this rank sits beside the chauffeur in the *Etsu*'s car), not counting the freed slaves who play to-day more or less the role of *bara*. But the lowest *saraki* titles which the *Etsu* may bestow on his favourites are nearer clientship than nobility proper. Social climbers, rich and ambitious men, could buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or the king: *Etsu* Saidu, the late Emir, sold the title of *Mižindadi* three times over. Wealth buying a serf's title—this is indeed a paradoxical result of a social system which, intent on promotion and social rise, turns even the humiliation of clientship into a vehicle for a social career.

566 The complex pattern of clientship and the various motives which make free men seek patronage are illustrated in the following list of *bara* who were in the service of the late *Shaba*.

[1] Political ranks are frequently distinguished from *bara* ranks using the same title by adding the suffix *-kó*, meaning great, or the word *tsu*, meaning 'of the king', e.g. *Sonfada* and *Sonfadokó*, *Soje* and *Sojetsu*.

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566

List of Bara in the Household of the late Shaba Usman

(*Bara* titles are printed in italics)

1. Ibrahima *Madawaki*—in Bida. Formerly warrior by profession, now matmaker. Made submission to *Shaba*; his father and the rest of the family are not *bara* of the *Shaba*.
2. Etsu Ndakó—in Bida. Wealthy trader. He is the type of *bara* who is out for social promotion—a '*bara* for greatness'. He began as *egi kata* of the *Shaba*, who had no rank at that time. When Usman became *Shaba*, Etsu Ndakó made full submission, in the hope of profiting by this allegiance to the 'heir apparent' who might become *Etsu* one day and then bestow a *saraki* rank upon his client.
3. *Sonmáki*—in Bida. Mat and straw-hat maker. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru (of the same dynasty). The son followed in his footsteps, and served two *Shaba* in succession. He married a widowed daughter of his present master.
4. Yisa Gbodu—in Bida. Made submission to *Shabá*. Poor, a small trader by profession. Plays the role of a handy-man in the *Shaba* household.
5. Jiya Fugi—in Bida. Was formerly a *bara* of *Etsu* Mohamadu, the *Shaba*'s father.
6. Yisa Sharu—in Bida. He is a Mallam by profession, and became *bara* of the *Shaba* before the latter obtained his rank.
7. Mamudu Yakagi—in Bida. As No. 1.
8. Umaru Zainu—in Bida. Was formerly a *bara* of *Etsu* Maliki (of a different dynasty). He is a tailor by profession. His patron is at the same time his most profitable customer, having all dresses needed by the family made by him.
9. *Babban Ndeji*—in Bida. His father held *Ndeji* rank. When he died, his widow married the *Shaba* and took her son with her, who then became a *bara* of his stepfather.
10. Etsu Saba *Manzo*—in Bida. As No. 1. Acts as personal messenger of the *Shaba*. The title *Manzo* means messenger (in Hausa).
11. Suleiman *Gadza*—in Bida. His father was a titled slave of the *Etsu*. He gave his son as *egi kata* to *Shaba*. When the father died Suleiman's elder brother inherited the title, and the younger brother, having no prospect of obtaining a *saraki* rank, remained with *Shaba* as his *bara* and received from him the *bara* rank *Gadza*.
12. Idirisu *Madawaki*—in Bida. A very wealthy trader who became *bara* in order to obtain a title. (Cf. No. 2.)
13. Mallam Yusufu—in Bida. His father was *Alkali* of Bida, he himself formerly *Alkali* of Mokwa. Later he lost his position and became *bara* of the *Shaba*, for whom he now acts as a private 'chaplain'.
14. Mallam Mamudu—in Bida. Also a private chaplain of the *Shaba* household.
15. Jiya Man—in Bida. Another Mallam. His father was already *bara* of the *Shaba*.
16. Ndakó Tétengi—which means 'little Ndakó', to distinguish him from his father, who was called Ndakó and was also a *bara* of the *Shaba*. At that time they lived in Bida. Later they built themselves a farm settlement (*tunga*) on land given them by their patron. They live there now, paying an annual *dzankó* to the *Shaba*.

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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

665 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects 566 round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the 579 whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole 754 town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the 683 passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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It will have been seen already that the land disputes which we have just described reflect more than merely disputable, equivocal land-contracts. The landlords who 'sell' the land are without exception men of the titled classes, courtiers, favourites, or former slaves of the king or of powerful noblemen, and the 'buyers' mostly commoners, peasants who have had no other chance of obtaining additional land. To-day they are coming to realize that their right to the land which they acquire is protected by the Native Court. But till very recently, in order to obtain their rights, they would have had to bribe their way through or to find a protector equal in rank and influence to the landlord who threatened to evict them—a typical source of the institution of clientship, which we discussed in a previous chapter.[1] A final example. A certain farmer had 'bought' land from D., a *bara* of the late *Etsu* Saidu. The *Etsu*, for reasons of his own, refused his confirmation of the deal—D., being a tenant of the *Etsu*, could not transfer the lease without the latter's permission—and the tenant had only one way open: he attached himself to another, more influential, *bara* of the *Etsu* and through him made various gifts to the *Etsu*, over £3 in money, a valuable civet cat, and promised besides an annual rent of two bundles of corn.

Hereditary Land: Secondary Tenantship

Clientship, combined with a métayer arrangement, becomes a factor in land-tenure also in another respect. A commoner who desired more land, or a new piece of land, could give himself into the service or 'patronage' of a landowning overlord and thus secure land as well as political protection. The conditions were: an initial gift in kind as in all pacts of clientship, occasional presents, visits and other expressions of homage, and finally a tithe (*dzankd* again) from his millet or sorghum crop. This submission to patronage was often the only means by which the peasants in Cis-Kaduna could hope to retain their property when threatened with expropriation, and also the only means by which they could secure new land, that is, access to what under tribal conditions would have been a reserve of village land. The necessity of obtaining land and enjoying its secure possession thus constitutes another of the main roots of clientship. The lease of land obtained by these methods is hereditary, and remains in the family, a comparatively safe possession—unless political factors interfere. The tenants are rarely allowed to forget that the relationship between landlord and client implies more than merely a correct commercial relationship. Lack of respect, an apparent failure to render due homage, or behaviour suggestive of changed

Etsu himself suggested that the disputed piece of land (a river grove that was claimed by two neighbouring villages) should be bought for money by one of the parties. The purchase price fixed was 15s.

[1] Till very recently no peasant tenant would have dared to invoke the *Etsu*'s or *Alhali*'s help against his landlord; he would have been looked upon as somebody who had broken away from a firmly established tradition of loyalty, one-sided though it was. The tenant in the last example quoted above kept silent for fifteen years; not till 1934 did he venture to bring his case before the court and thus to obtain a final confirmation of his ownership.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 allegiance, suffice to make the landlord refuse a renewal of the tenancy
427 or even to cancel a running tenancy. Several cases of this kind have come to my knowledge; one even found its way to court: L., a nobleman of high rank, evicted his tenant (and this in the middle of the planting season!) because he had lacked in loyalty towards him and 'betrayed his confidence'.

427 Political changes have brought about an interesting development. To-day the initiative in this kind of tenantship has to some extent
566 passed from the tenants to the landlords themselves. The landlords were, as we have seen, mostly warriors and courtiers who, living in the
621 capital, never worked their land themselves, but settled their slaves on
567 it, and had it worked by their labour. When slavery was abolished and wars came to an end, when the 'absentee' landlords no longer needed *bara* as soldiers for their private armies and could no longer support a large household of henchmen and hangers-on in the town, they offered their land to their *bara*, and so new settlers went out into the country, occupying the land and founding new farm settlements. Sometimes the noble landowners even settled some of their relations in this fashion on the land, nephews and younger brothers, for whom no place or job could be found in town.

427 All these farm settlements, whether they were for slaves or *bara*, for peasants turned client or clients turned peasant, are called *tunga*—the
566 same name that is applied to the Nupe village 'colonies'. But the 'private' *tunga* has no name of the kind villages possess, but bears the name of the
621 noble patron to whom it 'belongs'. These *tunga* settlements are scattered all over Cis-Kaduna, and surround Bida in a dense belt. There are innumerable hamlets called Sokyara, Maiyaki, Ndeji, or similar titles of nobility—the titles of the landlords under whose patronage the settlements were founded. To our description of the village *tunga* given in a previous chapter we will add here a few examples of the 'private' *tunga*.

Etsu-Kolo (about four miles south of Bida), consisting of two compounds, two families which are distantly related. Called after the founder of the *tunga*, the father of the present family head. This Etsu-Kolo had been, like his father before him, a *bara* of the *Cekpa* in Bida. Later, however, Etsu-Kolo transferred his allegiance to the then ruling Emir, *Etsu* Mohamadu. The change of allegiance proved good policy: *Etsu* Mohamadu procured for him the position of a Village Head for the whole district with its many *tunga* settlements. Since then the family had remained faithful to *Etsu* Mohamadu's house, even after the Village Headship had been abolished again; they are still paying their regular *dzankú* to his successors, at present to the *Shaba* in Bida.

Emi Bwori ('House of Bwori', one mile north of Bida), called after a certain Bwori, the head of the guild of Bida butchers, and a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. This Bwori settled his own slaves in this *tunga*. The present owners of it regard themselves as *bara* of the descendants of Bwori, but have abandoned paying *dzankú* to them; but they still go to 'salute' them whenever they come up to town.

Lumanen (four miles west of Bida), a group of very prosperous *tunga* settlements, founded at different times by relations and noblemen attached to the royal house of *Etsu* Masaba. One settlement has been built by the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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father of the present *Maiyaki* for his *bara*, and is accordingly called *Maiyaki*. A second settlement is called *Emi 'tsu Saba*, and was founded in the time of the father of the present family head, who was a slave in *Etsu* Masaba's house. A third settlement was built recently, by the present family head, who was a *bara* of the present *Etsu* Saidu (also of the Masaba dynasty). All three settlements still pay their regular *dzanká* to their patrons. This year's *dzanká* amounted to one bundle of corn and ten yams.[1] 427 566 621

Makū (one mile south of Bida), consisting of three compounds, called after the noble patron of a certain Ndatazi, a peasant who had had a farm somewhere else first and then moved to the present site, obtaining the land with the help of the *Makū*. He lives in one of the compounds; of the other two one belongs to his brother, and one to a distant relative by marriage, who left his old farm and came here, where the land is better, also becoming a *bara* of the *Makū*. Each of the three houses pays an annual *dzanká* to the present *Makū*. It amounted this year to three bundles of corn and ten yams per compound.

Saci (three miles east of Bida), called after the *Saci* of Bida (a nobility rank). It consists of five compounds; in one a son of the *Saci* is living—the other members of his family are living in Bida—in the other compounds *bara* of the *Saci*. They have discontinued paying their *dzanká*, but still pay regular visits to their patron in town.

One word about the economic arrangement obtaining in the *tunga*. The slaves had worked the land entirely for their masters; that is to say, they had no *efakó* (family) land of their own, but were fed and clothed by their masters, and were also allotted smaller, *bucá* plots, which they were free to work for themselves. The arrangement between the landlord and the *bara* whom he settles on his land is the same métayer system which also regulates the tenantship of the free peasant who accepts clientship in order to obtain land. To-day, the difference between former slaves and *bara* has disappeared; for to most of the freed slaves their change of status meant only a promotion from slave to (free) client. Both, in a good many cases, still acknowledge this form of dependence and, as we saw, still return the annual tithe from their crops to the patron, or at least still pay their respects dutifully. The *dzanká* is no longer a compulsory tribute, and would not be upheld by the court. It is a voluntary gift which confirms the relationship of patronage and protection—a relationship which is as real to-day as it was in former times: political protection for oneself and one's children is bought cheaply with a bundle or two of corn a year. 566 567

Hereditary Land: Primary Tenantship

The acquisition of land through clientship follows the general pattern of the Nupe feudal hierarchy. A man who obtains land as a *bara* obtains it from a man of higher rank, either a royal prince or nobleman who holds the land in his own right, or from a rank-holder or titled slave or a king's *bara* who has himself obtained the land from another landlord higher up on the hierarchical scale. These 'primary tenants', however, have acquired their land by a different method, namely, through certain 566

[1] This census was taken in 1934, when *Etsu* Saidu was still alive.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

566 services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

425 In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikã*, the uninhabited bush; also all village 643 land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because 471 of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzankã* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

423 Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. 643 This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Maliki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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trained, slave; for a pawn, with his restricted usefulness, one might have to pay more than twice the amount. There is no doubt, then, that the institution of pawning represented not only a profit-making, 'capitalist' investment, but also, to some extent, a 'humanitarian' duty linked with status and prestige, a crude attempt at alleviating the hardships involved in the unequal distribution of wealth. Well-educated Nupe men, themselves members of the wealthier classes, with whom I discussed pawning, even went so far as to explain pawning (at least on a moderate scale) as an institution of considerable educational value enabling the sons of the poor to study farm-work and husbandry in the houses of prosperous and enterprising men. They would admit drawbacks only in the excessive practice of pawning, which, they maintained, was a recent development, brought about by rising prices and rising cost of living. These drawbacks, as they saw them, were that with the increase in their numbers, the pawns, many of whom frequently worked together in the same household, grew lazy and irresponsible, and showed openly their resentment at having to work for strange masters. The complaints of my informants were thus that in the combination of material and moral rewards which the people of wealth and status expected from the institute of pawning, the material rewards had completely to give place to moral rewards.

A similar combination of material returns from invested wealth with benefits of a more abstract order—status and prestige—is also characteristic of the institution of clientship (already explained in Chap. VIII). The share of the 'abstract' benefits becomes larger the closer we approach forms of expenditure and investment bound up with social status: display of wealth in household arrangements, festivities, the equipment of one's retinue, and so forth. To this and similar questions we shall return later.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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have seen, not only supplies its members with efficient training, but also guarantees, to some extent, a steady market for their products. The guild-head, moreover, is enabled by the special resources involved in his position to act as the 'banker' of the group and come to the financial assistance of individual members.

Certain other economic arrangements designed to provide insurance operate outside the labour-unit, and are thus of special importance for the individual craftsmen and the free professions. The familiar recourse to clientship is a first instance. By sacrificing part of his personal freedom as well as his earnings, the *bara* buys the patronage of an influential person. Though this patronage will be appealed to specially against the 'extraneous' risks due to political factors, it plays a part also in more 'normal' circumstances. Thus I found that a barber had recently become the client of a certain nobleman in his quarter of the town in order to secure a regular and good clientele; it is significant that the father of the barber had not been a *bara*, i.e. had not felt the need to 'insure' his more prosperous business. A young hat-maker told me that he intended to attach himself as *bara* to an influential rank-holder, with whose help he hoped to start business as a trader. I have also spoken of the Mallams and drummers, to whom clientship means the guarantee of success in their profession.

A different method of insuring against risks is embodied in the practice of borrowing money. 'Pawning' represents the firmly institutionalized form of borrowing—an institution which provides against normal as well as abnormal risks, and in which a social relationship closely akin to that of patron and client forms the basis of the financial transaction. Other forms of borrowing occur irregularly, and with a narrow scope. No professional money-lenders exist; the individual in need of money borrows it mostly from close relations, more rarely from friends or 'patrons'. The most frequent form of borrowing is for a husband to borrow from his wife. An indirect form of borrowing money from one's wife, not uncommon in Bida, is the practice of wealthy women to contribute to the bride-price of their sons and to other expenses, which, in accordance with Nupe kinship ideas, should be borne by the father.

A final insurance arrangement is provided in a specific financial institution operating somewhat on the lines of a 'pooling club'. It is called *dashi* in Nupe (*adashi* in Hausa) and plays—or used to play—a very important part in Nupe economy. We must describe it here in detail.

The *dashi* is a pure business arrangement, a free association of a number of men and women who agree to enter this financial co-operation for a certain limited period. Each member undertakes to pay regularly (for example, every week, or five days, or every month) a certain amount of money into a common fund, as many times as the group numbers members. Each time when the contributions have been collected a different member is entitled to draw the total fund, until every member has had his share. Members may also contribute double subscriptions, and then be entitled to two 'draws' in the course of the *dashi*. The allotment of the fund does not follow a fixed rule, but is left to the head of the group to work out. A member who is urgently in need of money can

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

565 Below the *sarakiši* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wuši*, whose
567 members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[13] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiši*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

PATRONAGE[13]

566 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society.
675 The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

AGE-SETS[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiši*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiši*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfuši*, of ages *c.* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

GOVERNMENT[15]

631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[13] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 383–401; 1935a, pp. 269–71, 292.
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–18

462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
462 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
439 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell groundnuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 546
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
652 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
661 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in
[675] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
652 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that
655 matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help
[782] them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual
567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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We shall see later that the explanation of this incorporation of artisans and brokers in the rigid bureaucracy of the kingdom lies in the control which the state exercises over crafts and merchandise; only by means of a control of this kind could the head of this warlike state secure an unimpeded supply of the commodities that were vital to the court and the state: arms, clothes, and saddles for the soldiers, food for the huge capital, and the luxuries that were needed for the display of royal power and wealth. We find convincing evidence for this interpretation in the fact that the different crafts are not of equal standing. Some rank higher than others, and this grading is not correlated with economic success: the very prosperous butchers are last on this list, blacksmiths and brassmiths, on the other hand, head the list, 'for they are makers of arms'. Only the glass-makers, a strongly independent and important craft, stand aloof from this order of craft-guilds. This is a list of the craft-guilds in Bida, with the titles of the guild-heads, arranged in order of precedence.

The figure in brackets shows the number of *ekpā* in which they live. The titles of the guild-heads are given in italics.

Brassworkers (2): *Muku.*
Blacksmiths (3): *Dokodza.*
Carpenters and Builders (1): *Egbaba.*
Barber-Doctors (3): *Sokyara.*
Beadworkers (2): *Majī Lantana.*
Leatherworkers (scattered in the town): formerly *Majī Kimpa.*
Weavers (3): *Leshe, Majī, Ndakó.*
Butchers (3): *Sonfawa.*
Glass-makers (1): *Masagá.*

SLAVERY

The lowest in the complex order of social classes in Nupe are the slaves (*wuzi*, as against *egi*, freeman, lit. child). But in this one class there are shades and distinctions of social status. Some slaves have risen to positions of wealth and influence. Others have remained menial workers in the households and on the farms of their masters. Pre-British Nupe numbered its slaves by the thousands. Twenty to thirty slaves was a moderate average for the household of a man of consequence. The prosperous craftsmen of Bida town, blacksmiths and weavers, always had slaves to work for them; even in villages one found households with one or two slaves.

The people of Nupe obtained their slaves by two methods: first, there were the slaves captured in the war, who became the property of the man to whose share in the booty they had fallen; and second, there were slaves bought in the markets of Bida.[1] The majority of the latter, it seems, were slaves sold by their captors—noblemen who had taken more slaves than they needed for their household. Slaves were also sold abroad, mostly to the south. Many Nupe men of rank were engaged in

[1] Lander reports that 200 slaves were on sale in the market of Rabá, the then capital of Nupe (op. cit. iii, p. 313).

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567 professional slave-trading; they acted as middlemen between the slave markets of the north, Kano, Katsina, and others, and the buyers in the south, on the river and coast.[1]

567 At the time of the Fulani conquest the price paid locally for an able-bodied male slave was 40,000 cowries, i.e. £1, and for a female slave 435 50,000 cowries, i.e. £1. 5s.[2] The price of slaves rose very high in later times. Shortly before the British occupation it had reached the sum of £7 for male, and £7. 10s. for female slaves. As my inquiries from various informants showed, this price had become almost standardized in the last decade before the British occupation and was valid throughout the country. It is interesting to note that this rise in price took place at a time when the largest market for slaves from Nupe was disappearing, shipments of slaves to countries overseas, especially to the Americas, having come to an end. We cannot say how this rise in price started, nor what might have been its cause. I can only suggest that it was due to increased difficulties of supply. Half a century of wars and raids had denuded the country of people who could with no great difficulty be made slaves. Slave-raiders were forced to obtain their human chattels in more distant areas and by more serious warfare—in the language of the economist, under conditions of higher 'cost'. Whatever the cause, this rise in price meant that the commoners and peasants of Nupe could derive from the wars and raids by which their rulers gained their fortunes not even the benefit of cheaper slave labour. Commoners and peasants would suffer when their country was defeated and their villages invaded by the enemy, or when, in civil wars, rival troops fought on their land. But the fruits of victory—rich booty in slaves—they could share only at a price: the same price which foreigners had to pay when buying slaves from Nupe in the open market.

567 Slaves were, in the strict sense of the word, the property of their masters. If anyone killed a slave belonging to somebody else this was [685] not regarded as a case of murder or manslaughter, but only as an offence demanding restitution of the 'destroyed' property, i.e. the full purchase price had to be paid over to the owner. But the slaves who were kept in the houses of the Nupe nobility were on the whole well treated. The master of a slave was quite within his rights if he chose to maltreat him, sell him again, or even kill him. But there is no doubt that this happened rarely—if ever. Many slaves, in fact, preferred to stay on in the houses of their ex-masters when slavery was abolished, in the position of an unpaid servant or retainer, rather than to start life on their own, especially if they were of advanced age. Custom even guaranteed the

[1] Barth states that most of the slaves from Kano were carried by small caravans to Bornu and Nupe; 'the best of slaves now go to Niffee (Nupe) to be there shipped for America. . . . Slaves are sent from Zinder to Niffee. Indeed it now appears that all this part of Africa is put under contribution to supply the South American market with slaves' (Dr. Barth, op. cit. ii, pp. 132 and 135). Lander mentions that the slaves brought to Rabá were purchased by southern peoples, traded down the Niger, and from there 'delivered from hand to hand till they at length reached the sea' (op. cit. ii, p. 298).

[2] See Schoen-Crowther, *Journals*, p. 194, and J. and R. Lander, op. cit. ii, p. 298.

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slaves a not inconsiderable measure of economic and social independence. An adult male slave would work for his master in the same way as sons and junior relations work for the head of the household. If he was put to farm-work, he would be given a small plot of his own to cultivate in his spare time. Or if he helped his master in a craft or in trade he would be able to count on a regular commission. Other slaves, who made good soldiers, were put into their master's private army, in which they would serve as foot-soldiers, armed and equipped at their master's expense. In the wars they would have their share of the booty. Slaves could thus acquire property, and the more fortunate owned horses, sheep, cattle, money—even slaves of their own. But when they died their property fell not to their wives and children but to their master.[1] Female slaves became personal servants of their mistresses or possibly concubines of their master. Unlike the male slaves they had no income of their own; what they might earn—by handicrafts or trade—would be their master's property.

Frequently the master would have to find wives for his male slaves; he would buy either a slave girl from the market, or possibly a girl belonging to another master—a slave girl to whom his own slave may have lost his heart. In the latter case a very reduced price would be paid, but the children would belong to the owner of the girl. But a slave might make money enough during his service to pay the bride-price for a free woman—mostly a widow, for whom a low bride-price is paid. In such marriages the free wife would in no way share the conditions of slavery, she would have her own house and work (a farm or trade) and might in due course be able to ransom her husband. Or a slave who had done well might be able to buy his own and his children's liberty. In this case he had to pay the full purchase price, except in the case of very old slaves who were no longer good for work—they would be released for half the amount. But if the offer to ransom a slave came from the slave's (free) relations, the owner would ask an exorbitant price, up to £20 or £30. Very rarely would a master let a slave free without the payment of the ransom, for example, as reward for faithful service. In all these cases the slave would bring two men as witnesses of the act of manumission.

A slave girl often became the wife of a free man—her own master or another man who bought her from her master, the purchase price replacing in this case the usual bride-price. This was not, however, real marriage; the slave girls became only concubines, not wives, and no religious or legal ceremony accompanied the marriage. Once they had borne their 'husband' a child, both mother and child became automatically free (though the status of a concubine remained unchanged). The families of the Fulani nobility count an innumerable offspring from this type of concubinage.

Children born of a free father and a slave mother were thus free

[1] To-day, more than thirty years after the abolition of slavery, this rule still holds in a modified form, with respect to ex-slaves who die without issue. In a court case heard before the Chief *Alkali* in Bida in 1936 the considerable property (cattle) of an ex-slave who had died without heirs was thus awarded to the son of his ex-master.

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567 themselves; so were children born of a slave father who married a free woman, and also of a slave father who bought a girl slave for himself and married her. If, however, slave married slave, the marriage being arranged—i.e. the purchase price for the girl paid—by the slave's master, the children remained slaves. But these slaves in the second generation were slaves of a different kind. They were no longer called *wuzi*, but *mangi*, 'born as child' (i.e. as freeman). Though not really free they were exempted from many of the disabilities of slavery. The children of a *mangi* who married another *mangi* were themselves *mangi* slaves again. But a *mangi* could not be sold by his master, nor could he be maltreated or killed—in the latter case his parents could obtain legal [682] redress and would be paid the usual purchase price as 'blood-money'. At the death of a *mangi* only half of his property could be claimed by the master, the other half was inherited by his own family. The *mangi* also had family farms of their own, and were generally treated like full members of the household in everything except that they were not entitled to any share in the inheritance of their master's property. A *mangi* was brought up together with the children of the house, was given the same education, and, like the sons of the house, served in the mounted household troops. Many *mangi* would free themselves, or at least marry free women. But the names of these house-born slaves in- [551] variably betrayed their origin; for they were named by their masters, and given not the usual Nupe names but names made up of some well-known blessing formula, of the first words of a proverb, and such like, for example: Adetsua, from *a de 'tsu à sei Sokó*, 'there is no Lord but God'; Barsu, from *bar su ga Allah* (Hausa), 'leave them to God'.

567 It would be wrong, however, to assume that slavery in Nupe carried with it a stigma. True, the people of Bida still speak with contempt of 554 the 'pagans' and 'slaves' (the two terms are almost synonymous) into whose countries their fathers had carried their profitable raids. But, characteristically for Nupe, the stigma attaches to the humble status rather than to the misfortune of having been made a slave. It disappeared with the signs of success and prosperity, open to slaves as to anyone. The wretched slave who could never rise above a menial labourer had to bear the ignominy of his position. But in the case of the trusted slave in a noble household, and above all the successful, freed slave, the taint of slavery meant little more than, in their own words, 'luck of war'. Slaves who served in the houses of the high nobility did indeed share some of the splendour that surrounded the position of their masters. Able and faithful slaves were rewarded with the position of head slaves, overseers, bailiffs; their masters bestowed upon them rich presents and gifts of land—more land than they cared to work with their own hands, having become men of wealth and importance. Their masters bestowed upon them, above all, special titles, household ranks—the ubiquitous symbol of social rise in Nupe, which in this case obliterated even the last external symbol of slave status, the typical slave-names.

000 The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host

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The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host of slaves: slaves for menial work—in the house and on the land—as well as the titled slaves of respected position. At the court this latter group of slaves formed the *ena wuzi*, the Order of Court Slaves, a distinguished slave *élite* into which only few selected slaves could ever hope to be admitted. From the slaves captured in war those of high birth and status, chiefs or distinguished warriors, were selected for the court. These, too, were given ranks and titles, and could rise high in the service of the king. Theirs was the specialized service of officials and trusted royal agents. There were those who looked after the king's vast household; those who were in charge of the *Etsu* Nupe's no less imposing harem—both offices formerly entrusted to eunuchs.[1] Other slaves formed the king's bodyguard and police force; they were provincial delegates, tax collectors, trusted messengers, 'liaison officers' between the king's palace and the houses of his noblemen, and between the king and the army in the field. These slaves, like the other rank-holders, owned land and held fiefs. The Nupe kings in Rabá are said to have had only four titled court slaves; the slave ranks that existed at the court of Bida some thirty years ago (and the ranks still exist, although their holders are no longer slaves) were more than three times that number. Under *Etsu* Maliki, one of the last independent kings of Nupe, the most responsible state offices were taken from royal princes and *sarakiši* and entrusted to slaves. The position of the slaves as officers of state thus seems to have overshadowed more and more all other state ranks. Slave ranks were ranks bestowed *ad personam*, and ranks bestowed by the king personally, independent of the council of princes and ministers; and this gives us the explanation for their rise in importance. The offices linked with civil and military rank also depended to some extent on the personal favour of the king. But once appointed, these men stayed on, servants of the kingdom rather than of the king. They had behind them the claims of powerful families, they were exponents of political factions, and could play on that 'balance of power' between the dynasties. The slaves were personal servants in the full sense of the word. They were brought into office, not by family claims or promotion or a rigid rule of succession, but by personal appointment, selection, and trial. They were bound to the king's service generation after generation, by the strongest bond: their position of unfree men. It frequently happened that a new *Etsu* took over the slaves who had served his predecessor and left them their ranks and possessions. The rise of the slave officials at the Fulani court is the counterpart of the rise of a powerful, dangerously independent feudal nobility.

The following is a list of slave ranks held to-day, not by slaves, but by former slaves or descendants of slaves at the court of the *Etsu* Nupe. I have again tried to indicate in what manner they received their title, and also in certain cases the office which some of them are holding to-day in the Bida Town Administration. That so many of these former slaves

[1] In the pre-Fulani kingdom the court is said to have employed only a few slaves—all eunuchs. All slave ranks which have a *nda* in their title, meaning 'father' (ranks that are still in use—see attached chart), were originally ranks reserved for eunuchs.

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567 554 had been placed in responsible positions proves what I have said about the selection and rise of slave officials at the court of Bida.

Slave Ranks

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Present office*	*Biographical remarks*
Gabi Seidi	Kupa	'Officer of Liaison' between *Etsu* and District Officer	A rich slave who under *Etsu* Bello bought his title for £16.
Ndatwaki	Yagba	On the Bida Town Council	Father was *Ndatwaki* under *Etsu* Maliki; he himself received the same title under *Etsu* Bello.
Dzwódfu	,,	,, ,,	An hereditary slave title, first granted under *Etsu* Usman.
Ndamáraki	Bunu	,, ,,	Father was *Ndamáraki* under *Etsu* Masaba.
Sántali	Benu-Nupe	..	Grandfather was a slave of Usman Zaki; they remained slaves of this house.
Masántali	Yagba	..	Grandfather was a slave of *Etsu* Umaru Majigi; they remained slaves of this house.
Swajiyd'tsu	,,	..	Father held same slave rank.
Ndatódo	,,	..	Father held the same title and also title of *Ndamáraki*.
Manfúda	,,	..	Another slave title which has become hereditary in one house.
Sonmátti	Kusopa-Nupe	..	Id.
Ndádari	Nupe	..	Id.
Shangbo	Nupe from Rabá	..	Father was a *saraki* (*Somasū*) of *Etsu* Majiya. He was made prisoner in the war and became a slave of *Etsu* Masaba.
(*Sarkin Dogari*	Hausa	Head of police force	To-day not regarded as slave title. Formerly bestowed on a personal slave of the ruling king.)

WAR

124 721 It will be understood that this description is based entirely on information and the historical recollections of informants. However, the wars that were fought in Nupe and by the Nupe are not so far distant that there are no longer eyewitnesses left, or people who have themselves borne arms in these wars. Thus information could be checked and cross-checked. For certain details I could, moreover, count on most authoritative informants, who had played a leading part in the last wars of the kingdom; the description of the military organization, for example, is based on information obtained from the late commander of the *élite* troops of Nupe, the king's bodyguard.

721 669 War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state. No warfare or organized fights occurred between the villages or tribal sections of the

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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dakári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 1,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

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566 allegiance, suffice to make the landlord refuse a renewal of the tenancy
427 or even to cancel a running tenancy. Several cases of this kind have come to my knowledge; one even found its way to court: L., a nobleman of high rank, evicted his tenant (and this in the middle of the planting season!) because he had lacked in loyalty towards him and 'betrayed his confidence'.

Political changes have brought about an interesting development.
427 To-day the initiative in this kind of tenantship has to some extent
566 passed from the tenants to the landlords themselves. The landlords
621 were, as we have seen, mostly warriors and courtiers who, living in the capital, never worked their land themselves, but settled their slaves on
567 it, and had it worked by their labour. When slavery was abolished and wars came to an end, when the 'absentee' landlords no longer needed *bara* as soldiers for their private armies and could no longer support a large household of henchmen and hangers-on in the town, they offered their land to their *bara*, and so new settlers went out into the country, occupying the land and founding new farm settlements. Sometimes the noble landowners even settled some of their relations in this fashion on the land, nephews and younger brothers, for whom no place or job could be found in town.

All these farm settlements, whether they were for slaves or *bara*, for
427 peasants turned client or clients turned peasant, are called *tunga*—the
566 same name that is applied to the Nupe village 'colonies'. But the 'private' *tunga* has no name of the kind villages possess, but bears the name of the
621 noble patron to whom it 'belongs'. These *tunga* settlements are scattered all over Cis-Kaduna, and surround Bida in a dense belt. There are innumerable hamlets called Sokyara, Maiyaki, Ndeji, or similar titles of nobility—the titles of the landlords under whose patronage the settlements were founded. To our description of the village *tunga* given in a previous chapter we will add here a few examples of the 'private' *tunga*.

Etsu-Kolo (about four miles south of Bida), consisting of two compounds, two families which are distantly related. Called after the founder of the *tunga*, the father of the present family head. This Etsu-Kolo had been, like his father before him, a *bara* of the *Cekpa* in Bida. Later, however, Etsu-Kolo transferred his allegiance to the then ruling Emir, *Etsu* Mohamadu. The change of allegiance proved good policy: *Etsu* Mohamadu procured for him the position of a Village Head for the whole district with its many *tunga* settlements. Since then the family had remained faithful to *Etsu* Mohamadu's house, even after the Village Headship had been abolished again; they are still paying their regular *dzanká* to his successors, at present to the *Shaba* in Bida.

Emi Bwori ('House of Bwori', one mile north of Bida), called after a certain Bwori, the head of the guild of Bida butchers, and a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. This Bwori settled his own slaves in this *tunga*. The present owners of it regard themselves as *bara* of the descendants of Bwori, but have abandoned paying *dzanká* to them; but they still go to 'salute' them whenever they come up to town.

Lumanen (four miles west of Bida), a group of very prosperous *tunga* settlements, founded at different times by relations and noblemen attached to the royal house of *Etsu* Masaba. One settlement has been built by the

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father of the present *Maiyaki* for his *bara*, and is accordingly called *Maiyaki*. A second settlement is called *Emi 'tsu Saba*, and was founded in the time of the father of the present family head, who was a slave in *Etsu* Masaba's house. A third settlement was built recently, by the present family head, who was a *bara* of the present *Etsu* Saidu (also of the Masaba dynasty). All three settlements still pay their regular *dzanká* to their patrons. This year's *dzanká* amounted to one bundle of corn and ten yams.[1] 427 566 621

Makū (one mile south of Bida), consisting of three compounds, called after the noble patron of a certain Ndatazi, a peasant who had had a farm somewhere else first and then moved to the present site, obtaining the land with the help of the *Makū*. He lives in one of the compounds; of the other two one belongs to his brother, and one to a distant relative by marriage, who left his old farm and came here, where the land is better, also becoming a *bara* of the *Makū*. Each of the three houses pays an annual *dzanká* to the present *Makū*. It amounted this year to three bundles of corn and ten yams per compound.

Saci (three miles east of Bida), called after the *Saci* of Bida (a nobility rank). It consists of five compounds; in one a son of the *Saci* is living—the other members of his family are living in Bida—in the other compounds *bara* of the *Saci*. They have discontinued paying their *dzanká*, but still pay regular visits to their patron in town.

One word about the economic arrangement obtaining in the *tunga*. The slaves had worked the land entirely for their masters; that is to say, they had no *efakó* (family) land of their own, but were fed and clothed by their masters, and were also allotted smaller, *bucá* plots, which they were free to work for themselves. The arrangement between the landlord and the *bara* whom he settles on his land is the same métayer system which also regulates the tenantship of the free peasant who accepts clientship in order to obtain land. To-day, the difference between former slaves and *bara* has disappeared; for to most of the freed slaves their change of status meant only a promotion from slave to (free) client. Both, in a good many cases, still acknowledge this form of dependence and, as we saw, still return the annual tithe from their crops to the patron, or at least still pay their respects dutifully. The *dzanká* is no longer a compulsory tribute, and would not be upheld by the court. It is a voluntary gift which confirms the relationship of patronage and protection—a relationship which is as real to-day as it was in former times: political protection for oneself and one's children is bought cheaply with a bundle or two of corn a year. 566 567

Hereditary Land: Primary Tenantship

The acquisition of land through clientship follows the general pattern of the Nupe feudal hierarchy. A man who obtains land as a *bara* obtains it from a man of higher rank, either a royal prince or nobleman who holds the land in his own right, or from a rank-holder or titled slave or a king's *bara* who has himself obtained the land from another landlord higher up on the hierarchical scale. These 'primary tenants', however, have acquired their land by a different method, namely, through certain 566

[1] This census was taken in 1934, when *Etsu* Saidu was still alive.

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other 423
respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'cor- 643
porate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. But of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town 423
walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esozi*, 643
where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the 241
land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esozi* is placed 567
under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esozi* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esozi* 423
has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from 241
the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with 643
the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the 427
communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch with his *esozi*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esozi*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esozi* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil. [485]

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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after a slight recovery, for 1*s.* 3*d.* Straw hats ten years ago fetched 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.*; in 1934 8*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936 5½*d.* and 1*s.* 3*d.*; embroidered gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 30*s.* or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fail short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
735 procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
● 567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other
558 household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of
426 money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for
735 which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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trained, slave; for a pawn, with his restricted usefulness, one might have to pay more than twice the amount. There is no doubt, then, that the institution of pawning represented not only a profit-making, 'capitalist' investment, but also, to some extent, a 'humanitarian' duty linked with status and prestige, a crude attempt at alleviating the hardships involved in the unequal distribution of wealth. Well-educated Nupe men, themselves members of the wealthier classes, with whom I discussed pawning, even went so far as to explain pawning (at least on a moderate scale) as an institution of considerable educational value enabling the sons of the poor to study farm-work and husbandry in the houses of prosperous and enterprising men. They would admit drawbacks only in the excessive practice of pawning, which, they maintained, was a recent development, brought about by rising prices and rising cost of living. These drawbacks, as they saw them, were that with the increase in their numbers, the pawns, many of whom frequently worked together in the same household, grew lazy and irresponsible, and showed openly their resentment at having to work for strange masters. The complaints of my informants were thus that in the combination of material and moral rewards which the people of wealth and status expected from the institute of pawning, the material rewards had completely to give place to moral rewards.

A similar combination of material returns from invested wealth with benefits of a more abstract order—status and prestige—is also characteristic of the institution of clientship (already explained in Chap. VIII). The share of the 'abstract' benefits becomes larger the closer we approach forms of expenditure and investment bound up with social status: display of wealth in household arrangements, festivities, the equipment of one's retinue, and so forth. To this and similar questions we shall return later.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

619 on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved
634 over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

[567] *Konú* (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Bafa* in the [114] 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

161 Demographic Data

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

162 1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op cit., p. 20
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province, who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

565 Below the *sarakiži* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wuži*, whose
567 members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[13] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiži*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

Patronage[13]

566 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society.
675 The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

Age-sets[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiži*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiži*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfuži*, of ages *c* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

Government[15]

631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[13] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 382–401; 1935a, pp. 290–71, 292.
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–18

SLAVERY

567 Slaves attached to the royal house and the nobility could rise to positions of wealth and influence, and some of the former titled court slaves have in recent times become Native Authority officials. Slaves had a certain measure of social and economic independence; though female slaves had no income and their earnings belonged to their master, they might become the concubines of a free man and be given their freedom. Any children born would in any case be free. Male slaves could seek to purchase their independence.

Slaves were obtained both by capture in war and by purchase in the Bida market. Owners had the power of life and death over slaves, though in practice they rarely maltreated them. Indeed, when slavery was abolished, many former slaves elected to remain as unpaid servants with their former masters. Children born to a man's slaves were called *mangi* ("children of the house") and could not be sold, maltreated, or killed. They were brought up as members of the household but were not entitled to a share in the master's inheritance. A master would, however, provide the marriage payment for a marriage arranged by him for one of his slaves with another slave.[33]

PAWNING

426 558 The practice of pawning human pledges grew to enormous proportions before its final suppression in 1933–34. Under the pressure of unexpected or imperative demands, one person in a family, preferably a male, would be pawned for 5–10 years. Pawning was regarded as a disgrace and the pawns were looked down on by their masters and even by the household slaves.[34]

POSITION OF WOMEN

562 Women's activities, other than household tasks, include spinning, weaving, cooking cakes for sale in the market, and hairdressing (a lucrative profession). Women are also doctors and traders, though those whose professional duties keep them away from home for long periods are commonly regarded as "loose" women. They collect the produce of all trees except palm-oil and kola; they cultivate and sell groundnuts and root crops and help to trade some of the men's crops.

A woman's earnings as a trader cannot be touched by her husband, but remain her property until her death, when he inherits them. Among commoners a woman is often better-off than her husband and may lend him money for taxes and the purchase of tools, and even provide for marriages and funerals. The inter-sex hostility, which has been accentuated by the economic independence and consequent sexual freedom of women, also shows itself in the Nupe conception of witchcraft, where a witch is thought to do mystically what a woman actually does in everyday life.[35]

562 565 The most important women's titles are those of *nimwoye*, of the royal house of Masaba, and *sagi*, of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman Zaki alternatively. Quarrels between women are brought before women holding these titles and the women of Bida town and the villages bring them gifts. *Sagi* is also the title of the "head of the women" in every Nupe village. The chief woman commoner in Bida has the title of *sonya*; she organizes all large-scale women's work and is entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is now an official of the Native Administration, receiving a small salary. The status of a woman by descent is not 554 reduced on marriage, since Nupe class sentiments cannot admit a lowering of the status of anyone high-born.[36]

[33] Nadel, 1942, pp. 103–8, 157.
[34] Ibid., pp. 311–13.
[35] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 172–81.
[36] Nadel, 1942, pp. 831–4, 147–56; Temple, 1919, p. 326.

326, 571, 592, 476 Nupe FF52

[For information on the efakó-group (cooperative labor group), particularly in the craft guilds, also see category 467--Analyst]

71, 675, 642 Nupe FF52

[Information on bara-ship, the sacrifice of individual freedom for the sake of political protection by a patron, has been placed in category 566. --Analyst]

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342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and
[631] windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the
361 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
[354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

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621 pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly.
571 Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little [484] interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the
621 parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in
186 the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

621 Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
554 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form
571 themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the powerful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
571 of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accordance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpā*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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linked with a title or name, encased in these *ekpã* which bear the name of a royal house, the group of commoners rallying round a noble patron, and the nobility rallying round a dynastic head—this is one of the most conspicuous symbols of the political relationships which rule the capital.

The political administration of Nupe kingdom (like every political administration) can be regarded as an organization guaranteeing order and security to the subjects of the state—individuals and groups—in return for specific forms of submission: submission of individuals to the established rules of conduct; surrender, by groups, of all independent political action; and surrender, by individuals and groups, of portions of their property in the form of taxes and tributes. The law-abiding, tax-paying citizens are thus promised protection against enemies at home and abroad, and general security for carrying on their daily work, holding markets, using the roads, and enjoying the fruits of their labour. With regard to individuals, a legal machinery safeguards their civic rights, that is, their claims to this protection. With regard to subject groups, we may speak of constitutional rights in which this safeguard of security is embodied. The element of reciprocity implied in these constitutional rights, namely, the promise of security in return for a surrender of autonomy, is clearly understood by the people. This is shown in the current interpretation of such political measures as the suppression of the Kyedye attack on the town of Kacha described above. The intervention of the central government on behalf of Kacha is positively linked with the previous surrender of autonomy (*a gba ya Bida*, 'they submitted to Bida').

A striking feature of the internal organization of Nupe are the considerable regional differences in the completeness and directness of administration and the frequent changes which it has undergone in the fifty years of Fulani rule. These variations and changes have a threefold explanation: (1) They interpret, in terms of political status, the cultural and ethnical provenance to which we referred in the preceding chapter. (2) They are a compromise between the superstructure of the state and certain claims to autonomy, admitted mainly because of the difficulty of establishing a more complete control—for example, over the strongly organized river-state of the Kyedye, or over the newly absorbed 'outside' groups on the periphery of the kingdom. (3) They are a compromise also between centralization and delegation of power. The delegation of power represents an essential structural characteristic of the Nupe political system. The ever-expanding kingdom, increasingly dependent on the military help of the nobility, had to secure their services more and more by granting them landed property in the form of fiefs, and thus investing them with a portion of territorial sovereignty. But then, only through this indirect—feudal—administration could the expanding state hope to reach and to control its entire population, above all those scattered village units which never evolved a larger political system than could be fitted easily (like the Beni confederacy or the Kyedye political organization) into the large-scale framework of the Nupe state.[1]

[1] Compare the similar situation in Imperial Rome: 'The state had to appeal to private persons of wealth and influence because it was not able to transmit its

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443 above. A census of the same market will give quantitative data with regard to the attendance of the market and the goods which are offered for sale on an average market-day. The figures quoted, which are of necessity elastic, were compiled from a large number of regular observations during the months of February and March. The kind and quantity of goods traded on the Nupe markets reflect the seasonal fluctuations in supply and demand. It must be understood, therefore, that at other times of the year, especially in the rainy season, the composition of the market will be somewhat different. In a large centre like Kutigi, however, which can count throughout the year on imports from distant places, these changes remain within more narrow limits than in a small market which relies largely on local supplies. For the purpose of comparison I have also added the corresponding figures referring to ordinary week-days.

443 The chart shows that, in marketing, certain goods are regularly com-
441 bined. The same women who sell grain also sell rice, red pepper, *kuka*,
438 and partly palm-oil and shea-butter. The sale of yam is regularly combined with the sale of cotton, and sometimes of gourds; or cotton is sold by the traders in native cloth. Such goods as smoked fish, native tobacco, or cooked food, on the other hand, are always traded separately. The combination of goods offered for sale does not invariably betray the character of the seller, whether she is a farmer's wife, marketing his produce, or a professional trader or 'middleman'. The two categories, in fact, overlap to some extent. As a rule the women who sell grain, rice, *kuka*, red pepper, yam, and cooked food are only 'occasional' traders, i.e. are marketing produce from their husbands' farms. In the case of the women who combine the sale of grain, red pepper, rice, and palm-oil, grain and red pepper may well come from the farms of their husbands, while rice and palm-oil may have been bought by the woman from someone else. Or the woman who sells cloth and cotton may be selling her husband's cotton together with cloth which she purchased in Bida. The women, on the other hand, who sell tobacco, smoked fish, and various Bida goods are invariably professional traders or 'middlemen'.

443 The distinction between seller and buyer is no less difficult to elicit
● 571 from the chart. The two roles are often combined in the same person. Many women who come to the market to sell agricultural produce or cooked food, or men who bring live stock or hoes, at the same time purchase various goods from other traders. But the market, in Africa as well as Europe, is more than merely a business institution. The people who attend it, whether they come to buy or to sell, also come for the sake of company and entertainment. In the market they meet friends and acquaintances with whom they can gossip and exchange news. There also the sexes meet, girls and their suitors. Rarely will there be a market-day on which drummers and musicians do not turn up also, and young men or girls join in a dance. This 'social' aspect of the village market must appeal more to the local people, than to the professional traders from Bida or other more distant places. It presupposes common interests, a familiarity and intimacy of long standing. The group of peasant men and women who are brought together regularly on market-

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Census of Kutigi Market

Goods	Attendance and quantities of goods: On market-day	Attendance and quantities of goods: On ordinary days
Fulani butter and milk	4 Fulani women from camp in the neighbourhood, each with 1–2 gals. of milk and 1 lb. butter	2–3 Fulani women
Grain, rice, red pepper, *kuka*	30–40 women, each with 10–12 *kpanu* of grain and rice, 1 lb. of red pepper and a small bowl of *kuka*	2 women
Palm-oil, shea-butter, and salt	50–60 women, partly the same as those who sell grain and rice, each with 2–4 gals. of palm-oil (in old petrol tins)	2 women
Cotton and yam	10–12 women, each with 4–5 heaps of yam, each containing 6–8 yams. Quantity of cotton very variable	2–3 women
Smoked fish	30–40 women, each with one basket containing 15–20 fish	3 women
Various greens and herbs (partly used as medicine)	15 old women	..
Native tobacco	5 women	3 women
Live stock	Men with 4–5 sheep or goats	..
Pottery of different size	10–15 women, each with 10–15 smaller or 4–5 larger pots	..
Gourds	7–8 women, partly the same as those who sell cotton	..
Hoes	1–2 men, each with 4 hoes	..
Mats	Very variable, 2–10 mat sellers, mostly men	..
Cooked food (pastries, corn-gruel, corn-water, &c.)	20–30 women, the same as those who also sell grain or palm-oil, each with 2 pts. corn-water, 20–25 packets (in banana leaves) of corn-gruel, and 10–15 pastries	4–5 women
Meat	3 butchers, average 2 sheep or sometimes 1 bull or cow	They slaughter every second day
Straw hats	5 men	..
Cloth, various fancy goods	5 men in the booths, and 15 women (Nupe and Yoruba) in the square	..
Tailors	6 men, in the booths	..
Barbers	4 men	..
Leather-workers	4 men, in the booths	..
Charms, medicines, and potash	4 men, two of them Hausa	..
Roast meat	1 man, sitting on the road-side opposite the market	..

days indeed constitute a substratum of community life at large. The social life at the village markets utilizes, and creates or revives, at the same time the contacts and social relationships which characterize the 'area of common life'. It is no accident that this circle of five to ten miles radius from which the local attendance of village markets is recruited coincides with the area which is covered by local knowledge and interest in each other's affairs,[1] and within which intermarriage between different villages takes place.

[1] See p. 38.

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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1s. 6d. in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips.

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course

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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

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369 and reality. The prototypes of *ena* ranks are all (at least theoretically)
561 within the reach of the individual members. Every one of the young
554 men who have gone through the *ena* may find when he reaches the suitable age that elimination by death or illness of senior relatives has singled him out for the position of a family head, and thus for a *nūsa* rank. Indeed, the promotion which accompanied his age-grade career will serve as an important qualification in the bestowal of the real rank by chiefs and elders. In certain respects all *ena* ranks of the senior grade retain their validity outside the *ena*, and after its expiry. The code of age-grade etiquette expires with the age-grade association. Not so the symbols of age-grade achievement: a man will be called by his rank rather than his name years after the *ena* has come to an end, often even for life—especially if he had held a very high rank. Men who have once been elected as *Etsu* or *Ndakotsu*, even when they are not, or not yet, appointed to a *nūsa* rank, will occupy a position of some distinction in their native village. Not only are they addressed and known by their *ena* titles, but village elders will pay attention to their opinion, and will entrust them with responsible tasks—in the organization of a ceremony, or of important collective work carried on outside the framework of the age-grade association. *Ena* ranks will never be confused with the political ranks of the village; they remain *tici nya ena*, ranks of the age-grade association. But although still only models of the 'real thing', they are 'real' in the sense that they indicate the varying qualification of individuals for access to the final social advancement. In the village *ena*, then, and similarly in the few age-grade associations in Bida which are recruited from the ruling classes, the *ena* rank-system anticipates a future social status; it introduces social concepts, and practises forms of conduct the effectiveness of which will be proved in adult life.

None of this is true of the average Bida association. Although here, again, the ranks attained in the senior grade accompany a man through life, they can claim no significance beyond that accorded to them by the rules of the game. A game indeed it is. These ranks let you enjoy fictitious contacts with a world of rank and power which you can never hope to enter in reality. Their upward trend, their incentive of competition, imply, not preparation or anticipation, but pretence, imitation—'substitution'.

561 Let us examine now the composition of the age-grade associations
571 with regard to the social groups and strata which they absorb. In
369 small villages a single age-grade association includes the youths of the whole village, and may even go beyond it, including the 'dependencies' of the village, the small *tunga* settlements, or linking a number of *tunga* settlements with one another. In the scattered hamlets round Bida the boys and young men of three to four hamlets join in a common *ena*. In very large villages (e.g. Kutigi) the age-grade is subdivided into a number of associations, each embracing one large, or two or three small, neighbouring, village *efu*. The age-grade itself, however, stretches across the whole village community, and the different associations conform to the same pattern with regard to the length of the term, and the time and year of the 'change-over' from grade to grade. In Bida the sub-

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division goes much farther, and we find a large number of disconnected 561
associations, which are no longer co-ordinated or conform to a common 571
pattern. I estimate the number of age-grade associations in Bida at 369
200. The individual *ena* is, again, bound up with locality, and includes boys and young men from the same part of the town. But here two new factors enter: social differentiation, and divided political allegiance. The very fact that the Bida *ena* finds its members among friends and close acquaintances already expresses the tendency to make it socially homogeneous, and to limit its membership to individuals from the same social stratum, or the same professional group. *Sarakiži* and *talakaži* never mix in the same *ena*. Nor do prosperous traders or Mallams join the same *ena* as peasants or small craftsmen; nor does, finally, the youth of the craft-guilds intermingle—glass-workers, blacksmiths, weavers, all have their separate age-grade associations. The limitation with regard to locality and close acquaintances is less rigid in the highest grades than in the junior grades. For as in the course of years the membership decreases, some members having died, others having left the *ena* or perhaps the town, it sometimes becomes necessary to open the membership of the higest grade to people from other parts of the town. Yet no *ena* would accept members from beyond the boundary of the town *ekpã*. The political solidarity of the three dynastic divisions of the town is thus reflected in, and even, as we shall see, actively supported by, the age-grade associations of the capital.

Here once more we gain insight into the social significance of the Nupe 182
age-grade association: it underlines and fosters the solidarity of the 561
existing social groupings. This means something different in the village 369
and in the town. In the former it refers to the village community at large, and we find the age-grade associations stretching across it, and across the large kinship units and 'houses' into which the village society is divided. We can liken the age-grade system to a horizontal plane cutting across the separate structures of the extended families, with their wide base, tapering off to the apex of the one official representative of the family group, the titled elder. The age-grade association must thus counteract all possible separatist tendencies of individual kinship groups and sustain the large-scale integration on which the existence of the village as a social unit depends. In large villages this integrative scheme is in some measure narrowed down, owing to the size of the groups that can be absorbed effectively in a single age-grade association. It assumes, in fact, a somewhat different aspect, in uniting the extended kinship units within themselves—in the form of the large *efu* group—that is, in holding together the widely expanded structure which is to support the apex of a common official representative.

In the town the existing social grouping is created and held together by political and class interests. Here again, the age-grade association fosters the unity of a group which is to submit, in 'real' life, to a common head. But he no longer represents the 'apex' of an organically grown structure; as the *ena* is largely the product of a free, voluntary association, the group loyalty which it fosters is towards the freely chosen leader of a local political faction.

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ent tribe. I have seen friendship between a Nupe and a Yoruba in Jebba, and between a Kutigi farmer and a *konu* weaver, between a Bida tailor and a peasant from Patigi. Only social class remains an effective barrier even in friendship. Unlike age-grade comrades, friends will help each other with money. Friends may also exchange their children, that is, adopt each other's children, and marry them to their own children—as is also done by men who stand to each other in the relationship of classificatory brothers. This practice has the aim, as the people say, 'to increase friendship'. The essential difference between age-grade fellowship and friendship is thus clear: if the former fashions sentiments of 'belonging together' on the basis of similarities in outlook and interest, i.e. similarities involved in common locality, tribal origin, common occupation, the latter unites individuals *qua* individuals, in a union which is essentially new, and initiates rather than follows existing bonds and sentiments.

It remains to discuss the *ena nyentsugłži*, the age-grade associations of the girls, and the relation between the parallel age-grades of the sexes. I have said already that the girl's *ena* is limited to the youngest age-grade. As explanation of this different organization among the girls the people argue there can be no senior grades among girls, since the approximate age limit of the junior grade, 15 to 16 years, coincides with marriageable age. Unlike boys, the girls can no longer carry on in the *ena* once they are betrothed or married; their duties towards husband and family cannot be reconciled with age-grade activities. This explanation is borne out by the characteristic relations that unite the parallel *ena* of boys and girls. They both take exactly the same titles; and a boy and a girl who bear the same title enter a special, close, relationship: the boy calls the girl *nna*, mother, and the girl the boy *nda*, father. Girls' and boys' groups meet at the various feasts which age-grade associations arrange. It is the duty of the girls to prepare food and beer, the money being contributed by the boys, and to serve it at the *ena* feast. The *Etsu* of the boy's *ena* presents the girls with kola-nuts. The girls will sing and dance, and the boys will watch, and then, in their turn, the boys will perform before the audience of the girls. They all behave with utmost dignity, and even severity: the *ena* is quite obviously not the place for flirts and amorous play of the kind one can observe between boys and girls who meet in the street or market. The symbolism of the names by which girls and boys address each other—names which are never used by lovers or by husband and wife—emphasizes the 'respectable', non-sexual, nature of this relationship, even to the extent of excluding any reference to legitimate sex relations—marriage. It is supposed to happen occasionally that boys and girls who were brought together in the *ena* marry afterwards. I have not come across an actual case. The relationship between them, while the *ena* lasts, is definitely meant to be in the nature of comradeship, and must never lead to sexual relations. Yet once the girl is married, it may be difficult to maintain this aloofness. The danger of jealousy on the part of the husband, and possibly the temptation of carrying comradeship with the other sex to a more intimate relationship, forbid a continuation

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561 of the girls' *ena*. So much for the interpretation of the *ena nyentsugiži* on
571 the lines of the Nupe argument.

561 But if for women the age-grade career comes to an end with marriage, while for men marriage represents neither a limit nor even a conspicuous grade in the age-grade career, this reflects also the different sociological significance that marriage has for women and men. For women, it is the end of one life and the beginning of another. It means change of home and family bonds, and initiation into new aims and duties. For men, marriage—a first marriage—does not even coincide with the periodical readjustments in the labour-unit, i.e. the release from the *efakó* group which, as we have seen, takes place as a rule when a man has two wives or grown-up children. The social career of the men—achievement of economic independence, promotion to office, and responsible position in the community—only begins to fulfil itself long after their first marriage; that of the women is meant to enter its last phase in marriage. Indeed we have seen that when the woman claims the right of an independent, continued, social career, she must buy it with the sacrifice of the marriage union.

561 As regards the institution of the parallel age-grades its practical value
564 seems to be that it prepares the ground for the first experiences of sex relations. Or rather, it aims at circumventing, and dulling, this unsettling first experience. Enabling the sexes to meet in the critical age, between 13 and 16, as it were on neutral ground, openly and respectably, it tends to remove some of the secrecy and unhealthy curiosity that is part of the mental transition from the self-contained existence of early youth to the new awareness of the polarity of sex. Our study of adult sex morality has left no doubt about the restricted effectiveness of this native 'co-educational' scheme. It must fail because it is, like all faulty education, in the nature of a palliative. It breaks the adolescent, we might say, gently, to the moral code of adulthood, but it adopts this code in all its dangerous narrowness and its rigid exclusion of amorous experiments and pre-marital sex relations. If age-grade discipline paves the way for adult sex morality, it does so also with respect to its repressions and inhibitions, and that final sweeping reaction against conventional morality which we could study in the adult life of the Nupe people.

561 To summarize. The age-grade associations include the adolescent male (and to lesser extent female) population of Nupe from early youth up to the threshold of adulthood. The most vital years in individual development are thus brought under the influence of this institution. We have studied the decisive part which it plays in moulding the personality of its members and in defining their attitude towards tasks and problems which they are to face in adult life. The essence of the institution of age-grades is, then, preparation—a twofold preparation. Its first aspect is the fashioning in the framework of the age-grades of sentiments of solidarity which are to bind the group at large.

182 This involves an important theoretical problem which has greatly
561 engaged the attention of modern sociologists and social psychologists, namely, the possibility of transferring co-operation and solidarity

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reduced to a system of merely occasional assistance. According to my informants the change is due primarily to the high cost of the *egbe*, which to-day few farmers can afford. This is no doubt true if we understand 'cost' in the relative and not in the absolute sense. In the very closely balanced budget with which most Nupe farmers must reckon to-day the comparatively large single outlay for the *egbe* may prove an insuperable difficulty. But this is not the whole picture. A cost is high only measured on the profit it can realize. And here we have seen that one of the most essential kinds of profit—moral profit—which the *egbe* can realize, namely, its assurance of the economic balance between the generations, has itself lost much of its significance in the life of the community.

The second type of collective work, the *dzolo*, is less important than the *egbe*. It is practised only for harvesting of those crops which demand a large working team (ground-nuts, cotton, and beans) and consists in the arrangement among a number of farmers to work in turn on each other's farms. The host provides the meal after the work. But there is no drumming or dancing, nor is any competition involved in the work of the *dzolo*. Neither is the mechanism of the age-grade associations utilized for this collective work, which is carried out on a much smaller scale than the *egbe*, and only between friends, i.e. families whose heads are friendly with one another. In the *dzolo* the tie of friendship evidently supplies that incentive to collective work which, in the *egbe*, is entrusted to the appeal of music and dance and the stimulus of competition.

WAGE-LABOUR

Assistance in farm-work by means of paid labour plays on the whole (we must add as yet) an insignificant part in Nupe production at large. It is called *kantsú* in Nupe but is often referred to by the Hausa name *lada*, i.e. wages. It is employed by the owners of farms who are not themselves farmers or who for other reasons cannot themselves look after their land. Paid farm-labour is a new thing in Nupe. It has no place in the traditional system of land-tenure and *efakó* work. Characteristically, it is almost completely absent in the rural districts; it is employed mostly in the large commercial centres in which a considerable proportion of the population belongs to the well-to-do 'professional classes', such as Kacha, Jebba, and, above all, Bida.[1] Let me give you a list of the cases I recorded in which wage farm-labour was employed. The employers were a number of traders in Kacha who had bought some land a few years ago but did not work it themselves; a number of traders in Bida; two Mallams in Bida; a Mallam in Jebba whose health did not allow him to work on the land (he was employing wage-labour for the first time); Native Administration officials in Bida—a few policemen, and teachers at the Bida Middle School; and lastly, the village chief of Kacha (who is at the same time District Head) whose time is taken up by official

[1] One of my Bida informants, himself a well-to-do member of the 'intelligentsia', estimated that six out of ten farmers in Bida employ wage-labour. Though I should regard this estimate as much too high it is significant for the outlook of the urban *bourgeoisie*.

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561 lays down the rules of behaviour for *ena* members, and which is again valid for life. These rules demand friendliness towards one another, and avoidance of all quarrels; mutual assistance in work (though not with regard to loans); respect towards one's superiors in the group; and respect also for the sanctity of marriage among all fellow members. The significance of this last rule, which applies to brides as well as wives, in age-grade associations the lifetime of which comprises the years when the adolescents first awake to the reality of sex, when they court and finally [369] marry, need not be emphasized especially. Yet only in the village can the rule be regarded as tending to eliminate quarrels and feuds which must disrupt the community. In Bida it is in effect abetting matrimonial laxity outside the small group to which this code applies. The narrow political and class loyalty of the Bida *ena* has thus its counterpart in the no less narrow *esprit de corps* with its qualified respect for matrimonial rights.

In the case of a breach of the age-grade code the culprit is summoned before the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*, who have the right to punish him. A first, light offence may entail only a warning. Repeated offences will be punished more severely. If a young man shows himself lazy in *egbe* work or reluctant to fulfil the obligations of collective farm-work, it is regarded as sufficient punishment to order him to work in the back row, among the youngest and most inexperienced *ena* members. In the case of more serious offences the penalty may take the form of social ostracism: the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* would rule that no member of the *ena* must attend festivities in the house of the offender. This sentence, I was told, soon brings the culprit to heel; he will kneel down in front of the *Etsu* and ask him for forgiveness, protesting that he would henceforth mend his ways. In certain age-grade associations, especially in Bida, fines are 561 inflicted in the case of graver offences against the *ena* code. Expulsion is 837 never practised, not even as a penalty of the gravest of all age-grade offences—misconduct with the bride or wife of a comrade. However, my inquiries into the occurrence of this offence were invariably answered with a blunt denial. Whether or not it was founded on fact I have no means of deciding. Quite possibly the *esprit de corps* of the *ena* forbade admission of so shameful a charge. The rather too sweeping denial with which my questions were met makes it appear not unlikely: 'We are like brothers,' many of my informants said, 'who would steal a brother's wife?'

In one respect, at least, this statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration. 561 Age-grade comrades are not 'like brothers'. The intimate relation between age-grade comrades which this simile suggests is not true to 572 facts. The relationship existing between friends, on the other hand, is often likened to the relationship between brothers, and does in certain respects resemble it. But age-grade comradeship as all informants agreed, is sharply distinguished from friendship, and the mutual obligations of friendship in no way coincide with those implied in *ena* membership. The subject is worth pursuing.

A man (or woman) will never have more than one friend. The friend may come from a different locality, a different profession, even a differ-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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ent tribe. I have seen friendship between a Nupe and a Yoruba in Jebba, and between a Kutigi farmer and a *konú* weaver, between a Bida tailor and a peasant from Patigi. Only social class remains an effective barrier even in friendship. Unlike age-grade comrades, friends will help each other with money. Friends may also exchange their children, that is, adopt each other's children, and marry them to their own children—as is also done by men who stand to each other in the relationship of classificatory brothers. This practice has the aim, as the people say, 'to increase friendship'. The essential difference between age-grade fellowship and friendship is thus clear: if the former fashions sentiments of 'belonging together' on the basis of similarities in outlook and interest, i.e. similarities involved in common locality, tribal origin, common occupation, the latter unites individuals *qua* individuals, in a union which is essentially new, and initiates rather than follows existing bonds and sentiments.

It remains to discuss the *ena nyentsugiži*, the age-grade associations of the girls, and the relation between the parallel age-grades of the sexes. I have said already that the girl's *ena* is limited to the youngest age-grade. As explanation of this different organization among the girls the people argue there can be no senior grades among girls, since the approximate age limit of the junior grade, 15 to 16 years, coincides with marriageable age. Unlike boys, the girls can no longer carry on in the *ena* once they are betrothed or married; their duties towards husband and family cannot be reconciled with age-grade activities. This explanation is borne out by the characteristic relations that unite the parallel *ena* of boys and girls. They both take exactly the same titles; and a boy and a girl who bear the same title enter a special, close, relationship: the boy calls the girl *nna*, mother, and the girl the boy *nda*, father. Girls' and boys' groups meet at the various feasts which age-grade associations arrange. It is the duty of the girls to prepare food and beer, the money being contributed by the boys, and to serve it at the *ena* feast. The *Etsu* of the boy's *ena* presents the girls with kola-nuts. The girls will sing and dance, and the boys will watch, and then, in their turn, the boys will perform before the audience of the girls. They all behave with utmost dignity, and even severity: the *ena* is quite obviously not the place for flirts and amorous play of the kind one can observe between boys and girls who meet in the street or market. The symbolism of the names by which girls and boys address each other—names which are never used by lovers or by husband and wife—emphasizes the 'respectable', non-sexual, nature of this relationship, even to the extent of excluding any reference to legitimate sex relations—marriage. It is supposed to happen occasionally that boys and girls who were brought together in the *ena* marry afterwards. I have not come across an actual case. The relationship between them, while the *ena* lasts, is definitely meant to be in the nature of comradeship, and must never lead to sexual relations. Yet once the girl is married, it may be difficult to maintain this aloofness. The danger of jealousy on the part of the husband, and possibly the temptation of carrying comradeship with the other sex to a more intimate relationship, forbid a continuation

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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occasion the mother of the two sisters was present, and spoke harshly to the husband, who shortly afterwards fell ill and died. It was then that people began to suspect Wusa and her family of witchcraft; there was plenty of gossip, and when Aramatu later married her late husband's younger brother, in the usual Nupe levirate, people called him a 'witch's man' and avoided his company. The couple were living on the farm but frequently came to town to stay with Aramatu's mother; this gave rise to new gossip, for it is very unusual for a Nupe man to pay such visits to his mother-in-law, and the people concluded that Aramatu's second husband had come completely under the influence of the two women. 754x

The matter was brought to a head a few years later, by an event that happened in Wusa's household. She was then about thirty-five or forty, and had a guest, a Hausa employed as Muezzin in a Bida mosque, staying in the house. One day he complained about the food Wusa gave him to eat; she resented his remarks and the two quarrelled. Shortly afterwards they had another quarrel, over a trivial matter, the Hausa flying in a rage and striking Wusa in the face so that her nose bled. Wusa's mother happened to visit her that day, found her crying, and was told the reason; apparently nothing further happened then, though my informant was away at the time and found his mother-in-law gone when he returned. He comforted his wife, who was still crying as well as furious, and thought no more about it, until, a fortnight later, the Hausa fell ill, suffering from severe headache and inflammation of the eyes, and suddenly died. Now everyone, the husband included, was convinced that Wusa as well as her mother and sister were all dangerous witches. The three women were formally charged with the crime, with the results described before.

(2) The events here described happened shortly before my second visit to Jebba Island, in the up-river village of Kpatsuwa. The story, much fuller of mystery and miraculous features, was well known in all the riverain villages, and it is interesting to quote two versions, one from Kpatsuwa itself, where I learned it from the people most closely concerned, and the other from Jebba, where it was told me by a man who knew about the events from hearsay only. The two versions, as we shall see, differ not a little, the hearsay version representing clearly something like an incipient myth. To begin with the local account.

The brother's son and prospective heir of the old chief of Kpatsuwa, a young man called Braima, was married to a pleasant young woman, but was also friendly with a much older woman, called Ketswamasa, who was the wife of a friend of his, a local drummer. The relationship between Ketswamasa and Braima was 754x 572

*754 of the kind known as *nnâkata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. In-
• 572 fluential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and
[557] drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

*754 Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been
[683] bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [572] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [262]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [606]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

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TRADE AS A PROFESSION

The majority of professional traders in Nupe are Bida men and women. For these professional traders the restriction to the small areas which are characteristic of inter-village trade does not apply. The whole country, and indeed the whole of Nigeria, is their field of activity. Trade, business, is independent of the boundaries of a community, a tribe, or language. Inside Nupe one of the results of this extensive trade is the regularization of hospitality towards traders in all larger villages of the country. Only a few traders may be able to find relations in the distant places to which their business takes them. The others are free to stop in every house. The rules with regard to the compensation for this form of hospitality which does not fall in the category of kinship duties vary locally. In Mokwa the guest maintains himself and is expected to give his host a parting gift of 10–15 kola-nuts (representing about 1*s.* 6*d.* in money). In Kacha, a much larger business centre, the population of which consists to a very large extent of traders, a stranger who has no relatives in the place may go to the chief, who will allot quarters to him. The guest receives lodging as well as food, but is not expected to make any gifts in return; he is expected only to return the hospitality in his own village should his host be taken there on his business trips. 441 574 484

Outside Nupe the Nupe traders are frequently more than merely birds of passage. They stay at a place for several months or even years at a time, and may possibly settle there permanently. We find such colonies of Nupe traders in every larger town of Nigeria, in the northern Emirates as well as in the Europeanized centres of trade in the south. In the north they speak Hausa; in the south they can mostly get on with Nupe (only a few Nupe men and women have learned Yoruba). Not the least convincing evidence of the century-old route of Nupe trade to the south, down the river Niger, is that Nupe language is understood all along this route. In places on the lower Niger where the lingua franca of the north, Hausa, is no longer understood I found that the people would speak and understand Nupe. Although in the life of the traders tribal and cultural affinities are subordinated to business interests, these links re-emerge in a new form. In these foreign parts where the Nupe live as aliens, they are drawn together by the link of their common language and common origin. They form small cultural enclaves, Nupe colonies, and tend to live together in the same part of the town. These colonies do not form social units or communities in the narrow sense of the word; rather, they are fluid, semi-temporary, groups brought together by the chance of common enterprise. They can hardly be homogeneous; they contain men and women from different sub-tribes and parts of Nupe country. Moreover, they spring up suddenly, and may disappear again as suddenly, owing to changes in the economic conditions. But while they exist they show a strong tendency to develop something like an organized community life. They all feel themselves as Nupe; they recognize the ranks and forms of status valid at home and elect a head or chief in Nupe fashion. Many men and women in these colonies are joined in the course 441 167 484 571 [191]

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511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he
554 should have built himself such a pretentious house. We shall also hear later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale poly-
554 gamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even
595 be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status. Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they express the effectiveness of this incentive.[1]

511 We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog-
554 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant
514 households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly, they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer in-
461 vestigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest' borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept. In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time represents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe, as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid. The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure, members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers, craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the spreading of the Mallam profession.

[1] It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such questions of historical truth.

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one
369 of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round
the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida
561 *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is
raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole
unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan
religion.

I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing
561 collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities
concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the
members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed
that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the
ena a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the
success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his
capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the
most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known
[789] as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat
all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice
as fast'.

Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the
561 narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional
574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming cere-
monies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the
narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of
kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are
invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*,
Etsu, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the
group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food,
drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the mem-
bers of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller
festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the
larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end
of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited.
At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new
age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred
guests.

Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the
561 courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts
574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle,
leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one
535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they
554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every
moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers.
369 There exist special *ena gbarúfuži* dances, performed at these occasions:
they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a
row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms
stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in
small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena.
Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

561 574 535 554 369

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

561 574 554 369

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

561 796

[1] This song, which was composed by the *zaworo* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows. [533]

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one *ena* would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age-grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the individual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [262]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [604]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country, though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
652 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income
661 firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will
652 find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold
655 Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help
[782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual
567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *kuso*, 'bush'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nũsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'ạ gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nũsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nũsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nũsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nũsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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622 hereditary chieftainship, the accumulation of surplus renders such development more likely. But even here the existence of the special chief's cult, which imposes additional expenses on the chief (higher than in the case of cults to which he need only contribute his share), should tend to adjust more equitably the economic balance between chief and elders.[1]

622 However, we have other evidence to show that the chief's position, economically privileged though it may be, is not *meant* to lead to the 576 formation of an essentially different, sharply separated, permanently 554 privileged ruling class; evidence, in other words, to show that the political organization of the village is meant to preserve the social homogeneity of its community. This evidence lies in the rules of etiquette defining the behaviour of the people towards their chief. People everywhere show reverence to their chief: they kneel down by the door when entering his presence. Often there are raised platforms in the chief's entrance hut, near the door leading to the inner part of the house, on which he would sit, while the others are squatting on the ground in front of him. Or the chief would sit on a leopard skin or at least a cow-hide, while the others are assigned seats on grass-mats. The chief, finally, is addressed by special formulae of greeting reserved for his title. Yet again, this attitude of reverence represents only the highest grade of respect as it is shown similarly to all *nũsaži*, graded in accordance with age and rank. In every house young men or visitors of lower status and seniority would squat near the door while the head of the house, or honoured guests, occupy places on the inner side—the more honoured side. Special greetings of the same symbolic nature as the salute reserved for the chief are typical of the various ranks. Here as in the case of economic privileges etiquette marks off the chief not as standing on 'a plane by himself' but merely as the most prominent in a graded order of prominence. If on state occasions, wearing his state robe and turban, the chief is conspicuously marked off from the rest of the people, when going out to his farms there is nothing to distinguish him from an ordinary farmer; like him he carries his hoe across the shoulder, a straw hat on his head, and wears only the cheap blue cloth slung loosely round the body. There is thus ample 'neutral ground' in the matter of etiquette and distinction of status between chief, elders, and the rest of the people.

But above all, the attitude of reverence and the special chief's salute 622 are reserved for the chief's person; they are not enjoyed equally by his 565 relations merely in virtue of their being his relations. The exalted social position of the chief does not extend to his family—there exist, even in 554 hereditary chieftainship, no symbols of a hereditary class differentiation. Later, in the discussion of social classes in the kingdom, we shall understand fully the significance of this 'democratic' element in Nupe village chieftainship.

[1] In 1936 the chief of Doko bought five sheep for sacrifices connected with the 'chief's cult', contributed beer to other ceremonies, and presented two gowns to men with whom he was anxious to keep on good terms—not counting occasional small gifts and contributions, e.g. to family feasts, &c. Altogether an expenditure of approximately £2–3, or 30 to 40 bundles of corn, that is, roughly half of his income from tithe.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by cowering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner. 565 576 516

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver. 565 576 431

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally, [643]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 576 431 small kola-nuts, in fives or tens, were handed out to messengers, dancers, guild-heads, and other people of lower rank.

Even language and music are used as symbols of class. There exist in 565 Nupe special drum-rhythms, *take*, greeting formulae, *kirari* (Hausa, lit. 'calls'), and songs which are linked with certain noble families and im- 576 portant ranks. As soon as a family comes to power or a man receives 533 rank and title, the drummers of Bida will compose such *take* and *kirari* in their honour. You can, in fact, have them made to order, at various prices; but an influential person will not need to order them, for the drummers, counting on his patronage, will supply him at once with this musical salute. Some of the *take* and *kirari* which one can hear to-day date back to pre-Fulani times; others were composed recently. Whenever a member of these noble families attends a festivity, the drummers would announce his arrival by playing 'his' *take* and singing 'his' *kirari*, and the 'master of ceremonies', who is always present at such gatherings, would recite a long list of illustrious ancestors to whom the nobleman can lay claim, the ranks which he had held, and the deeds which he achieved. Lastly, the Nupe address each other by titles only, and never by name, if the person addressed bears a title. Special formulae of greeting are linked with every rank, and thus mark position on the social scale by the most obvious system of signs—everyday speech.

Class symbols and class etiquette shade over into the more substantial 565 differences of class. Behaviour which is pressed into the service of class 576 manifestation becomes indistinguishable from behaviour which results from differences in social and economic advantage. The right to carry a sword or appear everywhere on horseback presupposes the economic ability to acquire these 'emblems of rank'. Submissive behaviour of a client towards his patron, or a member of the lower class towards a man of rank, is determined as much by the convention of class etiquette as by the special interest of gaining favour in the eyes of a person of consequence. Here we are dealing with the other aspect of class differen- 565 tiation, those 'cultural' differences which are, or become, typical of different classes. They revolve round the two pivots: political and economic structure.[1] They involve the existence of political prerogatives and the varying measures of individual liberty and mastery over one's own destiny, enjoyed by the different classes. Here we can outline the existing classes of Nupe society. We have met their protagonists already: the ruling class of the kingdom, rich absentee landlords, men whose occupation was war and slave-raiding, and, low down on the social scale, commoners and peasants, heaviiy taxed, and gaining a scanty livelihood rendered insecure by the very facts that add power and prestige to the ruling class. We have also met the craftsmen in the town, who share some of the privileges of the nobility, and the Mohammedan intelligentsia who can attach themselves to the highest stratum irrespective of

[1] The two structures do not define identical strata, nor is the economic differentiation invariably reducible to political prerogatives. However, we will leave the examination of the exact relation between the two 'pivots' of social stratification for a later chapter.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts,
441 although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women
441 as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which
868 they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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561 554 themselves similarly heterogeneous and arbitrary, including Bida titles among its traditional village ranks.

561 554 576 The system of precedence involved in *ena* ranks and grades is taken very seriously, and the rigid rules of etiquette which govern it are enacted with all solemnity. Much of the *ena* business takes place, as we shall see, within the single *ena*; but when members of different grades meet—for example, at family feasts in the house of a member, or at collective farm-work—submissive or condescending behaviour marks their relation towards each other. Members of a junior grade will never dance when members of senior grades are present, except with their special permission and at their request; in collective farm-work the junior grades work at the back of the team, at less important and less conspicuous tasks. Age-grade etiquette is even more emphatic within the individual association. At communal meals the 'subalterns' will wait till their superiors have eaten; at *ena* feasts subaltern and senior ranks will never dance at the same time; when greeting a superior, the age-grade member of lower rank will squat down and bend his head, exactly as prescribed for intercourse between superiors and inferiors in the social scale of 'real life'.

561 554 369 In the village *ena* it is only in general terms that the ranks indicate social position on the rank-scale of the association. In the town *ena* the ranks are sometimes chosen so as to indicate and do justice to the special gifts, or the special social position outside the *ena*, which characterize individual members. In this the organization of the town *ena* reflects the more highly differentiated social structure of urban society. Thus a Bida *ena*, composed largely of illiterate members, assigned to a young man who had been educated in the Government Middle School the title *Naïbi*, a rank of the Mohammedan clergy which can be held only by scholars. The rank-list of another *ena* included the rank *Boroti*, lit. Head of the Bororó, its holder being the son of the late Emir's 'regent-delegate' for the Bororó Fulani. Some Bida age-grade ranks indicate a certain official capacity held by a member in the *ena*. Thus I found a rank *Dzufā* (lit. pocket) bestowed on a young man who acted as 'purser' of the group. All purchases and payments for *ena* purposes were made through him; when, for example, a member decided to give a party for the group he would place his money contribution in the hands of the *Etsu*, who would then hand it over to the 'purser' as the member responsible for financial arrangements. In one *ena* I found the rather curious rank *Mataushe* (Hausa, lit. 'the man who rubs', i.e. 'masseur'), by which name a certain slave or body-servant of the Nupe king was known whose special duty it was to massage the feet of his master. In like manner it was the duty of this 'office holder' in the age-grade association to massage the feet of his *Etsu* at meetings of the group when his master felt tired.

561 554 177 One group of ranks typical of the Bida *ena* deserves special attention, namely the ranks which are organized on 'European lines' and copy, not ranks and offices of Nupe society, but ranks, offices, and even names of Europeans with whom the Nupe had come into contact. Such titles are often amusing and even puzzling. In one *ena* the head of the group was

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not called *Etsu* but *Gomna Ture*, European Governor. Other ranks in 561
the same *ena* were *Kantoma* (Station Magistrate), *Joji* (District Officer), 554
Likita (Doctor); there was also the rank *Dupienne*, derived from the
name of Mr. Dupigny, a former Resident of Niger Province, a rank 177
Borti (Major Burton), *Mallam Smi* (Mr. Smith, a former Superintendent of Education), and *Jamsi Dogo* (lit. Long James, a title which referred to a former clerk in the Divisional Office); it was, not unnaturally, the lowest title on the rank-list. Another *ena* organized on modern lines was divided into two sections, a 'native' and a 'European' section, the former consisting of Nupe titles, the latter of Europeanized names and ranks, such as *Gomna*, *Joji*, *Likita*, *Rezdet* (Resident), *Kantoma*, *Misisi* (Mrs.), *Hafissa* (Officer), and *Karamin Joji* (Assistant District Officer). In the [576]
normal business of the *ena* these two sections behaved differently, and were bound by different rules of etiquette, native and 'European', which meant that the members of the 'European section' had to greet each other in European fashion, by lifting their caps, and had to eat at a table with fork and spoon. I could not help laughing when these rules were explained to me; but the head of the group pointed out, rather indignantly, that this was the most natural thing in the world; after all, 'a Governor does not eat with his hands'.

The seriousness with which these distinctions of ranks are observed, 554
the realism with which this playing at society *à la Européenne* is enacted, 561
forbids us to treat it merely as a childish and meaningless make-belief. 177
Psychologically, it has the significance of a substitute for thrills and
achievements which normal life cannot offer. The inclusion of titles and 154
forms of conduct copied from the British officials in the country is part of that 'realism' which marks age-grade etiquette and precedence: it does justice to the new political order of the society, and partly also to the fact that high social position in present-day native society implies intimacy with the Administration and high British officials. If it were asked why the Bida *ena* chose as symbols for social gradation ranks and offices so far removed from their ordinary life, I should point out that there is less difference than one might assume between the two models which the *ena* could choose—the model of European and the model of native society. To the average Bida man the highest ranks and offices of his own society are no less remote and inaccessible than the office of a District Officer or Governor. We must add that the choice of a particular rank-system for the *ena* is in no way determined by the social stratum from which it is recruited. Bida age-grade associations of *tdlaka* and *sarahi* alike adopt the highest ranks both of traditional and British society. Only for a small minority—the few *ena* of the ruling class—may these ranks and offices, and the whole exalted social life which they depict, one day become reality. For the large majority they represent an infinitely remote, imaginary social existence.

Here we are led to the wider problem of the relation between the world 369
of pretence built up in the age-grade association and the values of 'real', 561
that is, adult, social life. It can best be approached through a comparison
of village and town *ena*. In the village association the social life enacted in 554
the *ena*, and its prototype in adult life, stand in the relation of potentiality

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woman'. Certain of these clues will be borne out by the biographical sketches which I shall later quote. But let me emphasize that they represent merely a 'theory', firmly held though it may be. When I visited a noted witch with one of my informants (who had strongly stressed the morose and stern aspect of witches) I found her to be a pleasant-spoken young woman, whom I could easily make laugh by some small joke. When, later, I pointed out this apparent anomaly, my informant retorted that the woman had merely put on an act to throw off my suspicions; towards her own people she would still be morose and unfriendly. 754x

But even if these clues are mere theory, they help us to understand the ascription of witchcraft to particular persons. If I tried to sum up briefly the Nupe character as it appears to the observer, I should say that the average person is always friendly, pleasant-spoken and polite, very fond of jokes, chatty, and given to ready laughter. To some extent such behaviour is consciously cultivated. To be unfriendly or unpleasant in intercourse is definitely 'bad form'; polite etiquette has been developed to a fine art; and in the routine of social life joking and playing have their appointed place. Whether the rules of etiquette do not sometimes serve to repress fiercer and less placid leanings, we may for the moment disregard: the point is that politeness and pleasantness constitute the accepted ideals of behaviour, the sort of morale the Nupe believe in. And this morale is valid more fully for the women than for the men, since the women stand outside the two provinces of social life where placidity and friendliness are, on occasion, out of place, namely, esoteric ritual and political struggle. [157] [576]

It is, then, the absence of the accepted morale which makes the Nupe suspect witchcraft. The woman who behaves as the Nupe think witches do is one whose character belies the common precepts and ideals of conduct; she is ill-conditioned, eccentric, 'atypical'—what Margaret Mead would call a 'deviant personality'. In other words, the suspicion of witchcraft fastens upon 'abnormality'; not the physical abnormality, say, of cripples, hunchbacks, or strikingly ugly people, which is merely a matter of ill-luck; nor the mental abnormality of lunatics, which is the handiwork of spirits: but the abnormality of social and moral deviants.

Yet ill-conditioned and eccentric individuals, morose and quarrelsome characters, are as frequent among the men and as openly disapproved. The question therefore remains, why this argument should apply to women only. And unless we are prepared to consider this concentration upon female witchcraft to be sheer accident, we must assume that it is in some fashion symptomatic of the life of the society which created the belief. I

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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *egi kata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attachment to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 563, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
735 procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other
558 household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of
426 money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for
735 which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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be secret, should be considered more fortunate than the ordinary run of people. Yet why this should be so, why some families should have this special standing *in rebus sacris* and others not, is not a question in which the people show any interest. 'There is no fixed number of medicines,' they say, and hence no rule governing or accounting for their distribution. 759

We need not speak again of the community medicine *zumácikã*, which represents an isolated instance.[1] But we may note certain transitional forms, in which ownership by lineages shades over into ownership by the community. For certain of the hereditary medicines are vested in 'houses' which equally hold hereditary ranks and offices, so that the two possessions go together. When the family head succeeds to the rank, he also assumes charge of the *cigbe*; and the people in fact say of this kind of medicine that it is 'owned' by such-and-such a rank (not person). Now as the rank represents a privileged position ultimately derived from the community and entails duties on its behalf, so the possession of the medicine assumes the aspect of a privilege and duty delegated, by the community, to the particular lineage and its head: these are not so much 'owners' as trustees or guardians, much as the hereditary village priests are appointed guardians of a community *kuti*. Usually the analogy remains on this abstract level; but in one instance it becomes more tangible, when the properties of the hereditary *cigbe* include efficacy as an ordeal: here, then, the possession of *cigbe* ceases to be private, and its application turns fully into a right or duty executed for the well-being of the community.

5. CIGBE AND MORALITY

Excepting the isolated community medicine, no class of *cigbe* is unequivocally good, or for that matter unequivocally evil. But particular medicines may be morally reprehensible, so that all the various groups of *cigbe* experts must in varying degree face the responsibility of practising a craft not above blame or suspicion. 754 × 577 ●

The contraceptive remedies of the barber-doctors and *cigbeciši* represent the mildest case; for though their immorality is a matter of common agreement, almost everybody ignores it in practice, and the *cigbe* practitioners could easily claim the neutrality of experts catering for a public demand. This is indeed the attitude of the barber-doctors. The *cigbeciši*, whose craft is bound up with mystic rules and sacred knowledge, are also more fully aware of the moral conflict; their attempts to justify the dubious practices

[1] There may of course be others, in parts of Nupe which I did not visit. But it is certain that their number is very small.

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thus reveals the underlying conviction that their skill should be morally blameless.

Yet it is precisely the adepts of the more mystical or sacred craft who must face this moral conflict in much graver form. For *cigbeciži*, individual practitioners, and the 'owners' of hereditary medicines alike also have knowledge of medicines not only morally dubious but straightforward evil and in fact called *cigbe benágũ*, 'evil medicines'. Now this means, for the Nupe, several things. It means that the use of the medicine 'harms innocent people', as does the farming *cigbe* which increases your crops at the expense of your neighbours, or that the medicine 'kills people', as do those vindictively 'protective' medicines which punish thieves, evil-wishers, or personal enemies. Again, a medicine is evil if it is apt to be abused by evil-minded persons, which is true of the invisibility *cigbe* and perhaps also of the 'protective' variety, though my informants could not say precisely what kind of abuse there might be. Finally, the efficacy of the medicine might be mistaken for witchcraft, and is for this reason adjudged 'evil'.

The last reason seems to be the crucial one. To begin with, it applies in every case and also reinforces all the other reasons. Thus the person made unexpectedly prosperous with the help of the farming *cigbe* might easily be taken for a witch by his neighbours; much the same might happen in the case of the vicious 'protective' *cigbe*; while the medicine which makes you invisible or enables you to feign death endows you with precisely the gifts with which witches are credited. Furthermore, where some of the other reasons appear inconclusive, the resemblance to witchcraft is decisive. It is clearly inconsistent to condemn the 'protective medicine', meant to attack only evil-doers or evil-wishers, while accepting without qualms the efficacy of deadly ordeals, which do precisely the same. Admittedly, there is a difference; while in ordeals and the like it is the law of the country that takes its course, the *cigbe* places the power of life and death within the reach of individuals, and this power works, though not at random, yet blindly, not measuring [628] punishment against offence. In a society like Nupe, where the self-help of blood revenge is unknown, this is logically adjudged immoral and evil. Yet in argument the Nupe do not reason this way; rather do they fall back on the stand-by explanation, that this 'punishment' and 'killing' may be confused with witchcraft.

Undoubtedly, the medicines which bring harm or death upon people (innocent or otherwise) are as such condemned. 'There is nothing nice about these medicines,' said the Master of the *cigbeciži*, with some understatement. Yet they are evil also because they meddle in something that has the appearance of evil. And when the Nupe are reluctant to talk about these medicines, the

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reason is, again, their resemblance to witchcraft, with which subject no one wishes to seem conversant. I know of no case where accusations of witchcraft were later withdrawn and admitted to have been caused by some such mistake; and there can of course be no other proof to show that these mistakes are in fact apt to happen. But linguistic usage proves how tenuous is this distinction between witchcraft and things that look like witchcraft. I mentioned before the generic name for the medicines alleged to make invisible—*badúfu*, 'dark place'; now the same word is also used for the medicines which, in popular opinion, are employed by witches, and hence by the adepts in an art itself called 'black' or 'dark'. Again, the 'male' farming *cigbe* called *eshe* shares its name with the male variety of witchcraft. The experts among my informants insisted that the linguistic connection was entirely fortuitous; and it is true that the two names are identical only in Beni country while in the riverain area, for example, one denotes male witchcraft differently. But the ordinary man in Beni country is convinced that the efficacy of this *cigbe* and witchcraft are one and the same thing. Whether these medicines have merely been unhappily named, so that their names came to suggest the identity with witchcraft, I cannot decide: as they are now used they clearly stand for such a judgment (or confusion) of identity.

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Let me anticipate one further point concerning witchcraft beliefs. Since so many *cigbe* look like witchcraft it is pertinent to ask if some do not also serve (or are believed to serve) witchcraft. In Nupe popular opinion witches do use particular *cigbe* to make themselves invisible and, generally, to equip themselves for their nefarious activities. And if persons do not become witches merely through having the required medicine, the latter yet helps, or may even be indispensable since the witch can by no other means defeat the other, protective, medicines which their victims might possess.[1] Witchcraft and anti-witchcraft, in that view, is a battle of *cigbe*. Among the experts, opinions varied. All were agreed on the existence and efficacy of the protective *cigbe*; but while some thought that 'real witchcraft needs no *cigbe*', others considered it at least likely that witches possessed a particular medicine which lent them their sinister powers. None of the experts admitted to possessing or preparing this utterly evil kind of *cigbe*, but a few suggested that certain of their colleagues—always living in other parts of the country—did so and were lying when they disclaimed such knowledge. And here the question must rest.

The fact remains that the medicine experts, though they may deny the knowledge of this most evil *cigbe*, yet admit knowledge

[1] This view is documented in the statement on witchcraft quoted on p. 165.

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*754 of medicines almost as unequivocally evil. The same men, let us note, will also administer helpful, beneficial, 'good' medicine. On
● 577 the whole, the latter are more numerous, and are considered more important when it comes to discussions or arguments. As for the others, the experts would claim that they take due precautions, giving the medicine away only to 'good people' and 'for the sake of God', not for ordinary gain. But these personal qualms do not explain away the confusion of moral standards and do not answer the question why practices contemptible by common agreement should yet be accepted and actively pursued. The answer seems to lie in the amoral character of the Nupe universe. There it is, composed of good things and bad, the handiwork of a deity which unconcernedly sets good beside evil. Man, it would seem, has no call to improve upon creation. The qualms of the *cigbeciži* are a concession to social conscience not to religious scruples; in the last resort they are concerned only with appearances—that their craft should not look like witchcraft. As regards the evil potentialities of 'medicine', they are accepted with the same optimistic cynicism with which the Nupe view the very world in which they live.

6. MODERN INFLUENCES

177 Islam has on the whole brought little change. It bans the hereditary medicines, since they approximate to the pagan worship of
755 *kuci* and *kuti*, and may well have caused some of them to disappear. But the craft of the barber-doctors enjoys the respectability of a truly Mohammedan profession; while the medicines of individuals and the craft of the *cigbeciži* flourish among Mohammedans no less than among the pagans. Indeed many of these experts would regard themselves as good Moslems. Even the Master of the *cigbeciži* dresses like a Moslem, goes to the mosque, observes the fast and other rules of Islam, and boasts of his descent from men who served the Mohammedan Emirs of Nupe.

Nor do specifically Moslem practices compete seriously with the traditional craft. A great many mallams administer cures and sell charms or amulets, both prepared in strict accordance with the Moslem creed as they understand it. The cures all take the same form: the attributes of Allah or certain verses of the Qoran are written in ink on a wooden slate which is then washed clean, the inky water being drunk by the patient. The amulets, called *laya* (a Hausa word), consist of pieces of paper similarly covered with sacred writing, which are sewn into small leather cases and worn on the body. But Nupe religious conscience is accommodating: pagans wear the Mohammedan charms as often as Mohammedans

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world', and has no narrower, pragmatic or ethical application. As for the realm of ethics, Nupe doctrine is altogether silent. It upholds no ideal man, nor condemns his antithesis. There is no eschatology, no mythology exemplifying rights and wrongs, crime and retribution, and no promise of reward to the law-abiding. Nor is the formulated doctrine concerned with norms of action of more common currency, the simple rights and wrongs of everyday morality. 'Economic ethics' has its place in ritual; since this turns upon such things as birth, marriage and adolescence, crops and the exigencies of the seasons, prosperity and wealth, that is, upon events and conditions involving practical decisions, the respective courses of action are implicitly upheld as desirable, worthwhile and 'right'. But they are not 'announced' or 'revealed', neither commanded nor yet conspicuously dramatized. Their significance is left to preliminary knowledge, the worshippers knowing at the outset what to expect of the ritual, both as regards its aim and the promises it vouchsafes. And these are again silent on ethical issues. The fortunes anticipated and the misfortunes that may befall you imply neither merit nor punishment: they simply happen, while religion means no more than an aid in attaining or evading them.

Only two explicit ethical commands occur in the whole range of Nupe rituals. They refer to filial obedience (enjoined in the *gunnu*) and to the blessedness of fecundity. But we remember that the relevant episode of the *gunnu* is also the first to fall victim to change, and that other religiously sanctioned aids, the services of the *cigbeci*, are dispensed in disregard of the moral condemnation of childlessness. On balance, then, Nupe religion is amoral. As we anticipated, the crucial issue in most religions, how to reconcile the discrepancy of religious merit and practical rewards, simply does not arise. Nupe religion takes life as it is, offering no 'annunciations and promises' that would redress its iniquities, and hardly even endorsing the equity that should govern it.

This equity is largely left to the care of secular agencies alone. Religion plays a part only indirectly, through sanctioning the persons—kings, chiefs, executioners—who act as guardians of the accepted good. The sanction lies essentially in ritual, that is, in the various ceremonials involved in the assumption of these offices or entrusted to their holders. But let us note that these men guard, not really morality, but only that part of it which has solidified in the form of politically enforced law. Differently expressed, Nupe society knows mainly crimes and few 'sins', and only lawful, not saintly behaviour. On occasion religion abandons even this indirect support for the conventions of morality; for certain rituals deny these conventions, as in the sexual licence of the *gunnu* and *gani* or in the condonation of violence in the *navũ*. At this point, then, the

41:Nadel P,E-5 (1934-1936) 1937
FF62 Yoruba FF62
Nupe FF52

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the Nupe, neglecting rational connexions, seem to neglect the emotional aspect as well. The explanation is that the facts and events which bear on emotional reactions may be interpreted as rational motivations of the acts related in the story. This is in fact how the Yoruba approach, and utilize, the emotional aspects of the narrative.

N 152

Yet the comparative weakness of the emotional factor in the Nupe reproduction is not due to the Nupe lack of appreciation for rational connexions. The emphasis on emotional factors as far as it is evident in the Nupe version is not correlated with factors of reasoning; the appreciation of such elements as the beauty of the girl, her sadness after the murder, or the strength of the brothers' love, is not turned at once (as is the tendency among the Yoruba) into an interpretation of motives and reasons, but seems to represent a specific, self-sufficient trait. To a certain extent the emotional response among the Nupe appears linked with the tendency to dissolve the narrative into a series of concrete situations. (N 25) is a good example: he mentions that the brothers 'returned home' after they met the girl; he reproduces the girl's avowal of her love for the younger brother in the wrong place, but again in a typical 'situational' context: "when the girl learned of the murder, she said that she had only loved the younger brother"; he lets the people speak as follows: "This is what he did, God will revenge it." But he repeats twice how strongly the brothers loved the girl, and although he does not connect the girl's sadness with her disappearance, he does not omit, as many other Nupe did, the girl's 'aching heart'. But the cases in which I could find a similar correlation are few, and it seems possible that the emotional bias among the Nupe constitutes an independent, secondary psychological characteristic which may only run parallel to what we discovered to be the dominant trait in Nupe reproduction: stress on situational and temporal connexions.

Y N 152 577 171

The response to the moral ideas which are referred to in the narrative is again bound up with rational factors. The reinterpretation and rationalization of the statement "God will revenge it" which we discussed above is a point in question. But the attitude to the moral statements adds a new characteristic to the psychological differentiation of the two groups. All the Nupe reproductions keep closely to the meaning of the sentence "he has done an evil deed". The Yoruba reproductions on the other hand are much more varied and depart much more freely from the original. Here are a few Yoruba versions:

First recall:

(Y 6) The people said: "he abused his power over the younger brother."

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(Y 12) It surprised the people (to hear) what the elder brother had done. They said, "one should leave him alone, God will punish him."

(Y 18) When the people learned of the deed, it pained them very much. They said: "God will revenge it."

Second recall:

(Y 1) The people judged the elder guilty and evil; but God would punish him.

(Y 2) and (Y 5) The people were very sorry for the boy, but (they said): "Our Lord God will punish him."

(Y 12) The people said: "The elder should have left the younger alone. God will punish him."

To the Nupe then, the unspecific and abstract reference to the wickedness of the deed seems natural and satisfactory. The vague, schematic connexion which the story establishes between the wrong deed and the supernatural punishment, seems to satisfy their attitude towards moral value. The Yoruba, on the other hand, feel the urge to define the nature of the evil deed more closely and more explicitly. They weigh specific deed against specific punishment. Their attitude to the moral judgment is the same as to all the other features of the story: rational, and intent on clear logical connexions.

(5) *Arrangement and order*

Y N 153 171

It is interesting to study the question of the order in which the events of the story are related and remembered. In the first recall the Nupe frequently (in 11 cases) rearrange this order, but only 2 Yoruba do the same. The explanation, however, cannot be that the precise, logically coherent narrative keeps more closely to the original story, for in the second recall the figures for the rearrangement of order are equal in both groups: i.e. the Nupe figures rise by 5, to 16, and the Yoruba figures by 14, from 2 to 16. Evidently, Yoruba recall, relying more on logical connexion, is apt to abandon the external form, whereas the loose, devious way of Nupe retelling which in the second recall is not much more free than in the first, may be more tied to the external order of events as to the only framework establishing coherence.

Before I pass to the picture experiments I will quote two full stories, one from the Nupe and one from the Yoruba, to illustrate the fundamentally different attitudes with which the two groups approach their task:[1]

(N 11) Long ago, there lived a young man. He had a brother. They were elder and younger brother. They lived, they lived, till they saw a young girl. The girl was very beautiful, they loved her with one heart, both the elder and younger brother loved her.

[1] Other full quotations of the story will be found in *Africa* (5).

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II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

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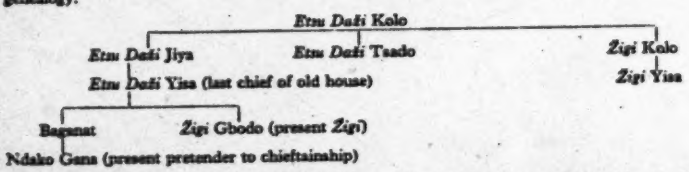
Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('efu')*	*Succession*	*Insigna, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Etsu Dazi*	Chief	Dazi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Zigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dazi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotu*	..	,,	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Maku*	..	,,	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dzoko*	..	Takogi	,,	..	..
8	*Boke*	..	Kpacinefu	,,	..	..
9	*Shabazhi*	..	Ndadofu	,,	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dazi	,,	..	..
11	*Zitsu Bebi*	..	Edokó	,,	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	,,	,,	..	..
13	*Maji Egbe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	,,	,,	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Zitsu* and *Zigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences. 622 793

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Zitsu* and *Zigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon 622 793 578

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622 against the ruling chief whom he regarded as an usurper. He refused
793 the chief the use of the sacred insignia—the bangles of Tsoede—without
578 which the annual chief's ritual cannot be performed. Finally, in 1934, he asked me to intervene for him so that he should be given official authority to keep in his possession the invaluable insignia, which the chief was demanding back not so much for religious reasons (for some of his brothers and sons were already posing as Mohammedans), as in order to deprive the rival family of this convincing evidence of their claim to the rule of Doko. The case remained undecided, and the rivalry between the two men unrelieved, till in 1936 the chief offered the 'pretender' official recognition of a sort, namely, the title *Makū*. The highest rank next to the chief's, *Shaba*, had just fallen vacant, and a reshuffle of titles had taken place. Ndakó Gana, however, rejected the title *Makū*—a new title, introduced *ad hoc* (copied from the dynastic ranks in Bida)—as a meaningless, makeshift sort of rank and demanded instead the rank of *Shaba* itself. The deadlock was finally overcome by an appeal of both parties to the *Etsu*; he managed to persuade the young man to accept the offered rank, at least as an earnest, and as more fitting to his age.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

622 The tasks of government which fall to the village chief are these:

1. He appoints the village elders from the ranks of the family heads and is thus bound, as by a constitution in the modern sense, to accept their co-operation and advice in all matters of village government.
2. He controls the land resources of the community and in this capacity apportions farm-land, trees, fishing rights, and levies certain tributes and land dues from the families holding village land. With this aspect of village government we shall deal later on in detail, in the chapter on land-tenure.
3. He is not, as we have seen, the religious head of the community. But he organizes, directly or indirectly, and partly finances, certain religious rites linked with chieftainship.
4. He arbitrates in litigation and wields (though now only on a limited scale) a certain informal judicial power.
5. He organizes all large-scale co-operation and concerted action of the village community.

We have already spoken of the composition of the village council and the co-operation between chief and elders. Let me add some concrete data to illustrate the working of the village 'constitution'.

627 A Doko farmer had quarrelled with a neighbour over some trees; people from a village near Mokwa came into Mokwa to borrow masks for the *elo* ritual which they were going to perform, having lost their own masks; a family head in Sakpe accused his sister's son who lived in his house of having stolen rice from his farm; a girl in Laboži denounced two strangers who had been given hospitality by a neighbour and whom she saw stealing their host's clothes; a young man in Jebba accused his wife of adultery; another man in Jebba complained that a certain hunter

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Succession to Chieftainship. Here we must turn back to the 634 position of the Kede chief and the question of succession to Kede chieftainship. For the highest in the series of promotion which we have just been discussing, the ultimate promotion open to members of the chief's family, is promotion to chieftainship. The rank next to the chief's, *Egba* (here meaning 'deputy'), is in fact regarded as the rank of an 'heir apparent', and is as a rule held by the most senior among the titled relatives of the chief, his younger brother, or elder brother's son. Succession to chieftainship, more rigid than succession to the other political offices, thus allows the chief-to-be to consolidate his position in advance of his actual appointment. The tribal notables exercise a certain indirect influence: for in every one of the repeated routine decisions on the promotion of a 'delegate' they already decide to some degree his future chances as a candidate for chieftainship. But then, the ruling chief is himself one of the 'electors' and can easily turn the decision in favour of the candidate whom he supports.[1] Here becomes clear what I have said above about the kinship relation between the Kede chief and his 'delegates' tending to strengthen the position of the chief. The mere tie of kinship between them may conceivably prove a weak and unreliable support of his authority; but the fact that the delegates remain dependent on the favour of the chief for their promotion and political career in general turns it into a bulwark of chiefly power.

With 'councillors' and 'delegates' both dependent upon his goodwill, the Kede chief exercised an almost absolute authority—more absolute, I may add, than any other chief of Nupe. Repeated promotion and transfer, all decided in the capital, tied the delegates closely to Muregi and prevented them from making for themselves too independent a position in their temporary dominions. The 'absolute' power of the Kede chief thus appears as a necessary element in the control of this mobile political system which, with its scattered outposts and colonies, yet depended so much on smooth co-operation and concerted action. The weakness of the system lay in the fact that it allowed no legitimate check on the 634 power of the chief. A more equitable balance of power could 578 only be achieved by illegitimate means—that is, by feuds and

[1] It is significant, in this connexion, that the present *Kuta* introduced a new rank for his son when the list of traditional ranks was exhausted (see the chart of Kede ranks).

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634 578 factional splits within the hereditary ruling class. The recent history of the Kede contains indeed evidence of such rivalry between the Kede chief and his officers of State, or between different claimants to Kede rulership, and the ensuing division of the country into rival factions.[1] Attachment to one of the rival factions is also the only means by which the subject classes, the commoners with no rank and office, could exercise an indirect influence upon the political management of their country.

634 534 *Administration of the 'Colonies'*. The following chart illustrates the different grades in the rank list of Kede delegates. The ranks are given in order of precedence, each rank together with the district to which its holder is posted. The last five ranks on the list do not belong to members of the chief's family, but to that group of 'household' ranks which are also occasionally vested with emissaryships.

Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Egba	Elder brother's son (classific.)	Gbara	Kpatagban (right bank)
Sonfara	Son	Lives in Muregi, no emissaryship	(A newly introduced rank)
Kofiẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Raba	Raba
Ekpã	Younger brother (classific.)	Kpacefu	—
Tswadiya	Younger brother	Ketsogi	Ketsogi
Lefiti	Younger brother of *Egba*	Muregi, no emissaryship	Kpacefu
Liman Gyedwa	Distant relation	,,	Kpasha (right bank)
Tswadyagi	,,	,,	Kpasha

[1] Factional splits of this kind were occasionally utilized and fostered by outside Powers. Thus the Royal Niger Company supported an *Egba* in whom they found a valuable ally against the ruling *Kuta*, promising the former the chieftainship in return for the support of his faction. And once or twice the Emirs of Nupe backed the rival claimant of Kede chieftainship against the 'official' candidate.

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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
674 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing
693 a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

634 *Territorial Rights*. The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

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arisen. Their occurrence or avoidance is clearly bound up with the interpretation put on Kede political autonomy—a point which we will discuss under a separate heading.

VI. The Claim to Autonomy

Let me say, first, that the administration of Kede country presents an exact analogy to the administration of Nupe kingdom. Emissaries from the capital, delegates recruited from the ruling house, are in charge of the administrative districts of the Emirate as they are of the district of Kede country. This analogy reflects the analogous political evolution in both countries: the rise to power of a small group over a large country with heterogeneous population. The only exception from this rule of administering the districts of the Emirate through royal delegates is Kede country itself, which remained under its own chief, who acted as the representative of the *Etsu* Nupe. Even for this exception there is a parallel to be found in Kede organization: the emissary system did not apply to the area of the upper-stream Kede. Their whole area was regarded as one sub-district of Kede country and was placed in charge, not of an emissary from Muregi, but of one of their own chiefs, the village chief of Bele, their southernmost settlement. The explanation for this privileged position of the two groups, the Kede *Tifin* under Kede and the Kede under Nupe, is most probably the same—namely, that their rulers would have found it difficult to control themselves effectively the territory of these subject communities: the Kede the country of the upper-stream group, which was not easy to reach with their big canoes (note that they made the chief in the place farthest down-stream the 'deputy' for the whole group), and the Nupe kings the whole river area.

To the down-stream Kede their autonomous position in Nupe Emirate is a sacred trust, dating back to their first chief who received, with the chieftainship of Kede, the 'Rule over the Water' from the mythical Tsoede. The Kede chiefs still style themselves *Etsu nya nuwā* ('King of the Water'), and, as their history shows, have always taken this title very literally. It meant to them more than merely the formal concession of assigning to a Kede chief duties normally discharged by a royal delegate, and they have in the past frequently attempted to acquire a larger

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

665 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects 566 round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the 579 whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole 754 town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the 683 passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

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561 sub-tribe of Kutigi, Enagi, and Dabbā, the *gani* even dramatizes the age-
796 grade structure itself, its system of ranks, and the promotion from grade to grade. The *gani* assigns different ceremonial duties to the different grades, and involves certain symbolic tests of manhood of progressive severity which the different age-grades, one after the other, must undergo. The ceremony can, in fact, be regarded as a ritual of age-grade initiation. However, I must leave the description of this ceremony, closely associated though it is with the conception of age-grades, for a future occasion.

Let us turn to the Mohammedan religious ceremonies. At the celebration of the *Sallah* the age-grade associations play a much less specific role. They arrange a small festivity in the house of their group captains on the eve of the *Sallah*, at which—as in all houses of Bida and Mohammedan Nupe on that evening—a ram is killed and eaten. On the following morning the various *ena* of the town meet in the market to join the thousands of people who will follow the royal procession to the mosque and round the town walls, and gather later in front of the Emir's house, listening to drummers and musicians, and watching the display of the horsemen and the coming and going of the royal guests.

The celebration of the Mohammedan New Year, on the other hand, called *navũ* in Nupe (lit. torches), represents the climax of the public appearances of the Bida *ena*. The *navũ* is essentially a festival of youth. Its ritual acts, which appear to express, symbolically, the death and renewal of the year, are carried out by the young folk of Bida. On the eve of the New Year, at sunset, all the age-grade associations meet in the houses of their captains, and then march to the market of their town quarter, where all the associations of the *ekpã* forgather. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands, and are clad in simple, scanty garments. Three long processions, one in each *ekpã*, move slowly through the streets of Bida, down to the arm of the river flowing through that part of the town. The boys sing and dance while they walk, and throw their torches high up in the air, catching them as they fall. Arrived at the river, they take off their garments, and, clad only in a loincloth, wade into the water. There is no atmosphere of ritual or ceremony about it; they splash and play in the water, dance, wrestle, sing, and laugh at the clumsiness of those who drop and extinguish their torches. All the time the torch-play goes on; they play with the torches like balls, throwing and catching them. It is a dangerous game: I saw many lucky escapes, and quite a few incidents not so lucky.

561 Girls and young women, too, go to the river to bathe on the *navũ*,
796 and the sexual attraction adds its stimulus to the general excitement.
786 The *navũ* is, in fact, the only occasion on which I have seen the Nupe indulge in open, undisguised, sexual play. Torches are thrown into the water to light up the spot where girls are bathing almost naked; boys
579 accost girls in the water, and couples disappear in the dark of the river-banks. But the *navũ* is in more than one respect a period of licence. Indeed, more important than this amorous play is the licence which was extended till about fifteen years ago to all acts of violence and assault that might occur on *navũ* night. And such liberty of action was not

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the 561
torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably 786
led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the
three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one 796
ena would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight 579
would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age- 561
grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the in- 602
dividual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events
with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All 574
members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which 561

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837 sexual licence towards which the other social forces appear to be
831 driving. The result is the close association between professional female trade and semi-professional licensed prostitution which we can observe to-day.

Yet admission into this 'domain' was in turn made dependent upon
562 a certain qualification, namely childlessness. Here we can add a final,
837 ideological motive to the social causes behind the moral development. It is embodied in the Nupe conception of barrenness as a state outside
831 conventional morality, and its contribution is twofold: it helps to define more narrowly the group in which sexual licence shall be sanctioned, by
842 making sterility of the women a criterion of admission; and it provides at the same time the spiritual framework for such social sanction, by linking it with certain religious or quasi-religious beliefs. To some extent the ideological association between barrenness and sexual licence can be reduced to certain obvious rational motives, which are, in fact, present in the minds of the people: childlessness is of great advantage in the life of the women traders whose profession involves constant travelling and long absence from home; moreover, the sexual indiscretions of sterile women are socially of less consequence than those of other women, being comparatively safe from discovery and precluding the more disturbing legal complications (i.e. birth of illegitimate children). But the social interpretation of barrenness also expresses certain more deeply
[581] rooted beliefs. To the Nupe marriage has no real meaning without progeny. Barrenness is regarded as a great curse and misfortune, and many cults and forms of magic are designed to secure fertility of the women or to cure barrenness. Traditional religious beliefs place barren women in a category apart and exclude them from participation in the most important annual cult of the country, the *gunnu*.[1] As the barren woman fails by the common standard of marriage and womanhood, she is also exempted from the standards of common morality. Adultery and unchastity count less in her than in other women. And although the stigma of immorality would still attach to the unchaste barren woman (she would still be called a 'worthless woman'), it would be, as it were, overshadowed by and fused with the other paramount stigma of barrenness itself.

The growth of sexual licence far beyond its traditionally sanctioned limits is again due to various causes, economic, political, and religious. The primary cause appears to be economic and will be discussed in that context. Its effectiveness, however, is greatly strengthened by the political and social factors which foster what I have termed the 'double morality' in Nupe society. We can also see that the Nupe conception of barrenness must itself indirectly aid these tendencies and defeat the limitations which it was meant to uphold. For in a country with spreading sterility and even birth restriction, a religion which withholds its sanctions of matrimonial morality in the case of childless women can prove but a weak bulwark against the tide of sexual licence. Mohammedanism in Nupe, committed as it is to that 'double morality', undermines rather than supplies forces of moral restraint.

[1] For a description of this aspect of barrenness see *J.R.A.I.* 1937, p. iii.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [572] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
543 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[842] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation. 162 582 595

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation. 161 167

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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interests, deep-seated class sentiments, which cannot admit of a lowering of status in any one high-born. Yet if, owing to the rigid class system, marriage between the classes is thus turned into a potential instrument of social advancement, its utilization in this sense is also rigidly controlled.

For marriage in the aristocracy, especially in the royal nobility, is to a very large extent endogamous—'family marriage' as the Nupe call it. As the Nupe-Fulani regard themselves all as related, and as most families of the nobility are more or less closely related by marriage, practically all 'family marriages' of this kind are at the same time marriages within the ruling class. The Fulani in Nupe, moreover, following Mohammedan practice, encourage parallel cousin marriage (which is forbidden by the traditional marriage rules of the country) as well as cross-cousin marriage, and thus widen enormously the scope of 'family marriages', especially between descendants in the male line. Family marriage in Nupe, finally, is characterized by a much lower bride-price than that paid in ordinary exogamous marriage. This leads to the rather paradoxical situation, on which my informants invariably commented, that the wealthiest and proudest classes of the country favour 'cheap' marriage, while the humble commoners and peasants are committed mostly to a very high bride-price. The explanation is that the low bride-price in this case supplies an additional incentive for endogamous marriage—'class endogamous' marriage, as it were—and thus for the preservation of the social identity of the ruling classes (as well as, incidentally, a strengthening of their group solidarity).[1]

Indeed the counterpart of the incentive of a low bride-price in 'class endogamous' marriages is the 'deterrent' of an exceptionally high bride-price demanded in the case of marriages between the classes, i.e. between men of the *tálaka* class and girls or women of the nobility. Such cases are accordingly rare. Yet we may note that if a chance of such marriage exists, if the girl loved the man sufficiently to overlook the difference in social status, the high bride-price alone proves no obstacle. For friends and relations would join forces to find the money and to enable the ambitious suitor to make his luck by this advantageous marriage. The benefits of his new position would be considered sufficient promise of an eventual ample gratification. One of my Bida servants was an example: the son of a commoner, he had succeeded in winning the love of the daughter of a very high *saraki* and eventually, after considerable difficulties, in marrying her with money borrowed from friends and relations.

The endogamous marriage rules only ensure that the women of the ruling classes should marry within the class; they do not attempt to exclude the less dangerous form of dilution implied in the marriages of the men to women from other classes and strata. Indeed, the polygamous nature of marriage in Nupe, which forces the men to seek wives

[1] One of my informants who belonged to the *saraki* class even went so far as to explain the whole principle of having a different bride-price for 'family' and 'outside' marriages as a political measure taken by the *saraki* and Fulani nobility with the purpose of preventing commoners from marrying into their class. Though incorrect as regards the facts, this interpretation is significant as an expression of the dominant class sentiments.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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from outside their social group, precludes an application of 'class endogamy' in this sense. Marriage of this kind between the strata has reached enormous dimensions. And this shows, incidentally, that the rule of 'class endogamy' serves, even in the case of the Fulani rulers, the interest only of a social identity and solidarity and not, as one might perhaps assume, of racial purity.

POLYGAMY AND SEX MORALITY

In Nupe as in most polygamous societies in which marriage is by bride-price (and by high bride-price at that) the number of wives a man possesses becomes an infallible index of wealth and status. In the peasant districts, where we find comparatively little inequality of wealth, the range of polygamy also varies in narrow limits. Genealogies which I collected in the two Nupe villages Doko and Kutigi show the following range of polygamy (the figures refer to middle-aged or old men, both of the living and previous generation):

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	68	96	20	11	1	1	179

The average is thus 2.1 wives per man.[1] To quote a similar average for Bida would be meaningless: the great inequality of wealth and status is reflected in the widely varying range of polygamy. In the houses of the *talakaži*, the 'poor ones', monogamy is the rule; in the 'middle class' the conditions are much the same as in the peasant districts; but as regards the men of substance and rank, though it would be correct to say that they have rarely less than four wives, the upper limits of their polygamy are very fluid, and cannot even be ascertained with any accuracy. Popular notions attribute to certain royal princes and, above all, to the kings of Nupe, numbers of wives varying between 100 and 200. Even the late *Etsu* Saidu is reported to have had sixty wives. Discretion forbade any direct inquiries. Besides, the vagueness in the legal definition of 'wife' and 'marriage' in these cases would have detracted from the value of the information. According to Mohammedan law a man may have four wives only. But this rule is easily circumvented by limiting the number of legal wives whom one marries with religious rites to four (or four at a time), and relegating the rest to the position of mere concubines. In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found

[1] The range of polygamy varies to some extent locally. In Mokwa, for example, I obtained the following figures:

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	44	28	3	3	..	..	60

The average is, again, 2 wives per man.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events.

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed.

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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794 Islam. In all these cases the result has been an odd compromise. In Bida, the Moslem type of marriage is now more frequent than
582 the traditional type; while among the Mohammedans outside the former is absent and the latter still fully in force. The observance of the levirate is somewhat puzzling. Islam permits the marriage with a brother's widow whether the brother is senior or junior to the deceased; in pagan Nupe, marriage with an elder brother's widow is forbidden, but marriage with a younger brother's widow greatly encouraged. Now, in the villages these rules still obtain; in Bida, however, the first kind of marriage is practised, though not very frequently, while the second never occurs. It seems, then, that in the type of marriage which Islam permits but the indigenous custom disallows, the hold of the latter is still sufficiently strong to prevent any widespread adoption of the novel practice; while the type of marriage both permitted by Islam and strongly pressed by local custom has been abandoned by the more 'orthodox' Moslems. This instance contradicts our previous argument as to the fortuitous fit and hence ready acceptance of certain Moslem customs. Rather, we must admit that such a given fit may, paradoxically, entail the rejection of the custom in question. Has it been rejected so as to prevent any blurring of the division between Moslems and non-Moslems, and thus to emphasize the new, different 'way of life'? It would seem to be so; but since this is the only instance of the kind I can only suggest the possibility. The strong hold of the indigenous practice is finally shown in a type of marriage as definitely forbidden by Islam as it is encouraged by Nupe custom, namely, the nominal marriage of a boy with his paternal grandfather's widow. This *yawó suna* ('marriage in name') is practised both in Mohammedan Bida and in the pagan districts. It is clearly bound up with the idea of reincarnation and with the corresponding practice of naming a grandson after his father's father: identical in name and 'soul', the grandson also assumes the nominal status of his *alter ego*. And as the traditional belief remained unassailed by Moslem doctrine, so the practice rooted in it withstood the impact of the new usages.

794 The most serious divergence between indigenous custom and Moslem ideas occurs in inheritance. The Moslem law of inheritance
428 implies, briefly, the division of a man's property among all his offspring (both male and female) as well as his wives, their respective shares varying in amount.[1] Nupe custom, on the other hand,

[1] The inheritance of women's property can be disregarded. Women in Nupe own only personal belongings and money, and can dispose of them more or less as they like—to sons, daughters, or their husband. Though the Nupe practice is more fluid than the Mohammedan usage, the two do not clash; nor has the former changed under Moslem influence.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[5]

584 According to Temple,[6] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[6] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- [302 bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161 There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

64 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 582
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage.

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 588 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 551 425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsoʒi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsoʒi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsoʒi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
[582 villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the
1341] (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsoʒi*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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by the family head in whose house the ceremony is performed; but he can also count on contributions from the various relations and friends who attend the ceremony as guests of the house. We have noted the modern tendency among peasants to replace the traditional gifts in kind with contributions in money, which are customary in Bida. These expenses vary widely with wealth and status. The minimum costs—which interest us here—amount to about 3*s.* to 5*s.* in the name-giving ceremony and 8*s.* to 10*s.* in marriage and funeral ceremonies. In the case of junior family members this group of kinship expenses also includes certain occasional gifts in kind to elder relatives, especially the family head. In one Doko household (not quoted among our examples) a young farmer who worked on his own gave his whole produce of beans (worth 2*s.*) to his father and elder brother. In another household, in Bida, a man shared his crop of maize with his elder brother, who was the family head. Family heads, on the other hand, have to provide for the costs of education of their children or younger brothers (so far as it involves expenditure), e.g. the apprenticeship in the workshop of a craftsman, or the attendance at a Koran school or the Government school. They must bear the expenses that might be caused by illness—the purchase of medicines or of the services of diviner or barber-doctor. 'Pocket-money', finally, for children or junior family members is, as we have seen, supplied in the form of *bucá* work, which they are encouraged to take up.

Bride-price

The largest item under this heading is the payment of bride-price, which devolves, in traditional practice at least, on the head of the family section that is united in the labour-unit. I have pointed out already that the bride-price also involves the accumulation of wealth, and comparatively long-range planning and saving.

The bride-price is always reckoned in money, although it may be paid partly in kind; the gifts in kind, however, which may form part of the bride-price, such as cloth and beads, all have a definite money value, and must be bought for money. The Nupe bride-price, called *ewó yawó*, 'money of marriage', comprises a series of payments of varying amount, each of which is known by a special name: we have, first, the gift of the Greeting; we have further two gifts called Small Thanks and Great Thanks, respectively, the latter which represents bride-price proper, being sometimes referred to by the modern Hausa-Mohammedan term *sadeiki*; then there is the Money for Henna, to buy the henna with which the bride will adorn herself for the marriage ceremony, the Money for Pots, with which pots and cooking utensils will be bought, and finally a small gift to the bridesmaids who accompany the bride when she enters her husband's house for the first time. In the country these last two gifts are a comparatively recent introduction, having originated and spread from Bida. In addition to these various 'part payments' there is an annual gift of produce which is presented by the father of the bride-groom to the father of the bride during the period between the formal betrothal and the final marriage ceremony. The whole bride-price is

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, ● 583 the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks		10	0
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of [656] the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3) —which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

	£	s.
Gba (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or *gbaota* (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks	2	10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

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of living. To-day a distinction which did not exist in former times is universally recognized, between bride-price entailed in ordinary marriage and bride-price paid in the case of *yawó dengi*, marriage in the family: the latter commands a lower bride-price, approximately £3, i.e. the original uniform bride-price. In every case in which I examined the relation of 'marriage in the family' to outside marriage my informants emphasized that there were more family marriages to-day than formerly because it had become so difficult to pay the high bride-price. We see, then, that the bride-price was not simply reduced in amount uniformly; rather a certain context was introduced—invented almost—in which a lower bride-price could be legitimately accepted. The lower bride-price, which would run counter to traditional cultural standards, was thus given a certain qualified sanction by the society. However, even the low bride-price cannot always be provided by the family head. And here we find another adjustment to the lower standards of living, namely, the spreading practice to pay bride-price only for the eldest son, while younger sons must either contribute to, or bear themselves, the cost of their bride-price. The traditional duty of the family head is expressed only in a symbolic transaction: the young man who has to contribute his own bride-price in many cases still hands over the amount to the family head, who will then take all the necessary steps and carry through all the negotiations.

To the bride-price we must add its counterpart, the dowry which the bride brings into marriage and which is paid by her father. Though paid over in one, immediately before the marriage ceremony, the dowry like the bride-price also implies accumulation of wealth over a long period. The amount of the dowry used to correspond exactly to the low, traditional bride-price. Although it fell short of the exorbitant bride-price of recent years, it has been adjusted to the level of a moderately high bride-price (as represented in our example), which proves clearly the underlying intention to balance it against the bride-price even to a degree of mathematical exactitude. Unlike the bride-price, the dowry does not consist in money payments, but in various gifts and contributions in kind. It is reckoned to provide the young bride with cooking utensils, pots, and clothes, sufficient to last her for the first four or five years of the marriage; it also provides food—very excellent food—for the newly wedded couple, so that for the first month or two they are independent of the earnings of the husband or contributions by his family. This is the dowry that corresponds to the example of bride-price quoted above:

	£	s.
10 large pots, costing 1s. each, representing a value of		10
Beads, to wear round the waist, worth	1	15
5 pieces of cloth, worth between 5s. and 7s. each, representing a value of	1	10
Two months' food-supply, worth	1	10
Total	£5	5

Let us for the moment interrupt this description and examine the economic and sociological significance of the changes in bride-price. The question of the sociological significance or 'function' of bride-price

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511 583 has greatly engaged the attention of anthropologists. Yet the various answers which have been found, showing no little disagreement, mostly disregard the fact that institutions never subserve one single purpose, but rather combine ('amalgamate' as Malinowski puts it) a number of social purposes in their structure. The overt purpose of bride-price is clearly that of securing to a man the various legal rights over a woman which are embodied in marriage. Marriage marks the end of certain rights held over the woman by her own kin, above all, her parents, and their replacement by the new rights vested in the husband and his kin. Bride-price in this sense is adequately defined as 'an indemnification for . . . a . . . surrender of rights'.[1] However, as the bride-price is not supplied and received by bridegroom and bride themselves but by their parents or other senior family members, the transaction also has the two-fold social significance of actuating existing kinship bonds (between the bridegroom and his relations who provide the bride-price for him, and similarly between the bride and her family), and of confirming new kinship bonds which stretch, not between the two individuals, but between their families and kinship groups. The transaction of bride-price in this sense has the significance of a contract, to which the two families are the guarantors. The same applies to the parallel transaction of the dowry. Finally, a bride-price, or dowry, of considerable dimensions necessitates the accumulation of wealth and careful economic planning. Bride-price can thus also be said to provide a stimulus for production and economic enterprise in general—one of the motives which every society provides, and needs, to impel it to 'produce, to muster, to count, and publicize its wealth'.[2] This last aspect of the purposefulness of bride-price is, of course, not present in the conscious thought of the people themselves. It expresses a purpose or need read into the facts by the student of society. The first two purposes of bride-price, on the other hand, represent conscious motives of conduct, and the degree of their consciousness becomes evident in the changes which bride-price has undergone in Nupe.

Now, in the traditional Nupe bride-price the aspect of 'indemnification' is greatly overshadowed by the other two aspects. As we have seen, wealth was not 'given' but merely exchanged in the strict sense of the word, the bride-price being balanced exactly against the dowry. When bride-price increased disproportionately, far outstripping the dowry, the element of indemnification and payment as such came to the foreground. The people themselves link this surprising rise with the new economic and political development under British rule: 'Prices were high, and everyone had money.' To some extent this was no doubt due to an increased demand, the greater prosperity showing itself in a rising scale of polygamy. Partly also the motive of 'indemnification' gained a new, additional, significance, that of display for the sake of prestige. But the higher bride-price also showed the effectiveness of the third, economic, factor: for in the highly stimulated economic system the traditional stimulus embodied in the bride-price had to be increased in order to keep pace with the new, higher, level of production and expenditure.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935, p. 295.
[2] D. M. Goodfellow, op. cit., p. 132.

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This interdependence of bride-price and level of production also explains the limited success, among the more prosperous sections of the population, of the attempts of the Administration to fix the bride-price at a lower and, as it were, arbitrary figure. 511 583

Indeed the development of bride-price under the economic stress of the last decade shows how firmly the new 'want' of higher bride-price had struck root. The solution which the people themselves worked out left the 'indemnification' and the 'economic' aspect of the bride-price intact; it achieved the necessary adjustment by reassessing the 'sociological' or kinship aspect. The contribution of the family to the bride-price of its junior members was reduced to the symbolic transaction of the family head acting on behalf of the bridegroom who must himself provide the bride-price; above all, the new rules allowed a reduction in the bride-price in family marriages, i.e. marriages in which the marriage ties do not establish new, but utilize already existing kinship bonds.

We may mention here certain marriage rules customary among the upper classes of Nupe in which an outwardly similar result is achieved by a somewhat different process of reasoning. We have learned that bride-price is kept low in class endogamous marriages among the nobility; a man of status may also marry his daughter to one of his *bara*, and himself put up the bride-price, so that in effect no exchange of wealth takes place; and there is, finally, the custom among the upper classes to marry their daughters with a very low, nominal, bride-price to Mallams—the remission of the bride-price being regarded as a pious act. In these cases the bride-price is kept artificially low in order to ensure that the women of the aristocracy should all be married to men of the same class, or should marry certain men whom they would be unable to marry if the bride-price were high: the political and religious gain balances the material sacrifice.

The institution of bride-price in Nupe gives us an exceptionally clear picture of the multitudinous structure of institutions. It also illustrates the discriminating action of economic evaluation, which, out of the number of social purposes subserved in the institution, fastens upon certain specific purposes for transformation into concrete economic wants. Yet those that are not thus transformed need not be purposes which have lost their significance entirely, but may reveal it indirectly, in the form of 'theoretical values'. We recall the disintegration of the institution of bride-price in present-day Bida, in the case of those young labourers who spend their money among other things on 'women' instead of saving it for bride-price. Let us realize that in a society like Nupe, in which traditional morality forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse, the 'indemnification' aspect of bride-price also implies the purchase of legitimate sexual satisfaction. Now, these young labourers have discovered that to-day sexual satisfaction can be bought more cheaply, and without incurring the obligation of marriage. Short-sightedly, they perceive only this one need and disregard the other aspects of marriage and bride-price—the need of founding a family, of establishing new kinship bonds, and of ensuring continuity of the group. They admit these other needs—in theory; yet these needs are present, concretely, in 511 583 936

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events. 794

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed. [532] [583] [304] [262] [582]

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to 794 582

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[3]

584 According to Temple,[4] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

● 583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[4] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [574] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

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584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [574] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

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4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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16. Circumcision operation

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17. A bridal procession

[p. 118 (A)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. 852 The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is 304 the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen.

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial 585 is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or [292] 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and [302] don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests.

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother 585 and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her 797 future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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585 Afterwards the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, accompanied by her girl friends, her father's younger sister, her mother's brother, as well as some drummers and musicians. If the marriage is between families living in the same village or town, the procession will start after nightfall since it is 'shameful' for the bride to be seen on this occasion (her veil notwithstanding). If the marriage is between villages too far apart for a short walk after dark, the procession starts at daybreak the next morning. Should the bride be then seen by others, which can hardly be avoided, she must kneel down and sob realistically to show 'how ashamed she is'. In Bida, it is now customary for the bride to ride on a more or less beautifully caparisoned horse to her [797] new home—another Mohammedan innovation and another chance for displaying wealth and status.

In the next phase the scene shifts to the bridegroom's house. The bride is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her sleeping hut, which has been decorated and painted. Here she will stay in seclusion, in the company of her aunt, her girl friends and a married woman from the bridegroom's family (usually his mother's younger sister). The women and girls take no share in the 'merry-making' which will presently start in the other parts of the house, but pass their time chatting and singing womens' songs. On the morning after the bride's arrival the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice to the *kuci*, which is an exact replica of the one previously performed in the bride's house and is again attended by an envoy from the other family (now the bride's mother's brother). This ritual is clearly meant to affirm the acceptance of the bride into the new family and lineage and, in duplicating the previous sacrifice in the bride's house, to 'tie', or complete in tying, the marriage bond. It is not surprising that the Mohammedan cere- [797] monial includes no counterpart to this double ritual; for there can be no need to 'tie the marriage' again; while the public announcement of the marriage by the mallam, coupling as it does the names of the spouses as well as the names of their fathers and grandfathers, also obviates the need for a separate ceremonial of 'acceptance'.

On the same day the festivities begin, to which all the friends and relatives of the bridegroom's family are invited. Neither this nor the concluding phase of the wedding feast include any specifically religious features. During the 'merry-making' the emphasis is on the male participants, among whom the bridegroom's age mates figure prominently, typical men's songs and dances being alone performed. The bridegroom himself, in his finery, sits stiffly among the guests without joining in the general fun. The festivities end on the ninth day, and with them ends the segregation of the bride. On

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the tenth day she will for the first time sweep the hut, having until 585
then been waited upon by her companions, and join the other women of the house in the routine of household work. But she may not yet leave the women's part of the house and hence still remains separated from her husband. The same evening she sits down outside her hut, where she is visited by all the relatives and friends of her new family, receiving a small gift of money or kolanuts from each. This custom is called the 'buying of shame', since the bride will no longer need to feel ashamed when meeting the strangers among whom she is to live. On the twelfth day the concluding observance takes place. In the morning the bridegroom sends two fowls, one cock and one hen, to the bride's mother or, if she lives in another village, to his bride's aunt who has come with her. This woman will cook the fowls, adding various spices, and take them at midday back to the bridegroom. The hen is then sent to the bride, who will offer a small portion to her mother-in-law and eat the rest together with her companions. The cock is cut in two, the bridegroom and his best friend eating one portion, while the other is eaten by his father, alone in his hut. Afterwards the bride's companions finally depart, leaving her by herself in her new home. Now, as the Nupe put it, the 'path is open at last', that is, the marriage will be consummated the same night.

No religious significance is attributed to the observance just described, which pagans and Mohammedans alike perform; it is merely taken to express or affirm, in the manner of an obvious gesture, the new, friendly relationships which are henceforth to obtain between the husband and his wife's family, and between the bride and her in-laws. In this sense the observance represents the last step in the circuitous traditional procedure of 'tying the marriage'. That this exchange of food includes both a male and a female animal would seem to throw into relief the crucial nature of the occasion, the union of man and woman. But the fact that [812]
men eat the cock and women the hen appears to harbour also a further meaning, namely, an expression of that sharp dualism of male and female which pervades the whole of Nupe philosophy.

(iii) *Death*

Of the three 'crises of life' death is most heavily weighted with 764
ceremonial. This seems consistent with the trend of Nupe religion, to emphasize 'ends' rather than 'beginnings'. But it does not reflect the more sinister nature of the event, doubly sinister, it might be thought among a people ignorant of after-life and knowing only the vague chance of reincarnation. For though death itself is always felt to be uncanny and disturbing, the ritual elaboration is heaviest at the death of old people, in which one

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[5]

584 According to Temple,[6] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

184 Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[6] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 36.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found
595 the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more
565 attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would
586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphro-
[832] disiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the
837 women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral con-
831 cepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-profes-
837 sional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing;
837 what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The
586 obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d.* and 1*s.*

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Men who have to uphold their prestige and social position would never risk the publicity and ridicule of divorce proceedings in which they would have to appear in the role of the wronged husband.[1] The amorous affairs of Bida noblemen supply, in fact, an ever-welcome topic for the town gossips. When some years ago two popular noblemen quarrelled, everyone knew that it was about a girl and had the details at their finger-tips. Only the men of very great wealth and highest status are in a position to restrain or threaten their unfaithful wives. For one thing, they can afford to forfeit more than one bride-price, and can thus divorce their wives (according to Nupe Mohammedan law) without invoking elaborate public proceedings. Besides, wives and paramours would hesitate to provoke the enmity of these powerful personages. It is not unnatural, then, that (as my informants said) the wives of these men supply the only example of unimpaired marital fidelity in Bida—another no less striking instance of 'double morality'.

If the older married men are either resigned or complacent, the younger men see in illegitimate adventures only an exciting and tempting aspect of Bida life. We shall meet later with their ideal, the dashing young man 'about town' who can 'have' all the women he wants and can boast of his conquests. The women who avails herself of the loosened marriage ties may be talked about and called (behind her back) a 'bad woman'—*nyizagi banza*, a 'worthless woman'. But in their ordinary behaviour towards these women, when meeting them in the street or in the house of a mutual friend, the men will never fail in their respect towards them or betray by a sign their moral prejudices. This ambiguous attitude is symptomatic of a society which, though still conscious of its traditional dogmatic appreciation of chastity, is yet adapting itself to a spreading laxity of morals.

There is indeed evidence to show that sexual licence has been greatly increasing in the last generation or two. But there is also evidence of the fact that sexual licence on a smaller scale and within strictly defined limits enjoyed a legitimate existence in traditional Nupe society. The anomaly of public morals which would condemn sexual licence yet at the same time sanction it in a certain well-defined social domain is familiar to the student of society. In Nupe as in all other societies this qualified admission of sexual licence is due to various social causes. A first cause lies in the nature of sex itself, namely, in the reaction to the restraint on all pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations which characterizes the traditional sex morality of the people. Another cause is the large floating population in Bida, composed of traders, warriors (formerly), labourers (to-day), that is, men who come to Bida without their wives and depend on prostitution for the satisfaction of their sexual appetite. A third cause is embodied in the institution of female trade. We shall see later that women's trade involves a loosening of matrimonial and family ties and tends to become identified with licentious living. In female trade Nupe society thus has grasped a ready occupational framework for that domain of sanctioned

[1] Clear evidence of this is the scarcity of divorce cases, which form two-thirds of all court cases in Bida, from the houses of the nobility.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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in Nupe I found the following *dashi* associations in practice: *dashi* associations formed by women, the wives of farmers in Doko, Kacha, and one or two other villages, in which the weekly subscription was 3*d.*: they numbered between twelve and thirty members; a *dashi* among the Bida barbers, with the subscription of 4*d.* weekly, numbering ten members (I was told, incidentally, that formerly their *dashi* was organized on a much larger scale). Another *dashi*, numbering twenty-four members, was formed by N.A. scribes; here the subscription was high, in accordance with their salary, 10*s.* per month. The teachers of Bida Middle School also formed a *dashi*, numbering twelve members, with a subscription of 7*s.* 6*d.* per month. Eight members of this group had formed a *dashi* with a subscription of £1 per month the previous year. Several *dashi* associations have disappeared owing to the economic stress. The labourers at the Bida workshops had practised the *dashi* till five years ago, but had given it up when their wages were lowered. The beadworkers, who had also practised the *dashi* formerly, had abandoned it owing to the decline of their business. I received the same information among carpenters, blacksmiths, and butchers. The canoe-men in Jebba, finally, who used to organize their *dashi* at irregular times, had not had a *dashi* for several years.

Returning to the general discussion of 'insurance': as the large co-operative unit in agriculture and home industry is disappearing, and, with it, the 'insurance' which it provided, one may wonder whether this must not bring the other, individual, insurance arrangements more to the foreground. It is thus rather surprising that the practice of the *dashi*, far from increasing, is disappearing. The people, as we have heard, explain this as being due to the general economic decline. The beadworkers said that they had no money to spare, and the barbers and labourers did not think it worth their while to organize a *dashi* with a small subscription. Borrowing, on the other hand, especially the borrowing by husbands from their wives, is markedly on the increase. Disputes over debts of this kind are frequent in divorce proceedings in Bida. The examination of household budgets also reveals a considerable number of instances (five out of fifty) in which husbands borrowed money, chiefly for tax, from their more prosperous wives; and even in remote places, such as fishing villages on islands in the Niger, where the women are by no means the enterprising traders they are in Bida or larger villages, husbands borrowed up to 8*s.* and 9*s.* from their wives. That under a continued economic stress borrowing may spread and increase further, and eventually lead to the introduction of professional money-lending, is not improbable. Borrowing in Nupe, which has once already reached a peak (in pawning), might well, in a different form, grow again to such dimensions.

It is clearly a sign of the growing instability of the native economic system that the solid and comprehensive insurance against risks which is vested in the co-operative labour-unit is disappearing, and that its place is taken by the most restricted, most temporary, form of insurance —borrowing. Once again, we encounter social and economic repercussions of the dissolution of the large labour-unit. If previously we have seen that this development has adversely affected certain aspects of

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

773 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother: custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 248.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

● 586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [684
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more [735]
were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [766]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), [562]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

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4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [572] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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* Mr. E. C. Dufi.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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764 sees nothing tragic, and is meant to meet social demands as much as metaphysical fears. The ceremonial surrounding death differs somewhat in different communities; mostly, these variations are of [184] a minor character (concerning, for example, the precise duties of the grave-diggers), and can be ignored.

The full funeral ceremonial includes a whole series of rituals, beginning with the burial, called *mba*, and spun out over three funerary rites, performed after eight days, forty days, and one hundred and twenty days, and called after these time intervals. Poor [184] families may be unable to perform the last rite, which is altogether absent in the riverain area and in a few pagan inland villages. Several informants maintained that the Hundred-twenty Days' rite was an innovation, though long since established in many parts of the country (both among pagans and Mohammedans), and that it had come to Nupe with Islam. This last assumption is without foundation since the Mohammedan funeral customs include no such observance. Yet it does seem likely from the present distribution of the ritual that it originated in the Mohammedan capital and then spread to the pagan villages. The villagers, of course, show in a great many ways their readiness to imitate the 'superior' way of life in the town; and there need have been no stronger reason for an innovation otherwise congenial to the traditional outlook. But in the town the addition of another funerary feast fits more specifically into the social conditions.

764 To some extent it merely reflects the greater preoccupation, in the town, with occasions for the display of wealth and status. But 587 there seems to be this also. When discussing the final funerary rite the Nupe always stress that it is 'important for the women' or concerns 'the women especially'; as we shall see, it does in fact bear specifically on the end of widowhood and on the parentage of posthumous children. In the villages which do not perform this rite, these questions are settled, three months after the death, in an informal family council. The last funerary rite thus ceremonializes the same occasion as well as postpones it. Now, this occasion is much more important, the issue being more uncertain, among the townspeople than among the peasants in the villages. Only in the town, among the aristocracy and the wealthier classes, does large-scale polygyny occur, so that the re-marriage of widows becomes a complicated matter; equally, levirate and marriage of the mother's brother's widow which, in the villages, greatly simplify the problem, are disappearing among the Mohammedans of the town. The postponement of the decision by another month would thus seem to be a useful expedient; while the added ceremonial lends moral weight to an occasion grown more critical.

764 The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[5]

584 According to Temple,[6] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[6] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 582
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage. 588

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 851
425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO NUPE KINSHIP

BEFORE attempting the analysis of the Nupe community we must examine certain essential aspects of the kinship system of the country. This description cannot claim to be more than a brief outline. It is concerned only with the main principles of kinship structure among the Nupe so far as they bear on the subject-matter of this book.

The basic structure of the Nupe kinship system is the *extended family*: all individuals who can trace their descent to a certain initial, nucleus family—a husband and his wives—regard themselves as related and as forming one kindred. The Nupe have only one word for kinship, *dengi*, which defines relationship in the widest as well as in a more restricted sense. The vagueness of the terminology reflects the inherent vagueness of this concept of relationship. The extended family is a fluid unit in two respects. First, as the women of the family marry outside, into other houses and families, their connexion with the family from which they come, although never admitted to have ceased entirely, becomes weaker and less effective generation after generation. Secondly, the constant growth and expansion of the kinship unit which this principle of reckoning descent entails leaves the boundaries and 'fringes' of the family unit only vaguely defined. People cannot, in fact, trace their descent back farther than two or three generations, and in every family there are a certain number of 'relatives' who are known to be *dengi*, related, without anyone being able to define the degree or nature of the relationship. Moreover, individuals and sections may split off from the main family group, move to other parts, and thus disappear from the view of the rest of the kinship group.

It is implied in these facts that the effective kinship unit is represented, not in the vaguely defined 'theoretical' extended family, but in that section of it which remains living close together—whose members keep, as it were, in each other's view—in the particular case, the kinship section inhabiting one house. This kinship section is, in fact, referred to as a 'house'—*esni* in Nupe. The Nupe reckon relationship in 'houses', saying, for example, that people belong or do not belong to the same 'house', that is, are or are not related. Technically, the 'house' is a compound of a number of houses (to be described later in more detail), which is enclosed by a common wall and possesses a common gateway or entrance hut, called *katamba*. The term *katamba* is frequently used synonymously with 'house': in enumerating the kinship groups of a village the Nupe will tell you that the village numbers so many *katamba*.

To some extent the house-group, too, is subject to the natural fluctuations of increasing or decreasing population. An overflowing population may necessitate the building of new houses and compounds, mostly placed close to the original home, but in some cases at some distance from it, in another part of the village, perhaps in another locality

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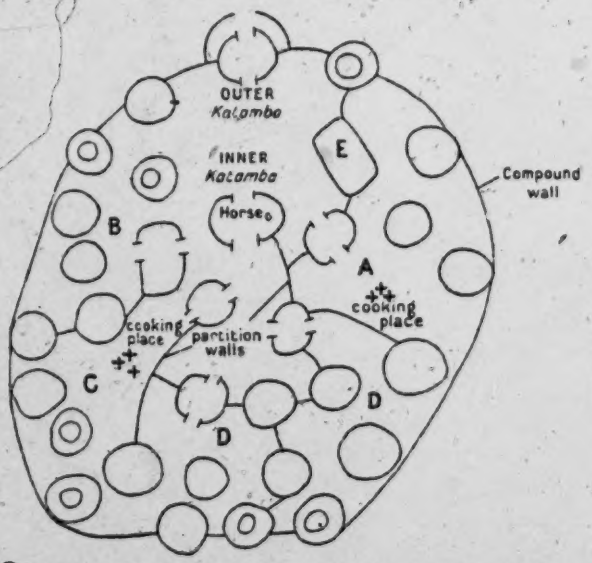
592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found dis-
596 tributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the sub-division of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[372]



○ Sleeping huts (◯) Katamba A... partition of family head. B...partition of unmarried sons. C...partition of unmarried daughters. D...partition of married sons and younger brothers. E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discus-
[621] sions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kinship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

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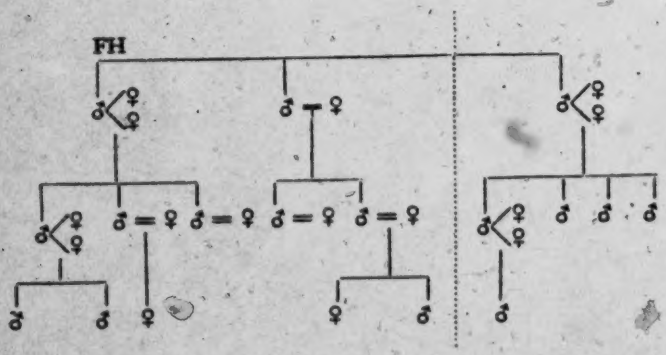
single *efu*, and the family section inhabiting one house is reduced to the smallest size. Moreover, independent economic position and independent, possibly even divergent, political interests and connexions cause adult family members to leave the paternal home and to set up households of their own. Even the wider local unit, the *efu*, is no longer based on kinship, but is largely replaced by a local unit the composition of which is determined by the factor of political allegiance and partisanship.

The size of the house-group varies widely: the largest group which I encountered numbered about sixty individuals, including men and women, adults and children. The smallest groups are found in Bida, and may comprise not more than six or eight people.

The effective kinship unit—the 'house' in the abstract sense of the word—expresses itself conspicuously in the recognition of a common family head, who is called, significantly, *emitsó*, Owner of the House. We shall learn later of the political, religious, and economic prerogatives vested in the person of the family head. Here I will only add that where a section of the house-group splits off from the main body and establishes itself in a new, separate, house it cannot claim to be at once recognized as a new unit, entitled to a separate *emitsó*, but continues to acknowledge the old family head. In the course of time the head of the new group may gain the position of an independent *emitsó*. The following diagram illustrates a case of this kind. The members of the family group placed to the right of the dotted line separated from the main family body in 1934 and moved to a newly built house in another part of the village (Kutigi). The reason given was that the old house had become 'too crowded'. The head of the new group expected to be recognized as *emitsó* after the death of the old family head (marked FH in the diagram).



The 'house' is subdivided into a number of family sections, each of which inhabits a division of the compound. The single section represents an even more effective unit than the house-group and its members enter a more intensive co-operation: they keep house together, eat together, and also form a common productive or labour-unit. No special

326, 571, 592, 476 Nupe FF52

[For information on the efakó-group (cooperative labor group), particularly in the craft guilds, also see category 467--Analyst]

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The family has been regarded by many anthropologists as a typical *bilateral* unit—a group in which the transmission of rights and duties follows both the paternal and maternal line. We know now that such family structures are extremely rare, and that in most societies succession in paternal and maternal line supplement each other and are assigned different spheres of validity, certain rights and duties being transmitted in the paternal and others in the maternal line. For the Nupe family we

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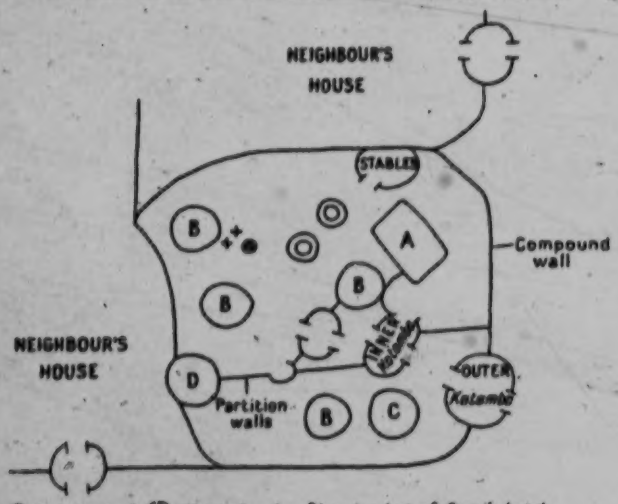
HOUSE OF A BIDA NOBLEMAN OF LOW RANK



○ Sleeping huts ⟲ Katamba. A... Sleeping hut of Family head.
B... Sleeping huts of his wives. C... Sleeping hut of unmarried son.
D... Sleeping hut of unmarried daughter. ● Well. ◎ Granaries.

[592 ●
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can say that rights and duties which are transmitted through the father greatly outweigh in scope and importance those transmitted through the mother. Kinship membership itself and the access to the political and religious rights vested in it are determined by paternal descent. As women in Nupe neither own nor work land, this most important property is also inherited through the father. The rights to certain forms of financial support (e.g. for the payment of bride-price or support in old age) are equally derived from descent in the father's line. As Radcliffe-Brown has shown, the genealogical division into paternal and maternal succession depends also on the nature of the rights and duties that are transmitted from individual to individual, some being transmitted more satisfactorily through men (i.e. the father) and others through women (i.e. the mother).[1] Thus the personal property of the Nupe women is inherited by their daughters—as the personal property

[1] R. A. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XIII

AGRICULTURE: ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR

LABOUR organization in Nupe, in every field of economic activity, is 241
characterized by a twofold principle: the distinction between in- 423
dividual work and family work or, in native terminology, between 592
bucá and *efakó*. As the division of labour implied in this distinction also involves a corresponding division of income and property, our discussion of the organization of agricultural labour must at the same time be a discussion of the forms of property that obtain in relation to agricultural production. The terms *bucá* and *efakó* have, in fact, this wider meaning. Every kind of work done individually, its products and the income—individual income—derived from it, are *bucá*; and every work done jointly, in collective family work, producing output and income over which the family group or a section of the family group exercises joint rights, is *efakó*. Thus we find two different kinds of farm property: *efakó* farms which are owned and worked jointly by the family group, and *bucá* farms worked and owned by individuals. Similarly there are *efakó* granaries to hold the produce from the family farms, and *bucá* granaries to hold the produce which the individual members of the family group own and utilize. The family group or, more precisely, the section of the family group which forms the *efakó*-unit, owns from ten to twelve granaries which are as a rule placed close to the centre of the house. Every *bucá* owner has, besides, his own granary, which is usually found close to the wall of the compound. Obviously, in a system of labour based not on wages but on joint work and a share in the proceeds, the discussion of the labour organization cannot be treated separately from questions of ownership and land-tenure. On the other hand, a co-operative group consisting of a section of the kinship group cannot be described without constant reference to kinship organization. Frequent cross-references, and overlapping with other sections of the book, are thus unavoidable.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WORK

Let me begin with the *bucá*, which can be briefly described. Every 241
male member of the family owns a *bucá*, with the exception of the 592
family head who being the administrator of the *efakó* has no *bucá* himself. For his personal requirements he is entitled to draw on the *efakó* income. Young boys of 8 or 10 already possess *bucá* farms of their own. *Bucá* farms vary considerably in size, and grow with their occupants. The largest *bucá* farm which I found was about one acre, i.e. about half the size of the plot of land which on the family possessions is proportionate to every adult worker. The average *bucá* yield I found to be between one-third and one-half of the individual adult's share in the yield of the family farm. The *bucá* owner can work on his farm only 'out of business hours', when he is not needed for *efakó*

[p. 241]

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work. Two different arrangements exist. The one found more frequently is this: every man works on the *efakó* farm from early morning till 3 or 4 in the afternoon; after that he is free to work his own individual plot. The second, less frequent, arrangement requires married men to work five days in the week, and bachelors six days in the week on the *efakó*, and allows them one or two days—including the weekly day of rest, Friday—on the *bucá*. The selection of crops which are grown on the *bucá* is of necessity very much simpler than that grown on the *efakó*; moreover, no collective work, not even occasional help, is possible for *bucá* work. Thus farmers grow mostly only the staple crops, sorghum, millet, or yam, on their *bucá* farms but sometimes, though rarely, also cotton or ground-nuts. The income from the *bucá* farm is used entirely for personal expenses, for clothes and additional food which are not provided by the family, such as savouries or kola-nuts, beer or palm-wine; for contributions to parties of friends, certain personal gifts, and so forth.

Bucá farm-work is not practised everywhere, and not even in every farming community. *Bucá* work and income of some kind, however, always exists. In certain areas where other forms of production (e.g. certain handicrafts) are practised besides agriculture—mostly forms of production involving less heavy work and higher money-return—these additional productive techniques supply the *bucá* work to which the men turn 'after hours'. Thus we find in Kutigi, the centre of Nupe mat-industry, mat-working adopted as *bucá*; in Mokwa, indigo-dyeing; while on Jebba Island, which is inhabited by the mixed farming and fishing community of the riverain Gbedegi, fishing with the drag-net (carried out in the evenings, i.e. after the day's farm-work) replacing the farming *bucá*.

The joint work on the *efakó* farm is carried out by a section of the household group, i.e. by a section of the family group which lives together in the same 'house' or compound. Only once have I found an *efakó* group comprising individuals who were living in different compounds. It was a transitional arrangement which had occurred in the course of the expansion of one household group, a section of which had split off and was preparing to take new land, farther afield, under cultivation. The 'emigrants' had already built a house in the new locality but were still, for the time being, working with the rest of the original household group on the old land. The whole household group, with its twenty-five to thirty male members, has most probably never formed a single *efakó* group, although informants, here as in so many cases only too ready to idealize the past, will often give exaggerated accounts of the size of the groups that formerly used to work together. Their estimates vary widely, between thirty and a hundred. However, even reliable informants put the size of the *efakó* group in pre-British days at a figure considerably higher than that observed to-day, namely, at from ten to fifteen. The average *efakó* group to-day numbers only two or three adult members. There is no doubt, then, and this is borne out by the evidence of genealogies, that the size of the *efakó* group has been steadily decreasing for some time. These are the figures relating to

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the size of the *efakó* working group in the case of fifty Nupe households which I have analysed (non-adult members of the working group are ignored in the table):

Number of men working together	1	2	3	4	5	6	Over 6
Number of cases	17	13	11	6	2	1	..[1]

The smallest *efakó* group, of one man, has obviously lost all the essential characteristics which distinguish it from the *bucá* group. In these extreme cases the *bucá* itself disappears, and we have single individual holdings, worked by one man, helped only perhaps by his boys who will stay with him until they are grown up, when they too will demand farms of their own.

The normal *efakó* group consists of a number of close relations—brothers and sons who are either unmarried or only recently married, and have one or two small children—working under the headship of the senior man, a father, father's brother, or eldest brother. Older men who are childless may also remain in the *efakó* group. In larger *efakó* groups and especially in groups the head of which is an old man, the family head may not himself join in the actual farm-work. He supervises it, he makes frequent tours of inspection to the farm, and he lays down the arrangement and order of the work for the day. As a family head he stands more aloof, and is free to use his leisure in his own way. The team-work which the *efakó* implies is of two kinds: actual working together, or co-ordinated working on different plots performing different tasks. Actual working together on the same plot is practised in the tilling of the soil and the preparation of ridges, in transplanting and harvesting. In this team-work a strong stimulus is embodied: the more experienced workers set the pace, and the others follow as well as they can, always conscious of the element of competition and display of efficiency embodied in the joint activity. The leader of the team is not, as we have seen, the head of the *efakó* group himself but the member next in seniority, in the traditional arrangement usually the younger brother or eldest son of the family head. Sowing, ordinary weeding, and the regular tending of the plants may be done by one or two workers of the group only, while the rest may be assigned tasks on other plots or sometimes a different kind of work altogether, such as the task of helping in the house, or taking farm-produce to a distant market.

Whatever the actual division of work, the consciousness of the individual share in the common labour is strongly pronounced, and with it the competitive element in the co-operation. Every co-worker in the team is aware of the number of ridges, for example, which stand to his credit in the common tilling; similarly everyone, at least among the adults, is able to describe precisely his share in the yield produced on the

[1] The proportion of *efakó* groups comprising more than four adults is in reality much smaller than is indicated in the table. A more superficial census of over 160 households, designed specially to ascertain the occurrence of large *efakó* groups, produced the same three instances of households with *efakó*-units of five or six adults.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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common land. The system of individual *bucd* work which runs parallel to the family work no doubt fosters such reckoning; no doubt also that this form of reckoning, essentially competitive as it is, must enhance the energy devoted by the individual worker to the common task. But such an attitude must also foster the tendency to split up and eventually dissolve the working-unit. In a small hamlet near Bida I discovered an interesting form of transition between full co-operation, which yet recognizes the individual share in the common work, and complete dissolution of the working-unit into independent agents. In the case to which I am referring the *efakó* group was divided into two working-units, each being engaged permanently on different fields although the yield produced by the two sections was still collected as the common *efakó* yield. The *efakó* group was formed by a father—a man of over 50—and his two married sons—of about 25 and 30. The father was working one group of plots and the two sons, together, another. The two groups of plots incidentally produced equally large crops, which was due to the fact that the old man could enlist outside labour on his farms and thus equalize the difference in working capacity between himself and his two sons.

MAINTENANCE OF LABOUR

The produce of the *efakó* is handed over *in toto* to the family head. It is stored in the *efakó* granaries, and only the family head has the right to dispose of it. We shall discuss later in detail the various uses to which he may put it. But let me describe here one aspect of the employment of the *efakó* income, namely its use for the benefit of the *efakó* members themselves who helped to produce it, speaking more generally, for the maintenance of the labour organization. The question of maintenance of labour has, first, a strictly material aspect, namely, the supply of the means of production—the agricultural tools. The main agricultural instruments used in Nupe farming, as we have seen, are two kinds of hoe, bush-knife, and axe. They all have to be bought from the blacksmiths or, in the case of the bush-knife, from the European store, and must be repaired periodically—expenses which are by no means negligible. A heavy hoe costs between 1*s*. and 1*s*. 6*d*., a light hoe between 6*d*. and 1*s*., axe and bush-knife between 1*s*. and 1*s*. 6*d*.; repairs may amount to between 3*d*. and 4*d*. each time, that is, perhaps 1*s*. a year. Now, as long as the individual worker remains in the *efakó* group, the head of the group supplies new tools and pays for repairs. A man who leaves the *efakó* group to work on his own may take away the tools which he has been using—they have become 'his' tools—but from now on he must himself pay the cost of all repairs or the purchase of new tools.

The second, human, aspect in the problem of maintenance of labour is the maintenance of the workers themselves. They are housed, clothed, and fed by the family head. The head of the *efakó* group is responsible for all expenses that occur in connexion with the repair of the house and the huts in which his co-workers live; he provides their clothing and food—the section of the family group which is regularly

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eating together and constitutes one *ménage* coincides in fact with the *efakó*-unit. The *efakó* head further pays the tax for his co-workers and is also expected to make himself responsible for establishing them socially when they have reached full adulthood, i.e. he will enable them to get married, by paying their bride-price. By allotting to the co-workers from earliest youth an individual plot for *bucá* work or allowing them the time for other *bucá* enterprises, he also puts them in the position of earning an independent income. They use it, as I have said, for their personal wants over and above those catered for by the family head—what we may call the small luxuries of life. When they desire to leave the *efakó* group and set up for themselves the family head finally provides the members of his group with the necessary 'capital' in the form of the tools which they may take with them, food for the first year while their new land does not yet bear crops, and, above all, in form of the parcel of family land which he allots to them as their own property. In order to do all this the family head must be able not only to draw on regular supplies of agricultural produce from the family land but also to avail himself of certain commodities of exchange and that universal medium of exchange, money. He must plan his money expenditure and accumulate reserves which can alone enable him to pay the large bride-price (which is always in money) when the time comes. The resources of the family working-unit thus gain the significance of capital proper, invested in the maintenance of labour; without it, without the prospect of fulfilling all these economic obligations towards the members of the working-unit, the *efakó* group cannot be maintained satisfactorily.

Here we come back to the decline or disintegration of the family working-unit under modern conditions which we have outlined in the beginning of this section. Now, every co-operative group must to some extent reckon with a periodical and temporary disintegration, that is, with the necessity of periodically readjusting its body of workers, replacing those who have died or are too old or who for other reasons desire to leave the group and to admit new, young members in their place. This is done through the twofold mechanism of inheritance and succession, and of release with regard to members who leave the group to work on their own. We shall examine inheritance and succession later; here it will suffice to say that in the Nupe system of inheritance the family farm goes to the relation next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son (in the classificatory sense). As regards the release of members from the group, the rule used to be that junior members remained in the *efakó* until they had more than two wives and more than two or three children. In the last five to ten years, however, many large *efakó* groups were dissolved after the death of the family head, and the family land, instead of being worked jointly by the remaining members of the family under the new head, was divided up among the various individuals who now work independently each on his own land. Moreover, nowadays young men who have just married frequently decline to stay in the *efakó*-unit and demand to be given a separate farm. I have noted many cases of this kind, in all parts of Nupe, in which the dissolution of the *efakó* group occurred between six and ten years ago.

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241 592 178 How are we to explain this comparatively sudden change? Viewing it from the general economic point of view all the advantages seem to be on the side of a large labour-unit: our discussion of the agricultural technique of the country has taught us that a large labour group represents, in Nupe, the only means of cultivating a large variety of both useful and profitable crops. Moreover, a large *efakó*-unit assures a certain measure of leisure to the family head and the old men in general, by enabling them to leave a large proportion of the actual work to the younger generation. It assures also a better distribution of responsibility, counting more adults among its members than does the small working-unit. It utilizes more fully the important incentive of competition and is, finally, of great educational value; for only in large labour-units are the young boys likely to work regularly in the company of others of their own age.

241 592 178 461 But if from point of view of group efficiency and security the large working-unit appears superior to the small (say) one- or two-men 'group', it is not necessarily so when looked at from the viewpoint of the individual. Take the question of leisure and distribution of responsibility. In one of the instances in which I found a large *efakó*-unit having been dissolved recently (six years ago), after the death of the family head, I was given this as the reason of the change: the new family head, the eldest of five brothers, had availed himself liberally of the privilege of leisure which his position implied, and frequently went hunting while the others were working on the farm. Now, while they had accepted the same arrangement under the old family head, their father, they declined to accord this privilege to their eldest brother, and preferred to dissolve the whole unit and work each for himself. To-day, working on their own, the individual family members have a comparatively larger measure of freedom and leisure, which they are free to use as they like. They can use their own discretion in planning the farm-work: of the five brothers two have taken to spend their spare time in making mats, a leisure-time occupation which, they assured me, is financially very advantageous to them; one has left the village; and the family head himself can still spend part of his time in hunting. Against the considerations of group efficiency thus stand individual considerations of gain, which provide another, and in some respects very different, standard of appreciation by which to measure the value of the large labour-unit. The word 'gain' should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Freedom of movement, freedom to choose a different profession (we remember, for example, the openings which the political life of the capital offered to young men of adventurous spirit), even freedom to enjoy one's leisure independent of the dictates of family requirements—these spiritual values appear under certain circumstances as tempting to the younger generation as does the prospect of material gain.

The two standards of appreciation will coincide where the *efakó* group is in a position to guarantee the satisfaction of all needs and demands which the group-members might feel. Nupe family co-operation in farm-work, once apparently more satisfactorily adjusted, is now failing in this respect. This failure can be attributed to two different develop-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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ments: to an increase in the needs and demands on the part of the individual members with which the system of family co-operation failed to cope; or to a decline in the efficiency of the group to maintain its former standards of maintenance. The Nupe *efakó* system has, in fact, failed on both accounts. As regards the first, a large variety of new needs and wants, temptations and values have spread, primarily from the town, and have begun to transform the original peasant culture; as regards the second, the family head is to-day frequently unable to meet out of the family income two financial demands which are regarded as essential to the *efakó* concept, the payment of the bride-price and the payment of tax for the individual members of the *efakó* group.

Certain of the influences which have thus led to the decline of the large working-unit are no doubt due to factors of modern culture change. Yet it would be wrong to regard the change in the structure of the working-unit merely as a result of the outside influence of culture contact. The structural change forms part of a much wider phenomenon; it is the result of an intrinsic economic development, namely, the readjustment between productive organization and needs existing in the society. If the change were due exclusively to culture contact we should expect to find the larger working-unit preserved only in backward, 'unsophisticated', districts. This is not the case. The table on p. 243 showed that three households out of fifty had working-units composed of more than four adults. Of these three households only one belongs to a backward area—the household of the chief of Doko. The two other examples come both from one of the most progressive places in Nupe, Lemu, and from a group of farmers who, as mentioned before, have but recently undertaken the cultivation of a new commercial crop, red pepper, to replace another commercial crop, ground-nuts, which had not proved an economic success. A large working group is essential to the cultivation of this new crop. In these two households the young men have remained in the *efakó*, content with their position, while the family head, in turn, is able to provide bride-price and tax-money. Here, then, culture contact so far from being responsible for the dissolution of the large working-unit has on the contrary supplied a type of production which enables the large working-unit to maintain itself; paradoxically, culture contact has placed the *efakó*-unit in a position to satisfy those very demands and needs which culture contact has newly imposed upon the society. However, these instances from Lemu are exceptional: neither in Mokwa, the centre of ground-nut cultivation, nor in Kutigi, where cotton is grown on a comparatively large scale, has the large *efakó* group survived. The exceptional cases which I have discovered are too few to warrant a more far-reaching, systematic explanation. Moreover, whereas in this case attractions and temptations appealing to the younger generation are partly responsible for the social change, individual differences must play a considerable part. We can only tentatively point to a certain negative evidence: the absence of some of these 'temptations' in Lemu which have made the younger generation in Mokwa and Kutigi claim an early economic independence. Lemu is neither a centre of native trade, nor does a profitable alternative

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241 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-
592 time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the
178 town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supple-
476 mented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first
476 and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young
241 men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later.

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking for the household. In our general description we have reached the point when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuka* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook.

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women

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are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work. 325

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit. 326 467 592

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out. 326 592 [857]

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

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326 the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His
592 younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A
326 blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s*.; this quantity is
434 sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at
435 the price of 6*d*. and 1*s*. a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d*.). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d*. and 3*d*. In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d*. in the dry season fetches 8*d*. in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s*.

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles. 323

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen. 323 444 439 [527]

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production, 323 471 592 474 [465]

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yorùba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbã. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6s. to 12s., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker
[427] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became
[357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and
286 there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven
[804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except
1443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

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one piece of

cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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288 apprentices. This source of income, formerly quite considerable, disappeared when weaving became less profitable. Young boys of about
592 10 years, mostly sons of farmers, were the pupils; they stayed with the
467 weaver for from four to five years, and the work which they produced during the time of their apprenticeship belonged to their master; when their training was completed the parents of the pupil would bring one bundle of corn as payment.

288 The loose organization of the labour-unit has its counterpart in the organization of the profession at large. Among the weavers no co-opera-
467 tion on a larger scale exists. We have even seen that individuals are quite ready to abandon the profession for other, more attractive, work—an attitude unprecedented among blacksmiths or glass-workers. Yet the symbols of guild organization, the guild ranks, are still preserved. Each group of weavers has its titled guild-head: the head of the Salu (Yagba) weavers is called *Majī*, and the head of the Yoruba weavers *Leshe*. He is also regarded as the head of all *konú* weavers in Nupe, and used to receive from them small annual gifts or tributes. But this common allegiance and co-operation reflects less the professional union than the tribal and cultural unity of these scattered Yoruba groups in Nupe country. The head of the Nupe group of weavers in Bida has no official title but is called simply *Ndakó*, Grandfather. The position of the group-head carries to-day none of the influence and authority which characterizes the guild-heads of other crafts; he neither receives gifts from the fellow craftsmen nor is he expected to advise or help them in their work. As in all other guild-organized crafts the official position of the guild-heads of the weavers was based originally on their role as intermediaries between the king and the craftsmen of Bida. But this role has lost very early all practical importance—earlier than it did in the other Nupe crafts. To quote the guild-head of the Yagba weavers: '*Etsu* Masaba still used to come to our workshops and order cloth personally from the *Majī*. But *Etsu* Umaru, who came after him, already bought what he needed on the market, and so did all the later kings of Nupe.'

BEADWORKERS

306 As a last example of guild-organized industries I will describe the organization of the beadworkers in Bida. Their craft shows certain specific features which make it specially interesting and distinguish it from the other crafts of Nupe. Beadworking represents, first of all, a typical refining industry, which involves a system of re-exportation comparable only to the most complex forms of economic enterprise found in Western civilization. It involves further the use of money capital and credit operations on a scale unparalleled in Nupe industry. It is, finally, a pure luxury industry, producing more expensive goods than either glass- or brass-work. These various factors have contributed to making the beadworking industry of Bida extremely vulnerable; it has suffered more than the other crafts from the economic stress of the recent years and, a significant result of this, presents the picture of a complete disintegration of co-operative production.

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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285 the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for 435 from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

434 If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household 463 groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and 592 houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Eyakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpā* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciśi* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciśi* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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305 larger group, the guild section or guild). The work of the barbers is
759 organized on the familiar lines of *efakó* and *bucá*. Although their work
does not entail actually working together, a certain kind of work is
592 regarded as a concern of the family group as such and as falling under
the rules of *efakó*. The *efakó* principle itself is interpreted in an unusual
sense. In the work of the barbers orders or summons do not usually
reach the individual barber directly, but come to him via the head of the
household, who allots the various tasks to the different family members.
The proceeds from all work carried out on these lines are divided among
the whole *efakó* group, in accordance with a certain schedule which takes
305 into account the seniority of the different family members. The tasks
759 which come under *efakó* rule are the most highly paid jobs: the shaving
of the hair and the cutting of tribal marks at the name-giving ceremony,
553 and the circumcision of boys. The first task is performed at the occasion
592 of an important household feast, and the barber-doctors rarely fail to
benefit from the generosity that goes with festal mood. These simpler
operations are executed by the younger men of the family, but the family
head and the older men will also be present, as guests quite as much as
in their professional capacity—which latter may reveal itself in no more
than an occasional hint thrown out to the young colleague. The barbers
will all sit together, and in front of them there will be a bowl into which
every visitor is expected to drop a coin, the largest contribution coming
from the parents of the newborn child. Let us follow the fate of a shil-
ling dropped into this bowl of the barbers at a name-giving ceremony in
a Bida house: 2*d.* is retained by the grandmother, who held the infant
during the operation; 1*d.* goes to each of the five junior members of the
efakó group (including the young man who performed the operation);
1½*d.* each to two older men of the family, the family head and his younger
brother; and 2*d.*, finally, to the head of the guild section.

305 All other work of the barbers is regarded as *bucá*: ordinary haircutting
759 and shaving as well as medical treatment.[1] The latter, more lucrative,
work is a prerogative of the older men, who alone know herbs and drugs
and can perform the *turare*. The younger men will be taught these craft
secrets when they reach a certain age. And thus another principle of
family work is realized in the organization of the Nupe barber-doctors,
namely, the balance in favour of senior family members which we have
observed in the organization of farm-labour and native industries.

We have seen that in the distribution of *efakó* income a certain con-
305 tribution goes to the head of the guild section. This, then, is a first
759 instance of economic co-operation of the large professional unit. This co-
operation is visible also in another, external, feature of this professional
467 organization. In each of the three day-markets of Bida there is a special
barbers' 'hall', a spacious open hut, where all the barbers (specially the
family heads) meet in the afternoon, and sit and wait for clients and
summons. This hut is built and kept up from a common fund. The
existence of this common fund is itself evidence of a close co-operation
in the financial field. Into this fund, which is called *dashí*, every barber

[1] The barbers are usually paid in money; but when the Bida barbers tour the country villages they often take firewood or food in lieu of payment.

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456 can normally exercise. Such are wars, slave-raids, political abuses which might deprive a group of the fruits of its labour, the loss of a member of the working group through imprisonment, or—to-day—unexpected fluctuations in the market for export commodities. The insurance which the Nupe productive system can provide against risks of this kind is, of necessity, limited in scope and efficiency. I have spoken already of certain forms which this insurance took in the traditional society: clientship and political allegiance. More interesting to us here are risks which are inherent in the productive organization itself, and which represent 'normal' risks in the sense that experience shows them to be ever present. Into this category come risks due, for example, to a failure of the crop, to marketing difficulties, a temporary economic stringency, or a temporary deficiency in the labour organization owing to illness or old age of individual members of the labour-unit. With risks of this kind the Nupe productive system is well equipped to deal, either through its normal labour organization or through certain mechanisms specially devised to provide 'insurance'.

456 592 The 'normal' risks in agriculture are insured against by means of the very constitution of the *efakó*, the co-operative labour-unit. A large co-operative group is capable of utilizing fully the highly diversified agricultural technique of the country, and of spreading cultivation, both locally and with regard to the crops grown, so as to eliminate the risk of a total failure. In a large working-unit it is also comparatively easy to make up for the temporary elimination of a worker. In a group of this kind invalid or aged group members can be assigned lighter work, or can even be supported by the rest of the group without doing any work. The smaller the group the more difficult it becomes to distribute tasks in this fashion, to spare a worker, and feed an 'extra mouth'. In the small, two-men or one-man labour-unit, the retirement of a member means the end of the working group, and his support places a heavy strain on the remaining organization. A new *ad hoc* arrangement may become necessary, in which independent small labour-units have to combine to maintain the retired member. Here is an instance which I noted in a *tunga* near Bida: a family of five was divided in two labour-units, one consisting of two adults, and the other of an old man, their father, who worked together with his two young grandsons. As his labour-unit could not produce enough for food and tax, the sons contributed ten bundles of grain a year towards the cost of their father's household.[1] That a situation of this kind may, in an extreme case, lead to a complete break-down of the 'insurance' scheme could be seen from household budget C quoted above,[2] which showed an old man and an invalid still depending on their own greatly reduced working capacity. Another example is that of a farmer who had hurt his arm and, having been disabled for one year, became a temporary labourer the following year to make up for the losses he had sustained.

456 467 The group co-operation in the guild-organized crafts similarly provides insurance against 'normal' risks. The guild organization, as we

[1] An analogous example from a family of craftsmen was quoted above, in household budget E.

[2] [See p. 341, cat. 116 — Analyst.]

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sentiments in co-operation was also implied in various statements made earlier in the discussion of economics. We have seen that the craft-guilds plan their labour organization on kinship lines, and reinforce the labour group by what we have called 'professional endogamy'. But let us realize that in doing this they do not appeal to abstract kinship ties or 'bonds of blood', but merely duplicate the common labour interests by corresponding family interests, namely, the concrete interests and forms of social interdependence entailed in intermarriage. Another instance of the influence of kinship ties became apparent in the fact that to-day sons would still agree to stay in the *efakó*, while brother's sons decline to do so. Yet we have also seen that even sons desire under certain conditions to be released from the *efakó*-unit. In the case of individual crafts and trade, kinship obligations, even of sons to fathers, are no longer recognized. The dissolution of the large labour-unit, moreover, has made it abundantly clear that its size and coherence is determined predominantly by economic interests and relations. Kinship bonds and sentiments are not strong enough to maintain a labour group once its economic usefulness is impaired. Generally speaking, then, kinship bonds, in order to supply a substratum for productive co-operation, must have the support of economic incentives—material benefits and forms of compensation. Where the latter fail, the kinship bonds themselves will fail in this task.

Though we cannot thus admit the effectiveness of kinship factors as such (at least not in a decisive measure) upon the labour organization, the reverse is no doubt true. The labour organization exercises a two-fold influence upon the structure of the family and kinship group: (1) through contributing to the co-operative mechanisms within the kinship group, and (2) through accepting the responsibility for certain tasks which are vital to the continuity and stability of the kinship group.

(1) The integration of the kinship group, that is, the 'internal adaptation' of the social unit (Radcliffe-Brown), is largely determined by the scope and closeness of contacts and forms of co-operation existing in the group. Co-operation in the same labour-unit thus represents one of the most ~~important integrative factors in this sense. We~~ remember also that the labour-unit coincides with the household-unit, and that the individuals who agree to work together also 'keep house', eat, and live together. The constant contacts and the lasting mutual adjustment entailed in this productive arrangement build up strongly coherent units. The reduction in size, and the splitting-up into small individual units, of the large labour-unit, must detract essentially from the integration of the family group.

(2) Speaking generally, the large labour group, led by old and experienced men, is more far-sighted in its economic planning than the small one-man or two-men unit. It allows for certain group interests which the individual worker will ignore, or discount as of lesser importance; it can assess necessities and wants more objectively, with a view to the fundamental needs of the group rather than immediate individual satisfaction. Thus the family head will place foremost the necessity of finding the bride-price for the junior family members in order to

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602 establish them socially as full members of the community, i.e. as married men, and, indirectly, to assure the continuity of the family group. We 592 have seen that even if the family head is unable to produce the necessary 182 amount himself, and the young men have themselves to contribute, the family head would keep and save the money for them. The young men, left to themselves, are tempted to squander money on things which appear to them to be of greater urgency, and to disregard, to their own detriment as well as to the detriment of the group, the more distant necessity of marriage. As in the case of the Bida labourers, their money 'goes at once', and they remain unmarried even a considerable time after having reached marriageable age. In the extreme case a family head would even pawn the labour and liberty of a younger family member who is less essential to the group for the sake of keeping in freedom the elder, more important family member, or enabling him to found a family. We can go even farther than this. Older men, tending to uphold tradition, will plan labour and expenditure so that there should be money, food, as well as time available for family feasts or communal religious ceremonies. Their efforts thus serve (unconsciously) the interests of group integration at large, which the younger generation, not so fully steeped in traditional ways of thinking, may hesitate to put before more immediate attractions. Finally, by submitting to the authority of the older men in productive co-operation, the labour-unit also sustains their position of authority in a wider sense, as leaders of the community. We can say, then, that the large labour-unit is committed to the maintenance of the structure and the traditional values of the society, and that with its dissolution an important agency of social integration and continuity disappears.

The changes which the *gunnu* ritual has undergone recently are a con- 796 vincing instance of this kind. In its traditional form the *gunnu* con- 602 tained a certain most stirring scene which took place on the eve of the 182 ritual, and which concerned the young men of the village especially. They were herded together in a certain place in the uninhabited bush, where they had to spend the night; they were to wait for a terrifying apparition, the spirit of the *ndakó gboyá*, who would question them about their moral conduct in the preceding year. If they were found guilty of having behaved disrespectfully towards their elders, they were flogged by their comrades at the command of the spirit. I have quoted already the article in which I described in detail the ritual and its effectiveness as a mechanism of social integration in the family group as well as the community.[1] But even from this short description we can gather the psychological importance of a ritual which uses such impressive stimuli to press home moral teaching, and to bind together periodically, in a common experience, the growing generation. Now, although the *gunnu* is still performed, the 'bush night' has been abandoned in many villages, and the explanation given was everywhere that the young men had refused to be subjected to the ordeal of this inquisition and punishment. The young men themselves were outspoken about the reasons of their refusal: 'We are now working as independently as the old men, we are paying tax for ourselves—why should we be flogged and threatened as if

[1] See pp. 25, 63.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

602 LOCAL AND KINSHIP GROUPING

611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man,
592 his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the "house" (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* ("owner of the house"), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or "clans,"
614 for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified "first ancestors."

FORMS OF SETTLEMENT: HOUSE TYPES[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*ezi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 28–32.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–32, 34, 36– , 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 234; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in 344] the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

652 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference 592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying [423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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294 They make as much as 1*s.* or 2*s.* on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4*s.* Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d.* to 4*d.* a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-
[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

435 You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-
294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his
543 mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never
[431] more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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462 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts,
441 although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women
441 as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which
868 they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up
[576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her
[428 earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be
562] touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

●593 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband
562 and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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593 562 makes the women the main traders of the country that the women can as a rule command more liquid capital than the men. In this sense, referring to the liquid resources, it can be said that the Nupe women are on the whole wealthier than the men. This does not mean that their financial position is entirely unaffected by the limited resources of the husband. The wives of small farmers and craftsmen or, generally, impecunious husbands, have little scope for their commercial activities, and may be unable to derive from the household resources the necessary working capital for a profitable independent enterprise. Where there is little to sell there can be little profit; and this small profit may be swallowed up by the normal household expenditure. Even the utensils and goods which constitute the wife's dowry may disappear gradually in a household where there is no money with which to replace the stock of pots, clothes, and ornaments—the woman's initial 'capital' (see p. 351). The household of a diviner in Bida, whom I knew well, was a typical case. The man was of poor health, unable to do any serious work, and had to rely entirely on his income from divining, which was small and irregular. The wife maintained the household, poor and simple as it was. She was about 40 years old; she had nothing left of her dowry save the few rags which she wore, and a few damaged pots. Every day she bought grain for 6*d*. on the market, made corn-gruel and corn-water, and sold this food in the mornings in the street, with a total profit of 2*d*. With this money she kept herself and her husband and a small child.

But usually the wives even of men whom one would hardly call prosperous attain an impressive degree of solvency. Solvency in this connexion is a relative term, as the pecuniary demands which the wives have to meet are much smaller than those which devolve on the men as the heads of the household. Yet in many cases the women come to the succour of their men even in expenses of the latter kind. It is by no means rare, especially in Bida, to find families in which a mother undertakes to pay the bride-price for the sons. Much more widespread is the practice of wives lending their husbands money, for example, for the payment of tax. Of this practice we shall hear more later. Let me emphasize here the dependence of the husband on his wife with regard to these monetary obligations—a dependence which must increase, as the independent economic enterprise of the women, commerce, is increasing in scope. This fact is essential for the understanding of certain moral issues involved in the expansion of women's trade in Nupe.

441 462 562 I have stated earlier that the line of distinction between professional and occasional traders is much more fluid among the women than among the men. Wives of farmers, craftsmen, Mallams, noblemen, traders, officials—they all are, or may be, traders. The enormous variety in the trade which is carried out by the Nupe women, and in the degree of their 'professionalization', cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The woman who sells every morning two or three dozen packets of home-made *kamu* (corn-gruel) for a tenth of a penny each, and the woman who buys £5 worth of rice, kola-nuts, or European cloth, do not really differ in anything except in the amount of capital they can lay their hands on. The difference in the distance which they cover when

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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further elaborated in popular belief; for it is generally held that a witch who would attack her own flesh and blood cannot do so alone but must enlist the help of other witches, not related to the victim. Kinship, then, in some measure deflects and frustrates the evil designs of witches. It is in fact true that witches are only rarely accused of harming their own blood relations; I recorded only two cases of this kind, both referring to the witch's own children. But the victims are not necessarily strangers; as often they are affinal relations of the woman witch (her son-in-law, her husband, his brother or the brother's children, or the husband's children by another wife).

From this varied evidence the following picture of the witch emerges: she is the enemy of men and of male authority; she seeks to dominate men; her evilness is somehow bound up with married state and occasionally with old age, that is, age beyond child-bearing; and her evilness is often directed against a husband and his kin. Now all these traits fall into place against the background of that other belief which links witchcraft with the economic position of the women; for seen against this background, and allowing for the fantasy disguise, the witch is accused of doing mystically precisely what the women, in virtue of their economic power, are accused of doing in real life. So that the witchcraft beliefs and fears paraphrase a true state of affairs and the anxieties and frustrations arising from it. Consider, then, for a moment that 'true state of affairs'.

To begin with, a great many Nupe men, peasants as well as craftsmen or members of the 'free professions' in the town, are heavily in debt to their trader-wives, on whom they often have to rely for money for tools, for some unforeseen heavy expenditure, and even for such items as the brideprice of a son or funeral expenses, which it is the man's duty to defray. If this dependence on the wife must detract from the man's proper status as the 'breadwinner', his authority is seriously diminished also by another factor. In the Nupe kinship organization most rights and obligations descend in the paternal line; and as sons (to a lesser extent, daughters) derive their kin group membership (membership of a particular 'house') from their fathers, have a place in their father's home and labour team, and inherit his property, land or profession, so they normally look to him or his male kin for economic support. But where the mother is the richer, the inheritance she will leave will be at least as important, and even while she is still alive her sons or daughters will turn to her for financial help. Frequently, in fact, the mother will pay directly, and not only through loans made to her husband, for a son's marriage, buy him clothes or luxuries, or shoulder the cost of a more expensive

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education. Let me make it clear that the mother is always expected to do the best for her children, and to pamper them in small matters, by giving them sweets, tasty tit-bits, and occasional presents. Nor is her more consequential economic help strictly unexpected and against the rule: but it is a rule of *faute de mieux*, whose coming into play inevitably connotes the failure of the more basic rule, that it is the father's role to meet the economic requirements of the household. Here, as in the instance mentioned before, the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men.

There is a further point, already touched upon in a previous context. In Nupe, the women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes. This is true even of the many women who only visit the market in the town, the Bida night market being a recognized place of assignation. All this is bad enough in the case of childless women; but in their case such immoral conduct is condoned, if with a shrug of the shoulders. As proverbial, however, as the moral laxity of the women traders is their desire to avoid having children. It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'. They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness.

Whether the woman exceeds the proper role of a wife and mother or rejects it, in part or entirely, she has successfully set aside a believed-in social norm. Now, this is no longer an instance of social abnormality, rather the opposite, if by 'normality' we mean all that is common, usual, expected: but it is a normality one hates and regrets, and contrasts with a desired state of affairs unhappily uncommon. This is borne out in every conversation; in the many quarrels between husbands and wives; in the many divorces and separations (and equally in the resigned attitude of husbands); in the comments of the medicine experts which we quoted before; in nostalgic talks of the men about a happier past when 'women knew their place'; and in the exclusion of unchaste and childless women from religious ceremonials.

This, then, is a clash between ideal and reality. But it is in no sense seen as fortuitous or transitory, as the result of some unfortunate maladjustment which could have been avoided and can conceivably be set right if one only made the effort. The harking-back to 'the good old days' is merely an escape from a reality which one is helpless to alter. For no one speaks about a future when everything should be better than it is now; and though the

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impact of alien influences and the vast increase in trade and traffic in the last few decades may well have aggravated the situation, all the available evidence (of genealogies and life histories) proves that the morals of women and the fate of marriages were, for the last four or five generations at least, much what they are today. Nor is this harking-back more than half-hearted; no one would claim that there was a time when all women were chaste and submissive, when they did not trade and earn money, and when contraceptive practices were unknown. Indeed such a claim, were it ever made, would be belied by the character of the *gunnu* ritual and by various legends and stories. Briefly, for the people the ideal was always out of step with the reality; so that we must judge this conflict to be inherent in the make-up of the society, whose economic system (which has certain moral consequences) is as unquestioned as are its ethical conceptions (which condemn these consequences).

This is important: for it is the inescapable nature of the conflict which finds expression in the belief in women witches. Nupe society, forced into an ambivalent attitude towards the role of women, which it cannot but accept and cannot but hate and call evil, also ascribes to them the powers of witchcraft. The coincidence as such is a matter of observed fact. But we can go further, and interpolate the psychological mechanism which turns the coincidence into a causal nexus, and hence enables us to call one thing the 'cause' and the other the 'symptom'. The mechanism is familiar: it lies in the projection of internal conflicts and of the frustrations so caused upon an external agent, real or imaginary. In our case, the awareness of an ideal state disturbed fastens upon the successful disturber; the helplessness in the face of a threatening situation turns into the positive fear of persons; and while one is incapable of dealing with the situation, one can at least deal with concrete individuals, whom one can accuse, persecute, and punish. So that in being made the witches of the society, the women are made to carry its fault or failure.

It is clear that this explanation holds good only on the assumption that the beliefs in witchcraft have been fashioned by men; for on almost every point we argued from a male standpoint. The legitimacy of this assumption need hardly be defended. The assertion of mundane morality, through legal institutions, falls to the men exclusively; above all, Nupe religion, its practices and doctrine, are fundamentally a male concern; and as it is the men who know and speculate about religion and have charge of the transmission of religious knowledge, so the notions of witchcraft must have been their creation. Situations of this kind are of course common; a great many societies are in this sense men-made and men-run; and if, like Nupe, they also afford considerable initiative and import-

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 573
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

856 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[843] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding-school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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chief's special income did not, normally, constitute an insurmountable economic barrier between himself and his subjects. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristic possessions of a chief—possession of things generally valued in the society—were not unattainable by others.

His surplus income the chief uses as follows: some of it he must devote to special expenditure attached to his office, the purchase of a goat or fowl for the annual sacrifices, or some other large contribution (larger than that of the other family heads) towards the cost of the village ceremonies. Occasional liberal presents to the elders, food, kola-nuts, beer, gowns are also indicated; a niggardly chief is much disliked. The larger part of his income the chief spends on himself, his family, and generally on things the possession of which are demanded by his status and prestige. Some chiefs, with a view to profit as well as prestige, have bought slaves or taken pawns. Every bigger chief possesses at least one horse. His dress is always of the more expensive kind—embroidered trousers, a turban, and an indigo-dyed gown, possibly an embroidered Bida robe. Many chiefs possess the beautifully carved staffs which are made by the craftsmen in the river valley and sold for sums up to two pounds. One or another chief owns an old flintlock gun, and some chiefs pride themselves on building bigger and more ornate houses than the majority of the people possess. Finally, as the most conspicuous symbol of economic advantage in this country of extremely high bride-price, two at least of the bigger chiefs I met had what among the Nupe peasants is considered a very large number of wives (5 or 6 as against the usual 1 or 2), and so had some of their sons and younger brothers.

Set against this the economic position of a well-to-do family head and rank-holder. He too used to own slaves or pawns. The higher rank-holders often possess large, imposing houses. They carry carved staffs, own a horse, turban and state gown, and a gun. Some of them may have three or four wives. With regard to the accoutrements of his office—the religious elements linked with chieftainship, its insignia and symbols of rank—the chief stands on a plane by himself; as regards things 'that money can buy', or liquid capital, he is placed only one step higher than his citizens of rank. The surplus capital which he derives from his office is not, as we can see, large enough to be turned into an effective instrument of political ambition.

Involved in this is the question how far the temporary economic benefits linked with the chief's office can be used so as to be turned into a lasting economic advantage, enjoyed by the descendants and the whole family of the chief. For the communities in which succession to chieftainship follows promotion or rotation the question answers itself: the surplus income vested in the chief's office is not sufficient, once acquired, to endow his whole 'house' permanently with economic superiority.[1] In

presided over by the *nūsa* ranks, and the smaller family groups (approximately 100 in number) with which we should have to reckon to-day.

[1] Here is a significant illustration: in Mokwa and Jebba, two villages of 'promotion type', the imposing houses of the late chiefs have fallen into disrepair; the descendants are no longer able to command the communal labour without which the upkeep of the large house is impossible.

I: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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slaves a not inconsiderable measure of economic and social independence. An adult male slave would work for his master in the same way as sons and junior relations work for the head of the household. If he was put to farm-work, he would be given a small plot of his own to cultivate in his spare time. Or if he helped his master in a craft or in trade he would be able to count on a regular commission. Other slaves, who made good soldiers, were put into their master's private army, in which they would serve as foot-soldiers, armed and equipped at their master's expense. In the wars they would have their share of the booty. Slaves could thus acquire property, and the more fortunate owned horses, sheep, cattle, money—even slaves of their own. But when they died their property fell not to their wives and children but to their master.[1] Female slaves became personal servants of their mistresses or possibly concubines of their master. Unlike the male slaves they had no income of their own; what they might earn—by handicrafts or trade—would be their master's property.

Frequently the master would have to find wives for his male slaves; he would buy either a slave girl from the market, or possibly a girl belonging to another master—a slave girl to whom his own slave may have lost his heart. In the latter case a very reduced price would be paid, but the children would belong to the owner of the girl. But a slave might make money enough during his service to pay the bride-price for a free woman —mostly a widow, for whom a low bride-price is paid. In such marriages the free wife would in no way share the conditions of slavery, she would have her own house and work (a farm or trade) and might in due course be able to ransom her husband. Or a slave who had done well might be able to buy his own and his children's liberty. In this case he had to pay the full purchase price, except in the case of very old slaves who were no longer good for work—they would be released for half the amount. But if the offer to ransom a slave came from the slave's (free) relations, the owner would ask an exorbitant price, up to £20 or £30. Very rarely would a master let a slave free without the payment of the ransom, for example, as reward for faithful service. In all these cases the slave would bring two men as witnesses of the act of manumission.

A slave girl often became the wife of a free man—her own master or another man who bought her from her master, the purchase price replacing in this case the usual bride-price. This was not, however, real marriage; the slave girls became only concubines, not wives, and no religious or legal ceremony accompanied the marriage. Once they had borne their 'husband' a child, both mother and child became automatically free (though the status of a concubine remained unchanged). The families of the Fulani nobility count an innumerable offspring from this type of concubinage.

Children born of a free father and a slave mother were thus free

[1] To-day, more than thirty years after the abolition of slavery, this rule still holds in a modified form, with respect to ex-slaves who die without issue. In a court case heard before the Chief *Alkali* in Bida in 1936 the considerable property (cattle) of an ex-slave who had died without heirs was thus awarded to the son of his ex-master.

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from outside their social group, precludes an application of 'class endogamy' in this sense. Marriage of this kind between the strata has reached enormous dimensions. And this shows, incidentally, that the rule of 'class endogamy' serves, even in the case of the Fulani rulers, the interest only of a social identity and solidarity and not, as one might perhaps assume, of racial purity.

POLYGAMY AND SEX MORALITY

In Nupe as in most polygamous societies in which marriage is by bride-price (and by high bride-price at that) the number of wives a man possesses becomes an infallible index of wealth and status. In the peasant districts, where we find comparatively little inequality of wealth, the range of polygamy also varies in narrow limits. Genealogies which I collected in the two Nupe villages Doko and Kutigi show the following range of polygamy (the figures refer to middle-aged or old men, both of the living and previous generation):

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	68	96	20	11	1	1	179

The average is thus 2.1 wives per man.[1] To quote a similar average for Bida would be meaningless: the great inequality of wealth and status is reflected in the widely varying range of polygamy. In the houses of the *talakaži*, the 'poor ones', monogamy is the rule; in the 'middle class' the conditions are much the same as in the peasant districts; but as regards the men of substance and rank, though it would be correct to say that they have rarely less than four wives, the upper limits of their polygamy are very fluid, and cannot even be ascertained with any accuracy. Popular notions attribute to certain royal princes and, above all, to the kings of Nupe, numbers of wives varying between 100 and 200. Even the late *Etsu* Saidu is reported to have had sixty wives. Discretion forbade any direct inquiries. Besides, the vagueness in the legal definition of 'wife' and 'marriage' in these cases would have detracted from the value of the information. According to Mohammedan law a man may have four wives only. But this rule is easily circumvented by limiting the number of legal wives whom one marries with religious rites to four (or four at a time), and relegating the rest to the position of mere concubines. In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found

[1] The range of polygamy varies to some extent locally. In Mokwa, for example, I obtained the following figures:

	Number of wives						*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Over 5*	
Number of cases	44	28	3	3	...	..	60

The average is, again, 2 wives per man.

In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found
595 the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more
565 attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would
586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphro-
[832] disiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and
837 the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral concepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which
831 legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-profes-
837 sional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The
537 obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men
586 cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d*. and 1*s*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their
556 meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Expenditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed purpose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of substance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara* who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses, were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly doubled household expenses.[1]

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-
554 price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the
● 595 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment': the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of
554 Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the
565 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank
484 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

[1] The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he
554 should have built himself such a pretentious house. We shall also hear later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale polygamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other
554 classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status.
● 595 Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they express the effectiveness of this incentive.[1]

We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog-
511 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these
554 demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been
514 adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly, they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer in-
461 vestigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest' borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept. In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time represents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe, as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid. The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure, members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers, craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the spreading of the Mallam profession.

[1] It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such questions of historical truth.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

595 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
[554] the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable,
[772] (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Duff.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO NUPE KINSHIP

BEFORE attempting the analysis of the Nupe community we must examine certain essential aspects of the kinship system of the country. This description cannot claim to be more than a brief outline. It is concerned only with the main principles of kinship structure among the Nupe so far as they bear on the subject-matter of this book.

The basic structure of the Nupe kinship system is the *extended family*: all individuals who can trace their descent to a certain initial, nucleus family—a husband and his wives—regard themselves as related and as forming one kindred. The Nupe have only one word for kinship, *dengi*, which defines relationship in the widest as well as in a more restricted sense. The vagueness of the terminology reflects the inherent vagueness of this concept of relationship. The extended family is a fluid unit in two respects. First, as the women of the family marry outside, into other houses and families, their connexion with the family from which they come, although never admitted to have ceased entirely, becomes weaker and less effective generation after generation. Secondly, the constant growth and expansion of the kinship unit which this principle of reckoning descent entails leaves the boundaries and 'fringes' of the family unit only vaguely defined. People cannot, in fact, trace their descent back farther than two or three generations, and in every family there are a certain number of 'relatives' who are known to be *dengi*, related, without anyone being able to define the degree or nature of the relationship. Moreover, individuals and sections may split off from the main family group, move to other parts, and thus disappear from the view of the rest of the kinship group.

It is implied in these facts that the effective kinship unit is represented, not in the vaguely defined 'theoretical' extended family, but in that section of it which remains living close together—whose members keep, as it were, in each other's view—in the particular case, the kinship section inhabiting one house. This kinship section is, in fact, referred to as a 'house'—*emi* in Nupe. The Nupe reckon relationship in 'houses', saying, for example, that people belong or do not belong to the same 'house', that is, are or are not related. Technically, the 'house' is a compound of a number of houses (to be described later in more detail), which is enclosed by a common wall and possesses a common gateway or entrance hut, called *katamba*. The term *katamba* is frequently used synonymously with 'house': in enumerating the kinship groups of a village the Nupe will tell you that the village numbers so many *katamba*.

To some extent the house-group, too, is subject to the natural fluctuations of increasing or decreasing population. An overflowing population may necessitate the building of new houses and compounds, mostly placed close to the original home, but in some cases at some distance from it, in another part of the village, perhaps in another locality

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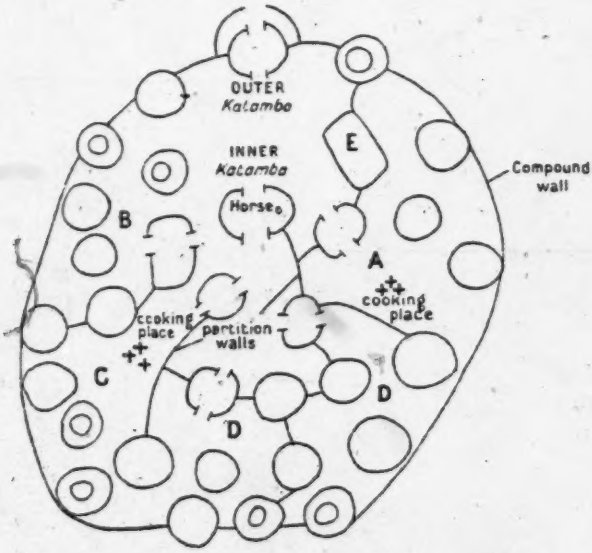
592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the
596 whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the subdivision of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[372]



○ Sleeping huts (◯) Katamba A... partition of family head. B...partition of unmarried sons. C...partition of unmarried daughters. D...partition of married sons and younger brothers E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discussions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and
[621] 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kinship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

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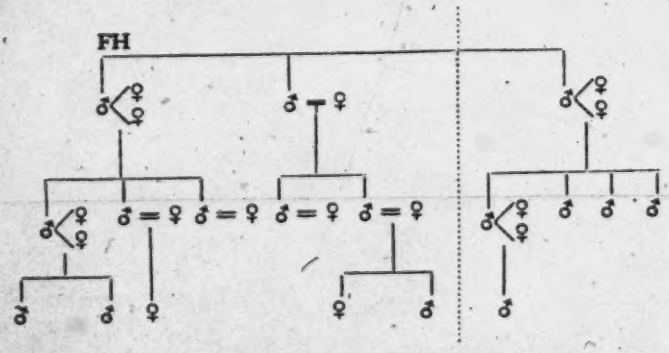
single *efu*, and the family section inhabiting one house is reduced to the smallest size. Moreover, independent economic position and independent, possibly even divergent, political interests and connexions cause adult family members to leave the paternal home and to set up households of their own. Even the wider local unit, the *efu*, is no longer based on kinship, but is largely replaced by a local unit the composition of which is determined by the factor of political allegiance and partisanship. 592 596 369

The size of the house-group varies widely: the largest group which I encountered numbered about sixty individuals, including men and women, adults and children. The smallest groups are found in Bida, and may comprise not more than six or eight people.

The effective kinship unit—the 'house' in the abstract sense of the word—expresses itself conspicuously in the recognition of a common family head, who is called, significantly, *emitsó*, Owner of the House. We shall learn later of the political, religious, and economic prerogatives vested in the person of the family head. Here I will only add that where a section of the house-group splits off from the main body and establishes itself in a new, separate, house it cannot claim to be at once recognized as a new unit, entitled to a separate *emitsó*, but continues to acknowledge the old family head. In the course of time the head of the new group may gain the position of an independent *emitsó*. The following diagram illustrates a case of this kind. The members of the family group placed to the right of the dotted line separated from the main family body in 1934 and moved to a newly built house in another part of the village (Kutigi). The reason given was that the old house had become 'too crowded'. The head of the new group expected to be recognized as *emitsó* after the death of the old family head (marked FH in the diagram). 596



The 'house' is subdivided into a number of family sections, each of which inhabits a division of the compound. The single section represents an even more effective unit than the house-group and its members enter a more intensive co-operation: they keep house together, eat together, and also form a common productive or labour-unit. No special

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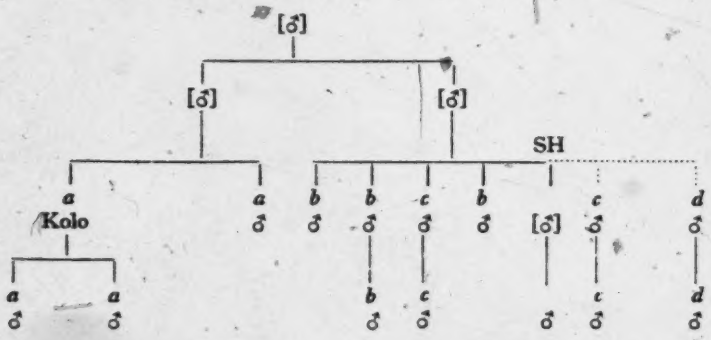
name exists for this group *qua* group, only a name referring to its organization as a labour-unit, or *efakó*. To-day these smaller sections are often reduced to the small individual family consisting of a father, his wives, and unmarried children; as often, however (and regularly, under traditional conditions), they embrace larger units and represent 'sections' in the strict sense of the word, cut from the house-group, and repeating its composition on a smaller scale. Such a section embraces, for example, a number of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren. The attached genealogy may illustrate the relation between the 'house' and the smaller kinship unit.

This genealogy shows another household in Kutigi whose family head is a certain Kolo, a man of about 50 or 55. Brackets indicate deceased family members. A dotted connecting line means that the nature of the relationship cannot be ascertained concretely but is only referred to vaguely as implying relationship of 'younger brothers'. Family members working together in the same *efakó* group are marked with the same letters (e.g. all individuals marked *a* form one *efakó* group, all individuals marked *b* another, &c.). The family members marked SH have left the original family home and have built themselves a separate house. Women and small children are ignored in the chart.



Each of the sections of the house may one day contribute the family head for the group at large. The position of the family head falls to the senior male member of the house-group, who is succeeded by his younger brother in the classificatory sense, i.e. the man next in seniority of the same generation, and, when the generation is exhausted, by the oldest man of the next generation, i.e. the eldest son of the eldest brother. This rule, however, is not applied rigidly and allows of some latitude so that personal qualifications can also be taken into account. Especially is this so where succession to family headship entails the assumption of a certain important position in the community (e.g. priesthood, or position of an elder). This brings us to the question of the transmission of rights and duties vested in family membership and to the method of reckoning descent.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

602 Local and Kinship Grouping

611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man,
592 his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the "house" (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* ("owner of the house"), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or "clans,"
614 for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified "first ancestors."

Forms of Settlement: House Types[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*ezi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 25–32.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–32, 34, 36– , 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 324; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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622 *albárka* (lit. blessing), a gift meant to express the 'blessing' that lay on [651] the land which the family received from the chief.

Another expression of the chief's control over the reapportionment of land is that all land of families or branches of families which have died out, and similarly the land of families who have emigrated, falls back to the common fund of land reserve administered by the chief. The period within which the land of emigrants still remains theirs is fixed everywhere in Nupe as three years. After that time the chief is entitled to reapportion the land. Should an heir from the emigrated group return after a longer period, he could (like any other stranger) claim land in the village, but not as a rule the same land that his family had held previously. The dying-out of a family, or a branch of a family, seems a fact not easy to establish and always open to doubts in a social system in which small sections repeatedly split off the main body of the family. There is always the chance of an unexpected or belated claimant turning up, representing a distant branch which chief and elders may no longer have reckoned as likely to identify itself with the original family. But this is mainly a theoretical speculation; there occur few such cases in Nupe —none in Trans-Kaduna, where land is plentiful and vacated plots unlikely to be much competed for.

[597] In Cis-Kaduna I witnessed an interesting case of this kind. A family head in Doko had died, leaving a small boy, who was then adopted by a childless brother of the deceased, living in a *tunga* on a farm of his own. The boy grew up on this farm and lived there contentedly until recently, after more than twenty years, the chief reapportioned the apparently unclaimed land that had belonged to the boy's father to two elders of high rank, the *Lile* and *Shabà* (both of the chief's family). Not until then did the young man return to Doko and make a formal claim for his ancestral land. But political motives rather than economic interest were behind this move; the parties in this case were, again, the chief of Doko and young Ndakó Gana, the 'dispossessed' descendant of the line of original chiefs. The chief had reapportioned the land in order to blot out the last visible connexion between the 'pretender's' family and the chieftainship of Doko; and the young man disputed the reapportionment on these very grounds. In the end he received back some of the original land and other new land in addition.

Here we discover a new significance in the apportionment of village land—its connexion with the bestowal of rank or office. This is not surprising in the communities (such as Doko) where the village ranks, like the land, remain in the possession of one 'house'. Later, we shall see more clearly, in the discussion of inheritance, that the Nupe kinship system tends indeed to couple attainment of family headship (which goes with rank) with inheritance of ancestral land. Considering, however, that the ordinary village land does not differ widely in quality and productive value, we can understand that this political aspect of land ownership is rather obscure—save in a case such as the one just quoted where political aspirations have attached to a specific property more than its proper share of symbolic significance. The political aspect becomes more prominent in connexion with a natural resource that shows this

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611 of the men is inherited by their sons. As in the Nupe economic system the women frequently enjoy a financially more advantageous position 428 than the men we find also that, in the event of economic stress, a mother may take over some of the financial duties normally discharged by the father.

611 Generally speaking, matrilineal descent in Nupe, including here both descent from the mother as an individual and from her family, has essentially the significance of an ultimate safeguard in case the patrilineal arrangement proves insufficient. In Bida society, with its great inequality of wealth and status, rich or powerful maternal relations may be as valuable as paternal relations; political connexions, especially, through the mother's family will often be utilized profitably. We realize that these 'matrilineal' rights do not follow rigid rules of descent and succession; rather they represent a 'second line of defence' on which individuals can fall back in case the 'first line of defence'—claims derived through the father—has failed. If we speak of the Nupe extended family as 'patrilineal' it will be understood that we refer only to the preponderance and the more rigid formulation of rights and duties transmitted in the father's line. The kinship organization as such, in which the alternative methods of reckoning descent stand in that relation of 'first' and 'second line of defence', can be most aptly described by a term which was suggested by R. W. Firth as 'ambilateral'.

601 The rule of succession to the rights and duties derived in the paternal line, which, as we have seen, imply a succession running through one whole generation before descending to the next, is expressed very clearly in the Nupe kinship terminology, about which I will only say a few words. It is of the classificatory type and corresponds to the generation pattern: it subsumes all members of the kinship group who are of the same generation under a common term. Thus members of the same generation are all 'brothers' to each other, 'sons' to the generation above them, 'fathers' to the generation below, 'grandsons' to the second generation above, and so forth. Within the generation seniority is specially defined: elder brothers are distinguished from younger brothers, and also the father's elder brothers from the father's younger brothers. The former, who represent the potential family heads senior to one's own (real) father, are called 'father', the latter, who may be placed as junior relations under one's father, 'little father'.

602 Let me summarize the main kinship concepts with which we shall be concerned in the course of this book. We shall largely disregard the fluid and vaguely defined large kinship unit formed by all individuals who are regarded as being *dengi*. When speaking of kinship group, or large family group, we shall always mean the 'house-group'. To the smallest unit, finally, we shall refer either as the family section, or as the household or labour unit, according to the aspect under which we are considering it. I must add, however, that the Nupe also recognize a much wider unit derived—in a very vague sense—from kinship factors. Thus a whole village is sometimes spoken of as representing one *dengi*, and as having 'one ancestor'. This interpretation does not refer to concrete common descent from an original family, but rather reinterprets

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the existing political structure of the community in a kinship sense. The ancestors of the chief who are regarded as founders of the village are also thought of vaguely as ancestors of the whole community. These essentially mythical kinship links exercise no influence upon concrete kinship claims and obligations. 602

Political factors are also responsible for the development of the large units which characterize kinship among the ruling family. We shall see that the ruling house of Nupe crystallized in three dynasties, which trace their descent from different sons of the founder of the ruling house, and divide between them the rights and duties vested in the ruling house. The ancestors of the three dynasties lived only two or three generations back; but already certain religious observances (prayers on their grave) mark them off from all subsequent royal ancestors. In this rigidly defined system of reckoning descent in the father's line back to these almost sanctified 'first ancestors', and in the relationship with one another which is in the nature of mutual obligations for the sake of the larger unit, the royal house itself, the three dynasties correspond from kinship point of view to incipient *clans*—the only analogy to clan structure which we find in Nupe. 643 769 [613]

Let me say in conclusion that kinship structure in Nupe is not that dominant, all-enveloping structure which we know from many primitive societies. Although it bears upon religious life, education, and the organization of production, it is greatly overshadowed as a determinant of social behaviour by the factors of political organization and, in economic life, by economic interests proper. Indeed only because of its lesser significance in social life could we omit the detailed description of Nupe kinship from the sociological analysis with which this book is concerned. 601

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political structure with the additional weight of alien rulership, the state did not break down but on the contrary appeared to have taken out a new lease of life.

Now we shall be able to prove the existence of strong trends of integration which form within the political unit, incidental to it or fostered by it, and which, bridging over cultural diversity and the rift of social and economic inequality, endorse in their fashion the unit wrought by political control. However, in our search for these 'binding forces' of more subtle and conciliatory type we shall discover that they do not all point the same way. They are indeed 'binding' forces—but what they tend to bind and draw together is not invariably the same group substratum.

We must examine first a significant negative instance—kinship. Kinship has no part in this integrative scheme, either ideologically or factually. No attempt is made to invest the conception of the state with that fiction of genealogical or kinship unity which is linked with the concepts of the sub-tribe and the village community. With the increased freedom of movement which is one of the results of political unification kinship relations become more widely scattered and marriage between distant localities is increasing and is regarded more and more as normal; but these new kinship relations draw only a patchy, irregular pattern that can have little influence upon the integration of the people at large. Moreover, kinship relations are often subordinated to political interests; patronage and the adherence to political factions may even break up family units. The widest gulf, between rulers and subjects, and between the *élite* culture of Bida and the peasant sections, is bridged only by the sociologically less significant form of intermarriage between men of the upper and women of the lower classes. We shall see later that full intermarriage is rigidly restricted and rendered specially difficult, unless it follows already existing political ties of patronage. We shall, in fact, have to speak of a definite class endogamy among the ruling classes. Marriage and kinship ties thus cement the solidarity of the component groups of the state, not of the state itself.

We continue our search in the economic field. Political unification carries in its wake expansion of economic co-operation and interdependence. Economic areas were re-designed in accordance with the new, wider political unit and its centre of gravity, the populous capital, which depends for food and supplies on the agricultural districts. But the contribution of this widened economic co-operation to national solidarity is negligible if not wholly negative. In this reorientation of economic links the boundaries of the state have frequently been crossed and disregarded: trade became 'international'; craftsmen, traders, and even peasants are always ready to seek profitable new markets outside Nupe, and even to emigrate for the sake of better business prospects. Economic interdependence and co-operation even introduce new conflicts and forms of antagonism which set group sections against each other. We shall speak of the village artisans who openly admit (and partly resent) the competition of the superior Bida crafts. In times of crisis conflicts of this kind tend to become more strongly marked. During the depression of 1934–5 I could notice distinct resentment on the part of the peasants

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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production, the present case demonstrates forcibly that it affects the very stability of the economic system of the country. We cannot claim to be able to describe exactly how the labour-unit was working under traditional conditions, and to state categorically that the scheme of insurance entailed in it operated without difficulty or friction. But on the evidence which we possess it is reasonable to assume that under certain conditions, with a smaller taxation, and protected from severe, incalculable, market fluctuations, the large co-operative group represented—or would represent—an eminently stable and successful labour-unit. The process of transformation cannot be halted. Where the large labour-unit still exists, it may, given the conditions just mentioned, be preserved; where it has disappeared, it cannot be revived. Our conclusions point to one solution only: to the creation of new institutions and labour organizations which can be made to fulfil, under existing conditions, those tasks which fell formerly to the labour organization that has disappeared—above all, the task of insurance. Such institutions can be found in co-operative organization, saving societies, co-operative marketing, and suchlike—organizations which in other parts of Africa have amply proved their efficiency.[1]

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE GROUP

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Throughout this discussion we have dealt with family and kinship group purely in their economic aspect. We have interpreted the mechanisms which maintain the working-unit and thus the co-operation in its human substratum, the family group, in terms of economic relations only. Against this treatment of the problem one might argue that it sees only one side of it, and that the kinship and family structure must be taken into account also as an entity *sui generis*, which, within the framework of economic relations, exercises its own specific influences. One might argue, in particular, that as the Nupe *efakó*-unit is based on the family, kinship ties and kinship sentiments as such supply the binding forces of the labour group—'maintain labour', in our terminology—and that the binding forces which we have recognized, namely, commonness of material interests and benefits accruing from co-operation, are in reality mutual kinship obligations.

The double nature of economic obligations in a productive unit which happens to be a kinship-unit at the same time cannot be denied. The influence of kinship factors can, in fact, be made evident by comparing the labour-unit based on kinship, with similar labour-units in which kinship plays no part. While, in the former, co-operation is achieved by mutual obligations such as payment of bride-price, and supply of clothing, food, and shelter, labour of the latter order must be recompensed in the form of money wages. The effectiveness of kinship

[1] It has been said that our intention should always be to graft these new co-operative organizations on to existing, indigenous, organizations. The scope and the possibilities of such a scheme must not be exaggerated. Although the tasks with which the new organization is to be charged may have formed part of the traditional system, the organization itself may have to be newly created, and may, in fact (as in our case), have to replace a failing indigenous organization, rendered inadequate by modern conditions.

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sentiments in co-operation was also implied in various statements made earlier in the discussion of economics. We have seen that the craft-guilds plan their labour organization on kinship lines, and reinforce the labour group by what we have called 'professional endogamy'. But let us realize that in doing this they do not appeal to abstract kinship ties or 'bonds of blood', but merely duplicate the common labour interests by corresponding family interests, namely, the concrete interests and forms of social interdependence entailed in intermarriage. Another instance of the influence of kinship ties became apparent in the fact that to-day sons would still agree to stay in the *efakó*, while brother's sons decline to do so. Yet we have also seen that even sons desire under certain conditions to be released from the *efakó*-unit. In the case of individual crafts and trade, kinship obligations, even of sons to fathers, are no longer recognized. The dissolution of the large labour-unit, moreover, has made it abundantly clear that its size and coherence is determined predominantly by economic interests and relations. Kinship bonds and sentiments are not strong enough to maintain a labour group once its economic usefulness is impaired. Generally speaking, then, kinship bonds, in order to supply a substratum for productive co-operation, must have the support of economic incentives—material benefits and forms of compensation. Where the latter fail, the kinship bonds themselves will fail in this task.

Though we cannot thus admit the effectiveness of kinship factors as such (at least not in a decisive measure) upon the labour organization, the reverse is no doubt true. The labour organization exercises a two-fold influence upon the structure of the family and kinship group: (1) through contributing to the co-operative mechanisms within the kinship group, and (2) through accepting the responsibility for certain tasks which are vital to the continuity and stability of the kinship group.

(1) The integration of the kinship group, that is, the 'internal adaptation' of the social unit (Radcliffe-Brown), is largely determined by the scope and closeness of contacts and forms of co-operation existing in the group. Co-operation in the same labour-unit thus represents one of the most ~~important integrative factors in this sense. We~~ remember also that the labour-unit coincides with the household-unit, and that the individuals who agree to work together also 'keep house', eat, and live together. The constant contacts and the lasting mutual adjustment entailed in this productive arrangement build up strongly coherent units. The reduction in size, and the splitting-up into small individual units, of the large labour-unit, must detract essentially from the integration of the family group.

(2) Speaking generally, the large labour group, led by old and experienced men, is more far-sighted in its economic planning than the small one-man or two-men unit. It allows for certain group interests which the individual worker will ignore, or discount as of lesser importance; it can assess necessities and wants more objectively, with a view to the fundamental needs of the group rather than immediate individual satisfaction. Thus the family head will place foremost the necessity of finding the bride-price for the junior family members in order to

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602 592 182 establish them socially as full members of the community, i.e. as married men, and, indirectly, to assure the continuity of the family group. We have seen that even if the family head is unable to produce the necessary amount himself, and the young men have themselves to contribute, the family head would keep and save the money for them. The young men, left to themselves, are tempted to squander money on things which appear to them to be of greater urgency, and to disregard, to their own detriment as well as to the detriment of the group, the more distant necessity of marriage. As in the case of the Bida labourers, their money 'goes at once', and they remain unmarried even a considerable time after having reached marriageable age. In the extreme case a family head would even pawn the labour and liberty of a younger family member who is less essential to the group for the sake of keeping in freedom the elder, more important family member, or enabling him to found a family. We can go even farther than this. Older men, tending to uphold tradition, will plan labour and expenditure so that there should be money, food, as well as time available for family feasts or communal religious ceremonies. Their efforts thus serve (unconsciously) the interests of group integration at large, which the younger generation, not so fully steeped in traditional ways of thinking, may hesitate to put before more immediate attractions. Finally, by submitting to the authority of the older men in productive co-operation, the labour-unit also sustains their position of authority in a wider sense, as leaders of the community. We can say, then, that the large labour-unit is committed to the maintenance of the structure and the traditional values of the society, and that with its dissolution an important agency of social integration and continuity disappears.

796 602 182 The changes which the *gunnu* ritual has undergone recently are a convincing instance of this kind. In its traditional form the *gunnu* contained a certain most stirring scene which took place on the eve of the ritual, and which concerned the young men of the village especially. They were herded together in a certain place in the uninhabited bush, where they had to spend the night; they were to wait for a terrifying apparition, the spirit of the *ndakó gboyá*, who would question them about their moral conduct in the preceding year. If they were found guilty of having behaved disrespectfully towards their elders, they were flogged by their comrades at the command of the spirit. I have quoted already the article in which I described in detail the ritual and its effectiveness as a mechanism of social integration in the family group as well as the community.[1] But even from this short description we can gather the psychological importance of a ritual which uses such impressive stimuli to press home moral teaching, and to bind together periodically, in a common experience, the growing generation. Now, although the *gunnu* is still performed, the 'bush night' has been abandoned in many villages, and the explanation given was everywhere that the young men had refused to be subjected to the ordeal of this inquisition and punishment. The young men themselves were outspoken about the reasons of their refusal: 'We are now working as independently as the old men, we are paying tax for ourselves—why should we be flogged and threatened as if

[1] See pp. 25, 63.

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we were small boys?' In their own words they confirm my argument that the weakening of productive co-operation entails a weakening also of other forms and bonds of group unity.

We may for the moment reflect on the fact that this progressive weakening of group integration occurs in a society with decreasing population. Partly this development underlines the strength and urgency of the forces which are working for the dissolution of the large labour-unit, and which here foster the tendency to split and reduce in size a working-unit which is already, as it were, automatically declining. But it also reveals the significant fact that a loosening integration and progressive subdivision of units is not invariably correlated with an increase in the size of groups, and the inherent difficulty of maintaining cohesion.[1]

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The present discussion has transcended the domain of economics. Where previously we have attempted to demonstrate the effects of changes in the structure of the labour-unit within the range of economic relations, i.e. on productive organization and the stability of the economic system, we are now studying the significance of these changes for the organization and stability of the social group. We can trace the influence of the changing economic organization upon social structure through wider and wider circles. Take the institution of the Nupe market. We have seen that the peasant attendance of the local village markets coincides with a local group characterized by regular social contacts, intermarriage and 'common living' in general. The market meeting mobilizes the local community, adds to the common interests, and forms an important focus for these contacts and forms of intercourse. Like the labour-unit on a smaller scale, it contributes essentially to social integration. This is no longer true of professional trade, which is carried on across community boundaries, and remains independent of established group-ties. Like the modern labour-unit, professional trade accepts solely the dictate of the impersonal profit motive.

Expanding trade connexions of this kind are only possible in a social system which provides safety and protection outside the narrow boundaries of the local community. They depend, in other words, on the large-scale political organization of the state. Like the economic relations which take place within its confines, the integrative mechanism of the state is essentially impersonal, and based on abstract principles rather than forms of co-adaptation growing from 'common living'. The transformation in the group substratum of economic relations is thus determined by the same concepts which also determine the transformation of the largest group unit, from community to state. Technically, the expansion of trade and commerce, production and exchange, would have been impossible without the corresponding expansion of political control. It would, perhaps, be going too far to say that spiritually also the former would have been impossible without the latter—without the conceptual framework which the latter provided. But we are justified in saying that the two forms of expansion reflect, materially as well as spiritually, two aspects of the same social process.

[1] This latter view was expressed, in the form of a 'social law', by Professor Radcliffe-Brown.

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one *ena* would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age-grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the individual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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786 loyalties which govern the town hold their sway over youth as well as adults; and on the occasion of the *navũ* the factional jealousies, 794 never fully submerged, were allowed to come into the open. Thus x796 the torch processions invariably led to organized and heated fights 883 between the three groups; on the way back from the river, especially, one would ambush the other or try to invade the rival territory. The battle is said to have lasted the whole night, being fought with torches, sticks, stones, and any handy weapons. Injuries (some say, even death) inflicted in the course of the *navũ* went unpunished; for on this one night the law of the land was suspended. Eventually, in 1920 or thereabouts, the excesses of this all-too realistic play forced the Government to intervene and to forbid this phase of the *navũ*.

In spite of its realism, however, the mock battle not only legitimized factional hostility but also diverted it into relatively harmless channels. For though the boys and youths would give vent to sentiments commonly felt, they themselves were still outside serious politics and not yet genuinely caught up in factional strife. They would still be play-acting, however realistically, much as their whole age-grade life, with its imitation of adult ranks and ambitions, is play-acting and a make-believe copy of 'real life'. For the population of the city, whose sons and brothers took part in the 'battle of youth', this was in the nature of a vicarious and controlled catharsis of tensions grown over the year; for the young fighters, it was the climax of age-grade life and a seal set to this 'education for citizenship'. Needless to say, the practice is still vividly remembered. And it is not only the older people who talk nostalgically about their more exciting youth; the young people today have preserved at least the idea of the thing. Small boys with whom I talked before the *navũ* explained to me with great glee all that they and their age mates were going to do to their 'enemies'. In the end, of course, they did nothing; so that today the 'battle of youth' has moved a further stage towards mere make-believe.[1]

794 The licensed aggression of the torch festival reappears on the next day in a new context, that of kinship. For the *navũ* is also ● 602 an occasion for *ma dzo*, for 'joking', that is, for the licensed liberties x796 commonly referred to as 'joking relationship'. Though much less formalized than in other African societies, the institution of joking relationship plays a clearly defined part in Nupe social life. The individuals standing in this relationship are called *dzomanci*, 'playmates', the relationship itself being derived mainly from kinship position. Thus the joking relationship obtains between grandparents and grandchildren of the opposite sex; between cross

[1] See also *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 396–7.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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cousins; between a man and his elder brothers' wives; between a man and his mother's brother's wives; between a man and his wife's *dzomanci*; and between a woman and her father-in-law and her mother-in-law's sister's sons. The relevance of this arrangement for Nupe kinship organization does not concern us here; nor need we consider the joking relationship as it affects everyday life. Let me only stress that the active partners in this relationship, that is, the individuals entitled to take the liberties, are always young people; older persons cease to engage in the joking relationship or become engaged in it only as passive partners, as the victims exposed to the liberties. In practice, then, the joking relationship is asymmetrical, amounting to liberties taken by children or youths with their elders and, in the majority of cases, by one sex with the other.[1] The liberties themselves take this form. Whenever an 'active' partner in the relationship meets his playmate he would lightly beat him or her with a stick until the victim appeases the assailant with a small gift of money. Or boys and young men would visit the home of a playmate, tie his (her) hands and feet with a grass rope, until once more a small ransom is handed over. Throughout the *navũ* this play goes on. Everywhere you see boys armed with sticks or carrying grass ropes handy; and whole bands of them will swagger along the streets looking for their 'playmates' among the girls and women, shouting at them, brandishing their sticks, and trying to seize them, with unequal success. For the 'passive' partner is allowed to evade the punishment, to retaliate, and even to cheat. Quite a few of the older men when they are caught by their young assailants do not pay the required ransom, but merely press their fingers into their playmates' hands as though handing over a coin, and escape by this ruse. And the women and girls on the market sit behind their wares with a stick or grass rope ready in case a 'playmate' tried his extortions on them. There is no serious note in all this: it is fun, and nothing else, taken in good part by everyone. Throughout this play another *motif* is also visible. The *dzomanci* will often be aided by his friends, and during *navũ* you will everywhere see youths walking in pairs and holding hands, two friends facing together the adventures of the day. Thus the *navũ* becomes a multiple occasion for mobilizing and demonstrating the main social relationships governing Nupe life—age-grade solidarity; political allegiance; kinship bonds; and friendship.

It is difficult to define precisely the Islamic kernel in the Nupe celebrations of the *Muharram*, mainly because the character of

[1] Joking relationship also occurs outside the kindred, between certain Nupe sections and other tribes, or within Nupe communities between occupational groups. As these relationships play no part in the *navũ*, they are here disregarded.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

602 Local and Kinship Grouping

611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man,
592 his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the " house " (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* (" owner of the house "), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or " clans,"
614 for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified " first ancestors."

Forms of Settlement: House Types[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*ezi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 25–33.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–32, 34, 36– , 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 324; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

He will consult the diviner again at the beginning of the confinement and before the child is named. The father will also buy 'medicines' to facilitate the birth and buy or collect herbs with which to prepare the new-born's first food. During the delivery itself the father keeps away, leaving the scene to his elder sister, mother or aunt, and to his father or father's brother, who is called in to cut the umbilical cord and dispose of the afterbirth (which is buried outside the hut). Even afterwards the infant's grandfather plays a more conspicuous part than does the father; while the latter goes quietly about his business, the grandfather loudly announces to all friends and visitors that a grandchild has been born to him, and it is to him that all congratulations are addressed. The delivery and the treatment of the new-born represent essentially practical procedures devoid of ceremonial. We may mention only that for four days the infant is fed on a boiled infusion of the herbs which the father has collected and given the mother's milk only on the fifth. On the same day the father sends gifts of kolanuts to all relatives and friends, with the announcement that the naming ceremony, meanwhile fixed, will take place on such-and-such a day.

This ceremony, known as *suna* ('name'), usually takes place eight days after the birth, and is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be re-born in the child. The ceremonial is brief and takes place in privacy, usually in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor lies buried, being attended only by the child's father and his nearest male relations. The father kneels down, a gourd with beer in his hand, and speaks this prayer (to quote a concrete instance):

'I am praying to *Sokó*. The child that has entered, Lord God, it is Landu returned (the grandfather's name). *Kuci*, hold him (the child) securely, do not permit that he falls sick. May he live, cause him to grow old'.

The ceremonial ends when beer is poured on the ground and the rest drunk in silence by the men present. As this brief ritual summarizes the whole conception of reincarnation, so it also betrays its ambiguity; for the *kuci* which is believed to have returned to the living is yet asked to take care of the living; and though one sacrifices to a particular ancestor, one yet invokes God.

The naming ceremony itself makes no further mention of these mystic notions, being concerned exclusively with formally announcing the name and identity of the new-born. This is done before a gathering of guests as large as the host can make it. The guests are relatives, friends, neighbours, and such important personages as the child's father may happen to know; they are expected to bring small gifts and will in turn be furnished with

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264a
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [263]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations
which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until
6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal.
This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in
the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with
some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up.
Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do
not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every
month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage
friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends.
If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes
her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes
in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside
with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call
on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [606]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her
of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as
he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone.
Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms
according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries,
which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam
then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when
the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the
success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and
in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the
stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes,
etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses
of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same
trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on,
unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child
twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property,
but the children of the household do, and battles are waged
between the young people. This custom is dying out where there
are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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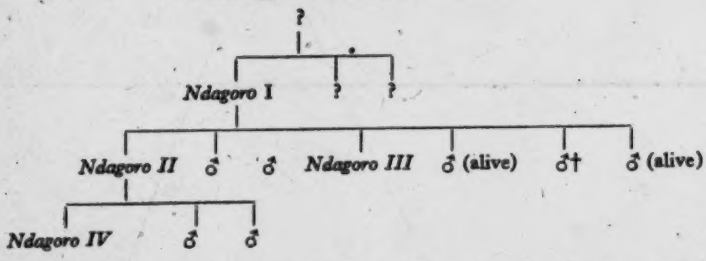
observe the general scheme of Nupe inheritance, one generation being run through before the next generation is admitted to the succession; but we notice also that the progress of succession left out two men of the older generation. 623

Genealogy of the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa



The same qualifications would also make a stranger who has settled for some time in a Nupe village eligible for a higher or lower *nũsa* rank. But 'good reputation' would be understood according to local standards, which may not be the standards of the applicant. A lute-player in Doko, who had been living there for some twenty years, a fairly prosperous and well-liked man, still went without title. Lute-playing, though appreciated in Bida, was not in the eyes of the villagers a respectable profession. Had he been a farmer, or even a drummer, he would have been awarded a title long before. 623 554 609 533

If a 'new man' desires to be granted a title he broaches the subject first with one of the titled *nũsa* with whom he is intimate; the latter will bring it before chief and council of elders, who will then discuss the question at their leisure. If, on the other hand, a rank falls vacant, especially one of the higher ranks, the official discussions will start at once, and all the men of the village will be talking about it and surmising likely successors. In the lowest ranks succession is a simple matter. In hereditary ranks, particularly in small families, the decision may also take but little time. When the *Ejukó* of Jebba Island—the hereditary Keeper of the Chain of Tsoede—died, his successor was known a week after his death, and the title was conferred upon him within a month. But sometimes the appointment of a successor is a serious and long-drawn-out business, and often enough, as we have seen, feuds may break out over the appointment of the most suitable candidate. Discussion follows discussion, often for weeks and months, especially if it happens to be the rainy season when everybody is busy and can spare only an evening or two in the week. The elders meet first, in small groups, in their own houses; later when the discussion has reached a more advanced stage they meet in the house of the *nũsa* of highest rank and finally in the house of the chief. As always in meetings of this kind the assembly gathers in the entrance hut of the house; the younger men sit near the outer door, the elder men on the inner side of the hut. They are rarely given anything to eat or drink except perhaps a few kola-nuts in the house of the chief. 623

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nūsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nūsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nūsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nūsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nūsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession:-promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may
621 return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on
425 request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have
621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to
[431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the
[431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who
609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now
621 the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted
425 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first
651 *dzankó*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who
[177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankd* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankd* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsoši*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The family has been regarded by many anthropologists as a typical *bilateral* unit—a group in which the transmission of rights and duties follows both the paternal and maternal line. We know now that such family structures are extremely rare, and that in most societies succession in paternal and maternal line supplement each other and are assigned different spheres of validity, certain rights and duties being transmitted in the paternal and others in the maternal line. For the Nupe family we

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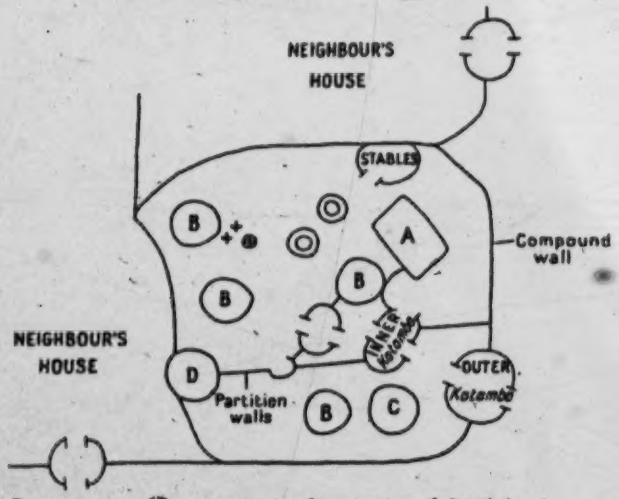
HOUSE OF A BIDA NOBLEMAN OF LOW RANK



[592
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○ *Sleeping huts* ⟲ *Kotamba*. A... *Sleeping hut of family head*.
B... *Sleeping huts of his wives*. C... *Sleeping hut of unmarried son*.
D... *Sleeping hut of unmarried daughter*. ● *Well*. ◎ *Granaries*.

can say that rights and duties which are transmitted through the father greatly outweigh in scope and importance those transmitted through the mother. Kinship membership itself and the access to the political and religious rights vested in it are determined by paternal descent. As women in Nupe neither own nor work land, this most important property is also inherited through the father. The rights to certain forms of financial support (e.g. for the payment of bride-price or support in old age) are equally derived from descent in the father's line. As Radcliffe-Brown has shown, the genealogical division into paternal and maternal succession depends also on the nature of the rights and duties that are transmitted from individual to individual, some being transmitted more satisfactorily through men (i.e. the father) and others through women (i.e. the mother).[1] Thus the personal property of the Nupe women is inherited by their daughters—as the personal property

[1] R. A. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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611 of the men is inherited by their sons. As in the Nupe economic system the women frequently enjoy a financially more advantageous position 428 than the men we find also that, in the event of economic stress, a mother may take over some of the financial duties normally discharged by the father.

611 Generally speaking, matrilineal descent in Nupe, including here both descent from the mother as an individual and from her family, has essentially the significance of an ultimate safeguard in case the patrilineal arrangement proves insufficient. In Bida society, with its great inequality of wealth and status, rich or powerful maternal relations may be as valuable as paternal relations; political connexions, especially, through the mother's family will often be utilized profitably. We realize that these 'matrilineal' rights do not follow rigid rules of descent and succession; rather they represent a 'second line of defence' on which individuals can fall back in case the 'first line of defence'—claims derived through the father—has failed. If we speak of the Nupe extended family as 'patrilineal' it will be understood that we refer only to the preponderance and the more rigid formulation of rights and duties transmitted in the father's line. The kinship organization as such, in which the alternative methods of reckoning descent stand in that relation of 'first' and 'second line of defence', can be most aptly described by a term which was suggested by R. W. Firth as 'ambilateral'.

601 The rule of succession to the rights and duties derived in the paternal line, which, as we have seen, imply a succession running through one whole generation before descending to the next, is expressed very clearly in the Nupe kinship terminology, about which I will only say a few words. It is of the classificatory type and corresponds to the generation pattern: it subsumes all members of the kinship group who are of the same generation under a common term. Thus members of the same generation are all 'brothers' to each other, 'sons' to the generation above them, 'fathers' to the generation below, 'grandsons' to the second generation above, and so forth. Within the generation seniority is specially defined: elder brothers are distinguished from younger brothers, and also the father's elder brothers from the father's younger brothers. The former, who represent the potential family heads senior to one's own (real) father, are called 'father', the latter, who may be placed as junior relations under one's father, 'little father'.

602 Let me summarize the main kinship concepts with which we shall be concerned in the course of this book. We shall largely disregard the fluid and vaguely defined large kinship unit formed by all individuals who are regarded as being *dengi*. When speaking of kinship group, or large family group, we shall always mean the 'house-group'. To the smallest unit, finally, we shall refer either as the family section, or as the household or labour unit, according to the aspect under which we are considering it. I must add, however, that the Nupe also recognize a much wider unit derived—in a very vague sense—from kinship factors. Thus a whole village is sometimes spoken of as representing one *dengi*, and as having 'one ancestor'. This interpretation does not refer to concrete common descent from an original family, but rather reinterprets

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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*754 further elaborated in popular belief; for it is generally held that a
773 witch who would attack her own flesh and blood cannot do so
562 alone but must enlist the help of other witches, not related to the victim. Kinship, then, in some measure deflects and frustrates the evil designs of witches. It is in fact true that witches are only rarely accused of harming their own blood relations; I recorded only two cases of this kind, both referring to the witch's own children. But the victims are not necessarily strangers; as often they are affinal relations of the woman witch (her son-in-law, her husband, his brother or the brother's children, or the husband's children by another wife).

*754 From this varied evidence the following picture of the witch
562 emerges: she is the enemy of men and of male authority; she seeks to dominate men; her evilness is somehow bound up with married state and occasionally with old age, that is, age beyond child-bearing; and her evilness is often directed against a husband and his kin. Now all these traits fall into place against the background of that other belief which links witchcraft with the economic position of the women; for seen against this background, and allowing for the fantasy disguise, the witch is accused of doing mystically precisely what the women, in virtue of their economic power, are accused of doing in real life. So that the witchcraft beliefs and fears paraphrase a true state of affairs and the anxieties and frustrations arising from it. Consider, then, for a moment that 'true state of affairs'.

*754 To begin with, a great many Nupe men, peasants as well as craftsmen or members of the 'free professions' in the town, are
562 heavily in debt to their trader-wives, on whom they often have to
593 rely for money for tools, for some unforeseen heavy expenditure, and even for such items as the brideprice of a son or funeral expenses, which it is the man's duty to defray. If this dependence on the wife must detract from the man's proper status as the 'breadwinner', his authority is seriously diminished also by another
[611] factor. In the Nupe kinship organization most rights and obligations descend in the paternal line; and as sons (to a lesser extent, daughters) derive their kin group membership (membership of a particular 'house') from their fathers, have a place in their father's home and labour team, and inherit his property, land or profession, so they normally look to him or his male kin for economic support. But where the mother is the richer, the inheritance she will leave will be at least as important, and even while she is still alive her sons or daughters will turn to her for financial help. Frequently, in fact, the mother will pay directly, and not only through loans made to her husband, for a son's marriage, buy him clothes or luxuries, or shoulder the cost of a more expensive

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

602 Local and Kinship Grouping

611 Descent and succession to offices and the inheritance of rights to land and other property are normally patrilineal among all Nupe. At the same time kin ties traced through the mother may afford opportunities for advancement and, especially in Bida the capital, maternal connections with persons of rank may be used to advantage in the political sphere. The Nupe term *dengi* connotes kinship in the widest sense to include all recognized cognates, but the effective *dengi* of an individual consists mainly of his agnates or patrilineal relatives descended from a common ancestor several generations back. Maternal kin ties, on the other hand, are rarely traced or effective beyond one or two generations. Groups of male patrikin are significant both as the nuclei of residential groups in extended families and in the status system of the chiefdom.

596 The domestic unit is usually an elementary or polygynous family, i.e., a man,
592 his wife or wives, and unmarried children.[1] This, or a larger group consisting of a man, his wives, married sons, their wives and children, or of a set of brothers, their wives, children, and grandchildren, the nucleus of which is thus a patrilineage of small span, inhabits a division of the compound, keeps house and eats in common, and forms a single productive or labour unit. No special name exists for this group apart from that referring to its organization as a labour unit or *efakó*. The larger unit was formerly general, but under modern conditions the family has tended to divide when sons become adult. The domestic family normally forms part of a larger social unit, the "house" (*emi*), which is both a kinship and a territorial group and may also be referred to as a *katamba*, a term for the common gateway or entrance to an enclosed compound. An *emi* may be localized in one compound or may be distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying either the whole or part of a ward (*efu*). In Bida the *emi* tends to be more widely scattered. The nucleus of an *emi* again consists of a body of patrikin to which wives and others are attached. Its head is known as the *emitsó* ("owner of the house"), a position which falls to the senior male member of the group, who is succeeded by the next in seniority of the same generation, and so on. When a section of an *emi* separates physically it continues to recognize its former head while he lives, but on his death it often attains an independent position with its own head. The size of the *emi* varies considerably. In Bida, those of commoners are often small and may contain no more than six or eight individuals; in the smaller settlements and among the nobility they may include as many as 60 persons.

602 Beyond these groups the Nupe also often recognize kinship over a still wider field. Thus a whole village may be regarded as descended from one ancestor, but such essentially mythical kinship links do not involve any specific kinship claims and obligations.

565 The three royal houses of Nupe may be regarded as large lineages or "clans,"
614 for they claim to observe rigid patrilineal descent believed to have proceeded from sanctified "first ancestors."

Forms of Settlement: House Types[2]

361 Nupe live in compact villages or towns (*ezi* is the term for both) which vary considerably in size; in Bida Emirate, besides the capital, there are three considerable settlements: Doko (800), Mokwa (2,000), Kutigi (3,000). Some, on the other

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 25–33.
[2] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24, 27–32, 34, 36– . 226–7; 1938; Temple, 1919, p. 334; Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. Harris.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the existing political structure of the community in a kinship sense. The ancestors of the chief who are regarded as founders of the village are also thought of vaguely as ancestors of the whole community. These essentially mythical kinship links exercise no influence upon concrete kinship claims and obligations. 602

Political factors are also responsible for the development of the large units which characterize kinship among the ruling family. We shall see that the ruling house of Nupe crystallized in three dynasties, which trace their descent from different sons of the founder of the ruling house, and divide between them the rights and duties vested in the ruling house. The ancestors of the three dynasties lived only two or three generations back; but already certain religious observances (prayers on their grave) mark them off from all subsequent royal ancestors. In this rigidly defined system of reckoning descent in the father's line back to these almost sanctified 'first ancestors', and in the relationship with one another which is in the nature of mutual obligations for the sake of the larger unit, the royal house itself, the three dynasties correspond from kinship point of view to incipient *clans*—the only analogy to clan structure which we find in Nupe. 643 769 [613]

Let me say in conclusion that kinship structure in Nupe is not that dominant, all-enveloping structure which we know from many primitive societies. Although it bears upon religious life, education, and the organization of production, it is greatly overshadowed as a determinant of social behaviour by the factors of political organization and, in economic life, by economic interests proper. Indeed only because of its lesser significance in social life could we omit the detailed description of Nupe kinship from the sociological analysis with which this book is concerned. 601

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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full-scale performance, while in the remaining cases there is a mere suggestion of the ritual.

This association of two fixed rituals with the funerary ceremonial presents several puzzling features. To begin with, the distribution of the two rituals among the thirteen ranks of Jebba is strikingly uneven, ten ranks being linked with the *gunnu* and only three with the *dzakó*. This, I was told, was not always so; but a more even distribution was upset in the course of time, when certain ranks originally linked with the *dzakó* were allowed to lapse because at the death of the incumbents there happened to be no suitable successors. This may be so; during my stay in Jebba, for example, three minor ranks of the *dzakó* group (not counted among the thirteen) were in fact vacant, and several more may have completely disappeared. Even so, the fact remains that no attempt was made to even out the inequality, though this would present no difficulty in this non-hereditary rank system. Furthermore, the dual division on the grounds of the suitable funerary ceremonial extends, not only to the men holding the respective ranks, but to their whole 'house' (i.e. lineage); thus the Jebba people generally class any individual or family as belonging either to the *gunnuciži* or *dzakociži* (the '*gunnu* people' or the '*dzakó* people'). This fits in oddly with a rank system based mainly on election and promotion; for it would imply that whole kin groups might have to change their religious affiliation if their titled head is promoted from a rank belonging to one section to a rank belonging to the other, or if a new family head is elected to a rank, say, of the *dzakó* group while his predecessor belonged to the *gunnu* section. Such promotions and elections do in fact occur and, as might be expected, entail considerable confusion. Most puzzling of all, this comprehensive division of the population into ritual moieties seems to have no relevant consequences, religious or otherwise. At least, the only consequence ascribed to it is both incongruous and obscure. It was claimed by most informants that the sons of *gunnuci* families alone were formerly allowed to join in the esoteric part of the *gunnu*, while no such rule applied to the *dzakó*.[1] One informant, an old man of high rank belonging to the *dzakó* section, maintained that that ritual was similarly exclusive. Since the rule concerning the *gunnu* is no longer in force (if it ever existed), it was impossible to verify the respective information; the *dzakó* ceremonial I witnessed certainly failed to

[1] If this were true it would obviously mean that boys and young men originally admitted to the secret part of the *gunnu* might be excluded from it when their family head changed his rank, or that boys not previously admitted might suddenly acquire the necessary qualifications. Either contingency is difficult to credit.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 796x
'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division. 766

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an 616
original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe communities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular 554
rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. [184]
The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *žiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Samaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements.

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be 796x
performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage.

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a 796x
disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and 773
brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the

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619 TRIBE AND NATION--presence or absence of groups larger than the community to which people think they "belong" in an extended kinship sense; basis of identification (e.g., common name, common language, contiguous territory, common culture, tradition of common descent); intratribal intercourse and communication (e.g., trade, intermarriage); degree of development of nationalistic aspirations; etc. See also:

Tribal or national political organization . . . 64
Affiliation with a culture area or subarea . . . 101
Ethnocentrism 186
Intercommunity relationships 628
Intertribal or international relationships 648
Nationalistic movements 688
Ideas about race 829

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CHAPTER II

CULTURE, TRIBE, SOCIETY

000 THE description of environment is concerned with a solid, easily defined, almost self-evident reality. A description of the general demographic and cultural constellation deals with the fluid entity of groups and systems of unity, the mere circumscription of which involves already theoretical definitions and classifications. These definitions and classifications must be based on facts which only the full analysis of the society can establish. This chapter will thus have to anticipate certain results of the general description which forms the main body of this book. It will not attempt to anticipate the descriptions themselves. Its aim is only to sketch in a background, to stake out a field of demographic and cultural facts by which is bounded that social reality with which this book is dealing.

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

101 Let me draw a tribal map of the part of Nigeria where Nupe country lies: in the north the neighbours of the Nupe are Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; in north-east and east lies Gbari country; in the south, on the river, the country of the Kakanda; and west of the river, Yagba (a section of the Yoruba) and Ilorin Yoruba; and in the north-west, finally, the people of Borgu and Bussa. Colonies of Nupe, small sections, split off from the main body of the tribe, are scattered all over Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of them, a group of about 15,000 people who call themselves Bassa, or Bassa Nge, lives near the confluence of Niger and Benue. They appear to have emigrated from the mother country about a hundred years ago, before the Fulani conquest; they settled first on the right bank of the Niger, on the hills of what is to-day Lokoja, and moved later, when the new town of Lokoja was founded by the Niger Company, to the left bank where they are living to-day.

The Nupe are known as *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*) among the Hausa, as *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*) among the Gbari of Kuta, and as *Anupeyi* and *Anufawhei* among the Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari; the Yoruba know them as *Takpa* and the Kakanda as *Anupecwayi*. The Nupe call themselves *Nupeci* or, in the plural, *Nupeciši*, their language *Nupe*, and their country *kin Nupe*, Land of Nupe. No special word for 'tribe' exists in Nupe; the Nupe speak of *za Nupe*, Nupe man, Nupe peoples.

● 619 This book is concerned with the culture of the people that calls itself Nupe. But what does 'people' mean here? What is the social reality to which the term Nupe people or Nupe tribe refers? The three meanings of *Nupe*, people, language, and country, do not coincide. Disregarding the split-off sections we may say that the Nupe tribe inhabits, roughly, the same territory. But it is not, and never was, 'one country' in the sense of a group united politically, or by facts of close contact and 'common life', thus marked off from other, similar areas or groups. Of

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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak, potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapái, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

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and Kupa. Nupe proper differs from Ebe, or Bassa from Žitako, no less than Nupe differs from the languages of the other, related, tribes, Gbari and Kakanda. Dialects, language, language group, or linguistic class—these are all fluid categories, shading over into one another, and none of them capable of being identified with tribe or people.

Political group and language group thus imply the existence of the tribe, they do not explain it. The objective reality of political and linguistic organization leaves undefined the nature of that elusive human substratum, tribe or people. Nor can we count on any external symbols of tribal unity to help us with the definition. No tribal costume, or tribal emblems, exist, no tattoos or face-markings characteristic of all Nupe.[1] Yet to the Nupe man himself the Nupe tribe or the Nupe people is a clearly defined, unmistakable entity. He will rarely hesitate whether to describe the population of a district or village as Nupe or to put it down as alien, non-Nupe. This is, of course, an expression of traditional, historically accumulated, and transmitted knowledge. People and tribe themselves represent but the product of complex historical processes, contacts, and ramifications. These processes are no longer traceable to-day; but even if we could trace them they would tell us nothing about the nature of this social fact which we witness to-day, the classification of groups which do not speak the same language and do not live together in 'one country' unified by political organization, under the heading of 'one tribe'. The only definition of tribe that seems possible is the tautological statement that a tribe or people is a group unit the members of which claim to form a group unit. But perhaps there exists some other, objective, social reality which can help us to define this evasive concept?

We have not examined yet that paramount social reality, culture. But culture no less than language or living-together seems a fluid criterion of tribal unity. The only definition of tribe that we can give in terms of culture is to call the tribe a group possessing more or less the same culture—as it possesses more or less the same language or lives more or less in contiguity and 'togetherness'. In Nupe the unit of culture is in certain respects smaller than the unit of the tribe. The different 'countries' of Nupe represent different, and differently organized, cultural 'provinces'. Culture varies with environment and the productive organization which it entails; it expresses the changing dominant interests involved in social, political, and economic conditions. We can thus speak of a riverain Nupe culture, a hunters' or peasant culture, and distinguish town from rural culture, or the culture of the ruling group from the culture of the subjects and commoners. The cultural unit is also wider than the unit of the tribe. Nupe shares its political and social system with many tribes in West Africa, its traditional religion with neighbouring groups in the north, east, and south, its modern religion, Islam, with the whole Sudan. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking of a West African culture, or a culture of the inland groups of West Africa (as against the culture of the groups in the rain-forest and near the coast). Finally, culture appears also, as it were, crystallized in the form of

[1] See below, p. 22.

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121 619 184

a tribal culture, and the area of cultural unity reveals itself in some respects as coextensive with the tribe.

This is not merely an enumeration of isolated 'traits' selected at random. Each cultural factor which we reviewed affects, and is interdependent with, a wide range of other cultural factors. Culture, as anthropologists are realizing, is not a sum total of discrete traits; it possesses a definite structure and identity; its traits or elements, interdependent and mutually determined, build up a 'pattern' that tends towards coherence and consistency. This consistency—a functional consistency—reveals its existence to the student of the society in those cultural characteristics which he learns to regard as 'typical' or 'non-typical' of a culture. Each of the three cultural units which we enumerated shows, in some measure, the features of this consistency and identity. We will not here probe deeper into the nature of this consistency which seems to crystallize in different degrees of intensity and comprehensiveness. But we must clarify our concept of culture. So far, we have used the word in a rather vague sense. It is not the same culture, the same category of culture, which we discovered in these three relations between cultural and tribal unit. Cultural unity is, speaking generally, unity and correspondence in forms of social behaviour. When speaking of culture units wider than the unit of the tribe, we referred to a correspondence of behaviour among disconnected groups which we as students of cultures and peoples discover, classify, and name; it is a correspondence upheld by the unconscious processes involved in tradition and the perpetuation of custom; it impresses upon the groups a certain external *uniformity*. When speaking of the smaller cultural units which reflect common environmental conditions and common interests, common spheres, that is, of organized social life, we refer to something that goes beyond an externally visible uniformity. We mean a *conformity* of behaviour, a conscious unity created by, and embodied in, a common group life and the mutual control and adjustment of behaviour among the people who form the group.[1] The identification of cultural group and tribe implies, in the observer's interpretation, something of both.

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But were this all it would enable us only to define the tribe as a natural species is defined—unknown to the subject of the definition. It would amount to colouring a certain space on a cultural map and calling it 'Nupe tribal culture'. It would not explain the crucial point in our argument, that the people are themselves conscious of the reality of the tribe. But culture has also another, new, meaning: it represents the conception of the people themselves. To the Nupe the tribe possesses a certain culture, specific to it and only to it, irrespective of variations within or similarities with groups without the tribal boundaries. Their awareness of this unity is expressed in the form of almost axiomatic statements, 'the Nupe do this or that', 'this and that is a Nupe custom',

121 183 619

[1] The historian may attempt to link the two, and derive 'uniformity' from an original 'conformity', that is, explain the present cultural correspondence among disconnected groups by cultural diffusion from a centre in which culture was identical with organized common life. But considerations of this kind remain outside this discussion.

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121 contrasting Nupe usages with customs and forms of behaviour characteristic of other tribes. You discuss, for example, the worship of human
183 figures and idols of the kind you see in every village and every house in
619 neighbouring Yoruba; or the face-like masks which the Yoruba and many southern tribes wear in their ritual dances; or perhaps the ceremony of spirit possession which the Hausa who live in Bida town perform on Bida market. Your Nupe informant will tell you positively: no —we have none of this; only Yoruba do it, or Hausa do it, as the case may be. Or you ask a Nupe man what all Nupe have in common. He will, as a rule, enumerate the same few traits. All Nupe, he will say, have the *ena gbarúfuži* (age-grade associations), all Nupe have the same system of *tici* (ranks), and all Nupe have the *gunnu* cult. Of the Nupe community in Lagos, a group which has forgotten its traditions and abandoned its language, I was told that they were still Nupe, because they still practised the Nupe *kuti* (ritual) of the *ndakó gboyá* (a ritual closely linked with the *gunnu*). Yet on closer examination this shibboleth of Nupedom proves only half true. Worship of idols and human figures exists also among the Nupe, in the riverain area; mask dances with face-masks are practised in a large section of the Nupe, in Mokwa and the neighbouring villages. The age-grade associations are common both to Nupe and Hausa. The rank system is common all over Northern Nigeria, but the details in its organization (very significant details) vary considerably among different groups of the Nupe. The *gunnu* cult exists also among Gbari, Gara, Basa Kom, and, what is more important, appears in Nupe itself in strikingly different forms in different parts of the country.[1] Finally, as regards the Nupe colonies outside Nupe country: I have visited the Nupe communities in Lagos and Ibadan. They are descendants of Nupe slaves and serfs, completely Yoruba-ized to-day in language, custom, and everyday habits. It is true they have the *ndakó gboyá* (which they call by the Yoruba name *igunnu*). But the *ndakó gboyá* is completely absent among the eastern section of Nupe, the Dibo, and also, I believe, among most groups of the Ebe, the northern section of the Nupe tribe.

Objectively, then, the rigid distinction of Nupe and non-Nupe on the basis of cultural characteristics often proves incorrect, and must do so, since culture is both wider and narrower than the tribe. True, there exist certain traits, or 'patterns' of traits, which are typical of all the Nupe, and possibly only of the Nupe—facts of material culture, social organization, religious beliefs. Like the Nupe who mean to uphold the identity of their tribe, I shall speak of things 'the Nupe do' or 'do not do'. True it is that the people admit the existence of certain cultural variants which qualify the cultural unity of the tribe. But the essential fact to us here is not the objective constellation of cultural traits. The identification of Nupe tribe with a core of Nupe culture represents a concept, a spiritual reality, rather than a critical interpretation of cultural facts. It reflects not the quasi-scientific calculation of more essential against less essential traits, or of a majority of common characteristics as against a minority of

[1] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.

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dissimilarities, but a phenomenon of a different order, a theory and ideology which ignores divergences *ex definitione*. It represents, in one word, the theory of the Nupe tribe. Our tautological definition of tribe then reads thus: a tribe or people is a group the members of which claim unity on the grounds of their conception of a specific common culture.[1]

To define the unity as conceptual does not make it less real or less significant. The awareness of unity is the basic element in all social unity. Consciousness of commonness is the primary element in social commonness. 'Communities, for all their external marks, are not objective things, they are spiritual realities.'[2] 'The tribe is not a community in the strict sense of the word: it lacks, as we have seen, the element of 'common life' and co-activity. But communities exist in different degrees of intensity; they have a different compass of social inclusiveness; there is not *one* community, but a complex hierarchy of communities.[3] The consciousness of a uniform culture defines the widest, loosest unit in the hierarchy of communities—potential rather than actual 'common life'. One turns easily into the other. 'One of the great processes of society . . . is that thereby the common is built out of the like, common interests growing out of what were at first merely like interests.'[4] We add that the consciousness of uniformity is the first step towards conformity of culture.

At the same time this uniformity of conduct which is conscious of itself is more than merely a potential stage of social existence. It represents, in itself, a specific social reality. Let me define here a vital concept of social existence which will occur throughout this book: social integration. The essence of integration is co-activity—potential or actual; social integration is predictable co-adaptation of behaviour in a group. It reveals itself in the certainty with which, in the group, certain actions of individuals or group sections will call forth appropriate response actions of other individuals or group sections. Now uniformity of behaviour is, sociologically, meaningless. Conscious uniformity, however, is predictable uniformity; the knowledge that a certain familiar pattern of activity will be repeated endlessly throughout the group represents a first form, and a degree at the same time, of social integration.

These two types of integration, uniformity and conformity, do not exhaust the forms of unity of behaviour existing in society. We shall meet in this analysis also with a third interpretation of cultural commonness or likeness, namely, the co-adaptation of behaviour involved in all organized associations. We shall speak of it as *co-ordination* of behaviour, for it represents essentially a planned, controlled organization of behaviour in the group, regulated and enforced by specific social mechanisms. In

[1] This definition claims to hold true for all large tribal groups ('peoples') of a similarly complex structure. It does not apply to smaller and more homogeneous groups. The factor of size and numbers is of importance. Evidently, for a small group on a Pacific Island tribe equals local group; or among American Indian tribes the tribal unit may coincide with the political group (see A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, 1923, p. 232).

[2] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 66.

[3] Ibid., p. 10; *Community*, p. 23.

[4] R. M. MacIver, *Society*, p. 8.

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121 this book we shall be dealing mainly with the political association, which seems characterized by two sets of factors: first, by its inclusiveness, being the relatively widest unit of co-ordination, and, underlining it, by the conception of a collective identity which is emphasized, above all, in inter-group dealings. And second, by the nature of its regulative mechanism (here the 'Government'), which rests, in the last resort, on the employment of force and coercion, and which controls both co-ordination for the purpose of internal stability ('law and order') and co-ordination for the purpose of external, inter-group, action ('offence and defence'). Cultural groups and communities have fluid boundaries; the association (in our case the political unit) is or is not rigid, but its boundaries—the boundaries of the group and sphere of conduct within which the co-ordination is to be valid—are by definition rigid. The consciousness of this validity defines the membership of the political association—in modern terminology, nationality. The political unit, unlike culture and community, is exclusive: one either is or is not a citizen of a country; one either comes or does not come under its laws and restrictions. However, one remains at the same time a representative of a culture which may not simply coincide with the cultural uniformity upheld by the political system. One remains also a member of a community or of communities which may exist apart from the 'common life' embodied in political co-ordination. Planned co-ordination of behaviour cannot ignore these other forms of integration—cultural likeness and commonness. Whether it utilizes them, creates them anew, or simply accepts their existence, they are the cultural raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

The three planes of integration, and the group units which they define, thus cut across each other, overlap, and possibly grow out of each other, It will not always be easy to separate them clearly in the concrete description. The preceding analysis has to some extent defined their theoretical boundaries. In what follows we can attempt to isolate, in our concrete material, these three social realities: the integration of (conscious) cultural uniformity or the tribe; the integration of cultural conformity or the community; and the cultural co-ordination typical of organized society, above all, the political system and its paradigm, the state.

THE TRIBE

619 The conception of a common tribal culture is kept alive, as part of Nupe tradition, by the transmission of traditional knowledge. It forms 184 part of the general ideological background of all institutionalized behaviour. For many forms of customary behaviour membership of the tribe constitutes a convincing *raison d'être*. The tribe, lacking all unity of comprehensive co-operation, also lacks the unity of a common centre of cultural teaching. The consciousness of a common tribal culture is thus maintained by the scattered, disconnected mechanism to which the transmission of traditional knowledge is entrusted in Nupe. It is implied in the nature of this transmission that the same *raison d'être*—'we do this

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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpã, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpã and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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to have crossed later to the other side where they settled and became, in the course of time, independent sub-tribal sections.[1] In the case of the Kupa the tradition is more concrete; it describes them as Ebe people who have crossed the Kontagora river (called in Nupe Eku, to cross the river is, in Nupe, *lá 'kú pà*, and this is supposed to be the origin of their tribal name) in the time of the big Nupe wars of conquest, about 1800. The Kusopa, the Forest Tenders, appear in Nupe tradition out of nothing. Somehow they grew into a separate sub-tribe the identity of which is based on their habitat in the thick inland forest west of the Kaduna and also on their special occupation, which is the cultivation of kola-nut trees. Gwagba is a deprecatory nickname given originally to a small section of 'Nupe *zam*' from Gbara, followers and henchmen of the Nupe kings who, in the wars for the Nupe throne, fled to Zuguma. *Gwagba* means, literally, Those who threw up their Hands, the Defeated, but it is applied to-day to the whole group of Nupe living in and around Zuguma town. The Benu, finally, represent another sub-tribe of recent origin, formed in historical times. They are people of Bornu origin (*Benu* being the Nupe corruption of *Bornu*), from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Bornu, who came to Nupe country towards the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of *Etsu* Ma'azû and settled, with his permission, in Trans-Kaduna. They came as wealthy traders, bringing with them certain new agricultural techniques—onion growing—horses and cattle (the latter soon disappeared in the tsetse-infested country). They soon became the dominant group, economically as well as politically, in the region where they settled, but they Nupe-ized themselves, intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their language, and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. Thus they are to-day a section of the Nupe, speaking the Nupe language, and conforming in their whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. Only their great annual festival, the *gani*, and the title of their chief, *Zomuwa*, are reminiscent of the ancient culture of Bornu.[2]

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The name Nupe has also been extended to other originally alien groups living in Nupe country, which have become Nupe-ized and are hardly distinguishable to-day from the people among whom they live. In many villages and towns of Nupe we find groups known by the name of *Konú*, Prisoners of War,[3] or Eyagi-Nupe, Yoruba-Nupe, people of Yoruba origin, who are the descendants of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani kings of Nupe against the Yoruba; they were later freed and, by order of the king, settled in various districts of the kingdom. In Bida town I met the makers of horse-trappings—a craft imported from Hausa—who assured me that they were Hausa no longer. 'Yes, our fathers were Hausa,' they admitted; 'but we are Nupe'—claiming Nupe-

[1] They speak, in fact, the same dialect—proof that the tradition is not without historical foundation.

[2] See Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 148. I have given a more detailed description of this process of cultural fusion in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] *Konú* means 'war' in Fulfulde; the adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early times of the Fulani régime, when the rulers still used their own language.

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ization after barely one generation. The people in the north of Nupe country, near the boundary of Gbari, are known as *Gbari bautá*, Gbari slaves. They represent the original Gbari population of an area conquered by the Nupe and incorporated into the kingdom about 1800. In the north-east, too, Nupe culture is absorbing groups of Gbari, in a smooth and silent development which is still observable to-day. In Kataeregi, for example, in the north-east corner of Beni country, one or two old men still speak Gbari and remember their tribal origin; but the younger people speak only Nupe, regarding themselves, and being accepted, as Nupe and Beni full and proper. On the river, in the south, we have another group which has for some time been under Nupe political influence and has partly adopted Nupe language and culture: the Kakanda. They are not, however, regarded as part of the Nupe tribe —or not yet. Whether or not the consolidation of their cultural links will advance further and will eventually lead to an adoption into the tribe we cannot say for certain; perhaps the Kakanda will, with the completion of cultural assimilation, some day be regarded as another, thirteenth, Nupe sub-tribe.[1] In one or two cases, finally, people of one sub-tribe have emigrated into the district of another sub-tribe, living there as settlers in a 'foreign' land. Thus we find a group of Beni villages in Dibo country, emigrants from Beni during the Fulani wars, and also two small groups of Ebe in Trans-Kaduna, in the area of the section which calls itself 'pure Nupe'.

Thus one can 'become' a Nupe—*a ẓe Nupe*, they have become Nupe, is what the Nupe say of their cultural proselytes. It is, of course, impossible to define precisely the point when cultural assimilation warrants, or might warrant, inclusion in the tribe. But it may seem as if this elastic application of the tribal name, which takes into account *de facto* cultural similarities, contradicted the 'theoretical' and 'conceptual' unit in which we saw the definition of the tribe. The unobtrusive assimilation of a small group on the fringes of some Nupe section and its eventual absorption in this section (as in the case of the Kataeregi Beni) can be easily understood. But the so-to-speak official inclusion of a new section, under a separate heading, seems to presuppose something like a cultural tribunal which grants tribal membership to new, 'naturalized' groups. This contradiction is due not to an obscurity in our definition but to an obscurity in the facts themselves—and an obscurity which cannot be eliminated. The substratum with which we are dealing has, as it were, changed under our hands. The concept of tribal culture has changed into the concept of a culture vested in a political unit and its deliberate, conscious expansion. The proselytes of the Nupe tribe or Nupe culture were in reality proselytes of the Nupe kingdom.[2] (It is,

[1] A few informants, in fact, already classified them as a sub-tribe of Nupe—but these were informants from sub-tribes adjacent to the Kakanda, that is, from groups which, so to speak, could directly watch the cultural changes. Groups farther away kept to the established, traditional definition of the Kakanda as a separate tribe.

[2] This is the conception of the people themselves. All informants spoke to me of the various sub-tribes as having 'become one through Tsoede' (the ancestor-

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619 in fact, doubtful if a tribe not backed by any political organization could make proselytes on any larger scale.) Later we shall see more clearly 563 how it happens that tribe and kingdom become, for the people, one and the same thing. But the mark of the 'theoretical' tribal distinction is not obscured completely. It is visible in the qualified adoption of these new 'naturalized' sections. They 'have become Nupe'; but they are still called 'Gbari slaves' or Yoruba-Nupe. And perhaps now, since the expanding Nupe kingdom no longer exists, there will be no thirteenth sub-tribe of Kakanda-Nupe, after all.

THE SUB-TRIBE

184 The fact of common origin which is excluded from the concept of the tribe becomes an essential element in the definition of the sub-tribe. The sub-tribe is thus not a 'tribe' on a smaller scale; it differs essentially from the wider unit of the tribe. If the Nupe tribe possesses no external symbols, costumes, or body markings, such emblems exist to some extent for the sub-tribe. The Nupe practise body and face markings, [304] *etsa*, 'patterns', which are cut into the skin of newborn babies, male and female, and which differ in the different sub-tribes.[1] The sub-tribe, too, has its ideology in which the conception of unity and differentiation from other groups is expressed. The ideological criteria are two: one we have just discussed, the unity of origin and of historical continuity. The other is, again, the criterion of cultural unity. But the physical fact of the smallness of the group as compared with the tribe makes 'culture' here a more concrete, so to speak more concentrated reality. No Nupe term which corresponds to our 'sub-tribe' or 'section' exists. The Nupe refer to the various sub-tribes as to 'lands', they speak of *kin* Beni, land of the Beni, or *kin* Kusopa, land of the Kusopa, and even of *kin* Kyedye, land of the Kyedye, a 'land' which consists of a narrow strip of territory running across river banks and islets. The sub-tribe is thus, like the tribe, a territorial unit. But again the fact of physical size changes the meaning of the concept. The smaller locality is, in fact, more of one 'land'; it implies a more unified environment. This is partly expressed already in the names of the sub-tribes, some of which refer to the nature of the environment in which the group lives and to the nature of the occupation by which it earns its livelihood. The Bataci or Marsh Dwellers are a group of marsh-land farmers and fishermen whose hunting-grounds are the pools and backwaters of the Niger. The Kusopa or Forest Tenders work the famous kola-nut plantations of Laboži and

king of Nupe), or explained the development as due to the fact that '*one Etsu* established his rule (or law) over the whole country'.

[1] I must add, however, that even here these external symbols of group unity are not quite unequivocal. Fashion is changing the markings to-day—and there is no reason to assume that this has not always been so. I have seen fathers and sons whose faces bore different markings. The markings of the Bida people, like other fashions associated with the capital of the kingdom, have been adopted by the people of the districts. And the modern Bida and Beni markings are in turn said to have been adopted originally from the Yoruba, whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found 'nicer' than their own crude slashes. (See Appendix II.)

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APPENDIX II

TRIBAL MARKS OF NUPE SUB-TRIBES

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BENI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks
(i.e. Bida marks): and

BENU sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

'NUPE ZAM' of Kutigi:
Traditional marks: and

Modern marks:

KUSOPA sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

DIBO sub-tribe: and

GBEDEGI sub-tribe:

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KYEDYE sub-tribe:

EBAGI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: very mixed. Have adopted Bida and Kutigi marks.

BASSA NGE sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

and also Bida marks.

KAKANDA tribe:
Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

APPENDIX III

HISTORICAL CHART OF NUPE RULERS

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A.D.	
1463?	Birth of Tsoede.
1493	Tsoede taken as slave to Iddah.
1523	Tsoede's flight from Iddah.
1531	Tsoede established himself as king of Nupe in Nupeko.
1591	Tsoede's death.
1591–1600	*Etsu* Shaba.
1600–25	*Etsu* Zavunla.
1625–70	*Etsu* Jigba.
1670–9	*Etsu* Mamma Wari.
1679–1700	*Etsu* Abdu Waliyi, foundation of the capital Jima.
1700–9	*Etsu* Alyu.
1710–13	*Etsu* Ganamace or Saci.
1713–17	*Etsu* Ibrahim.
1717–21	*Etsu* Idirisu.
1721–42	*Etsu* Tsado.
1742–6	*Etsu* Abubakari Kolo.
1746–59	*Etsu* Jibiri, the first Mohammedan king of Nupe. He was driven from his kingdom after thirteen years' reign. Died in exile in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen.
1759–67	*Etsu* Ma'azû's first reign. Power of Jima at its height. He resigned the throne and left Nupe to live in Ysuri.
1767–77	*Etsu* Majiya I.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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852 of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers
553 and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gather-
[305] ing and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests, will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptu-
553 ous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered
619 to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem
304 to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal
[619] throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several
[834] other puzzling features. It is called *zũ 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-
[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

131 167 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[5]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

101 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 634 [167] Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciži): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciži* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiži* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoži* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Bazumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endozigi, Ela, Difu, Gbaradozi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

619 634 *Nupe "Zam":* a group in Trans-Kaduna (Kutigi) believed to be the oldest section of the Nupe; calling themselves *Nupe*, they have no secondary name.

Ebagi: an "original" Nupe sub-tribe, who claim to be the descendants of a dynasty superseded by the Fulani now ruling in Ilorin Emirate.

Ebe (Abewa): an "original" sub-tribe living in Yelwa District, but, according to Mathews, they call themselves *Asu* and claim to have come from what is now Yoruba country.[10]

Gbedye (Gbedegi): on the borders of Yoruba country in Niger Province, possibly of Yoruba origin.[11]

Kupa (also, erroneously, called Gupa; Kupachi):[12] said to be of Ebe origin, having arrived at their present site on the southern bank of the Niger around Eggan and, in small numbers, in Bunu District, in about 1800. Some are also to be found in the Koton Karifi District of Kabba Province, where they form a section of the "host" population and, together with the Dibo (see below), account for some 10% of the population. There are also others in Kupa District of Koton Karifi Division. They are said to be not fully "Nupeized."

Cekpay: on the southern bank of the Niger.

Kusopá: in the Labozhi District, in thick inland forest west of the Kaduna River, where they cultivate the kola-nut plantations of Labozhi and Kudu; they are also to be found in the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. Their origin is unknown but they may be comparatively recent immigrants.

Benu: a recently formed sub-tribe of Bornu origin. They came from Kukawa at the end of the 18th century as wealthy traders and owners of cattle and horses and now predominate in Kutigi and in the neighbouring villages of the Trans-Kaduna area, where they are the economically and politically dominant group.

Dibo (also known as Zitako ("men down below") and Ganagana, a Hausa name: a recently assimilated sub-tribe. As lately as 1931 they were not fully "Nupeized" nor universally accepted as a Nupe sub-tribe.[13] They live in the southernmost part of Lafiagi and Agaie Emirates, also in the extreme north of Koton Karifi Division, on the eastern slope of the Gurara valley north of the Kunama-Okya watershed, their chief towns being Pandegi, Agyana, Ebagi, Rimbo, Kibogi, Rijaya, and Chigbwechi. There are also a few hundred in Toto and Umaisha Districts of Nasarawa Emirate. They are the predominant tribe at Ashera in Abuja Emirate.

Gwagba: a recently formed group, essentially a political section. The name is said to be deprecatory and applied to those living in and around Zugurma.[14] According to Mathews,[15] the Gwagba consist of the indigenous Ebe, Basa, and Bedegi of the district. He suggests that the name Gwagba was given to them at the time of their original conquest by the Agabi (the descendants of Tsoede, among whom are the present "royal family" of Zugurma), and that it may even be the original name of a people.

Basa-Nge: a group speaking a Nupe dialect which appears to have left the mother country about a century ago, before the Fulani conquest. They lived first

[10] Mathews, 1926.

[11] There is a Yoruba sub-tribe called Gbedde in Kabba Division of Kabba Province. One section of the Kyedye sub-tribe is also called Gbéde and also inhabits the upper stretches of the Niger.

[12] The name Kupa is said to be a corruption of Oku-Pari, meaning canoe-men of the Oku river. Kupa and Gupa are enumerated separately in the 1931 Census list of Nupe sub-tribes. Nadel names the Kupa only; Temple gives the Gupa as an offshoot of the Gbari, and the Kupa as a Nupe sub-tribe; Meek uses the name Gupa in his text and Kupa on his map; MacBride refers to those in Koton Karifi Division as Kupachi.

[13] They are, however, listed by Nadel (1942, p. 19) as one of the five "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, according to Nupe tradition, were in existence at the time of Tsoede.

[14] Nadel, 1942, p. 20.

[15] Mathews, 1926.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

619 on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved
634 over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

[567] *Konu* (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá (" Gbari slaves "): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe " proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which
[114] are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Bafa* in the 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

161 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

162 1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op cit., p. 20
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province, who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, " A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for " Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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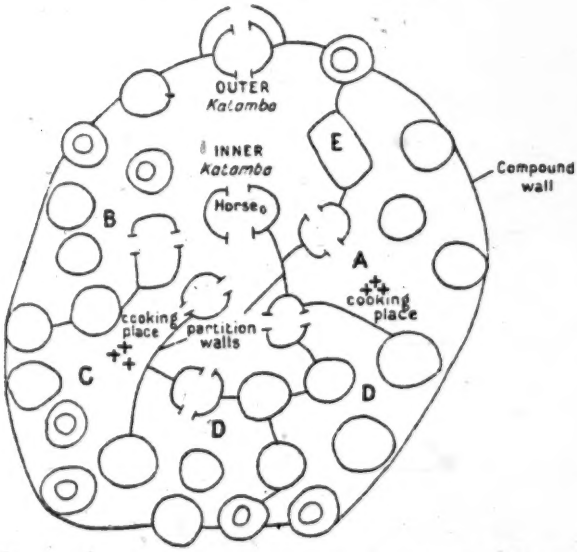
592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found dis-
596 tributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the sub-division of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[342]



○ Sleeping huts (◐) Katamba A... partition of family head. B... partition of unmarried sons. C... partition of unmarried daughters. D... partition of married sons and younger brothers. E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discus-
[621] sions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kin-ship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNITY: VILLAGE AND TOWN

621 THE description of 'areas of common life' must start with the description of the external arrangement, that is, forms of settlement. ~~The Nupe live in large villages or towns.~~ They have only one word for both, *eži*, thus defining the essentially identical nature of the two forms of settlement. There exists another Nupe word, *tunga* or *kangi*, which is applied to very small settlements. But this name refers not so much to the size as to the different sociological nature of the settlement; for the *tunga*, unlike the *eži*, does not represent an independent local unit but a 'daughter-settlement', a 'colony' of a village or town.

The size of the *eži* varies considerably. Nupe Emirate counts three 621 ~~villages with a population of~~ over or near a thousand: Doko with 800 361 inhabitants; Mokwa with 2,000; and Kutigi with 3,000. But there exist also smaller 'towns', villages the population of which had been reduced by emigration and which may be, in size, hardly bigger than a large *tunga*. The local arrangement of the Nupe village, large or small, is nearly always the same: clusters of compounds scattered comfortably over an area, each 'cluster' consisting of a number of walled compounds, 'houses' in native terminology, and forming what the Nupe call an *efu*, or ward. These village wards are separated by stretches of open land, spacious cultivated fields, studded with clumps of trees. More rarely the *efu* stand close together and are separated only by narrow thoroughfares between the walls of neighbouring compounds. This latter arrangement is typical of many riverside villages where, in narrow space, house presses upon house and compound upon compound. Each *efu* has its own name, derived either from a topographical peculiarity, e.g. Takogi, [103] meaning 'the one below', or Kpacinefu, 'the river bank *efu*', or from a sociological feature, namely, the rank or profession of the people living in the *efu*, e.g. *efu* Žitsu, '*efu* of the chief', or *efu* Tswata, '*efu* of the blacksmiths', and so forth; or, finally, the name of the *efu* may refer to the origin of its inhabitants, betraying them as immigrants from another village or tribe, e.g. Yafu (abbr. for Eyagi-fu), 'Yoruba *efu*', or *efu* Daži, '*efu* of (the people of) Daži'.

The Nupe *eži* with its scattered *efu* clusters is encircled by a large town wall, or more correctly, used to be encircled by a town wall. It exists no longer, but its ruins can still be seen in many places, and all the people insist that formerly all 'towns' were protected by such walls. These crumbled ruins of the old town wall provide us with a piece of important historical evidence, which tells us, I think, why the Nupe have chosen just this type of settlement, in large populous 'towns', and not, for example, settlement in loosely linked, scattered homesteads; it allows us to grasp at least one of the motives behind this social development: the dangers of war.[1] Large villages represent in a country of

[1] The other motive is economic and is entailed in the organization of the Nupe system of production and exchange. (See p. 366.)

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

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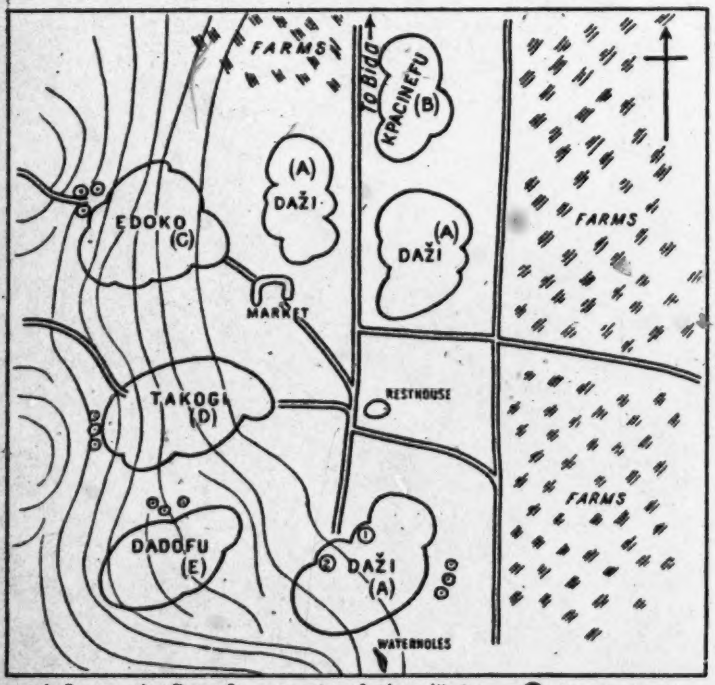
constant warfare the only safe method of settling. The small outlying settlements could quickly seek the protection of the walled town; a large concentrated population meant comparative security from raids, comparative safety in unsafe times. We have more historical data to support

361
621

SKETCH MAP OF DOKO



A–E are the five *efu* or wards, of the village. ⊙....roast ovens.
①...house of chief (*Etsu Daži*). ②....house of village priest (*Ižigi*).

this interpretation. One or two Nupe villages have sprung from the amalgamation of small groups, and in one significant case this fusion of component groups into a single large 'town' can definitely be traced to the time of the Fulani wars. What is to-day the village of Doko originated then out of the fusion of a small hill-side village, called Edokó, with a village situated originally about two miles away, in the plain, by the name of Daži. To escape from the Fulani raiders the people of Daži moved to Edokó, into the protection of the hill-side. The new twin-town was called Doko, with Edokó and Daži as two of the five *efu* which form the village to-day; and the chief, who comes from the stock of the Daži people, still takes the title *Etsu* Daži, king of Daži.[1] We possess also

[1] How far a development such as this, with a large village growing out of the fusion of two or more component groups, is typical of Nupe settlement in general

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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negative evidence to show that with the pacification of the country the reverse process has set in: Jima, once a capital of Nupe kingdom, a huge town to judge from the ruins of its town walls, is reduced to-day to a tiny village; most of its people have moved outside, and the eight former town-wards, still known by their old typical *efu*-names, are to-day scattered outposts, village 'colonies'—*tunga*.

The origin of the *tunga* settlements of Jima represents an unusual development. Normally the *tunga* reflects the expansion rather than the breaking up of the 'mother-town'. But the term *tunga* is not unequivocal. It refers to three different types of settlement. The first, the release of small groups for the foundation of 'daughter-settlements', is a direct consequence of the concentration of a large population in a single town. A growing population in the village, the need of new land, may lead to small groups moving into the uninhabited bush, to occupy virgin land and to found new settlements. A small section of one family at first, a few young men with their wives and children, the *tunga* may grow to a small hamlet embracing two or three large family groups. Or immigrants from another part of the country may choose to settle on the land which belongs to a certain village, and under its political protection: this settlement, too, will then be called *tunga*. Finally, the big landlords of Bida have settled their slaves and dependants on the land all round the capital, in small hamlets, called again *tunga*. But these settlements are in a different category, they represent not colonies of villages or towns but private property, farm settlements of individual landlords. A *tunga* is thus easily identified, for it is always referred to as a *tunga*, a 'colony', *of* a certain village or, in the case of private settlements, *of* a certain landlord. *Tunga* settlements seldom grow beyond three family groups. Should the population expand further, the *tunga* would again release some of its members who would leave the old settlement and found a new colony near-by. But it seems to have happened very rarely that a *tunga* grew into a 'town' proper—Gbangba, a prosperous village north of Bida and to-day the seat of a District Head, is the only example I can quote. Gbangba, however, was not a village colony but a *tunga* founded by people from Bida. On the other hand, I have seen several cases of *tunga* settlements which have grown out of each other, dependencies of dependencies. The *tunga* is itself a much more mobile settlement than the village proper. A *tunga* is often abandoned, and the people move to a new place, if there have been two or three bad harvests, or repeated cases of illness.

We understand the mobility of the *tunga* when we realize that these small farm settlements, founded by younger branches of families, can have none of the spiritual bonds—religious and ancestral—that would tie the 'real' village more permanently to the locality.[1] The same factor

I will not examine here. I may say that I have found two other typical instances; one I have described in *Man*, 1938, 85. There may be many more, of which the traces have become much more obliterated.

[1] An exception is provided by certain cults which are linked with individual families and not with the village as such; a sacred shrine of this kind may thus be carried to a *tunga*. The *tunga* Shebe Woro, for example, harbours the sacred chain and the shrine of Tsoede—two paraphernalia of the *ndakó gbayi* cult.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 also explains why *tunga* settlements rarely (if ever) develop into real 'towns'. The factor of size and numbers, too, plays its part. In order to provide that self-contained social and political life that is typical of the Nupe 'town', and in order to afford its inhabitants the political security which is part of the *raison d'être* of that form of settlement, a much larger concentration of people is necessary than the village *tunga* is likely ever to achieve in a sparsely populated country with so low a birth-rate. But the attitude of the people is as important: they cannot conceive of a *tunga* becoming an *ezi*—a rival settlement to their mother-town. The village *tunga* has no social life of its own: it possesses no market, no independent political organization, often no age-grades of its own, and celebrates its feasts and ceremonies with the 'mother-town'. 'Towns', on the other hand, are independent, self-contained units, which have little in common with each other, and often know nothing of their next-door neighbours. To become a 'town' would thus mean for the *tunga* to deny the very essence of its social identity.

Every village then counts, 'owns' as the Nupe say, a certain number of colonies, which surround it in a radius of six to seven miles, right up to the point where the area of the next village begins. Kutigi, for example, possesses six *tunga* settlements founded between 1860 and 1910. Five were founded by people from the two largest *efu* of Kutigi, one by people from Etsú, a neighbouring 'town', who preferred to settle on the more open and fertile land of Kutigi. Doko, a much smaller village but situated in a more densely populated area, owns nine large *tunga* settlements and a number of smaller, secondary, dependencies. Two of the large *tunga* settlements were founded by people of the Cekpă sub-tribe who fled from their homes during the Yoruba wars and settled in more peaceful Beni country. The other seven are village colonies proper. Interspersed between these colonies of Doko are four 'private' *tunga* settlements, founded by slaves and other dependants of Bida landlords.

The following examples may illustrate the organization of two comparatively recently founded *tunga* settlements:

Zaboru, a *tunga* near Sakpe, consisting of two compounds, was founded by the man Zaboru, together with his elder brother, the present Village Head of Sakpe, about thirty years ago. The two men went out together to find a place with new farm-land, and built first temporary, later permanent huts. The elder brother returned to Sakpe after the death of their father to assume his position as the new head of the family. In his place a third, youngest, brother, who had just married, went out to the *tunga*, about ten years ago, where he is still living.

Shebe Woro, belonging to the 'town' Shebe and consisting of two compounds, was founded in 1933, when a certain Kolo left Shebe 'because the place was too full'. Together with some relations and two friends he occupied a new place, about three miles away, deeper in the bush, and founded there the settlement now called Shebe Woro, which means, New Shebe.

342 361 Let us now go inside a Nupe village. I have described already its typical lay-out—the scattered *efu* and the walled compounds or 'houses'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and
[631] windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the
361 middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
[354 look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the
347] bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

● 621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

621 pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly. Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they 571 regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little [484] interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the 621 parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in 186 the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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621 and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of
186 Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded
361 by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the
162 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nîn*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its
361 northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross,
361 from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river
363 enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

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CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE

621 THE political organization of the Nupe village differs in certain respects in different parts of Nupe-land, but the general outline of the system remains, with one or two exceptions, the same. Every Nupe village, as it constitutes a separate community, also constitutes a separate political system. The area over which its sovereignty extends is formed by the village and its *tunga*, the 'town' and its 'dependencies'. At its head stands the 'town-king', *Žitsu*, who, to use the language of the people, 'owns' the village—*u wû ži*—and the land on which it stands. By this right of 'possession' he controls the lives of his community and the main resource from which it derives its livelihood, land. The close identification of chief and locality is often expressed in the title which the chief assumes and which is identical with the name of the village: the chief of Jebba (the correct name of which is Gebba) is known as *Gebba*, of Bele as *Belé*, and the old Beni 'town-king' of Bida styled himself *Bida*. In the chief, then, the collective existence of the village community is represented as in a symbol.

621 173 This political configuration is to some extent thought of as having evolved gradually in the course of time. But the Nupe village (unlike the kingdom) possesses no elaborate mythology which tells of the origin and the growth of the present polity. We have spoken of the vague interpretation in a kinship sense of the past of the village, according to which the people of the village have all descended from some common ancestor. As regards the specific political features, we find equally vague traditions of half-forgotten ancestors who were the founders of a village and the first settlers in the locality (we can disregard here the recent memories of fusion and separation of villages). The following tradition, referring to the village Doko, is a typical instance:

> Two brothers came from beyond the river, from a place called Gaze (a village on the river Kaduna). They came to a place now called Kopa [Kopa is about five miles from Doko, on the other side of the hill on the slope of which Doko is situated]. There was nothing in this place then save bush. They settled there, first as hunters, later they began to work the land. After two years the younger brother left Kopa and came down the hill to the place where Doko is to-day. He settled there and called himself chief. He became the first *Žitsu* of Doko, *Žitsu* Lefiya.

These traditions of origin become more articulate only where the tradition of the village can be linked with the semi-mythical history of Nupe kingdom and its ancestor-hero Tsoede. In a number of Nupe villages the people trace their line of chiefs back to one who was confirmed in his office by Tsoede, and invested by him with certain insignia and magical emblems. Of both Tsoede and these insignia we shall hear more at a later stage. Here it may be said that the ancestral chief thus

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi [illegible]on has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed [illegible]nship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nũsaẽ̃* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiẽ̃*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nũsaẽ̃* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nũsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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who was reputed to possess strong and deadly magic had threatened his life; a family head in Kutigi that his family was too highly taxed; a man in Pichi that a neighbour had beaten his goat (which the other man had found eating his grain): these are some of the cases which a village chief and his elders may daily be called upon to decide. 627

The procedure is nearly always the same. The various news, requests, or complaints are communicated at once to the chief, directly, if the supplicant or bearer of the news has the chief's ear, that is, is himself a titled elder, and indirectly, through the family head or the *efutsó* (head) of the *efu* in which he lives, if the bearer of the news is an ordinary peasant. Upon receiving the news the chief will summon the head *nũsa* (the *Sheshũ* in Mokwa, the *Lile* in Doko, the *Nãeji* in other villages), and he in turn will call together the other members of the council whose co-operation is required: two or three of the senior elders—the members of the 'inner council'—and always the *nũsa* to whose kinship group or *efu* the litigant or supplicant belongs. Not only does this *nũsa* act, as we have seen, as the official informant of the chief on all matters concerning his group and locality, but his intimacy with the people whose case is to be heard, and his moral influence, make him an important witness and, when a decision has been reached, a guarantor of its execution. Before this tribunal, then, supplicants and litigants in the village appear. The discussion that ensues is informal, and devoid of the stiff procedure that characterizes, for example, the Native Court. Supplicant or plaintiff state their case in a few sentences—the Nupe are not fond of long speeches and elaborate expositions. Obscurities in the statement are unravelled in patient cross-examination, in which everyone present can take part. Then, at one point, the chief or a *nũsa* may suggest a solution, which may be agreed to by the others with the stereotyped expression *u ge*, 'it is well', or revised in renewed discussion. Very rarely do tempers flare up and the discussions become heated. The final decision of the chief and his council is pressed home in the form of advice, persuasion, warning. A discussion of this kind rarely lasts longer than two or three hours, after which time it will be interrupted to be resumed on a following day. Mostly one or two sessions suffice to arrive at the final decision.

But then, in more difficult cases, in which many witnesses have to be called and thorny problems of arbitration settled, the decision is taken out of the hands of the village executive. For the chief is not entitled to dispense formal justice and to enforce arbitration. He must send all legal cases to the professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*) of the district; moreover, litigants who are dissatisfied with the chief's decision may themselves bring their case before the professional judge or the District Head (a point to which we shall return later). This limitation of village jurisdiction makes it impossible to pronounce in more detail on the efficiency of the village council and the way in which it handles, or could handle, more severe conflicts. The gamut of advice, persuasion, and warning is the only one which it can use: the more strident notes of authoritative orders and severe reprimands are outside its scale. 692 627

That they, too, have a rightful existence in the administration of village affairs is shown in the organization, by chief and elders, of all concerted 651 621

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651 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal cere-
621 monies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nûsafi* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an
[694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also,
623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece
661 of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nûsaẓi*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *eẓi u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunnu* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

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621 182 of this coextensiveness of the spheres of religious and political control could the village elders of Kutigi to whose 'strike' we referred above effect that political adjustment by religious pressure. And again only because of this coextensiveness of the spheres of political and kinship control could, in another instance, a family head be excluded from the ranks of the titled elders on the grounds that one of his sons had twice been caught thieving. The family head was identified with the moral standards obtaining in the kinship group the headship of which would have entitled him, in the normal case, to a position in the political executive. 'How can a man who cannot keep order in his own house,' said my informant, 'keep order in the village?' But these three agencies of control are only three in a multiplicity of coextensive forms of social organization: economic pursuits, the contacts of everyday life, recreation, education. The political activities take place within this one area of common life. Expressed in one formula: the political system and the closely knit social life of a single community organize an identical human substratum.

Here we may, in parenthesis, touch upon the theoretically interesting question whether this system of 'multiple control' which the political organization is capable of utilizing can be taken to explain the absence, in the case of the Nupe village, of the more conspicuous specifically political instruments of control. However, this question cannot be solved on the basis of Nupe material alone. For here the issue is confused by the fact that the state organization, superimposed upon the village system, obviates the necessity of the more essential of these instruments, especially with respect to legal and military executive. Indeed, the fact that the state removes graver legal cases from village jurisdiction releases the social system of the village from certain social pressure which must otherwise have necessitated a more strongly marked specific political authority.

621 622 182 This brings us to the question of the resistance of this delicately balanced system of multiple control to outside influences and, generally, the influence of change. Its efficiency is clearly a function of the uniformity of social interests obtaining in the community. It will fail as soon as the closeness of community life is broken by a strong divergence of interest. Extraneous changes creating new aims which are apt to dissociate the political executive from the rest of the people may disturb its equilibrium, which could then be readjusted only by a corresponding strengthening, at the cost of the other agencies in the multiple machinery of control, of political power as such. The most radical adjustment of this kind is that brought about by the modern political changes which, in accordance with the system of Indirect Rule, have turned the village chief into an official agent of the Administration. In this capacity he may have to give orders, enforce laws, and exact actions unpopular with his people. He is bound to stand for aims and interests which may threaten to estrange him from the community. An inconsiderate Administrative Officer may still more widen the rift. Twice I have come across chiefs who, in their official capacity and by the order of a District Officer, had to forbid all dances and festivities in a district which was

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

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The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'kingmaker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

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[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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621 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the 622 highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadu*. Having been granted this 182 responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.[1] But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results 622 of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very 182 similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the 631 pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

[1] It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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itself ideally. Through the person of its head, first of all, the village organization is bound to duties towards, and linked with the fate of, the wider political organization—the kingdom. Through religious, economic, and educational factors which follow in the wake of political absorption the one-ness of community and political organization which proved the essence of the village society is finally broken. The communities themselves, their areas of integrated social life, are broken open and forced partly into a system of integration, under the dictate of a concept of social unity which is part of the centralized political system of the state. I say 'partly', for the latter has to some extent left intact the social identity of the village. This is not meant only historically, but refers to the relation and actual inter-penetration of two essentially different social systems. Nor does it refer merely to a distinction between political autonomy of the village, or certain villages, as against political domination by the kingdom. One may perhaps speak of a partial autonomy of the villages under or within the kingdom, but the essential point is the different solution of the problem of political integration in one and in the other case. We have met with the analogous difference when we discussed the two different systems of political unification evolved by the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. Let me formulate it again: it is the difference between an organization growing out of and utilizing the potentialities of uniform culture and common life, and an organization relying on the extraneous machinery of political control; between a political integration which remains true to the concept of Community, and an organization which forces unity upon diversity of culture and common life—the State.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

621 Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
554 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
571 of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accordance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpã*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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linked with a title or name, encased in these *ekpā* which bear the name of a royal house, the group of commoners rallying round a noble patron, and the nobility rallying round a dynastic head—this is one of the most conspicuous symbols of the political relationships which rule the capital.

The political administration of Nupe kingdom (like every political administration) can be regarded as an organization guaranteeing order and security to the subjects of the state—individuals and groups—in return for specific forms of submission: submission of individuals to the established rules of conduct; surrender, by groups, of all independent political action; and surrender, by individuals and groups, of portions of their property in the form of taxes and tributes. The law-abiding, tax-paying citizens are thus promised protection against enemies at home and abroad, and general security for carrying on their daily work, holding markets, using the roads, and enjoying the fruits of their labour. With regard to individuals, a legal machinery safeguards their civic rights, that is, their claims to this protection. With regard to subject groups, we may speak of constitutional rights in which this safeguard of security is embodied. The element of reciprocity implied in these constitutional rights, namely, the promise of security in return for a surrender of autonomy, is clearly understood by the people. This is shown in the current interpretation of such political measures as the suppression of the Kyedye attack on the town of Kacha described above. The intervention of the central government on behalf of Kacha is positively linked with the previous surrender of autonomy (*a gba ya Bida*, 'they submitted to Bida').

A striking feature of the internal organization of Nupe are the considerable regional differences in the completeness and directness of administration and the frequent changes which it has undergone in the fifty years of Fulani rule. These variations and changes have a threefold explanation: (1) They interpret, in terms of political status, the cultural and ethnical provenance to which we referred in the preceding chapter. (2) They are a compromise between the superstructure of the state and certain claims to autonomy, admitted mainly because of the difficulty of establishing a more complete control—for example, over the strongly organized river-state of the Kyedye, or over the newly absorbed 'outside' groups on the periphery of the kingdom. (3) They are a compromise also between centralization and delegation of power. The delegation of power represents an essential structural characteristic of the Nupe political system. The ever-expanding kingdom, increasingly dependent on the military help of the nobility, had to secure their services more and more by granting them landed property in the form of fiefs, and thus investing them with a portion of territorial sovereignty. But then, only through this indirect—feudal—administration could the expanding state hope to reach and to control its entire population, above all those scattered village units which never evolved a larger political system than could be fitted easily (like the Beni confederacy or the Kyedye political organization) into the large-scale framework of the Nupe state.[1]

[1] Compare the similar situation in Imperial Rome: 'The state had to appeal to private persons of wealth and influence because it was not able to transmit its

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634 territory which he is called upon to rule to-day, the richest trade centre of the country, is inhabited to a very large extent by strangers, traders, craftsmen, and canoe-men from other parts of the country, many of them from Bida, that is, by people who reluctantly bow to the rule of a culturally 'inferior' peasant chief. It is not surprising, therefore, that his administration of the district proved unsatisfactory, and that the *Etsu* felt justified in urging the District Officer to reinstitute in this responsible office a member of his own class.

The District Heads live in their districts; they reside in the largest town and hold there their little court, an exact copy of a nobleman's household in the capital. They have to make frequent tours of inspection of their area, and at regular intervals they visit the capital to report to the *Etsu*, especially at the time of the great Mohammedan festivals when all officers of state assemble at the king's court. District Heads are sometimes transferred from one district to another, but the tendency to-day is to let them stay in one district as long as possible so as to become thoroughly familiar with the people and the local problems of administration. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their districts, their main task being the supervision of tax collection; but they are also charged with such non-political tasks as finding pupils for the elementary schools of the Emirate. Their subordinates in the administrative machinery are the various Village Heads of the district, of whom we have heard already.[1] The District Heads are further assisted in their work by a staff of official and semi-official helpers—scribes, messengers, policemen, and the host of *bara* and henchmen who attach themselves to every man of rank.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

633 621 The administration of Bida town has undergone many changes in the thirty or forty years of British Administration. The original system was based to some extent on the division of the town into a number of 'wards', each associated with an influential member of the Bida nobility. The town was divided into twenty *efu* (or, as they were known officially, *ungwa*—the Hausa word for town ward); five of these wards were grouped together as one large *ungwa*, and these four *ungwa* were placed under four men of high rank: *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Galadiman Gari*, and *Gabi Seidi*. The four *ungwa* bore no relation to the dynastic division of Bida into three *ekpã*; their arrangement simply followed the four main roads which cross the town from north to south and east to west. However, the four rank-holders in charge of the large *ungwa* as well as the other subordinate ward-heads in the small *ungwa* (or *efu*) were actually living in the part of the town over which they had been placed; the link of locality which is so relevant in Nupe life was thus recognized officially. Later, however, this system of ward-heads lent itself to certain abuses, bribery and extortion of tax-money; it was abolished by the Administration and replaced by a new system which now divides the town into four

[1] See p. 52.

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633 *ungwa* (the same four *ungwa*), defined geographically as Bida North, South, East, and West. Four new officials were appointed who are no 621 longer inhabitants of 'their' *ungwa* but are supposed to be jointly responsible for the whole town, irrespective of their personal connexions with one or the other locality. The Hausa and Yoruba communities of Bida, who live in *lálemi*, were placed under their own ward-heads. These six officials form the present Town Council. A royal prince, the *Natsu*, was appointed as its chairman, and at the same time as the representative of the *Etsu* on the Town Council. The attached sketch-map illustrates the changes in the town administration.

633 A certain inner weakness of this system becomes apparent at once. It lies in the disregard for the factor of locality and for those direct contacts and bonds of 'protection' and personal attachment which alone establish in Nupe a relationship of mutual confidence between the social classes, between ruler and ruled. It is not surprising therefore that the new division into four geographical areas 'did not work', and that in 1936, only three years after its introduction, a fundamental reorganization was contemplated.[1]

TAXATION

651 The taxation of the Emirate is fixed by the District Officer, who tours the country and, assisted by District Head and Village Head, assesses the income of the various villages and districts. The tax unit is the village area.[2] The distribution of the tax among the people of the village and its dependencies is left to the Village Head and his elders. Taxation varies partly from district to district and is also different in town and country. Complaints against too heavy taxation, or reports on defaulting, are forwarded through the District Head to the capital, that is, to the Emir's Council and the District Officer. Tax defaulters can be imprisoned.

Of the total tax revenue of the Emirate (to which are added fines, licence fees, &c.) 30 per cent. goes to the Central Government of Nigeria and 70 per cent. to the N.A. Treasury.[3] From the N.A. share in the revenue are paid the salaries of all (native) N.A. officials, the expenses of all Public Works for which the Emirate is responsible, the maintenance

[1] In a memorandum for the reorganization of the Bida Town Council, which I drew up on the request of the Administration, I have suggested (1) a town division based on the division into three *ekpā*, which is so eminently characteristic of the social life of the kingdom, and (2) a system of election of ward-heads by the people themselves. The latter would, in my view, utilize and render more valuable the channels of personal connexion between patron and client, trusted 'protector' and the ignorant, intimidated commoner who still feels that he could only benefit from the association with a man of rank and learning.—A paper on the same subject was published in abridged form in the *Summary of Lectures*, Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1937, pp. 97–8. See also p. 123.

[2] Lord Lugard, Colonial Reports Misc., No. 40.

[3] This scale corresponds to the position of Bida Emirate as a First Class Emirate. In 1935–6 the scale was slightly altered in favour of the N.A. share, because the building of the *Etsu*'s new official residence—a typical item of N.A. expenditure—would not have been possible without this additional revenue.

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425 from farming stock, that is, whose family is holding land already, the usual way to acquire land is to exercise his claim to a parcel of the land that is held jointly by the family group, and which is administered and apportioned by the family head. This would be the procedure, for example, in the case of a young member of the family who had founded a family himself and now requests land for a farm of his own. More or less the same situation would arise in the case of a stranger, a native of Nupe though not of the particular village, or even a native of Nigeria (a Hausa or Yoruba) though an alien in Nupe, who, having been adopted into a household, may request land on which to settle. There is, however, the possibility that the family land available at the time is insufficient; or there might be a man desiring land whose family had not held land previously or had lost the claim to the land, e.g. through overlong absence. Here two main methods offer themselves: first, the man desiring land can exercise his right as a member, native or adopted, of the village community to request land (possibly additional land) from the chief, which may be either land that has been under cultivation previously but has fallen vacant, or virgin land within the village territory. 427 Second, he can acquire new land through an arrangement with an individual landlord (using the term here in the widest sense); in other words, he can lease land temporarily for a rent in kind—a method known in Nupe as *aro*, 'borrowing'. In both these methods the land thus acquired is inalienable.

[621]

A third method closely related to borrowing is a lease for life or for an indefinite period, in most cases against a single payment in money to which is added a fixed rent in kind. This arrangement, which definitely recognizes the money value of land, may be tantamount to real purchase. Fourth, there exists hereditary tenantship, which gives the tenant absolute right over his land, including the right to dispose of it again or sublet it. This tenantship I shall call (for reasons which will become clear presently) *secondary* tenantship. It implies not a fixed rent but a share in the produce—a form of métayer system.[1] Finally, there exists a *primary* tenantship, in which a landlord who himself owns the land by the right of conquest or appropriation may cede complete and absolute rights over land to another person, Nupe or stranger, in recognition of (political) services rendered; here again a share in the produce is implied. The last two methods form part of the feudal organization of the Nupe state.[2]

425 We have thus five methods of land acquisition, which fall in two main 427 categories: (1) Acquisition in virtue of membership of a group (kinship

[1] See A. Marshall, op. cit., p. 643.

[2] Different from these traditional methods of acquiring and transferring land is the method of land-tenure under the Native Land Ordinance Act, which, adjusted to modern requirements, involves the lease of native land to non-natives, i.e. non-Nigerians (a merchant who plans a trading-station, a missionary who intends to build a school or church, &c.). In such cases application for a lease of a parcel of the land that has been retained as Crown land must be made to the Administration. This method, and all questions entailed in it, will be disregarded in the following. It is, in fact, of very little significance in Nupe country where no commercial utilization of land and no settlement of non-natives exist.

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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna.

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*latí*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cikã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'.

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociźi wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-o*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

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621 361 'colonies' or *tunga*. The *tunga* thus possesses land in its own right, but at the same time pushes its territorial possessions further into no-man's-land.

Access to Village Land

621 423 There is no general rule for the distribution, within the area of village land, of the farms belonging to the various family groups and individuals. Roughly one may say that the small individual plots (called *bucá*—a term to be explained presently) are situated near the village and the larger family plots (*efakó* plots) farther afield. When old men own plots of their own they, too, are given plots near the village so that they should not have to walk too far. The different plots which belong to the group of people living together in the same house (as a rule, a single family group), whether the plots are worked jointly or independently by the various household members, do not necessarily lie together, but are frequently scattered. Nor have the people who live together in the same *efu* their land on adjoining sites, or in the neighbourhood of the part of the village where they live. We may add that, again, there exist no special signs or boundary marks to distinguish the property of different farmers. A narrow path, a border of shrubs, or a tree, serve as landmark.[1] But the different cultivation that may be practised on the different fields, or the different stage of cultivation which the different fields may represent (fallow land, land that has been worked for one year, or two years, &c.), make these boundaries more obvious to the eye.

242 423 621 This irregular distribution of farm-plots appears to be due to a variety of causes. To some extent it is entailed in the complex agricultural technique of the country, with its many different types of cultivation and its regular system of rotation of crops. Every farmer owns a certain number of fields—some under cultivation while others are lying fallow—which he tries to distribute over different sites so that he can utilize different types of soil, e.g. the marshy sites near watercourses for the cultivation of rice or sweet potatoes, dry sandy soil for ground-nuts, heavier soil for yam and cotton, and so forth. This arrangement also has the advantage of distributing more evenly the risks of failure. You often find farmers complaining that one site on which they have a farm is less good than another, or has perhaps suffered special injury that year through birds or through thieving baboons, or has been washed away by a flooded river. But the irregular distribution of farm-plots is also a result of the very method of Nupe settlement: it could not be otherwise with the farm-land lying in a circle round the large villages in which a numerous population is concentrated. There would not be room enough for all family groups in the village to have their lands arranged in compact blocks in equally favoured positions, both with regard to the distance from the village and to the quality of the soil. Moreover, some plots more heavily worked than others 'tire' sooner and must be replaced by virgin land lying farther afield; and growing families must provide more land for their

[1] A characteristic exception are a few marsh-land plots near Kacha, which are properly fenced in—'because of the many disputes' that arise over this kind of land.

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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed 423
to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is 621
to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that 423
a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a 621
junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect 423
to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of 622
his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift [431]
to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The
annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid 423
to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the 622
chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three 651
bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nūsa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

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difference in quality and value to a much greater extent, namely, fruit-bearing trees. 423 621

In most districts the chief has a special title to certain economically valuable fruit trees wherever they grow, on vacant land or on people's farms. In Doko and Shebe this special chief's tree is the locust-bean, in Kutigi and Wuna the oil-palm. In Mokwa there exists another regulation, namely, that all shea-nut and locust-bean trees inside the town belong to the chief, while the trees outside are the full property of the man on whose ground they stand. Also there is in many places the general rule that no fruit tree on village land may be cut down without the special permission of the chief. Sometimes family heads exercise a restricted right to the 'chief's trees' growing on their land, i.e. they return two-fifths of the crop to the chief and keep the rest. But the chief may also grant the full possession of these trees as a separate right; thus he bestows the property of a certain number of valuable trees on an individual—young or old—as a recognition of higher civic status, together with the promotion to rank and title. The right to the trees, coupled with the rank, remains the property of the 'house', conditional upon the renewal of the appointment (to the same or a similar rank) after the death of each holder.[1] The shea-nut trees—to-day of considerable commercial importance—occupy everywhere in Nupe a special position. The trees on vacant land (virgin village land or no-man's-land) are common property. The women who collect the fruit go out in small parties and share the crop among them. The shea-nut trees on occupied farm-land belong to the owner of the farm.[2] In either case the exploitation of the crop is the exclusive prerogative of the women. [554] [562]

A few words may be given to a special variety of village land, the plots that are situated in the village itself, round the compounds and between the village *efu*. This land is owned by the people who live in the compounds adjoining the plots. Its inheritance and apportionment is ruled by the same regulations as the inheritance and apportionment of the houses themselves and will best be discussed in a later section. The land inside village and town differs only in one respect from the village land without: it is never left uncultivated. Manured as it is by the refuse from the houses it can be used continuously without the necessity of being left fallow for a period. If the owner of such plots leaves the village or the town and does not return for some time, leaving no one behind (which has happened frequently in Bida during the last twenty years), the neighbours will use the farm-plots; they are always ready,

[1] A certain complication arises when the modern official Village Head is not identical with the traditional chief, for the former may assume control over the land only, not over trees—he may indeed not possess any 'chief's trees' himself, at least not at the time of his appointment. There is no evidence as yet to show how this contradiction will be solved in the course of time—except an indirect evidence to be mentioned presently (see p. 189, n. 2), which tends to show that this separation of land- and tree-rights is allowed to last for several generations.

[2] The facts mentioned here will correct the statement made by some students of West African agriculture, that 'shea-nut trees are generally regarded as entirely common property' (O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, *West African Agriculture*, 1933, p. 27).

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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years— 621 the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as 425 we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have 621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to [431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is [431] this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who 609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted 621 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first 425 *dzankú*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose 651

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who [177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankâ* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankâ* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsoźi*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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566 allegiance, suffice to make the landlord refuse a renewal of the tenancy
427 or even to cancel a running tenancy. Several cases of this kind have come to my knowledge; one even found its way to court: L., a nobleman of high rank, evicted his tenant (and this in the middle of the planting season!) because he had lacked in loyalty towards him and 'betrayed his confidence'.

Political changes have brought about an interesting development.
427 To-day the initiative in this kind of tenantship has to some extent
566 passed from the tenants to the landlords themselves. The landlords were, as we have seen, mostly warriors and courtiers who, living in the
621 capital, never worked their land themselves, but settled their slaves on
567 it, and had it worked by their labour. When slavery was abolished and wars came to an end, when the 'absentee' landlords no longer needed *bara* as soldiers for their private armies and could no longer support a large household of henchmen and hangers-on in the town, they offered their land to their *bara*, and so new settlers went out into the country, occupying the land and founding new farm settlements. Sometimes the noble landowners even settled some of their relations in this fashion on the land, nephews and younger brothers, for whom no place or job could be found in town.

All these farm settlements, whether they were for slaves or *bara*, for
427 peasants turned client or clients turned peasant, are called *tunga*—the
566 same name that is applied to the Nupe village 'colonies'. But the 'private'
621 *tunga* has no name of the kind villages possess, but bears the name of the noble patron to whom it 'belongs'. These *tunga* settlements are scattered all over Cis-Kaduna, and surround Bida in a dense belt. There are innumerable hamlets called Sokyara, Maiyaki, Ndeji, or similar titles of nobility—the titles of the landlords under whose patronage the settlements were founded. To our description of the village *tunga* given in a previous chapter we will add here a few examples of the 'private' *tunga*.

Etsu-Kolo (about four miles south of Bida), consisting of two compounds, two families which are distantly related. Called after the founder of the *tunga*, the father of the present family head. This Etsu-Kolo had been, like his father before him, a *bara* of the *Cekpa* in Bida. Later, however, Etsu-Kolo transferred his allegiance to the then ruling Emir, *Etsu* Mohamadu. The change of allegiance proved good policy: *Etsu* Mohamadu procured for him the position of a Village Head for the whole district with its many *tunga* settlements. Since then the family had remained faithful to *Etsu* Mohamadu's house, even after the Village Headship had been abolished again; they are still paying their regular *dzanká* to his successors, at present to the *Shaba* in Bida.

Emi Bwori ('House of Bwori', one mile north of Bida), called after a certain Bwori, the head of the guild of Bida butchers, and a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. This Bwori settled his own slaves in this *tunga*. The present owners of it regard themselves as *bara* of the descendants of Bwori, but have abandoned paying *dzanká* to them; but they still go to 'salute' them whenever they come up to town.

Lumanen (four miles west of Bida), a group of very prosperous *tunga* settlements, founded at different times by relations and noblemen attached to the royal house of *Etsu* Masaba. One settlement has been built by the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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father of the present *Maiyaki* for his *bara*, and is accordingly called *Maiyaki*. A second settlement is called *Emi 'tsu Saba*, and was founded in the time of the father of the present family head, who was a slave in *Etsu* Masaba's house. A third settlement was built recently, by the present family head, who was a *bara* of the present *Etsu* Saidu (also of the Masaba dynasty). All three settlements still pay their regular *dzankd* to their patrons. This year's *dzankd* amounted to one bundle of corn and ten yams.[1]

Makū (one mile south of Bida), consisting of three compounds, called after the noble patron of a certain Ndatazi, a peasant who had had a farm somewhere else first and then moved to the present site, obtaining the land with the help of the *Makū*. He lives in one of the compounds; of the other two one belongs to his brother, and one to a distant relative by marriage, who left his old farm and came here, where the land is better, also becoming a *bara* of the *Makū*. Each of the three houses pays an annual *dzankd* to the present *Makū*. It amounted this year to three bundles of corn and ten yams per compound.

Saci (three miles east of Bida), called after the *Saci* of Bida (a nobility rank). It consists of five compounds; in one a son of the *Saci* is living—the other members of his family are living in Bida—in the other compounds *bara* of the *Saci*. They have discontinued paying their *dzankd*, but still pay regular visits to their patron in town.

One word about the economic arrangement obtaining in the *tunga*. The slaves had worked the land entirely for their masters; that is to say, they had no *efakó* (family) land of their own, but were fed and clothed by their masters, and were also allotted smaller, *bucd* plots, which they were free to work for themselves. The arrangement between the landlord and the *bara* whom he settles on his land is the same métayer system which also regulates the tenantship of the free peasant who accepts clientship in order to obtain land. To-day, the difference between former slaves and *bara* has disappeared; for to most of the freed slaves their change of status meant only a promotion from slave to (free) client. Both, in a good many cases, still acknowledge this form of dependence and, as we saw, still return the annual tithe from their crops to the patron, or at least still pay their respects dutifully. The *dzankd* is no longer a compulsory tribute, and would not be upheld by the court. It is a voluntary gift which confirms the relationship of patronage and protection—a relationship which is as real to-day as it was in former times: political protection for oneself and one's children is bought cheaply with a bundle or two of corn a year.

Hereditary Land: Primary Tenantship

The acquisition of land through clientship follows the general pattern of the Nupe feudal hierarchy. A man who obtains land as a *bara* obtains it from a man of higher rank, either a royal prince or nobleman who holds the land in his own right, or from a rank-holder or titled slave or a king's *bara* who has himself obtained the land from another landlord higher up on the hierarchical scale. These 'primary tenants', however, have acquired their land by a different method, namely, through certain

[1] This census was taken in 1934, when *Etsu* Saidu was still alive.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d.* and 6*d.*). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s.*, which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s.* and 6*s.*[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gumu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s.*, and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *esi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in 344 the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

● 621 An *esi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *esi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *esi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *esi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *esi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference 592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying [423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Agansku*, and of Shaku *Kpotuy*.[21]

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*Ɛitsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *Ɛitsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*yusaɛi*, sing. *yusa*, the "old ones," or *ticiɛi*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*Ɛigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Ziitsu* and *Ɛigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1916; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1926) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsoʒi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsoʒi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsoʒi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede
[582 marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
184] villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsoʒi*.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpā*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpā*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takū* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta doji*.

5: Nadel
622, 643

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[Information concerning the chief of the Kede sub-tribe has been placed in category 634. --Analyst]

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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nūsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nūsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nūsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nūsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nūsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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highest in the order of village ranks, and one of the senior elders of the village is promoted to the position of the chief. In all other areas chieftainship is hereditary and bound up with one 'house'. Chieftainship of the promotion type goes invariably hand in hand with a rank system of promotion type. But hereditary chieftainship does not invariably imply hereditary *nūsa* ranks. In Dibo country, for example, chieftainship is hereditary, but the *nūsa* ranks in some villages follow promotion. The elected chief is by no means regarded as less closely identified with the village which he 'owns' than the hereditary chief. The rule that he assumes the name of 'his' village as title holds good both for elected and hereditary chiefs: the *Gebba* of Jebba (Gebba) is, as we have just seen, an elected chief.

Neither chieftainship by election nor hereditary chieftainship implies an automatic, rigidly fixed, succession. Under the former, any elder who has reached an important rank is eligible for the final promotion. The latitude which this arrangement allows is illustrated in the succession to the chieftainship in Mokwa, where, in the case of the last five chiefs, the following rank-holders were elected as chiefs: *Sámaza*, the fourth on the village rank-list, *Sojekó*, the second on the village rank-list, *Majī Bagidi*, the eighth, and *Sarkin Zongu*; this last rank, borrowed from Hausa, has been abandoned during the régime of the present chief. It was attached to the position of a caretaker in the camp prepared for the trading caravans stopping at Mokwa—a responsible and lucrative, though from traditional point of view inferior, post. (See chart I, p. 54.)

Hereditary succession to chieftainship follows the same elastic rule which governs succession to hereditary *nūsa* ranks.[1] A few communities have adopted the practice of appointing beforehand the successor to chieftainship, an 'heir presumptive', mostly known by the title *Shaba*. But it can be shown that this practice is of comparatively recent origin, in fact, a copy of the system of succession characteristic of Nupe kingship. The larger the family group or 'house' of the hereditary chief, the more scope there is for the selection of a fitting successor. Expansion of the chieftain family may lead to a splitting-up of the 'house' as a result of which the chief's office, vested in two or more related houses, is taken in rotation by these families. In at least one case hereditary succession itself was abandoned, and replaced by free election: in Doko the line of hereditary succession was interrupted two generations ago, and a 'new man', a man of outstanding ability, was appointed as successor by the old chief and accordingly 'elected' later by the elders of the village. The genealogy of the Doko chiefs (p. 52) up to the appointment of this 'new man' may illustrate the latitude allowed even in strictly hereditary chieftainship. We see that sons, grandsons, younger brothers, and brothers' sons are all equally admitted to the succession of village chieftainship.

The appointment or election of the new chief is a matter for the council of elders. It is presided over by a certain *nūsa* of high rank who is in many places called *Ndeji* (a corrupted form of *Ndeẓi*, viz. *nda eẓi*),

[1] In one village, Etsú, I found matrilineal succession to hereditary chieftainship, through the mother's brother's son, although in all other respects the rules of inheritance were the same as everywhere else in Nupe. I am unable to explain this isolated instance, unless perhaps historically.

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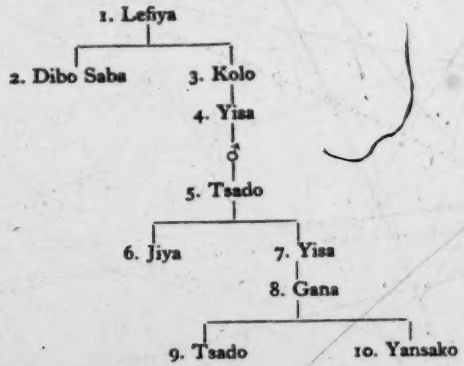
Genealogy of Doko Chiefs



Father of the Town, and who stands somewhat apart from the other village ranks. He plays the part of the chief 'elector' or 'king-maker'; he is never himself a candidate for chieftainship, but is entrusted with the rule of the village during the interregnum. We shall hear more of him presently. The Nupe dislike a long interregnum: as a rule only a few weeks, filled out with discussions and the consultation of diviners, elapse before the appointment of a new chief.[1] This appointment will eventually need the confirmation of the *Etsu* Nupe and, to-day, of the Administrative Officer. This last rule, however, applies only to those chiefs who are recognized as official Village Heads under the modern Native Administration. In the reorganization of the Emirate under British rule only the larger villages have been created seats of official Village Heads. Their number does not comprise all the places which are 'villages' or 'towns' in traditional native conception.[2] A significant terminological dualism has been the result: the people speak of *Zitsu*, 'town-king', when referring to their traditional, officially unrecognized, chief, and call the officially appointed Village Head *Etsu Nyenkpa*, 'Money Chief' (i.e. tax chief).

I can offer no explanation for the coexistence of these two different systems of chieftainship, of hereditary and promotion type. There is no evidence of either having developed from the other. Nor can local conditions, economic factors, or the factors of size and population be made responsible. But I could discover the sociologically interesting correlation between the system of succession and the religious elements which surround Nupe chieftainship. In the villages where chieftainship is hereditary we find that vague mythology of origin which tells of the first occupation of the land, and of the foundation of the village by the

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[1] I have been told that formerly unanimity between the various diviners of the village was considered necessary. In Mokwa my informants stated that the normal duration of the 'interregnum' is ten days.

[2] In connexion with a scheme to raise the salary of Village Heads the number of Village Headships in Bida Emirate has recently been further reduced.

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ancestor of the present chief. A certain special magic and sacred insignia are linked with the house in which chieftainship is vested. Thus the chiefs of various Beni villages and of Sakpe possess the brass bangles of Tsoede; chiefs in Dibo country an iron staff; chiefs in the riverain area the sacred chain of Tsoede. The magic ritual which is associated with chieftainship varies as widely: in Doko it is a harvest rite, the 'eating of the bulrush-millet'; in other villages it appears as magic against barrenness, as a rain sacrifice, an ordeal, or as a general rite to secure health and prosperity of the community. But invariably the chief's ritual, whatever its more specific aim, will be performed as funeral rite and ceremony of installation of chiefs, and also whenever certain great calamities befall the community—a drought, famine, or epidemic. The chief is not himself the priest of this magic, and often has not the insignia in his own possession. Insignia and magic are entrusted to another member of the chief's family. The office of the *Žigi*, the village priest, is kept in the junior branch of the chieftain house, and *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, Town-king and Town-priest, appear in the genealogies as elder and younger brother (in the classificatory sense).[1]

In the communities, on the other hand, where the chief is elected from the senior rank-holders, his house 'owns' no special magic or insignia, and there is no mythology of a founder of the village, but tradition speaks of the village as having 'always been there'. The religious duties fall, instead, to the *nũsa* who acts as chief 'elector' and who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum. This man's office will be hereditary and sacred, he will own insignia or a special powerful magic, which is, again, invoked at the death and the appointment of chiefs or in the case of great calamities. A supernatural agency, a mystic safeguard, is thus always assumed behind the chief's authority. But Nupe village organization has evolved two different solutions, in accordance with the two different systems of chieftain succession: one makes the chief or his family the agents of the supernatural power which supports the claim to chieftainship; the other separates the political rule from the mystic safeguard and, instead of a hereditary king, brings into being a hereditary 'king-maker'. (See chart II, p. 55).

This division of religious and secular office seems to eliminate effectively conflicts between chief and priest. The priests of the village cults, experts in religious matters only, have no influence in political affairs; they are, as we saw, not even granted the general prerogative of their age: a seat on the council of elders. The priest of the chief's cult, if of the chief's family, is classed as a 'younger brother' and thus equally barred from the position of an influential elder. Only the priest-king-maker (where he exists) could gain the position of a rival power and interfere with secular affairs. However, by his office the main 'elector' of the chief, he should be a supporter and ally of the chief, whose office reflects to some extent his own authority, rather than his adversary or rival. He may prefer a puppet at the head of the village—I saw an instance

[1] See the genealogy given in chart II, p. 55.

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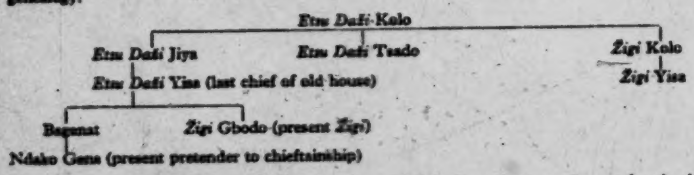
II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('ofu')*	*Succession*	*Insigma, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Etsu Dafi*	Chief	Dafi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Žigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shabe*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shabe*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dafi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotŭ*	..	"	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Mahŭ*	..	"	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dasho*	..	Takogi	"	..	..
8	*Bohe*	..	Kpacinefu	"	..	..
9	*Shabadi*	..	Ndadofu	"	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dafi	"	..	..
11	*Žitsu Bebi*	..	Edokó	"	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	"	"	..	..
13	*Maji Egbe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	"	"	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences.

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon

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622 793 578 against the ruling chief whom he regarded as an usurper. He refused the chief the use of the sacred insignia—the bangles of Tsoede—without which the annual chief's ritual cannot be performed. Finally, in 1934, he asked me to intervene for him so that he should be given official authority to keep in his possession the invaluable insignia, which the chief was demanding back not so much for religious reasons (for some of his brothers and sons were already posing as Mohammedans), as in order to deprive the rival family of this convincing evidence of their claim to the rule of Doko. The case remained undecided, and the rivalry between the two men unrelieved, till in 1936 the chief offered the 'pretender' official recognition of a sort, namely, the title *Makū*. The highest rank next to the chief's, *Shaba*, had just fallen vacant, and a reshuffle of titles had taken place. Ndakó Gana, however, rejected the title *Makū*—a new title, introduced *ad hoc* (copied from the dynastic ranks in Bida)—as a meaningless, makeshift sort of rank and demanded instead the rank of *Shaba* itself. The deadlock was finally overcome by an appeal of both parties to the *Etsu*; he managed to persuade the young man to accept the offered rank, at least as an earnest, and as more fitting to his age.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

622 The tasks of government which fall to the village chief are these:

1. He appoints the village elders from the ranks of the family heads and is thus bound, as by a constitution in the modern sense, to accept their co-operation and advice in all matters of village government.
2. He controls the land resources of the community and in this capacity apportions farm-land, trees, fishing rights, and levies certain tributes and land dues from the families holding village land. With this aspect of village government we shall deal later on in detail, in the chapter on land-tenure.
3. He is not, as we have seen, the religious head of the community. But he organizes, directly or indirectly, and partly finances, certain religious rites linked with chieftainship.
4. He arbitrates in litigation and wields (though now only on a limited scale) a certain informal judicial power.
5. He organizes all large-scale co-operation and concerted action of the village community.

We have already spoken of the composition of the village council and the co-operation between chief and elders. Let me add some concrete data to illustrate the working of the village 'constitution'.

627 A Doko farmer had quarrelled with a neighbour over some trees; people from a village near Mokwa came into Mokwa to borrow masks for the *elo* ritual which they were going to perform, having lost their own masks; a family head in Sakpe accused his sister's son who lived in his house of having stolen rice from his farm; a girl in Laboži denounced two strangers who had been given hospitality by a neighbour and whom she saw stealing their host's clothes; a young man in Jebba accused his wife of adultery; another man in Jebba complained that a certain hunter

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651 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal cere-
621 monies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nūsaži* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an
[694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also,
623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as
661 heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; 622
a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* 623
group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on
their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a 661
rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the 622
economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free him-
661
self from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important 623
economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) 651
a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe', from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this [431]
payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, [476]
which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general 622
money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes.
Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., 651
receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind 431
has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a

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622 651 [43]

voluntary present. It is, I was told, only the 'old men who are still doing it'. The value of the right to communal farm-work has also lost its former importance. A number of salaried Village Heads have abandoned almost completely their former agricultural work, being too busy with their official duties. One village chief, who is District Head at the same time (in Kacha), has found it impossible to spare even his sons and brothers for farm-work, needing them as messengers and the like. Instead, he has adopted the most recent innovation in Nupe economics, and engages wage-labour to work his land. The chiefs of small villages, however, who draw no wages, and have been given no official position under the N.A., have lost the most important of the old economic prerogatives—unless their people voluntarily continue the old practice—without benefiting from the new. Only the right to special fruit-bearing trees, game, and fishing has survived everywhere without change. It is not surprising, therefore, that the old term *Žitsu* is more and more losing its splendour, overshadowed by the matter-of-fact term *Etsu Nyenkpa*, Money or Tax Chief. And often the small chiefs, who have been passed over in the political reorganization of the Emirate,[1] tell you that to-day there is little difference between chief and commoners.

622 How far did the former economic prerogatives in reality establish a definite, unassailable economic superiority of the chief? The approach to this question must be through the comparison between traditional income and expenditure of chief and elders respectively. Here we see that some of the economic prerogatives of the chief are shared (though in lesser degree) by the other family heads and titled elders. The *nūsaži*, like the chief, have a right to the possession of fruit-bearing trees; they too can avail themselves of communal farm-work—though only after the chief. And if they have a large family, many sons and younger brothers helping in the farm-work, their normal income may not be very much lower than the chief's. Of the economic prerogatives of the chief only the land-tithe (or its modern counterpart, the chief's salary) and the game and fishing rights are exclusive to his official position. The game rights contribute mainly to the symbols of chieftain status—the possession of a leopard or lion skin, allowed only to the chief. The additional capital resources vested in chieftainship—additional in the sense that they are unavailable to ordinary family heads—were thus derived in the main from the tithe.[2] I have calculated that the annual land-tithe of a village the size of Doko would amount to about seventy bundles of corn—twice the annual yield upon which an average peasant household could reckon.[3] Now, on this evidence we are justified in saying that the

[1] See p. 52.

[2] Certain other irregular forms of income it is impossible to estimate to-day: occasional land fees from new tenants, fines or gifts from parties between whom the chief was arbitrating. Moreover, certain chiefs received a small share of the tax money they levied for the *Etsu* Nupe (see p. 116); but this last income, derived from the kingdom, no longer reflects the village system as such.

[3] There is a certain margin of error in this calculation. The constant extension and subdivision of Nupe family groups and households make it impossible to define with any precision the size of the households originally responsible for the payment of the tithe. I have taken an average of the larger groups, such as are

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chief's special income did not, normally, constitute an insurmountable economic barrier between himself and his subjects. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristic possessions of a chief—possession of things generally valued in the society—were not unattainable by others.

His surplus income the chief uses as follows: some of it he must devote to special expenditure attached to his office, the purchase of a goat or fowl for the annual sacrifices, or some other large contribution (larger than that of the other family heads) towards the cost of the village ceremonies. Occasional liberal presents to the elders, food, kola-nuts, beer, gowns are also indicated; a niggardly chief is much disliked. The larger part of his income the chief spends on himself, his family, and generally on things the possession of which are demanded by his status and prestige. Some chiefs, with a view to profit as well as prestige, have bought slaves or taken pawns. Every bigger chief possesses at least one horse. His dress is always of the more expensive kind—embroidered trousers, a turban, and an indigo-dyed gown, possibly an embroidered Bida robe. Many chiefs possess the beautifully carved staffs which are made by the craftsmen in the river valley and sold for sums up to two pounds. One or another chief owns an old flintlock gun, and some chiefs pride themselves on building bigger and more ornate houses than the majority of the people possess. Finally, as the most conspicuous symbol of economic advantage in this country of extremely high bride-price, two at least of the bigger chiefs I met had what among the Nupe peasants is considered a very large number of wives (5 or 6 as against the usual 1 or 2), and so had some of their sons and younger brothers.

Set against this the economic position of a well-to-do family head and rank-holder. He too used to own slaves or pawns. The higher rank-holders often possess large, imposing houses. They carry carved staffs, own a horse, turban and state gown, and a gun. Some of them may have three or four wives. With regard to the accoutrements of his office—the religious elements linked with chieftainship, its insignia and symbols of rank—the chief stands on a plane by himself; as regards things 'that money can buy', or liquid capital, he is placed only one step higher than his citizens of rank. The surplus capital which he derives from his office is not, as we can see, large enough to be turned into an effective instrument of political ambition.

Involved in this is the question how far the temporary economic benefits linked with the chief's office can be used so as to be turned into a lasting economic advantage, enjoyed by the descendants and the whole family of the chief. For the communities in which succession to chieftainship follows promotion or rotation the question answers itself: the surplus income vested in the chief's office is not sufficient, once acquired, to endow his whole 'house' permanently with economic superiority.[1] In

presided over by the *nilsa* ranks, and the smaller family groups (approximately 100 in number) with which we should have to reckon to-day.

[1] Here is a significant illustration: in Mokwa and Jebba, two villages of 'promotion type', the imposing houses of the late chiefs have fallen into disrepair; the descendants are no longer able to command the communal labour without which the upkeep of the large house is impossible.

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622 hereditary chieftainship, the accumulation of surplus renders such development more likely. But even here the existence of the special chief's cult, which imposes additional expenses on the chief (higher than in the case of cults to which he need only contribute his share), should tend to adjust more equitably the economic balance between chief and elders.[1]

However, we have other evidence to show that the chief's position, economically privileged though it may be, is not *meant* to lead to the formation of an essentially different, sharply separated, permanently privileged ruling class; evidence, in other words, to show that the political organization of the village is meant to preserve the social homogeneity of its community. This evidence lies in the rules of etiquette defining the behaviour of the people towards their chief. People everywhere show reverence to their chief: they kneel down by the door when entering his presence. Often there are raised platforms in the chief's entrance hut, near the door leading to the inner part of the house, on which he would sit, while the others are squatting on the ground in front of him. Or the chief would sit on a leopard skin or at least a cow-hide, while the others are assigned seats on grass-mats. The chief, finally, is addressed by special formulae of greeting reserved for his title. Yet again, this attitude of reverence represents only the highest grade of respect as it is shown similarly to all *nūsaži*, graded in accordance with age and rank. In every house young men or visitors of lower status and seniority would squat near the door while the head of the house, or honoured guests, occupy places on the inner side—the more honoured side. Special greetings of the same symbolic nature as the salute reserved for the chief are typical of the various ranks. Here as in the case of economic privileges etiquette marks off the chief not as standing on 'a plane by himself' but merely as the most prominent in a graded order of prominence. If on state occasions, wearing his state robe and turban, the chief is conspicuously marked off from the rest of the people, when going out to his farms there is nothing to distinguish him from an ordinary farmer; like him he carries his hoe across the shoulder, a straw hat on his head, and wears only the cheap blue cloth slung loosely round the body. There is thus ample 'neutral ground' in the matter of etiquette and distinction of status between chief, elders, and the rest of the people.

But above all, the attitude of reverence and the special chief's salute are reserved for the chief's person; they are not enjoyed equally by his relations merely in virtue of their being his relations. The exalted social position of the chief does not extend to his family—there exist, even in hereditary chieftainship, no symbols of a hereditary class differentiation. Later, in the discussion of social classes in the kingdom, we shall understand fully the significance of this 'democratic' element in Nupe village chieftainship.

[1] In 1936 the chief of Doko bought five sheep for sacrifices connected with the 'chief's cult', contributed beer to other ceremonies, and presented two gowns to men with whom he was anxious to keep on good terms—not counting occasional small gifts and contributions, e.g. to family feasts, &c. Altogether an expenditure of approximately £2–3, or 30 to 40 bundles of corn, that is, roughly half of his income from tithe.

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *wacī*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *wacī*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nūsaẓi*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *eẓi u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunnu* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

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621 182 of this coextensiveness of the spheres of religious and political control could the village elders of Kutigi to whose 'strike' we referred above effect that political adjustment by religious pressure. And again only because of this coextensiveness of the spheres of political and kinship control could, in another instance, a family head be excluded from the ranks of the titled elders on the grounds that one of his sons had twice been caught thieving. The family head was identified with the moral standards obtaining in the kinship group the headship of which would have entitled him, in the normal case, to a position in the political executive. 'How can a man who cannot keep order in his own house,' said my informant, 'keep order in the village?' But these three agencies of control are only three in a multiplicity of coextensive forms of social organization: economic pursuits, the contacts of everyday life, recreation, education. The political activities take place within this one area of common life. Expressed in one formula: the political system and the closely knit social life of a single community organize an identical human substratum.

Here we may, in parenthesis, touch upon the theoretically interesting question whether this system of 'multiple control' which the political organization is capable of utilizing can be taken to explain the absence, in the case of the Nupe village, of the more conspicuous specifically political instruments of control. However, this question cannot be solved on the basis of Nupe material alone. For here the issue is confused by the fact that the state organization, superimposed upon the village system, obviates the necessity of the more essential of these instruments, especially with respect to legal and military executive. Indeed, the fact that the state removes graver legal cases from village jurisdiction releases the social system of the village from certain social pressure which must otherwise have necessitated a more strongly marked specific political authority.

621 622 182 This brings us to the question of the resistance of this delicately balanced system of multiple control to outside influences and, generally, the influence of change. Its efficiency is clearly a function of the uniformity of social interests obtaining in the community. It will fail as soon as the closeness of community life is broken by a strong divergence of interest. Extraneous changes creating new aims which are apt to dissociate the political executive from the rest of the people may disturb its equilibrium, which could then be readjusted only by a corresponding strengthening, at the cost of the other agencies in the multiple machinery of control, of political power as such. The most radical adjustment of this kind is that brought about by the modern political changes which, in accordance with the system of Indirect Rule, have turned the village chief into an official agent of the Administration. In this capacity he may have to give orders, enforce laws, and exact actions unpopular with his people. He is bound to stand for aims and interests which may threaten to estrange him from the community. An inconsiderate Administrative Officer may still more widen the rift. Twice I have come across chiefs who, in their official capacity and by the order of a District Officer, had to forbid all dances and festivities in a district which was

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

621 622 182 208 [514]

The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'kingmaker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

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[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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621 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the 622 highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadu*. Having been granted this 182 responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.[1] But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results 622 of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very 182 similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the 631 pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

[1] It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe.[1] The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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the *Alkali*, said one of my informants, and will think nothing of perjuring themselves.

Let me quote a significant instance. An Ebe man had refused to let his daughter marry a Hausa whom she loved, having a different suitor from Ebe country in mind for her. The Hausa brought the case before the *Alkali* of Kutigi (some 50 miles away); the *Alkali* instructed the father to give his blessing to the marriage on the grounds that the Koran decreed that no father should stand between two young people who loved each other. The father swore an oath to that effect on the Koran and returned home. But after a month the Hausa came back, reporting that the girl's father had renewed his opposition to the marriage. Three times they were summoned to court, and three times the father agreed in the presence of the *Alkali*, only to revoke his agreement afterwards. At last I happened to be in the court and asked the man if perhaps the Ebe disliked letting their daughters marry outside the sub-tribe or tribe. Evidently relieved, the man said that this was indeed the case. Curiously enough, the girl, who had till then stubbornly maintained her desire to marry the Hausa, declared that she would obey her father as soon as the customary marriage rule was brought up in the court.

This example also illustrates the effects of what I have called above the 'divided law': the girl and her suitor, well knowing that if they submitted to the customary law as it was upheld by her father and most probably the village elders would not be able to marry, appealed to the Mohammedan court, whose decision, as they anticipated, was favourable to them. Here we see what I have mentioned above—that in districts in which the customary conceptions of law still obtain, modern legislation puts a premium on breaches of the traditional usage. This is shown most clearly in litigation over inheritance. According to Mohammedan law the property and land left by a family head should be divided equally among the sons; traditional rules of inheritance hold that land and property should be inherited by the younger brother, and that sons and brothers' sons should stay on the land working under the heir as under their sociological father. This rule expresses the interest of a farming community in maintaining landed property so far as possible intact, while the Mohammedan rule does justice primarily to owners of movable property, money, trade goods, or cattle. Now, for reasons which we shall examine in a later chapter modern economic developments have led increasingly to the adoption of the Mohammedan solution. But were individuals still to attempt to enforce the traditional rule, dissatisfied family members could easily obtain a reversal of this decision by appealing to the Mohammedan court.

Again we observe the effectiveness of the 'social law' which we have formulated above, that a stronger law ousts a weaker law. The existence of the divided authority which favours 'dissenters' from traditional law, must force chief and elders—the guardians of traditional usage—to surrender in ever larger measure the authority which they are still holding to the stronger authority of the state law, even to invite its intervention—as did the family heads who appealed to their feudal lord for support of their paternal authority. It is important to emphasize this, as

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many Administrative Officers think it desirable that the village chiefs and elders should continue to practise their informal arbitration side by side with the existing official courts. Our data preclude the likelihood of such a parallel development; they show that the tendency is rather towards the virtual surrender of one to the other. We have heard that in the present-day judicial arrangement the Village Head is expected to send all legal cases which cannot be settled by arbitration to the District *Alkali*'s court. Now I have found the chiefs quite satisfied with this state of affairs, which freed them of the responsibility in more serious cases. Some seemed, in fact, quite frightened at the idea of taking over this responsibility themselves, and were only too ready to leave a larger and larger proportion of their judicial tasks to the professional judge. 'To-day', a chief said to me, 'people want written judgements in such cases as divorce, inheritance, debts; *ama mi de takarda à*, but I have no papers to give.' ('Papers' are only the modern symbols of the more powerful and more permanent authority wielded by state jurisdiction; in his own words the chief expressed the essence of that principle of 'divided authority'.

Shall we acquiesce with the chief in these results of an inevitable process of change? I think not. Politically, the chief is divested already of much of his former power. To divest him also of all judicial authority is to deprive him of the last vestige of the most vital prerogative of his office, which is the enforcement of a certain line of conduct upon his community, and to sanction all deviations from it as acts detrimental to the welfare of the community. It would amount to turning the chief completely into a petty executive official, entitled only to carry out orders, but with no right to voice public opinion. Besides, the disregard for local customs by the professional Mohammedan judges is felt as a real hardship by many. Even if more change is on the way, bound to promote the final assimilation of Mohammedan law and customary practice, its pace should be set by the people themselves, and not by an alien, uninterested judge. In the nature of things the solution must lie in a compromise. In my view the best compromise would be to vest the Village Head with the right (and, more important, the duty) to act as an assessor in the court, with full consultative authority, whenever cases from his community are brought before the *Alkali*.[1]

This does not contradict what I have said in a previous section about the 'parochial outlook' of the village chief. The parochial outlook may unfit him for responsible posts in the administration of the Emirate at large, such as District Headship, which call for a wide view and an appreciation of policy on, as it were, a national scale. But it is just this parochial outlook which qualifies the village chief eminently for dealing with legal cases, bound up as they are with local conditions. However, there is a wider issue involved in this question—the most intricate problem which modern administration has to solve, the problem of centralization versus local autonomy.

[1] This solution is envisaged in the Native Courts Ordinance, which leaves it to the discretion of the Native Court to appoint assessors from the ranks of village chiefs and elders.

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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed 423
to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is 621
to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that 423
a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a 621
junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect 423
to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of 622
his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift [431]
to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The
annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid 423
to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the 622
chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three 651
bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nûsa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

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albárka (lit. blessing), a gift meant to express the 'blessing' that lay on the land which the family received from the chief.

Another expression of the chief's control over the reapportionment of land is that all land of families or branches of families which have died out, and similarly the land of families who have emigrated, falls back to the common fund of land reserve administered by the chief. The period within which the land of emigrants still remains theirs is fixed everywhere in Nupe as three years. After that time the chief is entitled to reapportion the land. Should an heir from the emigrated group return after a longer period, he could (like any other stranger) claim land in the village, but not as a rule the same land that his family had held previously. The dying-out of a family, or a branch of a family, seems a fact not easy to establish and always open to doubts in a social system in which small sections repeatedly split off the main body of the family. There is always the chance of an unexpected or belated claimant turning up, representing a distant branch which chief and elders may no longer have reckoned as likely to identify itself with the original family. But this is mainly a theoretical speculation; there occur few such cases in Nupe —none in Trans-Kaduna, where land is plentiful and vacated plots unlikely ~~to be much competed for.~~

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In Cis-Kaduna I witnessed an interesting case of this kind. A family head in Doko had died, leaving a small boy, who was then adopted by a childless brother of the deceased, living in a *tunga* on a farm of his own. The boy grew up on this farm and lived there contentedly until recently, after more than twenty years, the chief reapportioned the apparently unclaimed land that had belonged to the boy's father to two elders of high rank, the *Lile* and *Shaba* (both of the chief's family). Not until then did the young man return to Doko and make a formal claim for his ancestral land. But political motives rather than economic interest were behind this move; the parties in this case were, again, the chief of Doko and young Ndakó Gana, the 'dispossessed' descendant of the line of original chiefs. The chief had reapportioned the land in order to blot out the last visible connexion between the 'pretender's' family and the chieftainship of Doko; and the young man disputed the reapportionment on these very grounds. In the end he received back some of the original land and other new land in addition.

Here we discover a new significance in the apportionment of village land—its connexion with the bestowal of rank or office. This is not surprising in the communities (such as Doko) where the village ranks, like the land, remain in the possession of one 'house'. Later, we shall see more clearly, in the discussion of inheritance, that the Nupe kinship system tends indeed to couple attainment of family headship (which goes with rank) with inheritance of ancestral land. Considering, however, that the ordinary village land does not differ widely in quality and productive value, we can understand that this political aspect of land ownership is rather obscure—save in a case such as the one just quoted where political aspirations have attached to a specific property more than its proper share of symbolic significance. The political aspect becomes more prominent in connexion with a natural resource that shows this

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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankó* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankó* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsoži*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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No junior family member, even when already holding *efakó* land in his own right, may claim any share in the produce of the fruit-bearing trees. Only succession to the family head's position implies the usufructory right to the trees that stand on his or any other parcel of the family land.

Borrowing of Land

Land can be borrowed only for limited periods, as a rule for periods from two to five years, that is, in order to help a temporary shortage of land. The family heads or other 'landlords' arrange the transaction between themselves, not necessarily informing the chief, but always in the presence of witnesses who should be able later to testify to the nature of the transaction. Every landowner who has enough land is ready to 'lend' it in this way. In Trans-Kaduna the transaction is regarded as a friendly act, a 'helping out', quite natural between neighbours or fellow villagers. The borrower pays annually a fixed rent in kind, as a rule one bundle of millet or sorghum. In Cis-Kaduna the transaction gains a definite commercial significance: the borrower pays a small sum of money down, varying with the quality of the land (from 8*d*. for about one acre of ordinary land to 2*s*. for a much smaller plot on valuable marsh-land—the highest amount paid I found to be 6*s*.), and again the annual rent of one bundle or the equivalent in money.[1] In one case I found that regular farm-work for the owner of the land had taken the place of the annual rent in kind.

A landlord is free to cancel the lease before it has lapsed if the tenant is not working the land—as happens frequently; the court would confirm his right to do so, only ordering him to return the initial payment. But it may also happen that the landlord dies or emigrates while the lease is still running, or that for some other reason the lease is not recalled. In such cases the lessee often continues to work the land, although he has naturally ceased to pay the annual rent; he even comes to regard the land as his own whether he is working it or not, till one day it may be demanded back by the original owner or his heirs. In Trans-Kaduna, where no long-term transfer of land exists, any evidence as to the nature of the original transaction will at once settle the case. In the conquered areas of Cis-Kaduna, where land is let and sublet, and where short leases and leases for an indefinite period coexist, it is often difficult to establish clearly whether temporary or permanent lease had been arranged originally, specially when the witnesses of the original contract have died. What type of lease was originally intended is shown by the amount of the initial payment, whether it was high or low, that is, a 'real' payment, or only a *kyutá*, a gratuity. The latter, combined with a repeated rent in kind, establishes the nature of the temporary lease, the *jī aro*, 'borrowing'. But the continued working of the 'borrowed' land, and the failure of the original owner or his heirs to call in the lease, clearly alter the situation considerably. The attitude of the court in such

[1] Characteristically this annual rent is called in Bida—quite logically—*dzankó* 'tithe', but in the villages *kyutá*, 'present'.

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With so much variety it is impossible to select a particular community whose rituals would be 'typical' of Nupe practice; rather, each village cycle of rituals is typical (or atypical) in its own way. Yet neither is it possible to describe every variety of Nupe ritual (several of which I only knew from hearsay or from informants' reports). What seems more important is to examine some such cycle of rituals within the setting in which it operates, that is, within the corporate life of the community for which it is primarily valid or, in Nupe parlance, by which it is 'owned'.[1] As regards the question, which particular cycle of rituals to select, I propose to resolve it by taking two instances, one from Doko and the other from Jebba Island. This compromise seems the most expedient both since I have actually observed the majority of rituals in these two places and since these represent an interesting contrast, Doko being a 'typical' inland village, with hereditary chieftainship, and Jebba Island a riverain community where chiefs are elected. Let me add that, from other points of view, both communities are also 'atypical'; Jebba, because it is one of the two villages possessing major 'relics' of Tsoede; and Doko, because it formerly belonged to a federation of villages (or 'towns' as the Nupe would say), which type of political organization is unique in Nupe country. As regards the two communities themselves, a full description has been given elsewhere and need not be repeated.[2]

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One further point of more general import may be anticipated. In spite of the great variety of local cults the number of rituals performed and their place in the year's cycle do not differ greatly in the different communities. Usually there are one or two movable rituals, rarely more, and two or three fixed rituals, only a few villages having four or five; and though the dates of the fixed rituals vary somewhat from place to place, they fall more frequently in certain months (e.g. the 9th and 11th) than in others (e.g. the 3rd or 5th).[3] The corresponding months in our calendar, incidentally, can only be calculated approximately since the Nupe reckon in lunar months, the year beginning with the onset of the rains, and insert a 13th month every five years. In other years the 1st month is usually also called the 13th, especially when the rains are late, which not infrequently leads to confusion, some localities being temporarily a month out in their reckoning.[4]

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[1] I am here using the phrase 'primarily valid' since certain rituals imply an additional, wider validity (or 'ownership') which extends to the whole sub-tribe or even tribe. This point will be examined later (see below, p. 103).

[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 19, 25, 35. [3] See the chart on p. 69.

[4] In 1934, for example, the 1st month was taken to have begun on March 15th in the eastern part of Nupe, but at the end of April I found that the people of Mokwa, in the west, had just started with their 1st month. For a fuller description of the Nupe calendar, see *A Black Byzantium*, Appendix V.

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This roughly uniform timing of the fixed rituals might suggest that they are bound up with important seasonal events, farming activities and the like, which are similarly uniform throughout the country. The 9th month, which is so regularly accompanied by rituals, in fact represents a crucial phase in the life of a farming people, coinciding with the end of the rains and the time of the sorghum harvest, the staple crop of the country. But the 11th month, which falls in the middle of the dry season, coincides only with a minor agricultural activity, the harvesting of the last bean crop. Conversely, an important agricultural phase, the 1st (or 13th) month, when rains and planting begin, is infrequently accompanied by ceremonials. Other dates marked by rituals in different communities coincide with the first millet harvest (5th month), with the first yam harvest (7th month), or fall in the early rains (3rd month), when nothing in particular happens. 796x 795

The Nupe rituals are thus neither firmly linked with important agricultural activities nor yet concentrated in the season when farmwork is at a standstill, when the granaries are full, and when the people have both food and time to spare. But there is a nexus of a more general kind; for the Nupe rituals tend to be associated with the reaping of the crops more than with the planting, with 'ends' more than with 'beginnings', bearing upon the renewal of the fertility of which one has just received a token rather than upon attempts to secure it at the outset. The subsequent discussion will bear out this view. Here we must note that the ceremonials which happen to coincide with this or that harvest are in no way strict first-fruit rites, meant to signal the proper time for reaping or to control the first consumption of the new food; nor yet are they special feasts of thanksgiving. Rather is their religious import more unspecific, bearing on fertility, the thriving of crops, and health in general, irrespective of the particular occasion.

2. THE INLAND VILLAGE

(i) *Priestship*

The list of Doko rituals is brief. There are two movable ones —*fitakũ* ('The Stone drinks') and *Dibo Saba* (named after an ancestor chief),—and three fixed rituals: *ḱiba*, which is performed twice, in the 5th and 9th month; *sakó*, performed one month after the first *ḱiba*; and *gunnu*, performed in the 11th month.[1] 796x

The ceremonials are in the charge of different officiants. The ritual *Dibo Saba*, addressed to an ancestor chief, is also performed by the chief. The ritual *sakó* concerns only the small group of [769 622]

[1] In our calendar the 5th month corresponds roughly to July–August, the 9th to December, the 11th to February.

633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Agansku*, and of Shaku *Kpotug*.[21]

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*ẓitsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeṇi*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *ẓitsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*ẓusaẓi*, sing. *ẓusa*, the "old ones," or *ẓiciẓi*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*ẓigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Ẓitsu* and *ẓigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1926) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi tradition has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed chieftainship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nūsaži* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiži*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nūsaži* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nūsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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623 many elders. No 'house' may be excluded from the share-out of village offices, nor may one 'house' 'own' more than one title—at least not in theory. The senior members of the house sometimes accompany their family head to the meetings of the council in the chief's house. Or if an elder is himself too old, or an invalid, a younger relative may do his work for him; but there would not as a rule be two holders of a *nūsa* rank in the same house.[1] These rules, however, are not, in fact cannot be, rigid. A powerful chief may appoint a friend or favourite to a rank to which he would not normally be entitled, or refuse a rank to the legitimate claimant for reasons of private enmity or jealousy; an immigrant group may demand that a rank be conferred on its head as a confirmation of established citizenship; or an expanding family may claim additional titles for its members. New ranks may thus be created, new titles introduced, which do not correspond to the traditional system of village ranks.[2] On the other hand, titles may disappear with the family in which they were vested or with the special profession to which they referred. The title *Ndace*, Father of Hunting, originally a title common everywhere in Nupe, is missing to-day in many villages; the titles *Etsu Dzā*, Head of the Drummers, and *Maji Tswata*, Master of the Blacksmiths, have disappeared here and there where strangers (Hausa) have taken over the work of drumming and smithing and have disorganized this originally family-owned profession.

The equation: so many houses, so many titles, may also be upset (at least temporarily) by the opposite trend: in an expanding family group sections may split off from the main body, and build themselves a new house, without being awarded a separate rank. The *tunga* very rarely 'owns' a *nūsa* rank. Founded by young people, it usually keeps its status of a 'junior branch' even in subsequent generations. However, a son or younger brother may be called to succeed the family head in the village and leave the *tunga* to assume his inheritance and position in the 'town'.[3]

623 Thus the institution of ranks of elders has two aspects: one is the official
564 recognition, by the community at large, of the headship of certain individuals over the component groups of the community—kinship groups and 'houses'—a headship which implies both a certain moral control and control of the economic resources of the group; and the other the division of the political executive of the village between a number of selected individuals. The closer examination of the first aspect belongs to the chapters on kinship, land-tenure, and economics. We are concerned here more especially with the second aspect. But we shall see that the two are closely intertwined. The acceptance of a family head into the village executive enhances the position of authority which he normally occupies in his kinship group; but it signifies at the same time that he may be called upon to use this moral authority in the service of the village at large. Appointment to a village rank also strengthens the measure of

[1] Thus an old, blind *nūsa* in Jebba no longer took part in the meetings of the village elders. But no successor was appointed until his death.

[2] In Mokwa, for example, the new title *Maji Keshagba* (lit. Master of Grave Digging) was conferred on the head of a Hausa family which had settled there during the Fulani wars.

[3] See p. 37.

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623 economic control which he exercises, by granting him access to special
554 economic resources (above all, fruit-bearing trees) unattainable to the other members of his group. Thus supported, the titled family head is qualified to assume his double role, as official agent of the community at large and as representative of his group *vis-à-vis* the village community.

The relation between the two roles and their relative preponderance varies with the rank which an elder may attain. For the *nũsa* ranks are not of equal order. They are defined by strict order of precedence, and there is never any doubt which title ranks higher or lower. The measure of political responsibility closely corresponds to the place in the scale of village ranks. In some villages we even find a formal distinction between the 'great' and 'small' ranks, the former three or (more often) four in number, forming as it were the 'inner council'. Where the village is arranged in a number of separate large clusters of compounds (as in Doko, Kutigi, or Sakpe), the distinction between 'great' and 'small' ranks also implies a distinction between headship over the whole cluster of compounds, the *efu*, and headship over single compounds or 'houses' only.[1] The professional ranks of blacksmiths and drummers are always at the bottom of the list of village ranks. The political importance of the rank of the Head of the Hunters and of the ranks which are combined with priestly offices differs in different communities.

623 It would be wrong to think of the village council of elders as of an elaborate, rigidly formalized, instrument of government. The full council is rarely summoned except on important occasions, such as the election of a chief, or the visit of the *Etsu* and his delegates or the District Officer. The normal routine work of village government is carried on by the chief and his 'inner council' of two or three elders of highest rank. And here again we have no formal appointed assembly, but rather casual meetings in the houses of the chief or of one of the elders, at which current questions are discussed and the necessary decisions taken. If more elders have to be consulted or instructed, a messenger will be sent to their houses, or they will call individually at the house of the chief or the head *nũsa*. If in the case of the *nũsaẽi* of high rank their position of authority transcends the component groups to the headship of which they have risen in virtue of their kinship position, this latter aspect preponderates in the case of the *nũsaẽi* of lesser rank who are excluded from the 'inner council'. They are executive organs of the village in the indirect sense of intermediaries through whom decisions of the chief and the leading elders reach the various kinship and local groups, and through whom, in turn, these groups can voice claims and interests so far as they call for action on the part of the community.

623 The graded scale of village ranks does not command an unequivocal
554 corresponding system of appointment and succession. Succession to the lowest, professional, ranks is invariably hereditary. So is succession to
184 the priestly ranks or the ranks linked with a priestly office: the secret

[801] [1] In eastern Nupe, especially among Dibo and Beni, the number four plays an important part in the arrangement of *efu* as well as in the order of ranks. We find four *efu* and four ranks, or four head ranks and four secondary ranks, or four ranks plus the chief's rank.

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of the ritual office remains vested in one family group. But succession to the other ranks involves a certain ambiguous situation. Only a few communities have worked out the principle of precedence consistently, evolving a system of promotion from lower to higher rank—Jebba Island and Mokwa are examples. In these communities every vacancy is made an occasion for a reshuffle of the ranks. A *nūsa* whose seniority and standing qualify him for the rank that has fallen vacant is appointed, his own rank going to another *nūsa* deserving promotion, and so forth, till finally one of the lowest ranks becomes vacant, which is then duly bestowed on a fitting, as yet untitled, candidate. But in other communities all promotion from one rank to another is excluded, the titles in almost caste-like rigidity remain linked with 'houses', and a man can claim only this one title whether or not it is one for which his age, experience, and personality would qualify him.[1] The people are themselves well aware of this ambiguity. It is overcome, in practice, in various ways. First, the appointment to the rank which has fallen vacant may be postponed till the candidate has reached the age and gained the status appropriate to the rank; a 'young man' of Kutigi (he was about 45) had been waiting for ten years for the title which his father's brother had held before and which had been 'reserved' for him; every time I saw him and asked how his affair stood, he replied with the same words: *n'wa ke degi*, 'just a little longer'. Or one may introduce new titles, intermediary ranks, by which device the rigid order of traditional ranks is circumvented. Finally, hereditary succession in Nupe is never understood in the narrow sense of a quasi-automatic appointment. Often it is a selection from a number of candidates of suitable seniority—younger brothers or eldest sons (in the classificatory sense) of the deceased. Though seniority counts above all, old age and debility will disable a prospective successor to family headship. Apart from seniority, other attributes are also essential: good reputation, skill and experience as farmer, a friendly temper, and good health; a leper or a man suffering from elephantiasis or blindness is ineligible; so is a complete invalid. But so long as his impediment (e.g. a short leg, a crooked arm) does not interfere with his work on the land and his ability to move about, it does not matter. The main attribute is *dnkali*—intelligence. In Kutigi a serious quarrel had broken out between the chief and some of his elders who refused to give their consent to the appointment to a high rank of a man whom they considered 'to have no brains'.

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The following genealogy illustrates the succession to the position of a certain titled family head, the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa. We

[1] An interesting transition from hereditary ranks to ranks of the promotion type has evolved in Faže, a village in Ebe country. Only recently the former system of hereditary ranks was replaced in this village by a promotion system, the depopulation of the village in the Fulani wars having made this step necessary; for some of the families in which the most important ranks had been vested had died out, and only promotion from lower to higher ranks could prevent this untoward vacancy. This local development cannot, for various reasons, be taken as affording the explanation of the origin of the promotion system of *nūsa* ranks in Nupe. But it clearly shows that the people are aware of the inherent conflict between the rank system based on precedence and the strict rule of hereditary succession.

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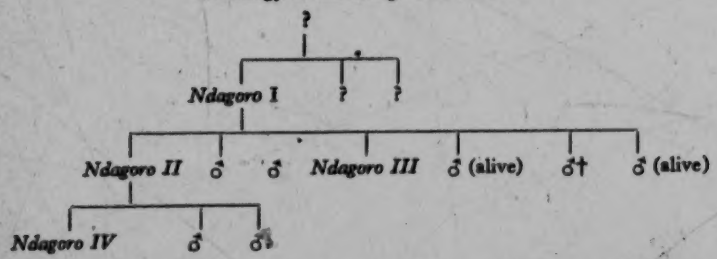
observe the general scheme of Nupe inheritance, one generation being run through before the next generation is admitted to the succession; but we notice also that the progress of succession left out two men of the older generation. 623

Genealogy of the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa



The same qualifications would also make a stranger who has settled for some time in a Nupe village eligible for a higher or lower *nūsa* rank. But 'good reputation' would be understood according to local standards, which may not be the standards of the applicant. A lute-player in Doko, who had been living there for some twenty years, a fairly prosperous and well-liked man, still went without title. Lute-playing, though appreciated in Bida, was not in the eyes of the villagers a respectable profession. Had he been a farmer, or even a drummer, he would have been awarded a title long before. 623 554 609 533

If a 'new man' desires to be granted a title he broaches the subject first with one of the titled *nūsa* with whom he is intimate; the latter will bring it before chief and council of elders, who will then discuss the question at their leisure. If, on the other hand, a rank falls vacant, especially one of the higher ranks, the official discussions will start at once, and all the men of the village will be talking about it and surmising likely successors. In the lowest ranks succession is a simple matter. In hereditary ranks, particularly in small families, the decision may also take but little time. When the *Ejukó* of Jebba Island—the hereditary Keeper of the Chain of Tsoede—died, his successor was known a week after his death, and the title was conferred upon him within a month. But sometimes the appointment of a successor is a serious and long-drawn-out business, and often enough, as we have seen, feuds may break out over the appointment of the most suitable candidate. Discussion follows discussion, often for weeks and months, especially if it happens to be the rainy season when everybody is busy and can spare only an evening or two in the week. The elders meet first, in small groups, in their own houses; later when the discussion has reached a more advanced stage they meet in the house of the *nūsa* of highest rank and finally in the house of the chief. As always in meetings of this kind the assembly gathers in the entrance hut of the house; the younger men sit near the outer door, the elder men on the inner side of the hut. They are rarely given anything to eat or drink except perhaps a few kola-nuts in the house of the chief. 623

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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nũsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nw'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nũsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nũsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nũsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nũsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

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I

Rank System from Mokwa (Promotion Type)

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Rank order	Title	Office	Locality ('*efu*' or '*emi*')	Succession	Insignia, magic, &c.	Remarks
1	*Lile*	Chief	Efugbo or *efu* Lile	Promotion	..	Present chief was promoted to chieftainship from rank *Sarkin Zongu*
2	*Shaba Lile*	..	Gunnuba (so called because *gunnu* priest lives here)	,,	..	Title introduced under Fulani influence; replaced original title *Sojoko*.
3	*Ndeshi* (Sheshi)	'King-maker'	Ilancita	Hereditary	Sacred chain, priesthood of Tsoede	Title *Ndeshi* corresponds to *Ndeki*, 'Father of the Town'.
3a	*Guye*	Successor to 3	Etisheshi and Korofugi	Hereditary in family of *Ndeshi*[1]	..	..
3b	*Tswashe*	Successor to 3a	Ntaci	As 3a	..	..
4	*Sdmaro*	..	Gbaye and Yafu	Promotion	..	Was promoted to present rank from *Tsonkwa*.
5	*Ndagoro*	..	Goro	,,	..	..
6	*Magi Koshegbe*	..	Kpege	,,	..	Newly introduced rank.
7	*Tronkwa* (Tsowa)	..	*emi* Ndakogi	,,	..	..
8	*Magi Bagidi*	..	Ilancita	,,	..	..
9	*Magi Dende*	..	,,	,,	..	..
10	*Magi wya Kota*	..	Goro	,,	..	..
11	*Magi Guye*	..	Kpege	,,	..	..
12	*Magi Tswaci*	Head of Blacksmiths	Tswata	Hereditary	..	..
13	*Etsu Dzi*	Head of Drummers.	*emi* Dzezi	,,	..	..
13a	*Shaba Dzi*	Successor to 13	*emi* Dzezi	Hereditary in house of *Etsu Dzi*[2]	..	..
•	*Wangwa*	..	*efu* Wangwa	..	..	This rank no longer exists. The position of the head of the *efu* has fallen, quasi-unofficially, to the *Limam*, the Mohammedan priest, who is not yet, however, officially admitted into the village council.

[1] These secondary ranks defining succession to the hereditary rank of 'king-maker' I have found only in Mokwa. The *Sheshi*, *Guye*, and *Tswashe* regard each other as elder and younger brothers respectively. I was told that originally the office of *Sheshi* was inherited matrilineally, and that this is the explanation why it has become divided between three kinship sections living in different *efu*. Though this explanation is, logically, incorrect, and although these three offices have actually been inherited in paternal line since the people can remember, the fact remains that the three groups which succeed each other in rotation are vaguely thought of as of matrilineal origin. The aloofness from the other village ranks which characterizes the office of the 'king-maker' is thus further enhanced by the different conception of succession.

[2] Secondary professional ranks of this kind are found also in other craftsmen groups, e.g. blacksmiths. Sometimes there exists also a third rank of this order, with the title *Kpoti*. This organization of craftsmen ranks will be discussed in Chapter XIV.

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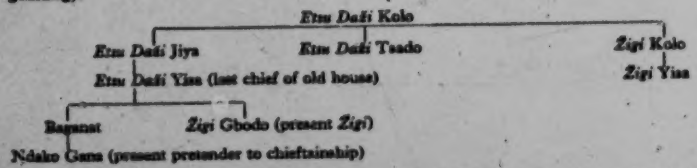
II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('efu')*	*Succession*	*Insigma, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Etsu Dafi*	Chief	Dafi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Zigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dafi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotil*	..	"	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Mahi*	..	"	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Daoko*	..	Takugi	"	..	..
8	*Bobe*	..	Kpacinefu	"	..	..
9	*Shabadi*	..	Ndadofu	"	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dafi	"	..	..
11	*Žitsu Bebi*	..	Edokó	"	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	"	"	..	..
13	*Maji Egbe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	"	"	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences.

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon

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651 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal cere-
621 monies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nūsaźi* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an
[694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also,
●623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as
661 heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; 622
a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* 623
group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on
their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a 661
rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the 622
economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free him- 661
self from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important 623
economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) 657
a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe', from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this [431]
payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, [476]
which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general 622
money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes. 651
Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., 431
receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a

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chief's special income did not, normally, constitute an insurmountable economic barrier between himself and his subjects. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristic possessions of a chief—possession of things generally valued in the society—were not unattainable by others. 622

His surplus income the chief uses as follows: some of it he must devote to special expenditure attached to his office, the purchase of a goat or fowl for the annual sacrifices, or some other large contribution (larger than that of the other family heads) towards the cost of the village ceremonies. Occasional liberal presents to the elders, food, kola-nuts, beer, gowns are also indicated; a niggardly chief is much disliked. The larger part of his income the chief spends on himself, his family, and generally on things the possession of which are demanded by his status and prestige. Some chiefs, with a view to profit as well as prestige, have bought slaves or taken pawns. Every bigger chief possesses at least one horse. His dress is always of the more expensive kind—embroidered trousers, a turban, and an indigo-dyed gown, possibly an embroidered Bida robe. Many chiefs possess the beautifully carved staffs which are made by the craftsmen in the river valley and sold for sums up to two pounds. One or another chief owns an old flintlock gun, and some chiefs pride themselves on building bigger and more ornate houses than the majority of the people possess. Finally, as the most conspicuous symbol of economic advantage in this country of extremely high bride-price, two at least of the bigger chiefs I met had what among the Nupe peasants is considered a very large number of wives (5 or 6 as against the usual 1 or 2), and so had some of their sons and younger brothers. 622 554 [545]

Set against this the economic position of a well-to-do family head and rank-holder. He too used to own slaves or pawns. The higher rank-holders often possess large, imposing houses. They carry carved staffs, own a horse, turban and state gown, and a gun. Some of them may have three or four wives. With regard to the accoutrements of his office—the religious elements linked with chieftainship, its insignia and symbols of rank—the chief stands on a plane by himself; as regards things 'that money can buy', or liquid capital, he is placed only one step higher than his citizens of rank. The surplus capital which he derives from his office is not, as we can see, large enough to be turned into an effective instrument of political ambition. 623 554 622 554

Involved in this is the question how far the temporary economic benefits linked with the chief's office can be used so as to be turned into a lasting economic advantage, enjoyed by the descendants and the whole family of the chief. For the communities in which succession to chieftainship follows promotion or rotation the question answers itself: the surplus income vested in the chief's office is not sufficient, once acquired, to endow his whole 'house' permanently with economic superiority.[1] In 622

presided over by the *sūsa* ranks, and the smaller family groups (approximately 100 in number) with which we should have to reckon to-day.

[1] Here is a significant illustration: in Mokwa and Jebba, two villages of 'promotion type', the imposing houses of the late chiefs have fallen into disrepair; the descendants are no longer able to command the communal labour without which the upkeep of the large house is impossible.

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VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*Etsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *Etsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*gusaki*, sing. *gusa*, the "old ones," or *ticiki*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*Eigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Zitsu* and *Eigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

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[23] Hopkins, 1934.

623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[24]

The Political System of the Kyedye

634 184 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nuwa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticili*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaki*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaki*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alkalin* Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[25]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

633 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsóli*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*Iitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndaceki* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benú*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benú* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[26]

[24] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–8.
[25] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1940a, pp. 176–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[26] Nadel, 1938.

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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women
554 of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The
[443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding
[651] land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women',
562 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about
624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a
754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

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of the office of the village *Sagi* and to emphasize its harmless business side instead. 562

Thus we find that in many Nupe villages an efficient business-like head of the women has succeeded the *Lèlu* or *Sagi* of the old type. In other places, again, the people would not admit the magic significance of the woman's rank. Yet the strength of the belief, concealed though it may be, was shown in a witchcraft case which I happened to witness in Gbajibo, a small village on the Niger above Jebba. Here the *Sagi*, the very business-like head of the local women, was yet behind the public outcry against an alleged witch. The women much more than the men were leading in this persecution; they had been the first to ostracize the victim; and when I questioned them about their motives, they all referred me to the *Sagi*. Her own motive appeared to be jealousy of the other woman, the alleged witch, in whom she saw a dangerous rival, possibly even for the position of a *Sagi*.

The office of the *Sagi*, modern or traditional, is invariably a much-coveted one. Her moral hold over the women, as our example has shown, is complete. It is equally strong in the less sinister spheres of communal life: like the *Sonya* in Bida, the village *Sagi* advises the women, organizes women's work, arbitrates between them, and receives small presents from every business transaction which they carry through.

MARRIAGE AND STATUS

The ranks and offices already discussed all belong to married women. But we have seen that they represent forms of status which the women acquire in their own right, on the grounds of descent, or personal ability, or both, independent of their status as wives of men who occupy this or that social position. We shall see later that the same principle applies also to the status won by wealth. In particular the status by descent of the Nupe women is affected but little by marriage, i.e. by the social status of their husbands; in so far as it is so affected, this change is in the direction of social advancement. Women of low birth who marry above their status into the aristocracy can claim the status of their husbands; and women who marry beneath their station do not lose their status but raise their husbands to their own social level. The men will be allowed to share most of the social and political privileges of the class into which they marry. Two cases were reported to me in which the men could even acquire *saraki* ranks after marrying a woman of the *saraki* nobility. But even if the men are not admitted fully into the titled class, their children would always acquire the status of their mother. Daughters may thus inherit the status of their fathers, and both sons and daughters that of their mothers; husbands may be adopted into the social sphere of their wives and parents-in-law. This social regulation may seem surprising in an otherwise strongly patrilineal society. But this one-sided interpretation of the change of status that goes with marriage is not an expression of matrilineal kinship tendencies, nor of 'feminist' leanings in Nupe society (though we shall find ample evidence of these, too); rather it expresses political

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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

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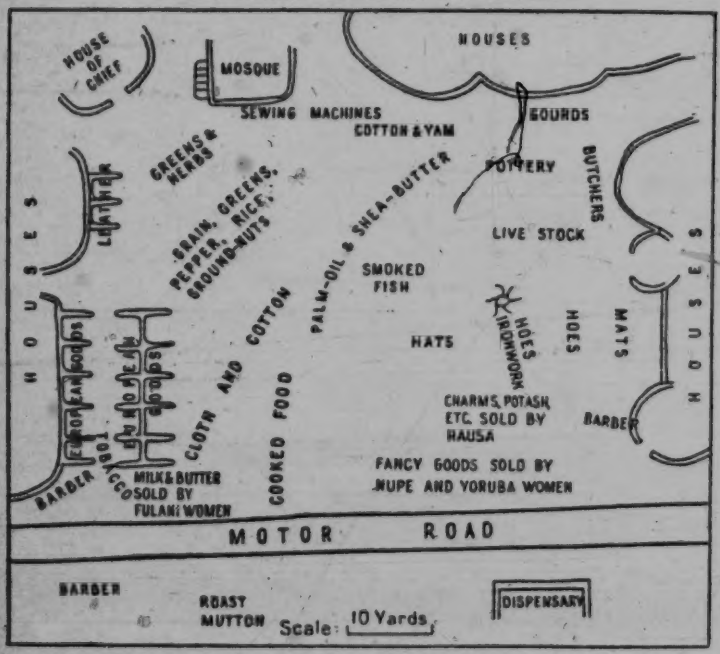
In one corner of the market barbers put up their open-air shop. In another corner butchers sell their goods, a drummer endlessly repeating the same rhythmical *motif*—the signal that the butchers have slaughtered that day—to attract the attention of the crowd. 443

SKETCH-MAP OF KUTIGI MARKET

[366]



Markets in the wider sense of the word, places for exchange and trade, grow spontaneously with the needs of the country. But markets of the kind just described, with permanent buildings, booths, and stalls, have to be built and laid out specially. Moreover, provision must be made to guarantee the protection of the large attendance, especially of the traders from other districts and countries. The element of planning is clearly visible. The villages which decide to have a market of this kind will go to work methodically; formerly, they appealed first, through the royal delegate in their district, to the king, who would designate some of his private slave police to take charge of the supervision of the market. In the Mohammedan and semi-Mohammedan villages a well-known Mallam would be summoned to consecrate the market and thus ensure its prosperity. This practice is said to be still in use. Certain markets become, in fact, known by the name of the Mallam who dedicated them. [625]

A sketch-map will best illustrate the well-planned arrangement of a typical village market—the market of Kutigi, to which I have referred

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443 366 I have described already at some length the markets of Bida so that there is little to add here. Bida possesses six markets, three main day markets close to the 3 royal houses, two small day markets—one near the west gate, one in the strangers' quarter—and one night market. In the distinction between day and night market the village distinction between the restricted trade on ordinary week-days and the extensive trade on market-days is in some respects repeated.[1] Multiply by ten the largest village market, and its attendance and the quantity and variety of goods displayed, and you have the Bida night market. Its average attendance has been estimated at 6,000, and as regards the goods which are bought and sold, I can only repeat that there is practically nothing that cannot be obtained there, from kola-nuts to beams for roofing, and from native-tanned goatskins to watches, scissors, or bicycle spare parts. Besides, [445] there are scribes who will write letters for you, Yoruba money-changers (who charge a commission of one penny in the shilling), cooks who roast small pieces of mutton over the fire and sell the meat on wooden skewers to passers-by, drummers, barbers, tailors, loungers, not to forget [625] the policeman who regulates the traffic and keeps watch (not always a sinecure) on disturbances of the peace.

In certain respects, however, marketing and trade in Bida differ essentially from their counterpart in the village. A first difference concerns the local distribution of marketing. Bida possesses, in addition to its four markets, also more or less regular shops which are open all day, such as the wayside shops in the street of the brass-smiths, where the womenfolk of brass- and silversmiths display the goods manufactured by the men, or the permanent shops in *lálemi*, the crowded strangers' quarter. Many traders, moreover, who will attend the night market keep during day-time little wayside stands on cross-roads or busy thoroughfares. The wide local distribution of shops corresponds to the typical demands of a large, decentralized town, in which the groups of potential customers are concentrated in widely scattered localities. At the same time it expresses a keener spirit of competition, and that doctrine of 'seeking out the customer' which is familiar to all more advanced systems of marketing. Two new stands which have only appeared during my stay in Bida will illustrate what I mean. One wayside shop established itself opposite the workshops of the Public Works Department, and its customers were the labourers, who would come out to buy food, sweets, and cigarettes; the other was installed close to the Bida Middle School, and catered for the occasional wants of schoolboys and teachers. In both cases two or three young women had joined forces and were keeping shop together. These wayside shops and stands do not pay rent; street corners and cross-roads are free to everyone; nor have any quarrels over claims to a particular spot arisen—as yet. But this is essentially a fluid process; and it is not unlikely that quarrels or litigation of this kind might arise in the future if competition becomes

[1] The day markets reflect the different needs of the large town as compared with the village markets. Firewood, for example, which is never seen on village markets as the women collect their own firewood on family farms, appears in large quantities on the day markets of Bida.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child [848 428] inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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77 offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however,
626 losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

197 The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the
634 following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

634 The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the
[304] name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba
[304] Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in
[441] Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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622 against the ruling chief whom he regarded as an usurper. He refused the chief the use of the sacred insignia—the bangles of Tsoede—without 793 which the annual chief's ritual cannot be performed. Finally, in 1934, 578 he asked me to intervene for him so that he should be given official authority to keep in his possession the invaluable insignia, which the chief was demanding back not so much for religious reasons (for some of his brothers and sons were already posing as Mohammedans), as in order to deprive the rival family of this convincing evidence of their claim to the rule of Doko. The case remained undecided, and the rivalry between the two men unrelieved, till in 1936 the chief offered the 'pretender' official recognition of a sort, namely, the title *Makū*. The highest rank next to the chief's, *Shaba*, had just fallen vacant, and a reshuffle of titles had taken place. Ndakó Gana, however, rejected the title *Makū*—a new title, introduced *ad hoc* (copied from the dynastic ranks in Bida)—as a meaningless, makeshift sort of rank and demanded instead the rank of *Shaba* itself. The deadlock was finally overcome by an appeal of both parties to the *Etsu*; he managed to persuade the young man to accept the offered rank, at least as an earnest, and as more fitting to his age.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

622 The tasks of government which fall to the village chief are these:

1. He appoints the village elders from the ranks of the family heads and is thus bound, as by a constitution in the modern sense, to accept their co-operation and advice in all matters of village government.
2. He controls the land resources of the community and in this capacity apportions farm-land, trees, fishing rights, and levies certain tributes and land dues from the families holding village land. With this aspect of village government we shall deal later on in detail, in the chapter on land-tenure.
3. He is not, as we have seen, the religious head of the community. But he organizes, directly or indirectly, and partly finances, certain religious rites linked with chieftainship.
4. He arbitrates in litigation and wields (though now only on a limited scale) a certain informal judicial power.
5. He organizes all large-scale co-operation and concerted action of the village community.

We have already spoken of the composition of the village council and the co-operation between chief and elders. Let me add some concrete data to illustrate the working of the village 'constitution'.

627 A Doko farmer had quarrelled with a neighbour over some trees; people from a village near Mokwa came into Mokwa to borrow masks for the *elo* ritual which they were going to perform, having lost their own masks; a family head in Sakpe accused his sister's son who lived in his house of having stolen rice from his farm; a girl in Laboži denounced two strangers who had been given hospitality by a neighbour and whom she saw stealing their host's clothes; a young man in Jebba accused his wife of adultery; another man in Jebba complained that a certain hunter

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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who was reputed to possess strong and deadly magic had threatened his 627
life; a family head in Kutigi that his family was too highly taxed; a man in Pichi that a neighbour had beaten his goat (which the other man had found eating his grain): these are some of the cases which a village chief and his elders may daily be called upon to decide.

The procedure is nearly always the same. The various news, requests, or complaints are communicated at once to the chief, directly, if the supplicant or bearer of the news has the chief's ear, that is, is himself a titled elder, and indirectly, through the family head or the *efutsó* (head) of the *efu* in which he lives, if the bearer of the news is an ordinary peasant. Upon receiving the news the chief will summon the head *nũsa* (the *Sheshi* in Mokwa, the *Lile* in Doko, the *Ndeji* in other villages), and he in turn will call together the other members of the council whose co-operation is required: two or three of the senior elders—the members of the 'inner council'—and always the *nũsa* to whose kinship group or *efu* the litigant or supplicant belongs. Not only does this *nũsa* act, as we have seen, as the official informant of the chief on all matters concerning his group and locality, but his intimacy with the people whose case is to be heard, and his moral influence, make him an important witness and, when a decision has been reached, a guarantor of its execution. Before this tribunal, then, supplicants and litigants in the village appear. The discussion that ensues is informal, and devoid of the stiff procedure that characterizes, for example, the Native Court. Supplicant or plaintiff state their case in a few sentences—the Nupe are not fond of long speeches and elaborate expositions. Obscurities in the statement are unravelled in patient cross-examination, in which everyone present can take part. Then, at one point, the chief or a *nũsa* may suggest a solution, which may be agreed to by the others with the stereotyped expression *u ge*, 'it is well', or revised in renewed discussion. Very rarely do tempers flare up and the discussions become heated. The final decision of the chief and his council is pressed home in the form of advice, persuasion, warning. A discussion of this kind rarely lasts longer than two or three hours, after which time it will be interrupted to be resumed on a following day. Mostly one or two sessions suffice to arrive at the final decision.

But then, in more difficult cases in which many witnesses have to be 692
called and thorny problems of arbitration settled, the decision is taken
out of the hands of the village executive. For the chief is not entitled to 627
dispense formal justice and to enforce arbitration. He must send all legal cases to the professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*) of the district; moreover, litigants who are dissatisfied with the chief's decision may themselves bring their case before the professional judge or the District Head (a point to which we shall return later). This limitation of village jurisdiction makes it impossible to pronounce in more detail on the efficiency of the village council and the way in which it handles, or could handle, more severe conflicts. The gamut of advice, persuasion, and warning is the only one which it can use: the more strident notes of authoritative orders and severe reprimands are outside its scale.

That they, too, have a rightful existence in the administration of village 651
affairs is shown in the organization, by chief and elders, of all concerted 621

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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entrance hut. The priest informs the chief that the ritual has been completed and the chief replies—'It is well; (after) what has been done, may God give that we pass through (endure) this year, and that the next years may pass (in well being).' From the chief's house the congregation repairs to the home of the priest, where they stay to drink the rest of the beer. Meanwhile women and young men, who were not allowed to see the earlier part of the ceremony, have gathered outside the house and drums have been brought out. A dance begins in which the old men alone are supposed to perform; actually, the younger men (not the women) join in later, but they are only suffered to take part and are sometimes stopped, though not very seriously. Later the whole crowd walks in procession through the village, 'saluting' on the way the houses of the various family heads and finally stopping at the dancing ground. Here the dance is resumed, in an unexcited fashion, until nightfall, when both the dance and the ceremonial come to an end. 796x

We noticed, in the *ziba* prayer, the emphasis on 'this year and next' and on 'new things', that is, on the completion of a phase, and on continuity and renewal. This idea is even more concretely expressed; for immediately after the ceremony the skin of the goat that had been sacrificed is sewn into a sack, shaped like bellows, to be kept in the priest's house until next year's ritual. There it will serve as an instrument of ordeal, anyone accused of a crime being able to protest his innocence by touching the bag: if he lied, his body would swell up ('like the bellows'). Thus the protection of the law and the punishment of crime are renewed year by year by the force of this *kuti* concerned with the 'doing of new things'. [627]

The *gunnu*, unlike most other Nupe rituals, has its special myth, which relates how the ceremonial originated and also explains, if only in an elliptic and cursory fashion, one or two features of the actual practice.[1] It tells of a mysterious stranger who, many generations ago, came to live among the Beni, in a small hill village in the north, close to the border of Gwari country. After a while he developed leprosy, was looked after by the kind-hearted villagers, and eventually died. As was the custom, the body of the leper was abandoned in the uninhabited bush on the top of the hill. Later, it was found that the body had miraculously disappeared and that in its place there had appeared a patch of pure white sand. The villagers then realized that the stranger had been no ordinary mortal and that God himself had buried him. They planted a tree on the place and instituted a big ceremony to be performed annually, so that the *kuci* of the dead should be propitiated and duly worshipped. The ritual, which is said to have 796x 773

[1] A much more detailed description of the ritual and the full texts of the *gunnu* songs are given in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, vol. LXVII.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.
692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.
671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.
778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[37]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[38]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[39]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[37] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[38] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[39] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

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thus reveals the underlying conviction that their skill should be morally blameless.

Yet it is precisely the adepts of the more mystical or sacred craft who must face this moral conflict in much graver form. For *cigbeciži*, individual practitioners, and the 'owners' of hereditary medicines alike also have knowledge of medicines not only morally dubious but straightforward evil and in fact called *cigbe benágũ*, 'evil medicines'. Now this means, for the Nupe, several things. It means that the use of the medicine 'harms innocent people', as does the farming *cigbe* which increases your crops at the expense of your neighbours, or that the medicine 'kills people', as do those vindictively 'protective' medicines which punish thieves, evil-wishers, or personal enemies. Again, a medicine is evil if it is apt to be abused by evil-minded persons, which is true of the invisibility *cigbe* and perhaps also of the 'protective' variety, though my informants could not say precisely what kind of abuse there might be. Finally, the efficacy of the medicine might be mistaken for witchcraft, and is for this reason adjudged 'evil'.

The last reason seems to be the crucial one. To begin with, it applies in every case and also reinforces all the other reasons. Thus the person made unexpectedly prosperous with the help of the farming *cigbe* might easily be taken for a witch by his neighbours; much the same might happen in the case of the vicious 'protective' *cigbe*; while the medicine which makes you invisible or enables you to feign death endows you with precisely the gifts with which witches are credited. Furthermore, where some of the other reasons appear inconclusive, the resemblance to witchcraft is decisive. It is clearly inconsistent to condemn the 'protective medicine', meant to attack only evil-doers or evil-wishers, while accepting without qualms the efficacy of deadly ordeals, which do precisely the same. Admittedly, there is a difference; while in ordeals and the like it is the law of the country that takes its course, the *cigbe* places the power of life and death within the reach of individuals, and this power works, though not at random, yet blindly, not measuring [628] punishment against offence. In a society like Nupe, where the self-help of blood revenge is unknown, this is logically adjudged immoral and evil. Yet in argument the Nupe do not reason this way; rather do they fall back on the stand-by explanation, that this 'punishment' and 'killing' may be confused with witchcraft.

Undoubtedly, the medicines which bring harm or death upon people (innocent or otherwise) are as such condemned. 'There is nothing nice about these medicines,' said the Master of the *cigbeciži*, with some understatement. Yet they are evil also because they meddle in something that has the appearance of evil. And when the Nupe are reluctant to talk about these medicines, the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak, potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

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621 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the
622 highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadú*. Having been granted this
182 responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.[1] But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results
622 of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very
182 similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the
631 pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

[1] It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER VIII
POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM
(*continued*)

THE FEUDAL STATE

WE have seen how in the history of the kingdom a certain territorial nucleus evolved, an area of 'Nupe proper'. This concept of a territorial 'nucleus' also forms the basis of the division of the country for the purpose of government. For the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration the kingdom was divided into four zones. First, the area of the conquered tributary countries outside the boundaries of the 'kingdom proper', in Nupe terminology, the countries of the *zaži kati*, the 'Outside Peoples'. Second, within these boundaries, an innermost core, the countries of Beni and Kyedye; having formed the nucleus of the rising kingdom they are now assigned the privileged position of royal domains. The third zone comprised the wider 'ring' of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, most of which lie in Trans-Kaduna. Bida town, the seat of the central government, formed an administrative district of its own. 631

Under the name of Outside Peoples were comprised the conquered territories of Gbari, Gbira, Kamberi, Kakanda, Yagba, Bunu, and certain sections of Nupe (Dibo and Ebe mostly). These districts were not administered fully by the central government. Their political dependence entailed two things: an annual tribute to Bida, and the recognition by other Emirates and chieftainships of the political status of these territories as 'under the protection' of Bida. It was a one-sided 'protection': Bida itself was free to raid her own outside peoples, but no other country could do this or levy taxes in these territories with impunity. The guarantor of these 'treaties' was, in the last instance, the Emir of Gwandu, the highest feudal overlord of all Fulani Emirs in this part of the world.[1] The central government in Bida did not assume jurisdiction over these countries, nor did it interfere in their own political administration. The tribute was paid in slaves and was collected annually by royal messengers, *tuci*, or as they were also called *ajele* (from the Arabic *ajala*, to dispatch), who visited these countries at the head of small armies, ready to quell any disturbance or to bring recalcitrant taxpayers to heel. Of the tribute levied a little more than half went to the king, the rest to the royal messenger. The office of tax-collector in the outside areas of the kingdom was entrusted mostly to the royal nobility, and the districts over which they were put in charge were linked with 636 651 636 651 662

[1] Such an 'international' agreement existed, for example, between the *Etsu* Nupe, the *Sarkin Sudan* (the Emir of Kontagora), and the Emir of Zaria with respect to Gbari country. These treaties were not always kept by the parties concerned. Thus the *Etsu* of Agaie used to raid the territories of his brother Emir, the *Etsu* Nupe, and had eventually to be stopped by a big war which was led by the Emir of Gwandu himself.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

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'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and *tunga* which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

651 [436] [285]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

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A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

631 651 554

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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631 became too great. The towns or villages which were granted as such personal fiefs could lie anywhere within the boundary of the kingdom, on
651 the royal domains as well as in the areas held as office fiefs by *egba*. The personal fiefs involved no legal or administrative authority, only the
554 authority of levying an additional tax called *edugi* (small tax) over and above the royal tax, *edukó* (big tax), after the latter had been collected. There was no limitation to this additional tax, which must often have exploited the peasants ruthlessly. Yet I have also seen close personal attachment between villages and their lord still existing to-day, bearing witness to the existence of more friendly ties between feudal lord and tenants.

631 It is clearly impossible to state in more detail how this administrative system worked, and especially how far the administrative and judicial
554 authority of the feudal delegate worked in harmony with the existing traditional authority vested in village chief and elders. Later on, I shall give more data about the working of this legal machinery. But it is easy to understand that the powerful feudal lord and his delegate could uphold political and legal authority by the very fact of their power and influence. They could, for example, secure redress or punishment where the village chief's limited power might be too weak to enforce judgement or arbitration. But this intervention might easily distort justice rather than further it. As aliens, never linked permanently with the people over whom they rule, the fief-holders were bad guardians of tribal law and traditional justice. This, in fact, reflects the fundamental conflict involved in the system of feudal administration. The feudal lords were officially responsible for the well-being of their subjects; they were agents of a central authority which was vitally interested in the maintenance of peace and order; they themselves, like their royal master, depended on the people of the fief for tax, supply of food, and supply of men for their armies and wars. But the connexion of fief with rank, involving as it did a change of the fief with every promotion, did not allow the mutual attachment between the feudal lord and his subjects to grow really strong and permanent—too strong and permanent for the safety of the king and the unity of the state. To balance the danger that might arise from a too firmly entrenched feudal lord, the kingdom had to risk the other danger of maladministration and discontent among the people on the fiefs.

642 This policy of preserving the balance of power between dynastic and feudal interests which had to be re-established and readjusted with every
631 change of régime is reflected in the many changes which the administration of the kingdom has undergone in the hundred years of Fulani rule. *Etsu* Masaba, intent on building up an enormous dynastic power, divided the whole of Beni and Kusopa country, town for town, among his sons and daughters and other followers as personal fiefs. There was no place in the kingdom, the Nupe say, which had not its private 'owner'. The Nupe nicknamed this generous king *ndã na ma gã na*, Father of Distributing. *Etsu* Umaru, who succeeded him, adopted the opposite policy in order to win the support of the native tribes against the feudal lords who had supported his predecessor. He abolished all private fiefs in

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaži kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

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In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoži*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

563 439

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kachs), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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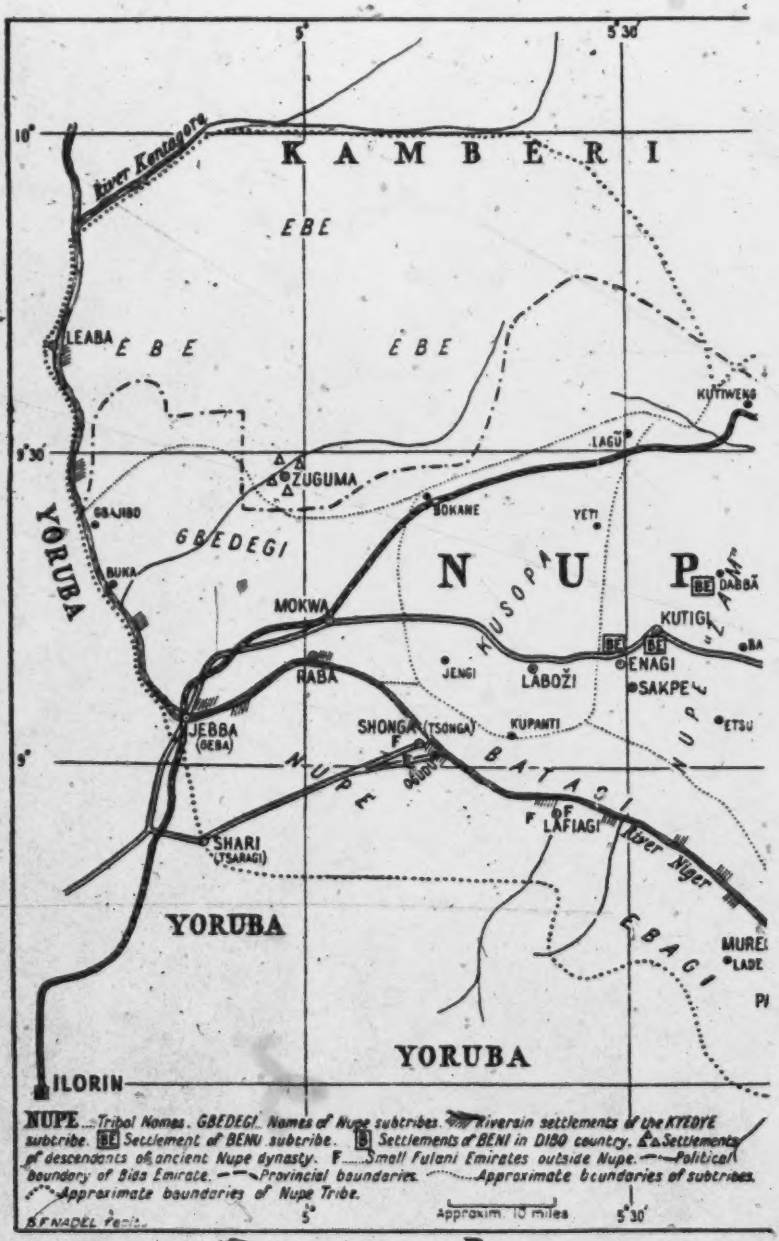

[End MAP I (A)]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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MAP OF NUPE

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[End Map I (B)]

565 Below the *sarakiši* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wuši*, whose
567 members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[12] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiši*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

PATRONAGE[13]

566 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society.
675 The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

AGE-SETS[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiši*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiši*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfuši*, of ages *c.* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

GOVERNMENT[15]

● 631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[12] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 383–401; 1935a, pp. 269–71, 292.
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–18

631 countries of Beni and Kyedye; the third comprised a wider ring of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, mostly in Trans-Kaduna; the fourth was Bida town, the seat of the central government, which formed an administrative district of its own.

The "outside" peoples consisted of Yoruba (Yagba and Bunu), Kakanda, Kamberi, Gbari, and Gbira, with some Nupe sections (mostly Dibo and Ebe). Their districts were not regularly administered by the central government, but they were recognized as being under the "protection" of Bida, and paid an annual tribute in slaves, collected by royal agents (*tuci* or *ajele*). Other Emirates and chieftainships were bound by "treaties" not to raid Bida's dependent territories, though Bida itself could raid its own "outside" peoples. The royal messengers visited the territories with small armies and the possession of such a force was an essential qualification for the post of *ajele*.

The kingdoms of Beni and Kyedye,[16] the two small "states within the State," were directly under the king and their chiefs acted as a kind of royal agents, their appointment and succession being subject to confirmation by the king. They could administer law in cases which came into the category of *gyara*, "reparation," and collected tax in their areas on the king's behalf.

The rest of the Nupe kingdom was divided into areas each containing a town with its dependent villages and *tunga*, which were administered as fiefs by their lords (*egba*). The latter might be members of the royal house or of the official nobility, or court slaves. Each received his fief from the *Etsu*, together with his title with which the fief remained permanently linked; the appointment to an *egba* post thus conferred a definite status. Fiefs were also bestowed on individuals, usually relatives or favourites of the king, independent of rank or office. A lord rarely visited his fief; his representative, usually one of his slaves or serfs living on his lands, collected tax for him. The *egba* had to give a proportion of this tax to the king. Among his other duties was the administration of justice in lesser cases.

633 Bida town was administered directly by the king and his officers of state, but, like the kingdom, was divided into areas, the inner city, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida lived, "greater" Bida, and the strangers' quarter. Cutting across these divisions were the small local units, described by Nadel as "factions rather than organized town wards," consisting of the followers of various members of the powerful nobility. In fact, the people of Bida refer to the different parts of the town by the titles of the nobility, who have their houses there.

In more recent times the affairs of Bida Emirate have been in the hands of the *Etsu* and a council of four, consisting of the *Ndeji*, President (formerly "father of the town" of Bida), the *Maiyaki* or *Sarkin Yaki*, Minister of Public Works (formerly Commander in War), the *Nágya*, formerly District Head of Mokwa and a member of the nobility, and the *Etsu Tafiey*, official representative of the commoners and formerly chief of the Beni confederacy.[17] Other officials include the *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the *Etsu*'s chief slave and now the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office of the Nigerian Administration. Seven District Heads are appointed by the *Etsu* from the ranks of the higher royal nobility.
634 Exceptions are the *Kuta* of the Kyedye sub-tribe,[18] who is the District Head of Kuta District, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha. The District Heads live in the largest town of their District and make frequent tours of inspection of the area and regular visits to the *Etsu*. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their District and for the collection of taxes.[19]

635 648 The *Dikko*, head of the nomadic Fulani (*bororoši*) in Bida Emirate, fills a traditional position in Fulani social life and ceremonial. He acts as liaison officer

[16] See below, p. 38.
[17] c. 1936.
[18] See below, p. 38.
[19] Nadel, 1942, pp. 158–65.

9: Nadel E 5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralised political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *ndáduma*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361]
Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [487]
were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (AFRICA, VIII, 3).

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

631 weapon so well suited to their hands. And in their small 'state within the state' this jurisdiction
693 over the 'King's Highway' was still working, a true if smaller copy of the old system, some thirty or forty years ago.

IV.

681 The *ledu* villages are, as we have seen, linked with the king's person by special sacred links; they are made to share the king's guardianship over the law; they thus visibly represent, and almost
693 propagate, the supreme power of the king at what we are tempted to call 'strategic' places. And
642 in this, it seems to me, an important general sociological issue is involved. Strict centralization of legal power, however strong a machinery for political integration it seems, always harbours a disintegrative element as well. For it tends to separate the crime as actually committed from the final act of justice. The element of retaliation and atonement, so essential to the savage mind, becomes meaningless where the criminal is tried and punished a hundred miles away, and by people who are, practically, strangers. The individual community is deprived of one of the most powerful elements of social cohesion, namely, the title to sanction the violation of its laws and of its social order within its own boundaries. It appears to be the meaning of the *ledu* organization to neutralize this influence for that vital area of the Niger valley. For the most conspicuous, final, phase of jurisdiction is returned to a certain extent to the individual community. It is true this applies only to a few selected places. But we remember their surprising regular distribution on the river; and also the rule that the *ledu* village nearest to the place of the crime had to be called upon to perform the execution. These villages are 'representative' places, and 'strategic' places, and their selection is backed by the strongest charter: mythical and religious belief.

S. F. NADEL.

[P. 132]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

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'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and *tunga* which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

[436] [285]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

632 692

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

631 651 554

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaši kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nin*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nin* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoži*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

[184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in 342] the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference 592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying [423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndahó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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634 territory which he is called upon to rule to-day, the richest trade centre of the country, is inhabited to a very large extent by strangers, traders, craftsmen, and canoe-men from other parts of the country, many of them from Bida, that is, by people who reluctantly bow to the rule of a culturally 'inferior' peasant chief. It is not surprising, therefore, that his administration of the district proved unsatisfactory, and that the *Etsu* felt justified in urging the District Officer to reinstitute in this responsible office a member of his own class.

The District Heads live in their districts; they reside in the largest town and hold there their little court, an exact copy of a nobleman's household in the capital. They have to make frequent tours of inspection of their area, and at regular intervals they visit the capital to report to the *Etsu*, especially at the time of the great Mohammedan festivals when all officers of state assemble at the king's court. District Heads are sometimes transferred from one district to another, but the tendency to-day is to let them stay in one district as long as possible so as to become thoroughly familiar with the people and the local problems of administration. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their districts, their main task being the supervision of tax collection; but they are also charged with such non-political tasks as finding pupils for the elementary schools of the Emirate. Their subordinates in the administrative machinery are the various Village Heads of the district, of whom we have heard already.[1] The District Heads are further assisted in their work by a staff of official and semi-official helpers—scribes, messengers, policemen, and the host of *bara* and henchmen who attach themselves to every man of rank.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

633 621 The administration of Bida town has undergone many changes in the thirty or forty years of British Administration. The original system was based to some extent on the division of the town into a number of 'wards', each associated with an influential member of the Bida nobility. The town was divided into twenty *efu* (or, as they were known officially, *ungwa*—the Hausa word for town ward); five of these wards were grouped together as one large *ungwa*, and these four *ungwa* were placed under four men of high rank: *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Galadiman Gari*, and *Gabi Seidi*. The four *ungwa* bore no relation to the dynastic division of Bida into three *ekpā*; their arrangement simply followed the four main roads which cross the town from north to south and east to west. However, the four rank-holders in charge of the large *ungwa* as well as the other subordinate ward-heads in the small *ungwa* (or *efu*) were actually living in the part of the town over which they had been placed; the link of locality which is so relevant in Nupe life was thus recognized officially. Later, however, this system of ward-heads lent itself to certain abuses, bribery and extortion of tax-money; it was abolished by the Administration and replaced by a new system which now divides the town into four

[1] See p. 52.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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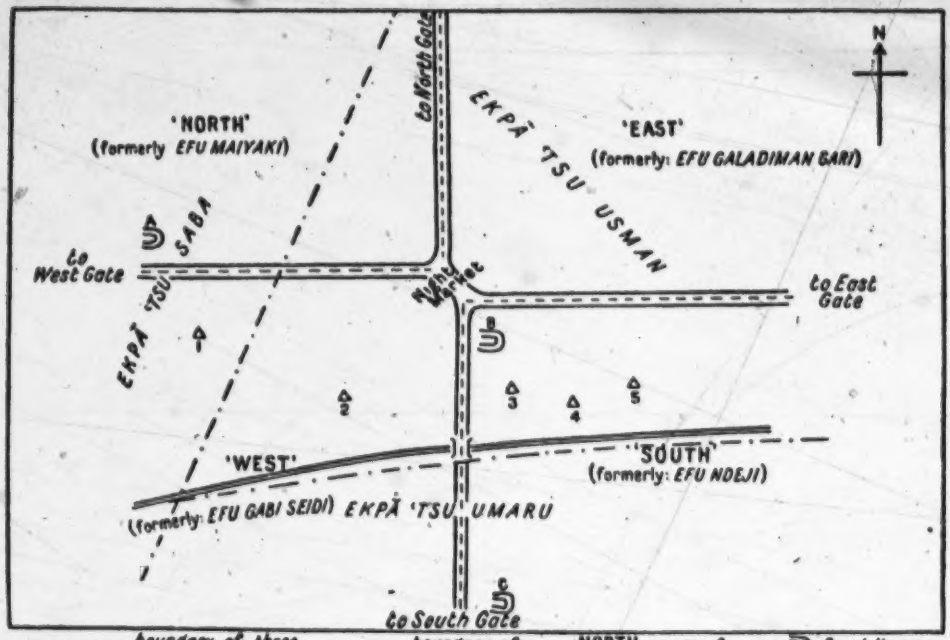

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[p. 161]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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633 *ungwa* (the same four *ungwa*), defined geographically as Bida North, South, East, and West. Four new officials were appointed who are no 621 longer inhabitants of 'their' *ungwa* but are supposed to be jointly responsible for the whole town, irrespective of their personal connexions with one or the other locality. The Hausa and Yoruba communities of Bida, who live in *lálemi*, were placed under their own ward-heads. These six officials form the present Town Council. A royal prince, the *Natsu*, was appointed as its chairman, and at the same time as the representative of the *Etsu* on the Town Council. The attached sketch-map illustrates the changes in the town administration.

633 A certain inner weakness of this system becomes apparent at once. It lies in the disregard for the factor of locality and for those direct contacts and bonds of 'protection' and personal attachment which alone establish in Nupe a relationship of mutual confidence between the social classes, between ruler and ruled. It is not surprising therefore that the new division into four geographical areas 'did not work', and that in 1936, only three years after its introduction, a fundamental reorganization was contemplated.[1]

TAXATION

651 The taxation of the Emirate is fixed by the District Officer, who tours the country and, assisted by District Head and Village Head, assesses the income of the various villages and districts. The tax unit is the village area.[2] The distribution of the tax among the people of the village and its dependencies is left to the Village Head and his elders. Taxation varies partly from district to district and is also different in town and country. Complaints against too heavy taxation, or reports on defaulting, are forwarded through the District Head to the capital, that is, to the Emir's Council and the District Officer. Tax defaulters can be imprisoned.

Of the total tax revenue of the Emirate (to which are added fines, licence fees, &c.) 30 per cent. goes to the Central Government of Nigeria and 70 per cent. to the N.A. Treasury.[3] From the N.A. share in the revenue are paid the salaries of all (native) N.A. officials, the expenses of all Public Works for which the Emirate is responsible, the maintenance

[1] In a memorandum for the reorganization of the Bida Town Council, which I drew up on the request of the Administration, I have suggested (1) a town division based on the division into three *ekpā*, which is so eminently characteristic of the social life of the kingdom, and (2) a system of election of ward-heads by the people themselves. The latter would, in my view, utilize and render more valuable the channels of personal connexion between patron and client, trusted 'protector' and the ignorant, intimidated commoner who still feels that he could only benefit from the association with a man of rank and learning.—A paper on the same subject was published in abridged form in the *Summary of Lectures*, Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1937, pp. 97–8. See also p. 123.

[2] Lord Lugard, Colonial Reports Misc., No. 40.

[3] This scale corresponds to the position of Bida Emirate as a First Class Emirate. In 1935–6 the scale was slightly altered in favour of the N.A. share, because the building of the *Etsu*'s new official residence—a typical item of N.A. expenditure—would not have been possible without this additional revenue.

643 The ndakó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuŋ* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

Status and Titles[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuŋ*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.

[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.

[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.

[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.

[9] See below, p. 35.

[10] See below, p. 36.

[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuŋ* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

631 countries of Beni and Kyedye; the third comprised a wider ring of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, mostly in Trans-Kaduna; the fourth was Bida town, the seat of the central government, which formed an administrative district of its own.

The "outside" peoples consisted of Yoruba (Yagba and Bunu), Kakanda, Kamberi, Gbari, and Gbira, with some Nupe sections (mostly Dibo and Ebe). Their districts were not regularly administered by the central government, but they were recognized as being under the "protection" of Bida, and paid an annual tribute in slaves, collected by royal agents (*tuci* or *ajele*). Other Emirates and chieftainships were bound by "treaties" not to raid Bida's dependent territories, though Bida itself could raid its own "outside" peoples. The royal messengers visited the territories with small armies and the possession of such a force was an essential qualification for the post of *ajele*.

The kingdoms of Beni and Kyedye,[16] the two small "states within the State," were directly under the king and their chiefs acted as a kind of royal agents, their appointment and succession being subject to confirmation by the king. They could administer law in cases which came into the category of *gyara*, "reparation," and collected tax in their areas on the king's behalf.

The rest of the Nupe kingdom was divided into areas each containing a town with its dependent villages and *tunga*, which were administered as fiefs by their lords (*egba*). The latter might be members of the royal house or of the official nobility, or court slaves. Each received his fief from the *Etsu*, together with his title with which the fief remained permanently linked; the appointment to an *egba* post thus conferred a definite status. Fiefs were also bestowed on individuals, usually relatives or favourites of the king, independent of rank or office. A lord rarely visited his fief; his representative, usually one of his slaves or serfs living on his lands, collected tax for him. The *egba* had to give a proportion of this tax to the king. Among his other duties was the administration of justice in lesser cases.

633 Bida town was administered directly by the king and his officers of state, but, like the kingdom, was divided into areas, the inner city, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida lived, "greater" Bida, and the strangers' quarter. Cutting across these divisions were the small local units, described by Nadel as "factions rather than organized town wards," consisting of the followers of various members of the powerful nobility. In fact, the people of Bida refer to the different parts of the town by the titles of the nobility who have their houses there.

In more recent times the affairs of Bida Emirate have been in the hands of the *Etsu* and a council of four, consisting of the *Ndeji*, President (formerly "father of the town" of Bida), the *Maiyaki* or *Sarkin Yaki*, Minister of Public Works (formerly Commander in War), the *Nágya*, formerly District Head of Mokwa and a member of the nobility, and the *Etsu Tafieŋ*, official representative of the commoners and formerly chief of the Beni confederacy.[17] Other officials include the *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the *Etsu*'s chief slave and now the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office of the Nigerian Administration. Seven District Heads are appointed by the *Etsu* from the ranks of the higher royal nobility. 634 Exceptions are the *Kuta* of the Kyedye sub-tribe,[18] who is the District Head of Kuta District, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha. The District Heads live in the largest town of their District and make frequent tours of inspection of the area and regular visits to the *Etsu*. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their District and for the collection of taxes.[19]

633 648 The *Dikko*, head of the nomadic Fulani (*bororoši*) in Bida Emirate, fills a traditional position in Fulani social life and ceremonial. He acts as liaison officer

[16] See below, p. 38.
[17] c. 1936.
[18] See below, p. 38.
[19] Nadel, 1942, pp. 158–65.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Aganshu*, and of Shaku *Kpotuy*.[21]

Village Organization

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*žitsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *žitsu*, "town chief" In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*ŋusaži* sing. *ŋusa*, the "old ones," or *ticiži*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*žigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Žitsu* and *žigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1926) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[24]

The Political System of the Kyedye

634 184 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nuwa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticiži*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaži*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaži*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alhalin* Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[25]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

633 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsóži*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*žitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndaceži* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benú*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benú* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[26]

[24] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–8.
[25] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1940a, pp. 174–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[26] Nadel, 1938.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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among the tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, and (a negative evidence mentioned already) the *ndakó gboyá*, which is regarded as 'typical' Nupe by Hausa and Yoruba, is unknown among Dibo and Ebe. There are also other rituals and cults which cannot be assigned (at least not to-day) to a certain sub-tribe, and finally rituals and cults which represent the cultural possession of single village communities. In brief, the possession of a common cult means only an external uniformity of culture. None of these rituals implies co-operation and actual contact in the group at large. They are still but the expression of parallel, 'like', behaviour and not of concrete co-activity and 'togetherness'.

This is equally true of the other cultural features on which the cultural identity of the sub-tribe rests. The consciousness of a cultural uniformity is supported by the actual existing uniformity. But there is still no organized centre of co-activity behind this uniformity or behind the transmission of the consciousness of this uniformity. We can only say this: the sub-tribe, much more than the tribe, constitutes a potentiality of such co-activity and intensive 'togetherness'. The links of a common language, of similar economic pursuits, similar interests, parallel religious ideas, may grow easily into links of co-operation and 'togetherness'. Only in two cases, however, has this potentiality become reality—among the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. In no other section are there contacts and forms of co-activity which make the sub-tribe 'one country', and its people 'one group'. How, then, does that cultural uniformity crystallize into the unified, conscious commonness of 'one country'?

I have described elsewhere the growth and organization of one of the two sub-tribes which have evolved such unified structure.[1] Let me repeat here the main facts. The growth of the Kyedye organization was the growth of a colonizing and conquering group. Expanding from one centre—Muregi, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna—the Kyedye established themselves in the course of time all along the river banks. They built their settlements on the land of the aboriginal sections, Bataci and riverain Gbedegi, and claimed rulership over them. Twin villages arose, half Kyedye and half Bataci or Gbedegi, from which the Kyedye administered the district, assuming judicial authority and levying taxes. This colonization is still going on, and their rulership, rigidly centralized, is still alive and undisputed.[2] Close contact, intermarriage, and regular new emigration link the settlements, old and new, capital and colonies. Delegates from Muregi, relatives of the Kyedye chief, reside in the settlements, and these administrative 'posts' are correlated with the ranks which the delegates hold in the Kyedye hierarchy; promotion in rank involves promotion to a more important as well as more lucrative post. This closely knit ruling group precludes all permanent links between the cultural groups which this political development has thrown

[1] See 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940, pp. 165–95.

[2] Only twenty or thirty years ago have the Kyedye established themselves on the river Kaduna, or on Jebba Island, a place which had only then become of economic importance.

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together. There is no intermarriage, and almost no cultural give-and-take; to-day the Kyedye are Mohammedans (or semi-Mohammedans), but the Bataci and Gbedegi have remained pagans. Yet in one significant field cultural unity has evolved, over and above the differences of culture, tribal origin, and social status, and over and above also the co-operation embodied in the political structure. With the political rulership the Kyedye have assumed spiritual authority as well; myths and sacred insignia confirm the position of the *Kuta*, the Kyedye chief, as the ruler over the whole riverain area and its people; and two most important sacrifices to the river Niger, which secure large catches and safety from floods, the *ketsá* and *ndáduma*, are linked with his person and office. Every new appointed *Kuta* will send one of his near relations to Jebba and Buka, the two places where these sacrifices are performed, with two white bulls to be sacrificed to the river spirits by the priests of these cults. By these sacrifices the chief secures 'greatness' for himself, and success and welfare for his subjects.

The Beni organization presents an entirely different picture. Unlike the Kyedye system it exists no longer; it was broken and destroyed by the Fulani conquest. It took the form of a confederacy formed by the twelve 'towns' of the Beni: Bida, Tafiẽ, Esã, Doko, Towagi, Egbe, Gaba, Nupeko, Eda, Panjuru, Ewu, Yesa. The political bonds were twofold: the twelve towns recognized the supremacy of one town, and paid a small tribute to its chief, or 'town-king'; further, in case of war, the twelve towns were bound to fight together and to support each other, again under the leadership of one town.[1] Mythology, and the existence of certain common sacred insignia of the twelve town-kings of Beni, supply the spiritual background for the political unity. Moreover, the *gunnu* cult, this most important religious cult of Nupe, appears among the Beni in a special form, namely, as a cult which utilizes comprehensive co-operation between the priests of the whole country, thus underlining, in the religious sphere, the unification of the sub-tribal section.[2]

One might ask why it was that just these two sub-tribes evolved a comprehensive political and cultural unit. The origin of the Beni confederacy is hidden in the dim past of a Nupe of which we have no records. As regards the Kyedye we can, to some extent, answer the question. In the environment of the river valley, and in the pursuits of a riverain people, lies the germ of territorial and political expansion. Long fishing expeditions, an extensive river trade, on which the livelihood of this riverain group depends, demand extension of political influence as security for the very wide area of their economic activities. Trading-posts become political outposts, and fishing colonies become strongholds of territorial expansion. The spirit of adventure and enterprise, finally, which alone could have built up this efficient organization, is part of the life of this riverain people.

Of the enterprising spirit of Kyedye chiefs, born colonizers and

[1] This chief town of the Beni seems to have been Tafiẽ till the Fulani conquest; after that the headship passed to Bida, till it disappeared finally with the absorption of the Beni confederacy in Nupe Emirate (see p. 82).

[2] See *J.R.A.I.* lxvii, 1937, p. 98.

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pioneers, the history of the Royal Niger Company can give many instances. But let us read these examples correctly. They show, first, that political integration tends to widen its basis so as to embrace all spheres of cultural activity; political unification calls into being other forms of contact and co-activity, and thus cements its own unity with the help of a more comprehensive and more intimate 'togetherness'. But these examples show also that the creation of such co-activity and togetherness does not simply follow from the potentiality of cultural uniformity. In the case of the Beni confederacy cultural uniformity appears intensified into co-activity and togetherness; among the Kyedye the political fusion of different sub-tribes, different cultural areas, created the wider area of co-activity and common life. Obviously, the nature of this co-activity and common life is different in each case. The commonness that grows from uniform culture and the commonness that is superimposed upon a cultural diversity represent two different social realities. What we have said above of the links of cultural uniformity which 'grow easily into links of co-activity and togetherness' was not, therefore, quite correct. We have before us not a simple quasi-automatic process of 'growth', but two specific, alternative forms of social development.

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Etsu Tafiẽ had been in pre-Fulani times the chief of the 'aboriginal population' of Nupe, the Beni tribe[1]—a justification which, as this chapter has shown, takes into account, out of the whole complex social structure of the kingdom, but one comparatively irrelevant fact: an external historical connexion with one isolated village community. Typical of what I have called the 'parochial outlook' of the village, the *Etsu Tafiẽ*, bearer of one of those 'petty village titles', having reached this new position through no acknowledged channel of 'social career', seems out of place in a council on which he could hardly hold his own against the traditional leaders of the country's fate, the highest ranks of the Nupe hierarchy. The insignificant role which I saw him play on the council seems to support my view.

Bida Emirate is divided for the purpose of administration into a number of districts; at the head of each is a District Head, appointed by the *Etsu* as a rule from the ranks of the higher royal nobility; he himself, as *Nǎgenu*, was formerly District Head of the Jima-Doko district (see table, p. 95). Some time ago the number of districts was reduced from ten to seven by amalgamating certain districts, making the area in charge of one District Head rather larger, and perhaps also more heterogeneous, than might seem advisable. Here is the list of districts and rank-holders appointed as District Heads.

List of District Heads

Former Districts	*Present Districts*	*District Heads*
Gbangba	Gbangba	*Nakorji*
Dakmon-Magwe	,,	,,
Badeggi	Badeggi	*Ginya*
Kacha	Kacha	*Sheshi*
Jima-Doko	Jima-Doko	*Nǎgenu*
Sakpe	Kutigi	*Kpotũ*
Egbako	,,	,,
Laboẽi	,,	,,
Mokwa	Mokwa	*Rani*
Kyedye	Kyedye	*Kuta*

Two District Heads are not members of the royal nobility: the *Kuta* of the Kyedye, whose privileged position as a provincial chief directly under the *Etsu* had been recognized in the early days of British rule and had been renewed recently by the Administration, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha, who was appointed in 1934. He had been the hereditary village chief of Kacha, and his appointment to an office which had been held previously by the *Makũ*, a royal prince, was designed, like the appointment of the *Etsu Tafiẽ*, to open responsible state offices to the Nupe 'commoner'. Unfortunately this appointment was once more based on insufficient knowledge of the country. The territory over which the ancestors of the *Sheshi* used to exercise their rule as 'town-kings' of Kacha has been placed in the political rearrangement of the country mostly into a different Division, the Agaie Emirate. Also the town and

[1] See p. 25.

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634 territory which he is called upon to rule to-day, the richest trade centre of the country, is inhabited to a very large extent by strangers, traders, craftsmen, and canoe-men from other parts of the country, many of them from Bida, that is, by people who reluctantly bow to the rule of a culturally 'inferior' peasant chief. It is not surprising, therefore, that his administration of the district proved unsatisfactory, and that the *Etsu* felt justified in urging the District Officer to reinstitute in this responsible office a member of his own class.

The District Heads live in their districts; they reside in the largest town and hold there their little court, an exact copy of a nobleman's household in the capital. They have to make frequent tours of inspection of their area, and at regular intervals they visit the capital to report to the *Etsu*, especially at the time of the great Mohammedan festivals when all officers of state assemble at the king's court. District Heads are sometimes transferred from one district to another, but the tendency to-day is to let them stay in one district as long as possible so as to become thoroughly familiar with the people and the local problems of administration. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their districts, their main task being the supervision of tax collection; but they are also charged with such non-political tasks as finding pupils for the elementary schools of the Emirate. Their subordinates in the administrative machinery are the various Village Heads of the district, of whom we have heard already.[1] The District Heads are further assisted in their work by a staff of official and semi-official helpers—scribes, messengers, policemen, and the host of *bara* and henchmen who attach themselves to every man of rank.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

633 621 The administration of Bida town has undergone many changes in the thirty or forty years of British Administration. The original system was based to some extent on the division of the town into a number of 'wards', each associated with an influential member of the Bida nobility. The town was divided into twenty *efu* (or, as they were known officially, *ungwa*—the Hausa word for town ward); five of these wards were grouped together as one large *ungwa*, and these four *ungwa* were placed under four men of high rank: *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Galadiman Gari*, and *Gabi Seidi*. The four *ungwa* bore no relation to the dynastic division of Bida into three *ekpã*; their arrangement simply followed the four main roads which cross the town from north to south and east to west. However, the four rank-holders in charge of the large *ungwa* as well as the other subordinate ward-heads in the small *ungwa* (or *efu*) were actually living in the part of the town over which they had been placed; the link of locality which is so relevant in Nupe life was thus recognized officially. Later, however, this system of ward-heads lent itself to certain abuses, bribery and extortion of tax-money; it was abolished by the Administration and replaced by a new system which now divides the town into four

[1] See p. 52.

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131 167 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[6]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

101 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 634 [167] Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciži): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciži* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laticiži* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoži* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbéde,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[6] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 287, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Bazumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endozigi, Ela, Difu, Gbaradozi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

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619 634 *Nupe "Zam":* a group in Trans-Kaduna (Kutigi) believed to be the oldest section of the Nupe; calling themselves *Nupe*, they have no secondary name.

Ebagi: an "original" Nupe sub-tribe, who claim to be the descendants of a dynasty superseded by the Fulani now ruling in Ilorin Emirate.

Ebe (Abewa): an "original" sub-tribe living in Yelwa District, but, according to Mathews, they call themselves *Asu* and claim to have come from what is now Yoruba country.[10]

Gbedye (Gbedegi): on the borders of Yoruba country in Niger Province, possibly of Yoruba origin.[11]

Kupa (also, erroneously, called Gupa; Kupachi):[12] said to be of Ebe origin, having arrived at their present site on the southern bank of the Niger around Eggan and, in small numbers, in Bunu District, in about 1800. Some are also to be found in the Koton Karifi District of Kabba Province, where they form a section of the "host" population and, together with the Dibo (see below), account for some 10% of the population. There are also others in Kupa District of Koton Karifi Division. They are said to be not fully "Nupeized."

Cekpay: on the southern bank of the Niger.

Kusopá: in the Labozhi District, in thick inland forest west of the Kaduna River, where they cultivate the kola-nut plantations of Labozhi and Kudu; they are also to be found in the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. Their origin is unknown but they may be comparatively recent immigrants.

Benu: a recently formed sub-tribe of Bornu origin. They came from Kukawa at the end of the 18th century as wealthy traders and owners of cattle and horses and now predominate in Kutigi and in the neighbouring villages of the Trans-Kaduna area, where they are the economically and politically dominant group.

Dibo (also known as Žitako ("men down below") and Ganagana, a Hausa name: a recently assimilated sub-tribe. As lately as 1931 they were not fully "Nupeized" nor universally accepted as a Nupe sub-tribe.[13] They live in the southernmost part of Lafiagi and Agaie Emirates, also in the extreme north of Koton Karifi Division, on the eastern slope of the Gurara valley north of the Kunama-Okya watershed, their chief towns being Pandegi, Agyana, Ebagi, Rimbo, Kibogi, Rijaya, and Chigbwechi. There are also a few hundred in Toto and Umaisha Districts of Nasarawa Emirate. They are the predominant tribe at Ashera in Abuja Emirate.

Gwagba: a recently formed group, essentially a political section. The name is said to be deprecatory and applied to those living in and around Zugurma.[14] According to Mathews,[15] the Gwagba consist of the indigenous Ebe, Basa, and Bedegi of the district. He suggests that the name Gwagba was given to them at the time of their original conquest by the Agabi (the descendants of Tsoede, among whom are the present "royal family" of Zugurma), and that it may even be the original name of a people.

Basa-Nge: a group speaking a Nupe dialect which appears to have left the mother country about a century ago, before the Fulani conquest. They lived first

[10] Mathews, 1926.

[11] There is a Yoruba sub-tribe called Gbedde in Kabba Division of Kabba Province. One section of the Kyedye sub-tribe is also called Gbéde and also inhabits the upper stretches of the Niger.

[12] The name Kupa is said to be a corruption of Oku-Pari, meaning canoe-men of the Oku river. Kupa and Gupa are enumerated separately in the 1931 Census list of Nupe sub-tribes. Nadel names the Kupa only; Temple gives the Gupa as an offshoot of the Gbari, and the Kupa as a Nupe sub-tribe; Meek uses the name Gupa in his text and Kupa on his map; MacBride refers to those in Koton Karifi Division as Kupachi.

[13] They are, however, listed by Nadel (1942, p. 19) as one of the five "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, according to Nupe tradition, were in existence at the time of Tsoede.

[14] Nadel, 1942, p. 20.

[15] Mathews, 1926.

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on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

Konu (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Baſa* in the 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

Demographic Data

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op cit., p. 20.
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province, who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

631 countries of Beni and Kyedye; the third comprised a wider ring of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, mostly in Trans-Kaduna; the fourth was Bida town, the seat of the central government, which formed an administrative district of its own.

The "outside" peoples consisted of Yoruba (Yagba and Bunu), Kakanda, Kamberi, Gbari, and Gbira, with some Nupe sections (mostly Dibo and Ebe). Their districts were not regularly administered by the central government, but they were recognized as being under the "protection" of Bida, and paid an annual tribute in slaves, collected by royal agents (*tuci* or *ajele*). Other Emirates and chieftainships were bound by "treaties" not to raid Bida's dependent territories, though Bida itself could raid its own "outside" peoples. The royal messengers visited the territories with small armies and the possession of such a force was an essential qualification for the post of *ajele*.

The kingdoms of Beni and Kyedye,[16] the two small "states within the State," were directly under the king and their chiefs acted as a kind of royal agents, their appointment and succession being subject to confirmation by the king. They could administer law in cases which came into the category of *gyara*, "reparation," and collected tax in their areas on the king's behalf.

The rest of the Nupe kingdom was divided into areas each containing a town with its dependent villages and *tunga*, which were administered as fiefs by their lords (*egba*). The latter might be members of the royal house or of the official nobility, or court slaves. Each received his fief from the *Etsu*, together with his title with which the fief remained permanently linked; the appointment to an *egba* post thus conferred a definite status. Fiefs were also bestowed on individuals, usually relatives or favourites of the king, independent of rank or office. A lord rarely visited his fief; his representative, usually one of his slaves or serfs living on his lands, collected tax for him. The *egba* had to give a proportion of this tax to the king. Among his other duties was the administration of justice in lesser cases.

633 Bida town was administered directly by the king and his officers of state, but, like the kingdom, was divided into areas, the inner city, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida lived, "greater" Bida, and the strangers' quarter. Cutting across these divisions were the small local units, described by Nadel as "factions rather than organized town wards," consisting of the followers of various members of the powerful nobility. In fact, the people of Bida refer to the different parts of the town by the titles of the nobility who have their houses there.

In more recent times the affairs of Bida Emirate have been in the hands of the *Etsu* and a council of four, consisting of the *Ndeji*, President (formerly "father of the town" of Bida), the *Maiyaki* or *Sarkin Yaki*, Minister of Public Works (formerly Commander in War), the *Nágya*, formerly District Head of Mokwa and a member of the nobility, and the *Etsu Tafiey*, official representative of the commoners and formerly chief of the Beni confederacy.[17] Other officials include the *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the *Etsu*'s chief slave and now the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office of the Nigerian Administration. Seven District Heads are appointed by the *Etsu* from the ranks of the higher royal nobility.
634 Exceptions are the *Kuta* of the Kyedye sub-tribe,[18] who is the District Head of Kuta District, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha. The District Heads live in the largest town of their District and make frequent tours of inspection of the area and regular visits to the *Etsu*. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their District and for the collection of taxes.[19]

633 648 The *Dikko*, head of the nomadic Fulani (*bororoši*) in Bida Emirate, fills a traditional position in Fulani social life and ceremonial. He acts as liaison officer

[16] See below, p. 38.
[17] c. 1936.
[18] See below, p. 38.
[19] Nadel, 1942, pp. 158–65.

633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Agansku*, and of Shaku *Kpotug*.[21]

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*ẓitsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeṅ*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *ẓitsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*ẓusaẓi*, sing. *ẓusa*, the "old ones," or *ẓiciẓi*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*ẓigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Ẓitsu* and *ẓigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1926) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[24]

The Political System of the Kyedye

634 184 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nuwa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticiłi*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaži*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaži*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alkalin* Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[25]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

633 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsółi*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*łitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndacełi* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benú*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benú* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[26]

[24] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–3.
[25] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1940a, pp. 174–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[26] Nadel, 1938.

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: TRIBAL MARKS: DRESS

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 304 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 565 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

BIRTH

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immediately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. 844 The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. 851 Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth. 852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

CIRCUMCISION

304 Circumcision (*zuy'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–16.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 116.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however, losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 654
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never
marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do
so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [136]
permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida,
whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [481]
and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285]
Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771]
rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. [782]
The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks[1] consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and 771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees." 775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its [245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

[1] [i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

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In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him. 634 771 776

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain. 634 776

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they have adopted the Nupe language. 634 304 197 167

[1] [i.e. The Kusopa subtribe.--Analyst]

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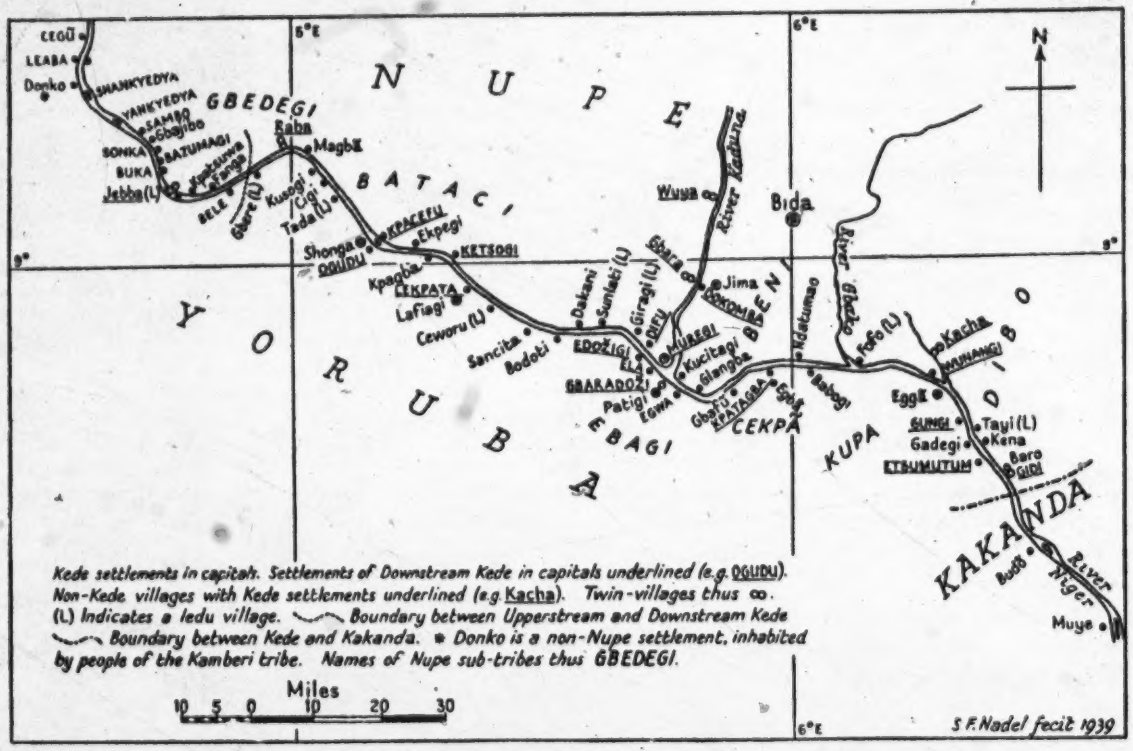

THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

[p.164]

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Kede

THE KEDE: A RIVERAIN STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By S. F. NADEL

I. Introduction

THE Kyedye or Kede,[1] with whom this paper is concerned, are a section of the large Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria, whose general culture and social organization I have described elsewhere.[2] The Kede have many cultural traits in common with their mother tribe; their kinship system is the same; they speak the dialect which is spoken to-day by the majority of the Nupe sub-tribes and has become the acknowledged language of the Emirate, Nupe 'proper'; they have also adopted the religion of Nupe kingdom, Islam. Yet combined with this cultural affinity we find certain marked divergencies. The Kede are a riverain group—the only purely riverain group among the various Nupe sub-tribes. Their economic pursuits and general social life centre round the river on which they live and from which they derive their livelihood. This means already that their social and cultural life must present certain features which are absent in Greater Nupe. Their political organization, moreover, contains certain distinctive and unusual traits—unusual even for Africa at large. It is for this unusual nature rather than for its relation to practical problems of African administration that I have chosen the political organization of this small Nigerian sub-tribe for the subject of this contribution.

II. Demography

The main body of the Kede lives to-day on the Rivers Niger and Kaduna between 8° 30′ and 9° 40′ North Latitude, inhabiting a narrow strip of land on both banks. The Kede share their territory with a number of other tribal sections of the Nupe, which lead a semi-riverain life, pursuing—unlike the Kede—agriculture

[1] The proper Nupe name is Kyedye. But the Hausa, Yoruba, and other neighbouring groups (as well as, to-day, Government officials) prefer the more easily pronounced Kede. We shall adopt, for the sake of simplicity, this latter name.

[2] See *Africa*, viii, 1935, and also my forthcoming book, *A Black Byzantium*.

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Kede

131 beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are
184 scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage:
101 for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synony-
184 mously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as
[173] *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

161 We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called
634 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group,
184 and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

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political boundaries, came to lie in three different provinces and six different (modern) Emirates or Divisions.[1] However, we shall see later that this distribution of a comparatively small group over so many political divisions is not due entirely to the re-alignment of political boundaries. It is also a result of movements of Kede groups in recent times, after the political boundaries had been fixed by the present Government. 634 184

By far the largest section of the Kede lives on the left bank of the Niger and Kaduna, in Bida Emirate. In this area the Kede have also maintained their political status of a separate political unit, with their own chief as the administrative head. In all other areas the Kede communities are absorbed politically in the districts on whose territory they lie, and live under the local, non-Kede chiefs and district heads.[2] The modern political situation has not, however, obliterated the other features of their social life; the characteristics of their political organization, more specially, live on, though on a smaller scale, in the one area where it has been given official recognition. Although many of our political data will of necessity be derived from this one area, we may again take them to be representative of Kede country at large, and when speaking in the following of Kede, Kede culture and social system, we shall mean the group as a whole, disregarding the modern political subdivisions.

There exists, however, one subdivision of a different nature, deep-seated and of old standing, which we may not ignore. I have spoken so far simply of the Kede. But there exist in reality two Kede groups: the Kede *Tifin*, or upper-stream Kede, and the Kede *Tako*, or down-stream Kede, the boundary between the two groups lying roughly at Jebba Island (the two groups overlap for a short stretch north and south of Jebba).[3] Now, what I have said about the specific features of the Kede social and political system applies only to the down-stream group. The upper-stream Kede show none of the traits which give to the culture of the sister group

[1] The Kede on the right bank of the Niger belong now to Ilorin and Kabba Provinces, and to the Emirates, or political divisions, of Ilorin, Lafiagi, Patigi, and (in the south-west corner) Koton-Karifi. The Kede on the left bank of the Niger and on the River Kaduna belong to Niger Province (formerly Nupe Province) and to the Emirates of Bida, Agaie-Lapai, and Kontagora.

[2] In one place (Ogudu) a certain compromise has been effected, the head of the fairly numerous Kede community acting as a titled 'second-in-command' to the village chief.

[3] The upper-stream Kede are also called Kede *Gbede*, after the Nupe sub-tribe (Gbede or Gbedegi) with which they share their territory.

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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

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with the position of immigrants who are dependent on the good-361
will of their hosts, but claimed with the territory in which to settle 166
also the political rule over it. If they are thus not 'colonists' in the strict sense of the word, not caring for settlement in new, virgin country, they are 'colonizers' in a more special, political sense, being settlers, immigrants, and representatives of a ruling race in one.

Here a final point remains to be cleared up: the exact relation 361
between the elastic territorial expansion of the tribe and the 166
necessarily more inert and rigid expansion of political domina- 634
tion. From the history of modern Kede settlement we learn that there is a certain time lag between the first occupation of a new place by Kede immigrants (the nucleus stage of the seasonal camp) and its eventual rise to the status of a political outpost. The Kede, as a rule, attribute the founding of their various colonies to particular chiefs. The initiative taken by the Kede chief in the colonial enterprise refers both to the early growth and the final political incorporation of the new colony. He might himself send out settlers from Muregi to a new place which looked a likely centre for Kede activities (Raba is an instance of this), or he might direct settlers from other places to a promising new settlement (as was the case in Katcha). But not until a settlement was firmly established and numbered several families would he delegate an official representative of his to take charge of it, thus proclaiming the political incorporation of the new Kede dominion.

We learn, further, that Kede territorial expansion did not proceed step by step, in continuous stages, but rather in a series of leaps, which may leave gaps between outpost and outpost, or mother-country and new settlement. Thus there are 'uncolonized' spaces on the Kaduna River between Gbara and Wuya or Gbara and Muregi—that is, stretches of country with native villages which (unlike the interspersed *kintsozi* villages in the 'old' Kede country) have not been absorbed politically by the Kede. We may assume that the early growth of the Kede community followed the same line of development. If this was so, the compact political unit in the 'old' Kede country proves that political rule was later brought up to the new outpost, and the territorial gaps eventually absorbed in the extending political unit. To-day the firmly fixed boundaries of provinces and districts forbid, of course, a similar sequel to the founding of new settlements. The new economic

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361 development of the country, moreover, has attracted Kede
166 emigration to places far outside the orbit of their political organiza-
634 tion: thus at the busy trading-place on the confluence of Niger and Benue, Lokoja, a large and prosperous Kede colony has grown, which combines all the 'stages' of Kede settlement, permanent and semi-permanent houses in which Kede families have made their home as well as a large encampment on the river bank for the Kede canoemen from the north. But it seems that even in pre-British times the territorial expansion of the Kede had to leave certain 'gaps' in its network of settlements and political outposts. Thus the large Nupe town of Eggan on the right bank of the Niger, flanked to the north and south by (presumably old) Kede settlements, remained a powerful, independent political unit, placed directly under the King of Nupe. It is this characteristic scheme of Kede expansion which allows for territorial gaps and the founding of (at least temporarily) isolated outposts that justifies our speaking of Kede 'colonies' and 'colonization'.

V. Political Organization

634 The political system of the Kede corresponds in all important points to the concept of the State. On its small scale, it fulfils the essential conditions of State organization: its dominion is territorial and non-tribal (or inter-tribal); its administration is centralized; its machinery of government is monopolized by a special *ad hoc* appointed or selected body, which is separated from the rest of the population by certain social and economic privileges.[1] The first of these three features we have discussed already; as regards the second, we have learned that Muregi, the traditional home of the tribe, is at the same time the political centre of the country; and as regards the last point, we have seen that in a broad sense the Kede themselves represent, corporatively, the ruling group of the country. But among the Kede we find another, more precisely defined 'privileged group', in whose hands the government of the country is concentrated. This ruling group, in a narrow sense, consists of the Kede chief and his titled councillors and emissaries.

[1] With regard to this definition of the State, see *Africa*, vol. cit., and my forthcoming Nupe book. R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (1927) (chaps. iii and iv), recognizes territorial sovereignty and centralized authority as essential to the structure of the State; the factor of the special 'ruling group' has been elaborated by F. Oppenheimer, *The State* (1926).

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The Position of the Chief. The Kede chief, or *Kuta*, resides in 634 Muregi. In his hands used to lie the ultimate decision on all matters concerning country and tribe as a whole—above all, war and the founding of new colonies. The *Kuta* was also the judicial head of his country. The larger part of taxes, duties, and other revenues used to flow into his private treasury. He was (and still is), finally, the official representative of his country *vis-à-vis* the overlords of Kede, the Emirs of Nupe. Impressive paraphernalia and forms of ceremonial serve to display the exalted position of the Kede chief, the most imposing perhaps being the enormous State [501] canoe, propelled by twelve paddlers (two to three is the normal crew of the Kede canoes), in which the *Kuta* travels. The authority of the Kede chief rests in the main on three facts: first, a moral sanction of Kede chieftainship lies in its hereditary nature and the fact of its being derived, in a straight line, from a mythical first *Kuta*, who had been invested with the rule over the Kede by Tsoede himself, the ancestor-king and culture-hero of the Nupe. (We shall hear more of him later.) Another support of Kede chieftainship, of more practical order, lies in the overwhelmingly strong economic position of the Kede chief. His resources allow him to acquire a large fleet of canoes—not only the chief means of livelihood, but also the mainstay of all military action in this riverain country[1]—and to attach to his household a host of followers and henchmen. The position of the Kede chief is made finally secure by the fact that the most important political offices in the Kede State are allotted to his blood relations.

The 'Offices of State'. Political offices among the Kede fall into two categories. One comprises a small group of rank-holders, *ticiʒi* ('titled ones'), who reside in the capital and represent the councillors of the Kede chief. A second category comprises titled official emissaries of the *Kuta*, *egbaʒi* ('delegates'), who are in charge of the various Kede settlements and colonies. To these two groups of 'real' office-holders we must add a third group of what the Nupe call 'private' or 'household' ranks, which the Kede chief bestows on faithful and able followers. The majority of them live with the *Kuta* in Muregi, acting as his messengers, councillors of a lesser order, and such like; a few are entrusted with emissaryships.

[1] Laird and Oldfield (op. cit., ii, p. 279) mention that the Kede chief 'had twenty canoes of retinue'.

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63 The councillors of the *Kuta* number five ranks, three of which correspond to more or less specialized offices: the administration of Muregi town, the guardianship of the sacred relics of Tsoede, and—in pre-British times—the leadership of military expeditions. In modern Kede, the District *Alkali*, the Mohammedan judge appointed by the Bida Native Administration for the District, is virtually a member of the chief's council in the same capacity of a 'departmental' official. With the exception of this last office, the ranks of the chief's councillors are hereditary and 'belong' to the various families which have held the ranks from times immemorial. The succession to a vacant office is not, however, automatic, but admits of a certain latitude, as for every vacancy there are bound to be several candidates of approximately equal seniority and equal claim. In the appointment of a new rank-holder by the chief and his councillors, due weight is given to the reputation of the candidate, his experience, intelligence, and economic success (as canoeman or river-trader). The position of a councillor appears to have carried no regular emoluments with it, except in the case of the official in charge of the town administration and thus the collection of taxes in Muregi. Occasional gifts from the chief and a share in the booty made on raids and warlike expeditions constituted their official income.

The rank list of the 'delegates' is both larger and more flexible than that of the councillors. It is frequently altered, increased, or decreased, according to the demands of administration. The members of this order of ranks are all recruited from the family of the *Kuta*. Their ranks are graded, and follow a strict system of precedence and promotion. Every promotion means a larger measure of power and influence, for it goes hand in hand with transfer to another, more important, and also more lucrative post. A new as yet untitled member of the chief's kin will as a rule be appointed to one of the lower ranks; the higher ranks and more responsible offices can only be reached by gradual promotion. Promotion and first appointment are, again, decided by the chief in consultation with the other tribal notables; here, however, the personal preferences of the electors count more than rigorous qualifications: in this system of ranks based on promotion, long experience is not regarded as a condition for a lower appointment, nor already achieved economic success for a rise in rank which carries with it increased economic benefits.

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Succession to Chieftainship. Here we must turn back to the 634 position of the Kede chief and the question of succession to Kede chieftainship. For the highest in the series of promotion which we have just been discussing, the ultimate promotion open to members of the chief's family, is promotion to chieftainship. The rank next to the chief's, *Egba* (here meaning 'deputy'), is in fact regarded as the rank of an 'heir apparent', and is as a rule held by the most senior among the titled relatives of the chief, his younger brother, or elder brother's son. Succession to chieftainship, more rigid than succession to the other political offices, thus allows the chief-to-be to consolidate his position in advance of his actual appointment. The tribal notables exercise a certain indirect influence: for in every one of the repeated routine decisions on the promotion of a 'delegate' they already decide to some degree his future chances as a candidate for chieftainship. But then, the ruling chief is himself one of the 'electors' and can easily turn the decision in favour of the candidate whom he supports.[1] Here becomes clear what I have said above about the kinship relation between the Kede chief and his 'delegates' tending to strengthen the position of the chief. The mere tie of kinship between them may conceivably prove a weak and unreliable support of his authority; but the fact that the delegates remain dependent on the favour of the chief for their promotion and political career in general turns it into a bulwark of chiefly power.

With 'councillors' and 'delegates' both dependent upon his goodwill, the Kede chief exercised an almost absolute authority—more absolute, I may add, than any other chief of Nupe. Repeated promotion and transfer, all decided in the capital, tied the delegates closely to Muregi and prevented them from making for themselves too independent a position in their temporary dominions. The 'absolute' power of the Kede chief thus appears as a necessary element in the control of this mobile political system which, with its scattered outposts and colonies, yet depended so much on smooth co-operation and concerted action. The weakness of the system lay in the fact that it allowed no legitimate check on the 634 power of the chief. A more equitable balance of power could 678 only be achieved by illegitimate means—that is, by feuds and

[1] It is significant, in this connexion, that the present *Kuta* introduced a new rank for his son when the list of traditional ranks was exhausted (see the chart of Kede ranks).

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637 578 factional splits within the hereditary ruling class. The recent history of the Kede contains indeed evidence of such rivalry between the Kede chief and his officers of State, or between different claimants to Kede rulership, and the ensuing division of the country into rival factions.[1] Attachment to one of the rival factions is also the only means by which the subject classes, the commoners with no rank and office, could exercise an indirect influence upon the political management of their country.

634 554 *Administration of the 'Colonies'*. The following chart illustrates the different grades in the rank list of Kede delegates. The ranks are given in order of precedence, each rank together with the district to which its holder is posted. The last five ranks on the list do not belong to members of the chief's family, but to that group of 'household' ranks which are also occasionally vested with emissaryships.

Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Egba	Elder brother's son (classific.)	Gbara	Kpatagban (right bank)
Sonfara	Son	Lives in Muregi, no emissaryship	(A newly introduced rank)
Kofiẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Raba	Raba
Ekpã	Younger brother (classific.)	Kpacefu	—
Tswadiya	Younger brother	Ketsogi	Ketsogi
Lefiti	Younger brother of *Egba*	Muregi, no emissaryship	Kpacefu
Liman Gyedwa	Distant relation	,,	Kpasha (right bank)
Tswadyagi	,,	,,	Kpasha

[1] Factional splits of this kind were occasionally utilized and fostered by outside Powers. Thus the Royal Niger Company supported an *Egba* in whom they found a valuable ally against the ruling *Kuta*, promising the former the chieftainship in return for the support of his faction. And once or twice the Emirs of Nupe backed the rival claimant of Kede chieftainship against the 'official' candidate.

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Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly* 634 554
Sodi	Younger brother	Katcha (unofficially)	Muregi, no emissaryship
Sheshi Kuta	Household-rank	Katcha	Eggan (right bank)
Tsowa Kuta	"	Muregi, no emissaryship	Egbagi (right bank)
Capa Kuta	"	"	Wunangi
Mijindadi Kuta	"	Jebba	Buka

The list shows that the assignment of posts to political ranks has undergone certain changes. They were due partly to the re-alignment of modern administrative divisions, which placed some of the former Kede areas outside of present-day Kede country (e.g. the Kede settlements on the right bank of the Niger). But partly also to changes in the economic and political importance of certain places and the corresponding change in their official 'appreciation'. Jebba and Katcha are illuminating examples. In Jebba we find a man of comparatively low rank in charge of the Kede community. He was posted there when Jebba was only just beginning to become the important place it is to-day. The *Mijindadi* is to-day a very old man, almost blind, and only nominally in charge of the 'colony'; he is generally expected to be succeeded by a high rank-holder whose rank would do justice to the importance of present-day Jebba. Katcha is, officially, in charge of the *Sheshi Kuta*, another 'household' rank; he is, however, unofficially assisted in his work by the *Sodi*, a relation of the *Kuta*, who also lives in Katcha and, in fact, only waits till this important Kede community will be handed to him as to the more suitable representative of the *Kuta*.

The dominion of the delegate varies in extent and composition. 634 His district (especially if he resides in one of the twin-villages) may comprise both tribal groups, Kede and non-Kede; or the boundary of his dominion may be drawn round the Kede settlement, while the 'native' village (which would be some distance from the Kede settlement or on the bank if the latter is on an island) belongs to the country and political district inland. In

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634 either case, the dominion of the Kede delegate would stretch some way up and down the river, comprising hamlets and villages on (formerly) both banks. The 'native' villagers live under their own chief and elders, and are on the whole left to themselves, except for the political obligations towards the Kede rulers. In the carrying out of these obligations (to be examined presently), village chief and elders become mere subordinates of the Kede government. The Kede families, on the other hand, which live in the district of the delegate are his subjects in a different sense. They too have their obligations towards the government which he represents. But they share to some extent his privileged official position *vis-à-vis* the 'natives' of the country. The family heads of these Kede families assume certain titles in Nupe fashion, which are to mark them as 'elders' of their community. In this case, however, these are not the usual village ranks, nor are they *tici nya Kuta* ('ranks of the *Kuta*'), but are of the order of personal or 'household' ranks, which the Kede delegate may confer upon the family heads in 'his' town.

The official duties of the delegate relate to the three main concerns of Kede administration. He is charged with the collection of taxes on behalf of the Kede chief, the maintenance of law and order in the districts, and he finally acts as the agent of the chief in all matters requiring concerted action of the tribe as a whole. The first two duties have undergone but comparatively minor changes under modern administration. The last duty, the most important aspect of which used to be contribution to the fighting expeditions of the tribe, is reduced to-day to such relatively irrelevant activities as the arrangement of the periodical tours of inspection through Kede country of the Kede chief or the District Officer.

634 651 *Taxation.* The present system of taxation is based on an income tax on sliding scale, assessed among the Kede on the basis of the number of canoes owned. The tax is collected locally by the official Village Head, and is then transmitted by the District Head to the Native Administration Treasury in Bida. For Kede District read *delegate* for Village Head (a certain number of Kede 'delegates' having been made Village Heads under the Native Administration), and *Kuta* for District Head—in all other respects taxation among the Kede is the same as in the inland districts of the Emirate. This was not so in pre-British times. The *kintsozi* villages,

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like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual 634
money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* 651
and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional 634
Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to 692
whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved 634
in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local 693
delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance 674
with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
674 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing
693 a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

537 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

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 634

arisen. Their occurrence or avoidance is clearly bound up with the 423 interpretation put on Kede political autonomy—a point which we 578 will discuss under a separate heading.

VI. The Claim to Autonomy

Let me say, first, that the administration of Kede country 634 presents an exact analogy to the administration of Nupe kingdom. Emissaries from the capital, delegates recruited from the ruling house, are in charge of the administrative districts of the Emirate as they are of the district of Kede country. This analogy reflects the analogous political evolution in both countries: the rise to power of a small group over a large country with heterogeneous population. The only exception from this rule of administering the districts of the Emirate through royal delegates is Kede country itself, which remained under its own chief, who acted as the representative of the *Etsu* Nupe. Even for this exception there is a parallel to be found in Kede organization: the emissary system did not apply to the area of the upper-stream Kede. Their whole area was regarded as one sub-district of Kede country and was placed in charge, not of an emissary from Muregi, but of one of their own chiefs, the village chief of Bele, their southernmost settlement. The explanation for this privileged position of the two groups, the Kede *Tifin* under Kede and the Kede under Nupe, is most probably the same—namely, that their rulers would have found it difficult to control themselves effectively the territory of these subject communities: the Kede the country of the upper-stream group, which was not easy to reach with their big canoes (note that they made the chief in the place farthest down-stream the 'deputy' for the whole group), and the Nupe kings the whole river area.

To the down-stream Kede their autonomous position in Nupe Emirate is a sacred trust, dating back to their first chief who received, with the chieftainship of Kede, the 'Rule over the Water' from the mythical Tsoede. The Kede chiefs still style themselves *Etsu nya nuwã* ('King of the Water'), and, as their history shows, have always taken this title very literally. It meant to them more than merely the formal concession of assigning to a Kede chief duties normally discharged by a royal delegate, and they have in the past frequently attempted to acquire a larger

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634 measure of independence in taxation, jurisdiction, and political management in general.[1]

634 In this connexion, we must point out an important development
669 in the history of Nupe kingdom, which in turn greatly affected Kede history. The royal dynasty of Nupe, which traced its origin back to the mythical Tsoede, was in power till the earlier half of last century, when Nupe kingdom, like most of the Native states in Northern Nigeria, fell under the rule of Emirs of Fulani stock who had conquered the country and deposed the indigenous kings. We have no data on the relation between Kede autonomy and the Nupe State under the old dynasty. But it is certain that under Fulani rule conflicts constantly arose, partly perhaps because the Kede (like many other Nupe sections) resented the alien rule, but to a large extent certainly because the Fulani kings, much more than the Nupe rulers before them, had to curb in their own interest the autonomous leanings of their Kede vassals. The Fulani, whose wars at that time were directed chiefly against tribes in the south, could not afford to let an all too independent section control the river—the southern boundary and at the same time the vital artery of trade and traffic of the country. Slave trade, the economic mainstay of the pre-British rulers of central Nigeria, traffic in arms and powder, and troop transports for their military expeditions, all had to cross the River Niger on Kede territory.[2] The Fulani overlords enforced their sovereignty in a number of wars and punitive expeditions, in the course of which (if the reports are true) hundreds were killed, thousands of Kede sold as slaves by the victorious Fulani, Kede notables executed in Bida, and whole districts of Kede country devastated. A typical instance is the Katcha War—the answer of the Fulani to the first attempt of

174 [1] There exists certain evidence to show that the Kede chiefs succeeded in
697 enlarging their judicial power at the cost of their overlords and usurped a certain judicial machinery of the Nupe State which had evolved in the river area. To-day, at any rate, the Kede claim that this judicial machinery was under the authority of the *Kuta*, while other, non-Kede, informants state that it represented entirely a prerogative of the kings of Nupe. I am referring to the *Ledu* (lit. prison) villages on the banks of the Niger, which were so called because they served as prisons and places of execution for criminals convicted, by the king's court, of a 'crime of the king'. I have described this system and the attempts of the Kede to claim it as their own in *Man* (1935), 143.

[2] The importance, for example, of Raba as a river port for slave traffic to the south is pointed out by Lander (*Journal of an Expedition* (1832), ii, p. 298). Laird and Oldfield speak of 600 Kede canoes, 'all of which may be employed for Ful troops to cross the Niger on war expeditions' (op. cit., ii, p. 315).

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the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is 634 situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under 669 allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above 634- all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the 669 river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company 648 campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The 634 *Kuta* lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of 634- modern government has not been an unqualified success. Admin- 178 istrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

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634 178 by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

634 565 563 The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565 563

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 162

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *hintsoyi* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

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634 examination of the political organization has revealed one such
565 machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how
182 far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

634 *Economic Co-operation and Community Life.* The propinquity of
182 the Kede and *kintsozi* settlements, combined with the difference
439 in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

621 In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more
182 intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupa-
634 tion and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsozi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsozi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede
[582 marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede
184] villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsozi*.

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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'. 621 182 634

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpā*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpā*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since. 634 173 182

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takū* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta doji*.

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634 is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this
182 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen,
173 concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

634 *Religion.* As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Moham-
771 medans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements
184 you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often
182 pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Ndáduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndáduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndáduma* rituals, the *Ndáduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndáduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

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634 *Conclusions.* We may say then, in conclusion, that economic
182 co-operation and community life only underline the political and tribal divisions which cut across Kede society. As integrative forces which could foster a solidarity pertaining to the political system at large, they fail. Only the ideological influences, myth and religion, succeed in this. They anchor the external political unit in more deeply rooted interests and sentiments. They add to political coercion the more subtle persuasion of supernatural arguments, of beliefs in the necessity and fore-ordination of the existing system.

634 I have been using the present tense with some liberty. It was
177 applied correctly if we are thinking of the last ten or fifteen years,
182 but inaccurately if we consider the immediate present and, above all, the future. The rite of the *Chain of Tsoede* is still performed annually, in completely Mohammedanized Muregi. The bull sacrifice at the *Ketsá* was performed when the present *Kuta* succeeded to the chieftainship; whether it will be repeated for his successor is open to doubt. The *Ndáduma*, at any rate, although still existing as a local rite, is no longer carried out by the Kede chief. We have spoken before of the decline of authority of the Kede chief. It may seem surprising that a chieftainship which had been forced to give up most of the qualities from which it formerly drew its strength should so easily discard these 'binding forces' of religion. The explanation lies, again, in the changed conception of Kede chieftainship. Kede rule has exchanged its dynamic and expanding nature for the secure, aquiescent authority under the Pax Britannica. It can dispense with the binding forces of religion, which used to uphold the autocratic rulership of a small minority; it can, above all, afford to discontinue a practice which, to the Mohammedan chiefs of Kede country, appears as a concession to their less enlightened subjects. Kede rule has thus paradoxically weakened itself in its new-found security. And in this the chiefs of Kede do not stand alone; this paradox is, I believe, a not uncommon feature of modern, static, Government-backed chieftainship in Africa.

The incipient dissolution of the 'binding force' of religion in the Kede State is only following in the wake of the general dissolution of the solidarity which it was meant to uphold. The economic development of the country led, as we have seen, to an extensive co-operation with outside groups and to the founding of colonies

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. 634 Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage 177 stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation 182 and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group, but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. The Evolution of the Kede State

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither 634 support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, 121 accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of one ethnic group by another.[1] Our data have shown political domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of paramount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'[2] and a gradual emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds that migration and colonization are never a result of over-population, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enterprise' which is absent in countries with over-population.[3] Can we accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final statement? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political role fully explained by this reference to psychological characteristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

[1] See F. Oppenheimer, op. cit.
[2] R. Lowie, op. cit., p. 40.
[3] A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.

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634 dependence on economic factors and, tied up with them, environ-
121 mental conditions. The impetus to colonization and expansion, as we saw it, was already implied in the way in which the people gain their livelihood. We can render this argument even more conclusive; the cultural situation in the river valley itself offers us the comparative material from which to draw our deductions. We remember the upper-stream Kede, who, neighbours, fellow
634 tribesmen and in many details of culture close relations of the
121 down-stream Kede, yet do not share their political achievements—
184 and also do not share their productive system and economic life in general. We can even go further and point to the environmental factors on which the economic system of the Kede in turn depends. The environment in which the upper-stream Kede live indeed forbids a development of river trade and traffic similar to that evolved by the sister group. The river in their area is narrow, barred in several places by rapids and rocky, frequently dangerous, passages, and generally impassable during half the year. On its banks there are few settlements, and the hinterland is thinly populated, inhabited largely by comparatively poor and backward groups. Hold against this the down-stream country: a broad river, navigable all the year round, the banks covered with numerous villages and the hinterland a rich, populous country with highly developed trades and crafts.

634 It will have been seen that I am speaking here of environment in
121 a rather wide sense, including, beside the physical constellation of the country, also such factors as distribution of population and the existence of a certain type of civilization. Methodologically, these facts stand in the same category as physical environment proper. True, they are essentially historical facts, representing the results of various historical developments. These developments themselves, however, are beyond our line of vision; their results—the fact that the Kede area happens to lie in the centre of a rich and powerful kingdom—are to us 'unique events' in the phraseology of the historian, extraneous factors of chance, which, like environmental facts, we have to accept as ultimate data.

Let me admit that this causal chain, environmental conditions—economic enterprise—political system, is not fully conclusive. It is weakened by another aspect of our comparative evidence—namely, the fact that the *kintsogi*, who are also close neighbours and tribal relations of the down-stream Kede, and who share with

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them the same 'stimulating' environment, appear to have remained 634 unresponsive to it. I have no explanation to give. Does this mean, 121 then, that we have to fall back on the psychological interpretation of the kind quoted above?

But the environmental and economic 'determinism' which these conclusions have put forward was not meant to exclude completely the contribution of psychological factors—that is, the social motive power that may lie in the temperamental and general psychological dispositions typical of a group. Nor was it intended to minimize the decisive part that enterprising and far-seeing individuals must have played in the creation of the Kede State. The river colonization was undoubtedly the work of a people fully deserving the attributes 'adventurous', 'courageous', or 'possessed of a spirit of enterprise'; it must also have been closely bound up with the leadership of certain outstanding individuals: think of the man who was responsible for the Kede throwing in their lot with the British, or the Kede chiefs who so successfully utilized the encouragement of the Niger Company for the expansion of their country. But two facts must be borne in mind when defending this psychological and 'individualistic' theory of social origins. First, the psychological characteristics which might be made responsible for the achievements of the group are not *racially* determined (i.e. by heredity)—the dissimilar social system of the upper-stream Kede proves this to the full; they remain an expression of, and a perfect adjustment to, environmental conditions. And, second, these psychological characteristics do not reflect the effectiveness of some spontaneous, as it were, self-contained, psychological force, but are fostered and formed planfully by the existing social system and its cultural demands, to which the individuals, generation after generation, learn to adjust themselves. How much in the gradual social development of the Kede State was due to the selective effects of environment, and how much to the spontaneous actions of exceptionally gifted individuals who, at one point of Kede history, may have shown their people a new way of life, is one of these questions of social origins to which, again, we have no answer.

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636 certain ranks. Thus *Edukpā*, the Countries beyond the Niger, were
651 always the province of the *Nágya*, the country of the Kamberi of the
662 *Kusódu*, of the Gbari of the *Etsu Gbari*, of the Yagba of the *Makū*, and so on. Political influence, however, could alter the rule, and a rich district would sometimes go to the more powerful royal prince irrespective of his rank. Thus *Etsu* Maliki, to win over the powerful *Kpotū* Abubakari (who became *Etsu* after Maliki's death) transferred the rich fief of *Edukpā* from the *Nágya* to him. Power and the possession of a strong private army was essential for the post of an *ajele*. An *ajele* who failed in his task was dismissed from rank and office and replaced by a 'stronger' man.

635 It is no accident that the two royal domains of Nupe kingdom were
651 the two political organizations which embraced the whole tribe, the two small 'states within the State', Beni and Kyedye. The political unification which they had evolved was recognized and utilized by the political administration of the kingdom. These areas were placed directly under the king. The chiefs of Beni and Kyedye acted somewhat as royal agents. Their appointment and succession was subject to the confirmation of the king, and a gift of sandals, a gown, and a turban which he presented to the new *Žitsu* symbolized, as we have seen, the fact that the local chief held his office 'by the grace of the king'. The town-kings of Beni and the *Kuta* of the Kyedye administered law in all cases which came under the category of *gyara*, 'reparation', and were required to refer graver cases, cases involving *sheri'a*, 'judgement', to the central authority—a point to which we shall return later. The town-kings also collected the tax in their areas on behalf of the king. This tax, *edu*, levied in these areas as in the whole kingdom, was in money, thus differing from the *dzanká*, the local tithe in kind. The tax was collected first by the head chief of the district, i.e. the *Kuta* among the Kyedye, and the town-king of Tafiē and (in Fulani times) Bida among the Beni, who placed the money into the hands of the royal tax-collectors appointed for these two royal domains. Of the tax levied in the domains the *Etsu* received two-thirds, the royal tax-collectors and the head chiefs of the two districts sharing between them the remaining third. In the time of *Etsu* Masaba, however, the *Etsu* took all and the town-king of Bida, in order to obtain his share, levied an additional tax of his own. The total tax paid by a Beni village in Fulani times is said to have amounted to £2 under *Etsu* Masaba and £3 under Umaru Majigi; later, under the greedy Maliki, it rose higher and higher till *u de iyaka à*, 'there was no limit'.[1]

000 The rest of Nupe kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

[1] The Bororó Fulani who came regularly to Nupe with their cattle formed another such royal domain with respect to taxation. The organization of this nomadic group evidently lent itself to no other method of administration. Their tax was collected by their own group head, the *Diko*, and then handed over to the royal tax-collector, who was known as *egba Bororó* (Delegate to the Bororó). He was himself a Fulani, who lived—and is still living—in Bida. When the *Etsu* Nupe recently wanted to buy cattle for his new experimental farms he arranged the deal through the man who used to be *egba Bororó*, making use of the old connexion for the new purpose.

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CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM

(*continued*)

THE FEUDAL STATE

WE have seen how in the history of the kingdom a certain territorial nucleus evolved, an area of 'Nupe proper'. This concept of a territorial 'nucleus' also forms the basis of the division of the country for the purpose of government. For the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration the kingdom was divided into four zones. First, the area of the conquered tributary countries outside the boundaries of the 'kingdom proper', in Nupe terminology, the countries of the *zaži kati*, the 'Outside Peoples'. Second, within these boundaries, an innermost core, the countries of Beni and Kyedye; having formed the nucleus of the rising kingdom they are now assigned the privileged position of royal domains. The third zone comprised the wider 'ring' of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, most of which lie in Trans-Kaduna. Bida town, the seat of the central government, formed an administrative district of its own. 631

Under the name of Outside Peoples were comprised the conquered territories of Gbari, Gbira, Kamberi, Kakanda, Yagba, Bunu, and certain sections of Nupe (Dibo and Ebe mostly). These districts were not administered fully by the central government. Their political dependence entailed two things: an annual tribute to Bida, and the recognition by other Emirates and chieftainships of the political status of these territories as 'under the protection' of Bida. It was a one-sided 'protection': Bida itself was free to raid her own outside peoples, but no other country could do this or levy taxes in these territories with impunity. The guarantor of these 'treaties' was, in the last instance, the Emir of Gwandu, the highest feudal overlord of all Fulani Emirs in this part of the world.[1] The central government in Bida did not assume jurisdiction over these countries, nor did it interfere in their own political administration. The tribute was paid in slaves and was collected annually by royal messengers, *tuci*, or as they were also called *ajele* (from the Arabic *ajala*, to dispatch), who visited these countries at the head of small armies, ready to quell any disturbance or to bring recalcitrant tax-payers to heel. Of the tribute levied a little more than half went to the king, the rest to the royal messenger. The office of tax-collector in the outside areas of the kingdom was entrusted mostly to the royal nobility, and the districts over which they were put in charge were linked with 636 651 636 651 662

[1] Such an 'international' agreement existed, for example, between the *Etsu* Nupe, the *Sarkin Sudan* (the Emir of Kontagora), and the Emir of Zaria with respect to Gbari country. These treaties were not always kept by the parties concerned. Thus the *Etsu* of Agaie used to raid the territories of his brother Emir, the *Etsu* Nupe, and had eventually to be stopped by a big war which was led by the Emir of Gwandu himself.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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636 651 662 certain ranks. Thus *Edukpā*, the Countries beyond the Niger, were always the province of the *Nágya*, the country of the Kamberi of the *Kusódu*, of the Gbari of the *Etsu Gbari*, of the Yagba of the *Makū*, and so on. Political influence, however, could alter the rule, and a rich district would sometimes go to the more powerful royal prince irrespective of his rank. Thus *Etsu* Maliki, to win over the powerful *Kpotū* Abubakari (who became *Etsu* after Maliki's death) transferred the rich fief of *Edukpā* from the *Nágya* to him. Power and the possession of a strong private army was essential for the post of an *ajele*. An *ajele* who failed in his task was dismissed from rank and office and replaced by a 'stronger' man.

635 651 It is no accident that the two royal domains of Nupe kingdom were the two political organizations which embraced the whole tribe, the two small 'states within the State', Beni and Kyedye. The political unification which they had evolved was recognized and utilized by the political administration of the kingdom. These areas were placed directly under the king. The chiefs of Beni and Kyedye acted somewhat as royal agents. Their appointment and succession was subject to the confirmation of the king, and a gift of sandals, a gown, and a turban which he presented to the new *Žitsu* symbolized, as we have seen, the fact that the local chief held his office 'by the grace of the king'. The town-kings of Beni and the *Kuta* of the Kyedye administered law in all cases which came under the category of *gyara*, 'reparation', and were required to refer graver cases, cases involving *sheri'a*, 'judgement', to the central authority—a point to which we shall return later. The town-kings also collected the tax in their areas on behalf of the king. This tax, *edu*, levied in these areas as in the whole kingdom, was in money, thus differing from the *dzanká*, the local tithe in kind. The tax was collected first by the head chief of the district, i.e. the *Kuta* among the Kyedye, and the town-king of Tafiě and (in Fulani times) Bida among the Beni, who placed the money into the hands of the royal tax-collectors appointed for these two royal domains. Of the tax levied in the domains the *Etsu* received two-thirds, the royal tax-collectors and the head chiefs of the two districts sharing between them the remaining third. In the time of *Etsu* Masaba, however, the *Etsu* took all and the town-king of Bida, in order to obtain his share, levied an additional tax of his own. The total tax paid by a Beni village in Fulani times is said to have amounted to £2 under *Etsu* Masaba and £3 under Umaru Majigi; later, under the greedy Maliki, it rose higher and higher till *u de iyaka à*, 'there was no limit'.[1]

000 The rest of Núpe kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

[1] The Bororó Fulani who came regularly to Nupe with their cattle formed another such royal domain with respect to taxation. The organization of this nomadic group evidently lent itself to no other method of administration. Their tax was collected by their own group head, the *Diko*, and then handed over to the royal tax-collector, who was known as *egba Bororó* (Delegate to the Bororó). He was himself a Fulani, who lived—and is still living—in Bida. When the *Etsu* Nupe recently wanted to buy cattle for his new experimental farms he arranged the deal through the man who used to be *egba Bororó*, making use of the old connexion for the new purpose.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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change in this array does not alter the continued consciousness of identity, but is subsumed in it.

This is, of course, a familiar situation, which ultimately accounts for the continuity (or continued self-awareness) of societies even when their cultural possessions, or for that matter their populations, change. Much will depend on the gradualness and restricted scope of the change; a sudden change in which new modes of behaviour greatly outweigh the 'array' of pre-existing ones may disrupt the continued identity. But it need not always do so. For the process just outlined may also be reversed: the society facing such far-reaching changes may yet fasten on to some particular cultural possession which remained unchanged, and consider it sufficiently relevant to furnish a criterion or symbol of the continued identity. Often, as we know, a creed or some religious observance preserved amidst the changes will prove to have this relevance.

This process, too, can be observed among the Nupe, among the colony of emigrants in Lagos, who have lost nearly every feature of culture, including language, which would normally sustain that awareness of 'being Nupe' or 'still being Nupe'. But they have preserved one traditional cult, the *gunnu*; and they still regard themselves as Nupe (calling themselves either Nupe or, more often, Takpá or Tapa, by the Yoruba name). The two things go together; in discussions, when the people wish to emphasize their tribal identity, they at once mention the possession of this cult which, to them, seems decisive.

Let me say a few words about the Nupe colony in Lagos. It numbers perhaps 5,000 people, both scattered over the outlying hamlets and villages and occupying a special quarter in the city of Lagos.[1] The Nupe settlement is claimed to be of considerable antiquity, going back to the Portuguese era, and to have attained its present important and honoured position towards the end of the last century, when the self-made head of the Lagos Nupe, a certain Gana and a 'noted warrior', was elevated to high rank by the Yoruba town king. This Gana, who incidentally was taken to England to be presented to Queen Victoria, was the grandfather of the present chief of the Lagos Nupe, a man of about seventy. Gana's rank, *Osode*, is still held by his descendants, and with the rank goes the priestship of the *gunnu*, which Gana had somehow assumed. The Lagos *gunnu* is a combination of three rites all subsumed under the same name, the *gunnu* itself, the *ndakó gboyá*, and the ritual of the Chain of Tsoede, the paraphernalia of the three

[1] The Nupe quarter in Lagos is known to everyone; its main thoroughfares are called *Tapa Street* and *Osode Street*, the latter deriving its name from the title held by the head of the Nupe colony (see below).

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *huso*, 'bush'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu* and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults. The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos ceremonials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Paradoxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their traditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

642 Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war, and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the
675 declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *egi kata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attachment to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 563, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 552] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

● 44 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

571, 675, 642 Nupe FF52

[Information on bara-ship, the sacrifice of individual freedom for the sake of political protection by a patron, has been placed in category 566. --Analyst]

644, 642

Nupe FF52

[Information on the ticiži, the "Titled Ones," the office nobility of the Nupe state, has been placed in category 565. --Analyst]

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Let me conclude the description with the report of an eyewitness of standing—the youngest son of *Etsu* Masaba—who had fought in one of the last great wars of old Nupe, against the Kyedye. I have referred before to the origin of this war. It was the answer of the central government to the capture by the rebellious Kyedye of the town Kacha, which, having submitted to Fulani rule, appealed to Bida for protection against their unruly fellow tribesmen. It was, incidentally, also the last war in which the Niger Company assisted the Bida government. In the next war Niger Company troops were to turn against the Fulani, and (helped by the same Kyedye) to defeat the armies of the kingdom. 721

Since the time of Manko, *goy* and Kyedye were always at war. It happened like this. The Kyedye refused to recognize the Fulani kings. They contended that they were independent 'kings of the water'. So Manko sent his son Ibrahima from Raba to the *Kuta*, to come to an arrangement and to stop hostilities. But the Kyedye killed the messenger, cut his body to pieces, and threw it to the fish. Thereupon Manko went to fight them, but could not do much. So the wars between the two went on and on.

Later, at the time of *Etsu* Umaru, the Kyedye attacked Kacha under their *Kuta* Usman, because Kacha had submitted to the Fulani and accepted their *egba* (delegate). The Kacha people fled to Bida and asked for help. *Etsu* Umaru sent out a big army led by *Shaba* Mamudu. Most of the *gitsúži* went with him, and I was among them, also many *sarakiži* both from the *ena Maiyaki* and *ena Ndeji*. We were three days on the way, stopping twice for the night (Kacha is about 40 miles from Bida). We made camps of grass huts; some of us lived in a *tunga* near-by. For the great men we built huts with grass fences round. The army had guns and men and horses—you could not count them. In Kacha the water was covered with Kyedye canoes. We attacked at once, shooting from the banks down upon the canoes in the water. The boats of the Niger Company were helping the Fulani then. They closed the Kacha river in the back of the Kyedye. The Kyedye fled, and we crossed the river in canoes which they had left behind. The *Dokoyiringi* led the pursuit, accompanied by *Shaba* Mamudu. The rest of the troops followed later. We pursued the Kyedye on the other bank, both on land and water, for three days, as far as Lafiagi and Shonga. This was a war not only against the Kyedye, but also against Kupa and Ebagi, who were helping the Kyedye. All villages and hamlets were burnt down, numberless men and women captured. We made more than 2,000 slaves. Later they were all sold (although the Niger Company had asked for the release of the prisoners of war). At Shonga the war ended. Many Kyedye had been run down and captured or killed, but some hid in the creeks and the river forest. The chief and the seven elders of the Kyedye fled with their wives and children to Ilorin. It did not help them. Emir Aliyu (the Fulani Emir of Ilorin) sent them back as prisoners to Bida. Here they were held as hostages till *Etsu* Umaru's death. But shortly after his death *Etsu* Maliki condemned them to death, and they were strangled secretly at night in the houses where they lived. 726 727

In war, which is political action *par excellence*, the essence of state structure must reveal itself most clearly. We observe what we have recognized as an element of state organization: the monopoly position of the ruling group with regard to the employment of the political machinery, in this case military action. We see, too, that this monopoly of control is vested in the ruling group *corporately*: its individual members, 721 642

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though they control severally the executive side of the political machinery, can only use it subject to the agreement of the administration as a whole (of which they form part), else the military machinery is directed against them as breakers of the 'king's peace'. Finally, wars are planned and the military machinery is set in motion by the ruling group as a *representative* group, that is, on behalf of the country at large. In wars against outside enemies the interests of the country and the people are perforce identified with the interests of the ruling group—expansion, conquest, or the destruction of a rival power. But in wars waged against internal enemies—rebellious sections or dangerously independent members of the government—the military action is taken as much in the interest of the ruling group (safeguarding, above all, the revenue) as in the interest of the state and the people in that it re-establishes order and public security. Thus in the Kacha war, referred to above, the ruling group, as the representative group of the state, protected one subject group against abuses by another. The government can take sides and place the political machinery at the support of one section against another only because it is vested in a group (as I put it in a previous section) raised above the heterogeneous component sections of the state. The monopoly control over the machinery of force thus reveals its twofold significance: as a privilege or prerogative, in the sense that it can be used (in war proper) for conquests and expansion, thus serving the specific interests of the ruling group; and as a constitutional duty, in the sense of being used internally, for the purpose of maintaining the 'king's peace'.

These two functions are not, however, securely balanced, and we shall discover the effects of this unstable equilibrium in the internal administration of the country, to the description of which we must now turn.

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631 became too great. The towns or villages which were granted as such
631 personal fiefs could lie anywhere within the boundary of the kingdom, on
651 the royal domains as well as in the areas held as office fiefs by *egba*. The
554 personal fiefs involved no legal or administrative authority, only the authority of levying an additional tax called *edugi* (small tax) over and above the royal tax, *edukó* (big tax), after the latter had been collected. There was no limitation to this additional tax, which must often have exploited the peasants ruthlessly. Yet I have also seen close personal attachment between villages and their lord still existing to-day, bearing witness to the existence of more friendly ties between feudal lord and tenants.

631 It is clearly impossible to state in more detail how this administrative
554 system worked, and especially how far the administrative and judicial authority of the feudal delegate worked in harmony with the existing traditional authority vested in village chief and elders. Later on, I shall give more data about the working of this legal machinery. But it is easy to understand that the powerful feudal lord and his delegate could uphold political and legal authority by the very fact of their power and influence. They could, for example, secure redress or punishment where the village chief's limited power might be too weak to enforce judgement or arbitration. But this intervention might easily distort justice rather than further it. As aliens, never linked permanently with the people over whom they rule, the fief-holders were bad guardians of tribal law and traditional justice. This, in fact, reflects the fundamental conflict involved in the system of feudal administration. The feudal lords were officially responsible for the well-being of their subjects; they were agents of a central authority which was vitally interested in the maintenance of peace and order; they themselves, like their royal master, depended on the people of the fief for tax, supply of food, and supply of men for their armies and wars. But the connexion of fief with rank, involving as it did a change of the fief with every promotion, did not allow the mutual attachment between the feudal lord and his subjects to grow really strong and permanent—too strong and permanent for the safety of the king and the unity of the state. To balance the danger that might arise from a too firmly entrenched feudal lord, the kingdom had to risk the other danger of maladministration and discontent among the people on the fiefs.

● 642 This policy of preserving the balance of power between dynastic and
631 feudal interests which had to be re-established and readjusted with every change of régime is reflected in the many changes which the administration of the kingdom has undergone in the hundred years of Fulani rule. *Etsu* Masaba, intent on building up an enormous dynastic power, divided the whole of Beni and Kusopa country, town for town, among his sons and daughters and other followers as personal fiefs. There was no place in the kingdom, the Nupe say, which had not its private 'owner'. The Nupe nicknamed this generous king *ndã na ma gã na*, Father of Distributing. *Etsu* Umaru, who succeeded him, adopted the opposite policy in order to win the support of the native tribes against the feudal lords who had supported his predecessor. He abolished all private fiefs in

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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaźi kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoźi*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

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linked with a title or name, encased in these *ekpā* which bear the name of a royal house, the group of commoners rallying round a noble patron, and the nobility rallying round a dynastic head—this is one of the most conspicuous symbols of the political relationships which rule the capital.

The political administration of Nupe kingdom (like every political administration) can be regarded as an organization guaranteeing order and security to the subjects of the state—individuals and groups—in return for specific forms of submission: submission of individuals to the established rules of conduct; surrender, by groups, of all independent political action; and surrender, by individuals and groups, of portions of their property in the form of taxes and tributes. The law-abiding, tax-paying citizens are thus promised protection against enemies at home and abroad, and general security for carrying on their daily work, holding markets, using the roads, and enjoying the fruits of their labour. With regard to individuals, a legal machinery safeguards their civic rights, that is, their claims to this protection. With regard to subject groups, we may speak of constitutional rights in which this safeguard of security is embodied. The element of reciprocity implied in these constitutional rights, namely, the promise of security in return for a surrender of autonomy, is clearly understood by the people. This is shown in the current interpretation of such political measures as the suppression of the Kyedye attack on the town of Kacha described above. The intervention of the central government on behalf of Kacha is positively linked with the previous surrender of autonomy (*a gba ya Bida*, 'they submitted to Bida').

A striking feature of the internal organization of Nupe are the considerable regional differences in the completeness and directness of administration and the frequent changes which it has undergone in the fifty years of Fulani rule. These variations and changes have a threefold explanation: (1) They interpret, in terms of political status, the cultural and ethnical provenance to which we referred in the preceding chapter. (2) They are a compromise between the superstructure of the state and certain claims to autonomy, admitted mainly because of the difficulty of establishing a more complete control—for example, over the strongly organized river-state of the Kyedye, or over the newly absorbed 'outside' groups on the periphery of the kingdom. (3) They are a compromise also between centralization and delegation of power. The delegation of power represents an essential structural characteristic of the Nupe political system. The ever-expanding kingdom, increasingly dependent on the military help of the nobility, had to secure their services more and more by granting them landed property in the form of fiefs, and thus investing them with a portion of territorial sovereignty. But then, only through this indirect—feudal—administration could the expanding state hope to reach and to control its entire population, above all those scattered village units which never evolved a larger political system than could be fitted easily (like the Beni confederacy or the Kyedye political organization) into the large-scale framework of the Nupe state.[1]

[1] Compare the similar situation in Imperial Rome: "The state had to appeal to private persons of wealth and influence because it was not able to transmit its

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642 661 669 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

642 Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war, and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 566 675 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords. Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

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adopt, even more eagerly, the religious practice of the higher and highest classes, Mohammedanism. This is not 'real' social mobility; it serves only to blur the border-line between the strata. It involves attachment to a higher stratum only in the sense of external closeness and assimilation.

The assimilation achieved is irregular and of very unequal significance. Yet it is prompted by a definite motive running through the whole society—self-enhancement. The readiness of groups to identify themselves culturally with the representative stratum reveals an incentive to overcome that heterogeneity of cultures and groups in which we have grasped the essence of state structure. Potentially, this incentive may carry forms of cultural reorientation capable of wielding more intensive, more real, commonness. To examine how and how far this potentiality is utilized by the political system is to examine the crucial problem of this discussion: the dynamic relation between political integration and the heterogeneous raw material out of which it must fashion its unity.

BINDING FORCES

What then is the specific apparatus of control by means of which this heterogeneous society, severely divided by gulfs of culture, ethnic extraction, community, and class, maintains itself as a unit? And to what extent does it draw into its orbit and use for its own support these other non-political configurations and spheres of social life? When examining the political organization of the Nupe village from this viewpoint we discovered that there the basis of political control is extended to its widest possible limit: political organization utilizes the integrative forces of community life at large; it organizes into a unit what is integrated into the same unit by every existing institution. It might very well seem from our foregoing analysis of the Nupe state that here we have the exact opposite. A state machinery which concentrates political power in the hands of a small *élite* and ignores—save in order to transform into class barriers—tribal and cultural identity, seems committed to the narrowest system of political control: by coercion and physical force.

However, this section will show that such conclusions would be incorrect. One might, on general principles, reason that no state could afford to rely solely on coercive measures; and that it would rather utilize coercion only as a 'short cut' to bring about sentiments which, 'once established and sanctified, . . . may well flourish without compulsion, glorified as loyalty to a sovereign king or a national flag'.[1] A state that would disdain to call to assistance these bonds of inner unity seems to jeopardize continuously its safety, and to risk being shattered and broken up by unrest and revolts, possibly beyond repair. Such tension and unrest seems indeed characteristic of the political history of Nupe. But the historian would have to point out also that with all these grave disturbances Nupe kingdom yet maintained itself as a unit. Even when the Fulani took over the rule, testing most severely an already strained

[1] R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State*, 1927, p. 117.

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642 political structure with the additional weight of alien rulership, the state
182 did not break down but on the contrary appeared to have taken out a new lease of life.

Now we shall be able to prove the existence of strong trends of integration which form within the political unit, incidental to it or fostered by it, and which, bridging over cultural diversity and the rift of social and economic inequality, endorse in their fashion the unit wrought by political control. However, in our search for these 'binding forces' of more subtle and conciliatory type we shall discover that they do not all point the same way. They are indeed 'binding' forces—but what they tend to bind and draw together is not invariably the same group substratum.

We must examine first a significant negative instance—kinship.
182 Kinship has no part in this integrative scheme, either ideologically
642 or factually. No attempt is made to invest the conception of the state with that fiction of genealogical or kinship unity which is linked
602 with the concepts of the sub-tribe and the village community. With the increased freedom of movement which is one of the results of political unification kinship relations become more widely scattered and marriage between distant localities is increasing and is regarded more and more as normal; but these new kinship relations draw only a patchy, irregular pattern that can have little influence upon the integration of the people at large. Moreover, kinship relations are often subordinated to political interests; patronage and the adherence to political factions may even break up family units. The widest gulf, between rulers and subjects, and between the *élite* culture of Bida and the peasant sections, is bridged only by the sociologically less significant form of intermarriage between men of the upper and women of the lower classes. We shall see later that full intermarriage is rigidly restricted and rendered specially difficult, unless it follows already existing political ties of patronage. We shall, in fact, have to speak of a definite class endogamy among the ruling classes. Marriage and kinship ties thus cement the solidarity of the component groups of the state, not of the state itself.

We continue our search in the economic field. Political unification
182 carries in its wake expansion of economic co-operation and interdepen-
642 dence. Economic areas were re-designed in accordance with the new, wider political unit and its centre of gravity, the populous capital, which depends for food and supplies on the agricultural districts. But the contribution of this widened economic co-operation to national solidarity is negligible if not wholly negative. In this reorientation of economic links the boundaries of the state have frequently been crossed and disregarded: trade became 'international'; craftsmen, traders, and even peasants are always ready to seek profitable new markets outside Nupe, and even to emigrate for the sake of better business prospects. Economic interdependence and co-operation even introduce new conflicts and forms of antagonism which set group sections against each other. We shall speak of the village artisans who openly admit (and partly resent) the competition of the superior Bida crafts. In times of crisis conflicts of this kind tend to become more strongly marked. During the depression of 1934–5 I could notice distinct resentment on the part of the peasants

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against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotũ*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotũ*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotũ*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows:

> The needle is coming,
> The Mallam of the needle,
> The father of threading.
> O let me go,
> And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes 642 the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achiev- 642 ing, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self- 186 enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *élite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1]

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Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiši* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'.

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[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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182 643 794 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pompous title of *Majī Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 642 797 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Majī Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

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more solid bond of political protection embodied in clientship. Attachment to the ruling group thus fused with conversion to its religion. In the early days of Fulani rule hundreds of pagans are said to have flocked into the capital to seek out an important person as their patron and to declare to him—and not to the religious officers of Islam—their readiness to embrace Mohammedanism. They received their turban and sword, insignia of clientship and new creed in one. Of such men the Nupe say not 'they become Mohammedans' but '*a ze goiži*'—'they become Fulani'.

Whatever the true essence of Mohammedan faith may be in Nupe, and however sparsely Mohammedanism has so far spread, Fulani rulership did create, and is creating, another 'mythical charter' of the kingdom. It tries again, with its new means, to mould the religious elements into the intensive unit almost of a State Church.[1] The effect of Islam as a 'binding force' of the precarious political system that the Fulani had erected cannot be doubted. A striking example is that under *Etsu* Umaru the whole Trans-Kaduna revolted, refused to pay the tribute, and finally made war on Bida. The rebellious peasants crossed the Kaduna river, marched against Bida and almost reached it, being defeated at a place called Bidakoko, a few miles outside.[2] The whole Trans-Kaduna, that is, with the exception of one town—the strongly Mohammedanized Dabbã, the same town where Mallam Dendo started his proselytizing work in Nupe, and which now refused to join in the war against the rulers with whom they shared their creed.

The identification of State and Church is demonstrated in the annual Mohammedan festival, the *Sallah*, which is as much a pageant of the might and splendour of the kingdom as a religious feast. There are two *Sallah* feasts, the Small *Sallah* and the Great *Sallah*, separated by a two months' interval.[3] Their celebration may be called the climax of the whole year's cycle: the two feasts give the months in which they fall their names—*etswa salagi* and *etswa salakó*, 'month of the Small *Sallah*' and 'month of the Great *Sallah*'; and to these the people look forward and look back, in the long-drawn preparations and anticipation, and in recollections and memories. The *Sallah* feast is like a Friday celebration on an immensely enlarged scale. On the first day the king on horseback under the state umbrella and surrounded by his noblemen and state officials, leads the vast procession to the praying-ground outside the town, where the *Liman* holds the service. After the service the procession returns to the royal residence. Here a great display of horsemanship takes place, at which the bodyguard of the king, his police and officers of state parade before him and his guests of honour—the foremost among whom are the District Officer and all the Europeans living

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, 1925: 'Islam . . . has converted isolated pagan groups into nations; . . . it is largely due to Islam that numbers of tribes are now, before our eyes, forming themselves into nations' (ii, pp. 4, 10).

[2] It is said that this name Bidakoko was later given to the place of the battle, because *koko a tũ Bida o*, 'almost they (the rebellious army) had reached Bida'.

[3] The Nigerian *Sallah* is the *Beiram* or *Id* of other Mohammedan countries, which feasts are also celebrated twice, as 'Little *Beiram*' and 'Great *Beiram*'.

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in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.[1]

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

[1] It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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tinguishable from the self-willed conformity born of a closely knit community life. The state itself becomes that twin-creation as which MacIver conceives it, and, with one side of its being, a community.

The process is not yet complete. Existing social divisions and divergent 'interest units' are not wholly submerged in the new consciousness of unity. Sociologically, the incompleteness of the development is visible in the reluctance with which certain sections, especially among the peasantry, respond to the cultural reorientation. Psychologically, it manifests itself in the ambiguous attitude of many individuals in the lower classes, vacillating between bitter resentment against the ruling class and readiness to identify themselves with its glory, of which we have seen examples. It is an attitude familiar in many societies similarly split by sharp distinctions of political and social inequality.[1] One might doubt whether this process of intensive unification will ever be completed now, with new influences coming in, new cultural and class divisions being formed which disturb the steady growth and blur the old border-lines. I do not myself think that this will be so. But in a wider sense the growth of the Nupe nation, even if it were to continue undisturbed, would never be complete: for the nation is a dynamic, not a static, unit, a unit which must constantly readjust itself and constantly absorb new 'raw material'—new generations, newly-formed classes, strata, groups. 182 642

The achieved integration of the state is then in some measure, like that of the village community, the integration of a 'multiple system of control'. Yet the state and the village community differ not only in the intensity and completeness but also in the quality of the integration which they achieve. We noticed that the 'binding forces' of the state appear in varying degrees of concreteness, from actual co-operation to moral orientation, and that those of most abstract appeal were the really effective ones. In this, I believe, lies the essential difference between the integrative mechanism operating in the village community and this new mechanism of creating nation-wide unity. Evidently, the very difference in size and numbers must play a decisive part. In the village all integrative agencies can address themselves to an identical group substratum, and can envelop it in the network of actual collaboration. The state, with its huge human substratum, its subdivisions and sections, precludes the full effectiveness of such direct and concrete integration. Direct contact and direct co-adaptation of behaviour is subordinated to indirect methods of bringing about conformity, through ideological persuasion. Actual concerted action gives way to efforts at securing parallel action, and 'common' interests in the strict sense are replaced by 'identical' interests. Instead of communal rites at which groups that in other contexts act as political units are welded together by the influence of religious experience, we have the spreading of common beliefs and practices designed to call forth identity of outlook and to foster, though not an identical group, a group conscious of identity.

Ultimately and rather surprisingly, then, the binding forces of the

[1] M. T. Herskovits has called it, by a suggestive term, 'socialized ambivalence' (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 295).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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state can be reduced to the fact of cultural assimilation. Yet it is not that random assimilation which is only incidental to the expanding state, and which only superficially obscures social division, achieving but an insecure, external, likeness. This assimilation is designed to carry the foci of cohesion and solidarity—ideologies, and the institutions by which they are sustained. I said 'designed'. But how far are we justified in regarding this assimilation and the incentives behind it as deliberately conceived and employed by the political system and its agents? Certain practices such as the encouragement given to Mallams proselytizing among the pagans, the reward of increased security held out to converts, or the engagement of musicians and poets to sing the praises of the king and the kingdom, represent actual 'propaganda', still carried out under our eyes. Others, such as the supplanting of a local cult by a 'king's ritual', must have amounted to the same in former times (in the case of the royal interest in the *ndakó gboyá* society it can be proved to have been so only two generations ago). Other forms of persuasion, again, may have worked through the unconscious mechanism of habits and views formed imperceptibly. Often their agents are men who have been in the Fulani wars or who have in some other way been associated with the ruling group and then returned to their villages, where their stories and memories aid the other, institutionalized, 'propaganda' of the kingdom. In a wider sense, however, they all are deliberately conceived and employed: they are agencies of an assimilation conscious of itself and of the message which it carries.

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CHAPTER X

GOVERNMENT IN MODERN NUPE

OFTEN in the foregoing description I have used the present tense as if the Nupe kingdom of pre-British days still existed. True, this was to a large extent an historical chapter; yet it described a development the results of which are still valid and still mould society to-day as they moulded it thirty, fifty, or even a hundred years ago. I was not merely reconstructing dead events and past phases. The Nupe kingdom and its society still exist, not only very vividly in the memory of the people but to a very large extent in concrete reality. This is not denying the force of social changes, but stressing the tenacity of a social structure that survives although its contents have changed materially. The recent economic and political changes have affected fundamentally the 'contents' of the social life of the country, the main interests and incentives round which it revolved. There are no more wars, raids, and conquests; slaves and feudal fiefs exist no longer. But ranks and titles and state offices linked with ranks and titles, still exist. Slaves have turned into *bara* or Native Administration officials; fiefs into administrative districts in the charge of royal princes. That the framework of the political organization could survive almost unchanged is in large measure due to the Administration of Nigeria under Indirect Rule and its tendency to utilize as far as possible the traditional social system. But a stronger proof of the tenacity of the Nupe social system is the fact that where the Administration had departed from it and tried to make way for a new development the old trend broke through, undeflected.

Two years ago the Administration built a new official residence for the *Etsu* Bida, with a brick wall, an imposing tower, a garage, and a flower garden—an emblem of modern Nigeria. Incidentally, for all its modernity the new house is but a replica of the hereditary palace of the Nupe kings, with special *katamba* for the *ena Ndeji* and *ena Maiyaki*, for *gitsúži* and *bara*, the *ena manži*, the men of the *Etsu Dogari*, and the commoners who come to wait on the *Etsu*. Now, this new house was built on 'neutral' ground, outside the town gates, as a symbol of the Government's intention to break with the division into three royal houses, which the Government considered harmful to the unity of the country.[1] The Administration believed itself to have overcome successfully the opposition of the late *Etsu*. An old and sick man, he was reported to have said—and his words were all over Bida—that he had agreed to the new site only because he knew he would not have to live in the new house. Which was true enough—he died before the building was finished. But the new *Etsu*, who willingly took up his residence in the splendid new house, one day surprised the District Officer by demanding that his 'proper house' in Bida, in his 'own' part of the town, should be put in repair at the expense of the Native

[1] See p. 93.

[p. 157]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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177 Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the
642 Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official
643 nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida
648 Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúži* and *sarakiži*, or more precisely by those *gitsúži* and *sarakiži* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

645 The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiẽ*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiẽ*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaži*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934-6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiẽ* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[842] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

631 weapon so well suited to their hands. And in their small 'state within the state' this jurisdiction
693 over the 'King's Highway' was still working, a true if smaller copy of the old system, some thirty or forty years ago.

IV.

681 The *ledu* villages are, as we have seen, linked with the king's person by special sacred links;
693 they are made to share the king's guardianship over the law; they thus visibly represent, and almost propagate, the supreme power of the king at what we are tempted to call 'strategic' places. And
642 in this, it seems to me, an important general sociological issue is involved. Strict centralization of legal power, however strong a machinery for political integration it seems, always harbours a disintegrative element as well. For it tends to separate the crime as actually committed from the final act of justice. The element of retaliation and atonement, so essential to the savage mind, becomes meaningless where the criminal is tried and punished a hundred miles away, and by people who are, practically, strangers. The individual community is deprived of one of the most powerful elements of social cohesion, namely, the title to sanction the violation of its laws and of its social order within its own boundaries. It appears to be the meaning of the *ledu* organization to neutralise this influence for that vital area of the Niger valley. For the most conspicuous, final, phase of jurisdiction is returned to a certain extent to the individual community. It is true this applies only to a few selected places. But we remember their surprising regular distribution on the river; and also the rule that the *ledu* village nearest to the place of the crime had to be called upon to perform the execution. These villages are 'representative' places, and 'strategic' places, and their selection is backed by the strongest charter: mythical and religious belief.

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THE *ETSU* NUPE

[facing p. i]

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the existing political structure of the community in a kinship sense. The ancestors of the chief who are regarded as founders of the village are also thought of vaguely as ancestors of the whole community. These essentially mythical kinship links exercise no influence upon concrete kinship claims and obligations. 602

Political factors are also responsible for the development of the large units which characterize kinship among the ruling family. We shall see that the ruling house of Nupe crystallized in three dynasties, which trace their descent from different sons of the founder of the ruling house, and divide between them the rights and duties vested in the ruling house. The ancestors of the three dynasties lived only two or three generations back; but already certain religious observances (prayers on their grave) mark them off from all subsequent royal ancestors. In this rigidly defined system of reckoning descent in the father's line back to these almost sanctified 'first ancestors', and in the relationship with one another which is in the nature of mutual obligations for the sake of the larger unit, the royal house itself, the three dynasties correspond from kinship point of view to incipient *clans*—the only analogy to clan structure which we find in Nupe. 643 769 [613]

Let me say in conclusion that kinship structure in Nupe is not that dominant, all-enveloping structure which we know from many primitive societies. Although it bears upon religious life, education, and the organization of production, it is greatly overshadowed as a determinant of social behaviour by the factors of political organization and, in economic life, by economic interests proper. Indeed only because of its lesser significance in social life could we omit the detailed description of Nupe kinship from the sociological analysis with which this book is concerned. 601

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [443] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were [778] entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

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From that time Nupe history is linked indissolubly with the fate of the Fulani conquerors of Nigeria who had made themselves rulers of the main Hausa states in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The history of the Fulani *Jihad* has often been described,[1] so I need say only a few words. The Fulani established their suzerainty over Northern Nigeria in a loosely organized, decentralized dual empire, the western part under the supremacy of the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, and the eastern under the Emir of Gwandu. Nupe kingdom fell to Gwandu's share. The Fulani conquest was achieved in two phases and by two methods: a gradual infiltration of the foreign country by Mohammedan Fulani, and then, ultimately, a military conquest. The same policy was adopted in Nupe. Mallam Dendo was one of those Mohammedan preachers and emissaries to 'heathen countries' who was to collect an ever-increasing group of followers as the nucleus of future conquest. His followers seem to have included men of all stations: cattle Fulani to whom in their semi-nomadic life Nupe had become a second home; Fulani and Hausa mercenary soldiers who took service in the Nupe armies; merchants from northern towns; and Mohammedan priests and missionaries; I estimated their number at the time of the conquest at not more than 1,000 or 1,500. When Mallam Dendo became strong enough to venture the decisive blow, he applied to the Emir of Gwandu, his overlord, for military help and for a *tuta*, flag, which signified his official recognition as a leader and accepted feudal chief of the Fulani Empire.

The opportunity for the Fulani to make themselves masters of the country soon came. Almost immediately after *Etsu* Ma'azû's death internal trouble broke out. The claim of Maazu's son Jimada, the legitimate heir to the throne, was disputed by his father's brother's son, Majiya II. The details of this feud are not clear. According to some accounts Jimada was Majiya's father's sister's son, who had been appointed regent for the boy-king Majiya; later, when Majiya grew up and demanded his kingdom, Jimada refused. Other accounts make the two claimants sons of elder and younger brother respectively, namely, of *Etsu* Ma'azû (the nineteenth king of Nupe) and *Etsu* Mama (the twenty-first king of Nupe). Majiya claimed the throne by the right of general Nupe succession, being the elder brother's eldest son; Jimada, however, was regarded as the legitimate heir according to the ancient Nupe rules of royal inheritance which decreed that the son 'born in the purple' should become king.[2] Whatever the origin of this dynastic feud, it led to a temporary division of Nupe kingdom into a western and eastern half: Jimada reigned in Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe, and Majiya built himself a capital in Rabá, on the Niger. Majiya gained the friendship of Mallam Dendo and the Fulani group in Nupe, and with them on his side he became by far the more powerful, and soon snatched the other half of

[1] See A. C. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1929; A. W. Bovill, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, Oxford, 1933; C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, i, pp. 98–102.

[2] In Africa this rule of inheritance is unique, and cannot, according to Nupe tradition, have applied to Tsoede himself and his four sons who succeeded him. All informants insisted that it became, at some unspecified period, the rule of succession in the Nupe dynasty.

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CHAPTER VII
POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM
(*continued*)

KINGSHIP

IN the tradition of Tsoede, that 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom, the essence of the Nupe state is already clearly expressed, sanctioned, almost sanctified, by that paramount authority that attaches to prehistoric events: it outlines a system of political domination, growing by conquest and expansion, and governed by a group detached in origin and status from the rest of the population, and claiming its supreme position by the right of might. The small river kingdom which figures, in the Tsoede tradition, as the nucleus of the great Nupe of later times, and the vast empire under the Fulani Emirs, are essentially of the same nature. The twofold process of expansion over alien groups and cultures, combined with cultural assimilation and absorption, is reflected in both, in the ideological history of the Tsoede myth as well as in the 'real' history of the Fulani kingdom. In one there is Tsoede, who conquers Nupe with the help of alien magic, who brings into Nupe the insignia of alien rulership and culture, but who, himself half Nupe by descent, creates a new, independent, and united Nupe. In the other there is this remarkable piece of empire-policy when Masaba claims succession to the Nupe throne on the grounds of his being half Nupe by birth and full Nupe by education. If the mythology of Tsoede establishes the essence and growth of kingship, later history shows its vicissitudes involved in such system of domination which forces unity upon heterogeneous groups and cultures, revolts and feuds, kings deposed and exiled, usurpers and shadow kings.

We know little about the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times. I have mentioned one piece of information already which I obtained from various sources, namely, the ancient rule of succession which made the eldest son 'born in the purple', that is, the son first born during the father's reign, the heir to the throne of Nupe. A few other facts concerning the person of the king I was able to ascertain from the *Etsu* of Patigi. Certain ritual rules obtained at the king's court—and some of these rules are still observed in Patigi. Thus the *Etsu* may only wear white; he can travel and go out whenever he likes, but may not eat any food save that prepared by his wives; nor may any stranger watch him eat. Finally, no one may be killed in the presence of the king or in the town in which he is residing.[1]

[1] This helps us to understand the organization of the 'King's Hangmen', the crucial fact of which was that the royal executioners killed their victims in places far away from the king's capital. Another effect of this observance, which is still visible, is the rule which forbids the performance of the *ndakó gboyd*, a cult believed to lead to the death of witches, in Patigi, the present 'king's town', or anywhere within a distance from which 'the shrieking of the spirit could be heard in Patigi'. (See *Man*, 1935, 173.)

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[p. 87]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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643 Although the present-day political system of Nupe appears to represent in many respects only a copy and continuation of the pre-Fulani system, the characteristic features of ancient Nupe kingship—the former rule of inheritance, the ritual taboos, and the sacred emblems and form of magic linked with kingship—have disappeared under the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs. But already a new background of religion and myth is forming behind the modern kingship. The memory of the ancestor of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, Mallam Dendo, has become sanctified. The stories of his life and exploits, emphasizing his supernatural faculties, have the flavour of myths. And his tomb at Rabá, over [788] which a mosque has been built, became a place of worship and pilgrimage. At the time of the election of the present Emir, when a number of important political posts were due to change hands, the *Rani*, a Fulani prince anxious to obtain one of these posts, went to Rabá, fasted for seven days, sacrificed in the grave-mosque, and prayed to his ancestor for help.

The disappearance of ancient Nupe kingship reflects the far-reaching historical changes which Nupe kingdom had undergone in the Fulani conquest. In pre-Fulani Nupe the link with magic and myth, ritual rules and taboos, and possibly even the law of succession, separated the king from the rest of the people, even from the members of his own house. Fulani rule, only recently established by undisguised conquest, and dependent upon the co-operation of a band of war-chiefs and faction-leaders, turned semi-sacred kingship into rulership of the strongest. The king becomes a *primus inter pares*, the highest rank-holder in a royal nobility ruled by precedence and promotion. The exclusiveness of primogeniture gave way to a system of succession that allowed for balance of power and could satisfy rival claims. This final balance was not achieved at once. Of the seven sons of Mallam Dendo three only were destined to found royal houses, two directly, Usman Zaki and Masaba, and one in the second generation, Majigi, through his son Umaru. Having once concentrated military and political power in their own hands, these three families eliminated the other sons and grandsons from the succession, paying them off with political offices the importance of which decreased from generation to generation. This resulted in three dynasties which succeed to the throne in strict rotation. In the genealogy given in Appendix II this development is clearly visible. This historical explanation of the present system of kingship is borne out by the views of the people themselves. One of my most enlightened informants, a very learned man and himself a member of the royal nobility, defended the present form of succession against the old primogeniture on these grounds: the old system could work in ancient Nupe, when there was a powerful *kuti* (magic) behind the *Etsu*'s authority. For the Fulani dynasty, which came to power as a large group, composed of jealous relatives and partisans, a divided succession was the only solution. The country too, he added, could only benefit from such balance of power.

643 We may mention here another change from pre-Fulani to Fulani kingship which concerns the political status of the Nupe state. While the 648 Nupe kings were absolute masters in their own country, the Fulani

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Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims. 643 648

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotū*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpā*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions. 643 662 [471]

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field. 060

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country, though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
652 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income
661 firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in
[675] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
643 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will
652 find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold
655 Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help
[782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual
567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

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565 *Tdka*, held by eldest son of *Shaba*.
Sontwárahi
554 *Wací Taba*, held by younger brother of *Shaba*.
Nda Iya
Nágemu, held by younger brother of *Etsu*, appointed 1935; no previous title; District Head of Jima.
'Old' *Natsu*, retired from office 1934.
Natsu, son of a former *Kpotû*, younger brother of *Ginya*; on the Bida Town Council.
Shabarabá, a new *ad hoc* introduced rank, bestowed in May 1936 on the eldest son of the late *Shaba*, as no higher rank was vacant.

2. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Usman* (*House of Usman Zaki*)

'Old' *Kpotû*, died in 1936; for somo-time District Head of Sakpe. Fief in pre-European times: *Edupkû* (countries beyond the Niger).
Kpotû, son and nephew of former *Kpotû*; District Head of Kutigi. He will shortly be asked to resign, that is, to become an 'old' *Kpotû*, on the grounds that his health is not very good. The *Etsu* does not contemplate promoting him to the vacant post of *Shaba* in accordance with the general rules of succession.*
Nágya, till 1935 District Head of Mokwa, now member of the King's Council. He is chosen to succeed to the rank of *Shaba*. Fief in pre-European times: *Edukpâ*.
Rani, since 1935 District Head of Mokwa.
Kusódu, younger brother of the late *Etsu* Bello, living in his Bida house. Fief in pre-European times: Kamberi country.
Wací Trwa
Shaba Gíni
Fogû
Lafarma
Kafa
Cata

[643] * The ground of ill health is a pretext rather than the true reason—and this is very significant. The *Kpotû* does not belong to the house of Usman Zaki, although he is generally regarded as belonging to this dynasty. He is a descendant of Abdu Gboya, one of the sons of Mallam Dendo whose offspring had failed to secure succession to the throne of Nupe. He is, in fact, the only member of these 'second-rank' royal families who had obtained, still in the fourth generation, one of the three highest dynastic positions. His premature resignation is a striking evidence of this dynastic policy to restrict succession to the throne to the three 'houses'.

3. *Ranks held by Members of the emi 'tsu Saba* (*House of Etsu Masaba*)

(Late *Etsu* Saidu, died 1935.)
Wacimbe
Nákorji, District Head of Gbangba. Chosen to succeed to office of *Kpotû*. Fief in pre-European times: Yeti.
Lukpâ
Tsaduya
Tiaci
Trwasha Giraba†
Tsuroma†

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726 An unsuccessful army would never retreat, or return to Bida with the goal unachieved. One would call for reinforcements from the capital, 643 which would be sent out together with a new *Nna 'Kũ* to replace the unsuccessful commander-in-chief. If these troops too were unable to bring the war to an end, the *Etsu* would take command personally, at the head of a third army composed largely of his own bodyguard and of the household troops of noblemen who had not joined the troops previously. During the king's absence from the capital a regency council, headed by the *Ndeji*, would be appointed to look after things at home. In the Yagba war the *Etsu* did not join the army but stayed behind, with his bodyguard of 200 men, which, together with the household troops of four noblemen who had remained in Bida, were the only trained soldiers to oppose the British attack. The king and the noblemen of high rank took the field accompanied by their whole household staff of slaves and servants, and often by their wives as well. They stayed in the Great Camp—consisting of huts of grass and matting—which was put up behind the fighting line or established in a hamlet near-by. A number of Nupe villages betray by their names that at one time the Great War Camp, *edokó*, had stood on their site.

The Nupe war was carried on till the capital of the enemy, that is, the village or walled town in which the chief resided, was captured. If the chief and the other leaders fled, they would be pursued until they were captured or until further pursuit became impossible. Often a fugitive chief sought refuge with the king of a neighbouring country whose territory the Nupe troops would have to respect. All captured places 727 were looted and burnt, and the whole enemy country devastated. But slaughter was avoided as far as possible—the defeated enemies were more valuable alive, to be sold later as slaves. Only when rebellions had to be put down by force of war the enemies, above all chiefs and leaders, would be killed mercilessly, either in the battle, or later in Bida, whither they were taken to be executed.

No less well defined than the etiquette of warfare were the rules and conventions governing the economic aspect of the Nupe wars—the division of loot and booty. All booty taken before the decisive battle—the capture of the enemy's capital—belonged to the king and was dispatched to him immediately. Upon the capture of the town *wasóso* was declared, free looting, in which everyone who fought in the battle could join. The shares in the spoils of war varied according to rank and position. The slave soldiers had to deliver everything to their masters but were rewarded with a small share in the booty they had taken. The *bara* soldiers could keep all booty in kind—(called *dukiya*, wealth)—but were expected to present some of it to their overlords as 'gift of thanks'; of the slaves whom they captured they had to surrender half the number to their overlords. The independent fighters, i.e. the sons of noble houses, kept whatever they captured, both 'wealth' and slaves, except for a voluntary gift to the head of the house. If I have at various occasions in this book called war in Nupe a profession and a source of income, these facts substantiate that view.

000 Let me conclude this description with the report of an eyewitness of

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Or, in the sphere of etiquette: men of equal rank greet each other by cowering low (women go down on one knee) for half a minute or longer while exchanging the formulae of greeting and, if they are well acquainted, stretching out their hands several times in succession and lightly touching each other's fingers. A man of lower rank when meeting his social superior will bow very low or kneel down, and only if the difference of rank is slight or obviated by personal intimacy (as between a *bara* and his patron), will he venture to offer his hand. If he is on horseback, he will dismount; if he is wearing sandals, he will take them off, though it may be on the road, and put them beside him; if he enters the house of his social superior, he will keep close to the door, squatting there till he is summoned to come near. The man of higher rank will stand or sit still, or make a short perfunctory gesture of bowing, and hardly move his arm to meet the other man's hand. When sitting together in a group, the man of low rank always sits slightly behind the man of higher rank. In the presence of the *Etsu*, *Alkali*, the highest ranks, or royal princes, you may not rest your arms on the floor—this would be disrespectful: the proper posture is to squat cross-legged, the arms folded in your lap, and to bend forward a little so that it should not seem as if you were looking straight at your superior. The *Ndeji* and *Maiyaki* were the only men whom I have seen behave really freely in the presence of the king; all others, even the *Alkali* and the royal princes, acted in a conspicuously submissive and slightly constrained manner. 565 576 516

That one addresses one's superior always through a third person is a common feature of African etiquette. So is, I believe, the custom of pulling the sleeve or a cloth over one's hand when offering a gift to a person of superior rank. Of gifts as a symbol of Nupe class etiquette there is more to say. In Nupe (as in the whole of Northern Nigeria) kola-nuts are the commodity most universally used for gifts and presents. To announce your visit or to invite somebody's visit, to win the favour of another man or to express your appreciation of another man's services, you send a present of kola-nuts. Their quality and amount reflect precisely the social status of donor and receiver. 565 576 431

I have already mentioned the existence in Nupe of two kinds of kola-nuts, the cheap southern variety, and the expensive kola-nut from Laboži; the latter, as we have seen, could be obtained only by, or through, the *Etsu* himself—presents of Laboži kola-nuts were thus symbols of royal favour, and unobtainable by anyone who was not in one way or another connected with the court. When I attended the *Sallah* at the *Etsu*'s court in 1936, he had two bowls (teapots, as a matter of fact) full of kola-nuts in front of him, one filled with Laboži nuts and the other with the small cheaper kind. To watch him distribute the kola-nuts—the kind and amount as well as the gestures which accompanied the gifts—was to watch the rank system of Nupe come alive. He presented ten Laboži nuts through a servant to all the higher rank-holders, and five in the same manner to the less exalted officers of state. He then gave one especially big one with his own hands to the men of highest position—the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Alkali* (and myself)—and threw one into the lap of favourites and friends whose rank called less for formality. Finally, [453]

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1] 182 142 186

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *goiši* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'. 182 643 533 186

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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Song of Etsu Bello

The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'kingmaker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
pous title of *Majì Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
B643 recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe
794 kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their
titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
642 after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated
797 the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an
external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Majì Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúži* and *sarakiži*, or more precisely by those *gitsúži* and *sarakiži* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiẽ*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiẽ*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaži*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934–6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiẽ* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

425 In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikã*, the uninhabited bush; also all village 643 land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because 471 of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzanká* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders 423 and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. 643 This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Mahki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

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kinship group and royal 'house', different though they are in many other 423
respects. The possession of land is only one instance of the joint, 'cor- 643
porate', rights which characterize the two analogous groups. [illegible]t of this we shall say more later.

Royal Estates

The three royal estates are situated immediately outside the town 423
walls of Bida. On each of the estates we find a small hamlet, called *esozi*, 643
where (former) royal slaves are living, who were appointed to work the 241
land and look after the royal property.[1] Each of the three *esozi* is placed 567
under the headship of a head slave, styled *Sokyara*—a titled overseer of the royal estates.

The first cultivation in the year—the clearing and first hoeing—was always done by large-scale communal labour in which over a hundred people used to join—slaves, *bara*, peasants from the neighbourhood—and which lasted for one or two days. The *Etsu* himself arranged for food and drink (sorghum beer) and for the customary band of drummers and flute-players to play during the work and at the dance afterwards. After this first cultivation the care of the land was left entirely to the slaves. Originally the whole yield of the royal estates went to the *Etsu* and to the other heads of the royal houses. The *esozi* used to supply over a hundred bundles of corn annually. The royal landlord gave his slaves in return food and clothing, and cared for their various needs. The married slaves (as everywhere in Nupe) were given fairly large individual farm-plots of their own which were not only sufficient to provide food for their families but as a rule also allowed some surplus for trade.

Under modern conditions the position of the royal slaves in the *esozi* 423
has been assimilated to that of clients who only pay an annual tithe from 241
the produce of their farms. But the different Emirs dealt differently with 643
the question of adapting the management to modern conditions. *Etsu* Mohamadu, who was not very interested in farming, abandoned the 427
communal work of the first cultivation; he also lost all personal touch with his *esozi*, and insisted only on the annual *dzankd*. *Etsu* Bello, on the other hand, maintained the communal work of the first cultivation; he demanded one-third of the total produce as 'tithe', leaving the rest to the people of the *esozi*. Under the late *Etsu* Saidu and under the present *Etsu* every family head in the *esozi* paid one to two bundles of sorghum or late millet to the royal landlord, the *Sokyara* acting as intermediary—the total tithe amounting to about ten to fifteen bundles a year. When the Government built the new residence for the present Emir a final change took place. The land outside the Wuya gate of Bida, which formerly belonged to the house of *Etsu* Masaba, was bought by the Government as a site for the new building, and turned into Crown land.[2] The

[1] During the dry season the three royal estates, being situated directly outside the town gates of Bida, are the natural camping-ground for the donkey and cattle caravans that pass through Bida. Now it is the customary practice that these camps—rather primitive grass-shelters erected by the people of the *Etsu*—are always pitched on the farm-land belonging to the ruling *Etsu*. His farms have thus the benefit of the well-manured soil. [485]

[2] In accordance with Nupe practice the fruit-bearing trees were not included

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423 present Emir, who comes from the royal house of Umaru Majigi, thus
241 owns, unlike any of his predecessors, two royal estates: his own family estate near the Jima gate, south of Bida, and the new estate on the Crown
643 land near the Wuya gate, which, like the residence itself, belongs to the modern accoutrements of his office. The *esoži* people on his family
427 estate were prepared to work for him on the usual *dzankâ* arrangement. But the *esoži* of *Etsu* Masaba—the *esoži* on the land that had now become his official estate—refused to work for their new landlord on the old terms, and demanded money wages. Finally, when the *Etsu*
[242 in 1936 started an experimental farm for mixed farming on his family estate, the *esoži* workers there also denounced the old agreement and
466] demanded wages; for this was work of a new kind altogether, work carried out entirely for their landlord, no longer work after their own fashion, from which they could hand over the traditional share in the produce.

Non-agricultural Use of Land

423 A few words must be said in conclusion about rights to land that is used for other than agricultural purposes, such as clay-pits from which clay is obtained for pottery or for the sun-dried bricks used in house-building, the iron-ore deposits which are used by the native iron-ore smelters, or the space needed for the dye-pits of the indigo dyers. All these stretches of land, whether they are situated close to the house (like the dye-pits) or some distance away (like the clay-pits and the ferruginous hill-side) are accessible to all.

The thick strips of rain-forest near the rivers are specially valuable
423 'no-man's-land'. Here woodcarvers and carpenters find the timber they
313 need for their work. The branches of certain palm-trees are used for
438 rafters in roof building; a certain species of reed is used for the making of the curtain-like mats which the Nupe call *eshegi* (the Hausa *asabari*); other species of grass, and the leaves of the dum-palm, are used for mat-making and the making of straw hats. The fact that these materials are found only in certain places, far away from the town where the craftsmen who are using them are living, is turned to economic use, and the procuring of the raw material thus gains independent commercial significance: the big palm-branch rafters are sold on Bida market by the men who cut them; and men and women frequently use the time of comparative leisure in the dry season to travel down to the river in order to collect dum-palm leaves and marsh-grass, which they sell later, for a little money, to mat- and straw hat makers.

The collecting and selling of firewood (which is done by women) and
423 the cutting and selling of grass for roofing (done by men) belongs to a
313 slightly different category. For in this case the non-agricultural use of land does not apply to 'no-man's-land'; the farmers and their families

in this transaction and remained the property of the original landlords, i.e. the head of the house of *Etsu* Masaba. Thus in January 1936, when the new official residence of the Emir had been standing already for almost a year, people from the house of *Etsu* Masaba were collecting the fruits of the trees on the new Crown land.

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 waah or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and [643] rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

361 hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

184 To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in
346 the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

621 An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

632 The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

342 The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference
592 to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

343 Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-
354 shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying
[423] bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

643 The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndaho gboyd* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

643 The ndakó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuy* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

STATUS AND TITLES[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuy*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.

[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.

[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.

[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.

[9] See below, p. 35.

[10] See below, p. 36.

[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuy* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

4: Temple G-4 (no date).1922

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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the K[illegible]a
173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated th[illegible] clans
167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide*
131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of
[114 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh-
152] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways.
[161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

641 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge
304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

●643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death
[67a] of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [884 672]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [835] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation.

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 682 696 [866]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [862] 586

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[847] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

5: Nadel
622, 643

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[Information concerning the chief of the Kede sub-tribe has been placed in category 634. --Analyst]

●644, 642 Nupe FF52

[Information on the ticiži, the "Titled Ones," the office nobility of the Nupe state, has been placed in category 565. --Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the last period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the walls of his house. This morning ride is still part of the daily routine of the *Etsu* Nupe, even up at his modern brick residence which stands by itself on the hill outside the town. He may extend his ride to visit his *esozi*, a short distance away, and inspect his farms, or possibly to inquire after his guests—for visitors of standing who have come from far away are assigned quarters in the *esozi*. Once when I accompanied the *Etsu* on this ceremonial morning ride he went to see a Nupe Mallam who had returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca and stopped in Bida as the king's guest on his way home. Another time two noblemen from Sokoto, relatives of the Sultan, had come on a visit to Bida and were invited to stay in the *esozi*. Later in the morning, back in his house, the *Etsu* receives the first official visitors of the day: the *Etsu Dogari* and the *Sarkin Yandoka*, the chiefs of the two police forces of the Emirate, who come to bring him the 'news of the town'—arrests made on the market the night before, a case of small-pox in one of the town quarters, and so forth. The *Alkali* and his Chief Assistant drop in to pay their respects, possibly to report on an important law-case, before they go down to the Court House in the centre of the town. The guild-head of the traders may present himself in order to inform the *Etsu* of the arrival in Bida of traders or a trading caravan with new attractive goods which the *Etsu* might care to inspect. Messengers come and go—from the Native Administration Treasury, or the Divisional Office, the Bida Town Council, or from a District Head. In the meantime the highest officers of state, the members of the Emir's Council, have arrived in his house for the daily *nkó*, the Council of State. At the *nkó* all matters of importance are discussed; or there may be legal cases on the day's agenda. For the *nkó* has also judicial functions and tries cases referred to it from a lower court. The session of the *Etsu*'s Council concludes the official duties of the day. In the afternoon the *Etsu* might see friends or visitors in his house, or drive through the town in his splendid motor-car—one of the modern symbols of royal prestige.

The climax of Bida Court life is the celebration of the Friday. On Thursday night and again on Friday afternoon the *Etsu* rides in great state to the mosque in the town, and on Friday at his return he holds a reception in his house which is attended by every man of rank and standing. Envisage this Friday procession: king and courtiers on horseback, in their sumptuous gowns, the king under the great silken state umbrella, the horses with trappings of silver and beautiful cloth; a bodyguard carrying swords, and police with their staffs, are running ahead, shouting the *Etsu*'s name or blessing formulae or little proverb-like sentences which illustrate the king's greatness; drummers are beating their drums, three mounted trumpeters blow the huge bronze *kakati* in an incessant deafening chorus; with it blend the shrill notes of the *algeita*, the Hausa oboe, while another musician is beating an iron double bell with a wooden stick, shouting and singing at the same time. All streets are lined with people, adults and children, who watch, fascinated, this procession, bearing witness to the impressiveness of this display of royal power. And then, back again in the royal palace: the wide place in front of the house and the courtyard are crowded with people; the *talakazi*—

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the commoners, men without name and rank—sit and stand outside, chatting and watching what there is to watch; the members of the privileged classes, titled nobility, and Mohammedan priests, are sitting in the inner courtyard and in *katamba* (entrance-halls), each *katamba* reserved for a special group. Only royal princes and the highest officers of state are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu*; they sit in the inner part of the house together with personal friends and favourites of the king.[1] All these people come to pay their respect to their sovereign, to see and to be seen, to exercise prerogatives, or to proclaim their connexion with the privileged and mighty. This external arrangement of the Friday ceremonial is indeed a symbol of the whole social structure of Nupe kingdom with its rigid system of etiquette and precedence, its differentiation of status, rank, and prerogatives, and its display of wealth and power. This structure we must now analyse in detail.

THE ROYAL NOBILITY

The descendants of the house of Mallam Dendo, under their three heads *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotû*, form the royal nobility of Nupe, the *ena gitsúźi*, the Group of Those who will become King. They are *gitsúźi* in the sense that from their ranks the new king is elected. The titles of nobility which they hold by the privilege of birth may lead every one of them, by slower or more rapid promotion, eventually to the highest rank, kingship. In most cases the royal prince who succeeds to the throne has reached first the rank of *Shaba*; the change from old to new king is thus made almost automatic, a dangerous interregnum is avoided, and the fight between the rival factions is confined to the less dangerous sphere of competition for the ranks next to the king. Only twice was a man who had not reached the title of *Shaba* (or, if the *Shaba* had died, the title of *Kpotû*) made *Etsu*.[2] In 1936 there existed, or more precisely, were actually held, 41 royal ranks, of which 10 fell to the house of Usman Zaki, 17 to the house of Masaba (the house which had supplied the last

[1] The arrangement at these receptions, the way in which the people who are admitted to the presence of the *Etsu* group themselves, is invariably the same. It is shown in this diagram:

Two bodyguards with ostrich fans
Etsu (on state bed)
Gitsúźi *Ndeji* *Sarakiźi*
Mayaki
Liman-Alhali
Mallams

[2] These exceptions were *Etsu* Mohamadu who, only *Makû*, was appointed *Etsu* by the Niger Company, and the present *Etsu* who had been *Nágenu*, but had held the important office of a District Head of Jima. It is the present tendency of the Administration to abolish the office of *Shaba* and to make the appointment to kingship a free election from the royal ranks. After the death of the late *Shaba* in 1935 no new *Shaba* has been appointed. It is not yet clear what effect, if any, this innovation will have upon the internal dynastic organization. The threefold system is so deeply rooted that I believe the effect will be only to abolish a name, and that the rank next in order in the dynastic section will assume the main function of the abolished rank, that is, headship of the dynastic clan.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The royal houses of Nupe, like every noblemen's house, had their host 567
of slaves: slaves for menial work—in the house and on the land—as well 644
as the titled slaves of respected position. At the court this latter group of 555
slaves formed the *ena wuši*, the Order of Court Slaves, a distinguished slave *élite* into which only few selected slaves could ever hope to be admitted. From the slaves captured in war those of high birth and status, chiefs or distinguished warriors, were selected for the court. These, too, were given ranks and titles, and could rise high in the service of the king. Theirs was the specialized service of officials and trusted royal agents. There were those who looked after the king's vast household; those who were in charge of the *Etsu* Nupe's no less imposing [839] harem—both offices formerly entrusted to eunuchs.[1] Other slaves formed the king's bodyguard and police force; they were provincial delegates, tax collectors, trusted messengers, 'liaison officers' between the king's palace and the houses of his noblemen, and between the king and the army in the field. These slaves, like the other rank-holders, owned land and held fiefs. The Nupe kings in Rabá are said to have had only four titled court slaves; the slave ranks that existed at the court of Bida some thirty years ago (and the ranks still exist, although their holders are no longer slaves) were more than three times that number. Under *Etsu* Maliki, one of the last independent kings of Nupe, the most responsible state offices were taken from royal princes and *sarákiši* and entrusted to slaves. The position of the slaves as officers of state thus seems to have overshadowed more and more all other state ranks. Slave ranks were ranks bestowed *ad personam*, and ranks bestowed by the king personally, independent of the council of princes and ministers; and this gives us the explanation for their rise in importance. The offices linked with civil and military rank also depended to some extent on the personal favour of the king. But once appointed, these men stayed on, servants of the kingdom rather than of the king. They had behind them the claims of powerful families, they were exponents of political factions, and could play on that 'balance of power' between the dynasties. The slaves were personal servants in the full sense of the word. They were brought into office, not by family claims or promotion or a rigid rule of succession, but by personal appointment, selection, and trial. They were bound to the king's service generation after generation, by the strongest bond: their position of unfree men. It frequently happened that a new *Etsu* took over the slaves who had served his predecessor and left them their ranks and possessions. The rise of the slave officials at the Fulani court is the counterpart of the rise of a powerful, dangerously independent feudal nobility.

The following is a list of slave ranks held to-day, not by slaves, but by 567
former slaves or descendants of slaves at the court of the *Etsu* Nupe. I 554
have again tried to indicate in what manner they received their title, and also in certain cases the office which some of them are holding to-day in the Bida Town Administration. That so many of these former slaves

[1] In the pre-Fulani kingdom the court is said to have employed only a few slaves—all eunuchs. All slave ranks which have a *nda* in their title, meaning 'father' (ranks that are still in use—see attached chart), were originally ranks reserved for eunuchs.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER IX
THE POSITION OF THE WOMEN

RANKS AND OFFICES

IT speaks for the consistency of the political system of Nupe that the position of the women, too, should be drawn into its orbit and even into the framework of official grades and ranks. Among the women of royal blood in pre-Fulani Nupe three women's ranks existed: *Nimwoye*, *Sagi*, and *Wogbo*. Precedence and succession in these three ranks corresponded to the succession in the three highest *gitsú* titles. At the court of ancient Nupe the titles were bestowed by the king on his mother or father's sister, elder sister, or daughter. The holder of the title had to be a *nyizagi gbakó*, a 'strong woman', that is, a woman of about 40–50 years. She had to be unmarried, or else her marriage would be formally dissolved on her appointment to the rank, and she would forthwith be regarded as unmarried. She lived, not in the house of her husband or father but in the *Etsu*'s own house. The Fulani adopted the first two ranks, abandoning, however, the condition of celibacy or nominal celibacy, and made the two daughters of Manko the first *Sagi* and *Nimwoye*. The two ranks have remained in the royal house of Nupe since then. After the split of the dynasty into three branches the women's ranks followed the new dynastic division, the title *Nimwoye* being assigned to the women of the royal house of Masaba, and the title *Sagi* being taken, in rotation, by the women of the royal houses of Umaru and Usman. This rule still holds good: the present *Sogi*, for example, is a sister of the late *Etsu* Bello of the house of Usman, and the *Sagi* before her was an elder sister of the *Shaba*, of the house of Umaru.

The women rank-holders occupied an extremely influential position at the court. They took part in the king's council, they could join in the war with their own troops of slaves and serfs, they held fiefs and owned land. Theirs was the position of 'kings over the women of Nupe'. Although these political prerogatives have disappeared, the position of authority vested in these women's ranks is unimpaired. All quarrels between women, especially women of the noble families, are brought before them; the women of Bida and the villages send them presents and receive counter-presents from them, much as is the custom between the noblemen of Nupe and their king. *Sagi* and *Nimwoye* are often the official representatives of the court at the family feasts of the Bida nobility. At the name-giving ceremony which was celebrated in the house of the *Shaba* in 1936 the *Sagi* came to bring presents and congratulations from the *Etsu*—an honour which was duly appreciated by all who were present.

Among the Bida women of low birth, the wives and daughters of commoners, we find another women's rank, *Sonya*.[1] She is, as the Nupe

[1] The Nupe word *Sonya* corresponds to the Hausa word (and the equivalent women's rank) *sarauniya*, lit. queen. *Sō* or *So* is a Nupe root meaning head or chief.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*,' Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawraciši nya minîn*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kii*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manži* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somasii*, which is the old Nupe title.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

177'58 Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the
642 Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official
643 nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida
648 Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúźi* and *sarakiźi*, or more precisely by those *gitsúźi* and *sarakiźi* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

645 The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiẽ*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiẽ*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaźi*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934–6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiẽ* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Etsu Tafiē had been in pre-Fulani times the chief of the 'aboriginal population' of Nupe, the Beni tribe[1]—a justification which, as this chapter has shown, takes into account, out of the whole complex social structure of the kingdom, but one comparatively irrelevant fact: an external historical connexion with one isolated village community. Typical of what I have called the 'parochial outlook' of the village, the *Etsu Tafiē*, bearer of one of those 'petty village titles', having reached this new position through no acknowledged channel of 'social career', seems out of place in a council on which he could hardly hold his own against the traditional leaders of the country's fate, the highest ranks of the Nupe hierarchy. The insignificant role which I saw him play on the council seems to support my view.

Bida Emirate is divided for the purpose of administration into a number of districts; at the head of each is a District Head, appointed by the *Etsu* as a rule from the ranks of the higher royal nobility; he himself, as *Nágenu*, was formerly District Head of the Jima-Doko district (see table, p. 95). Some time ago the number of districts was reduced from ten to seven by amalgamating certain districts, making the area in charge of one District Head rather larger, and perhaps also more heterogeneous, than might seem advisable. Here is the list of districts and rank-holders appointed as District Heads.

List of District Heads

Former Districts	*Present Districts*	*District Heads*
Gbangba	Gbangba	*Nakorji*
Dakmon-Magwe	,,	,,
Badeggi	Badeggi	*Ginya*
Kacha	Kacha	*Sheshi*
Jima-Doko	Jima-Doko	*Nágenu*
Sakpe	Kutigi	*Kpotū*
Egbako	,,	,,
Laboṭi	,,	,,
Mokwa	Mokwa	*Rani*
Kyedye	Kyedye	*Kuta*

Two District Heads are not members of the royal nobility: the *Kuta* of the Kyedye, whose privileged position as a provincial chief directly under the *Etsu* had been recognized in the early days of British rule and had been renewed recently by the Administration, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha, who was appointed in 1934. He had been the hereditary village chief of Kacha, and his appointment to an office which had been held previously by the *Makū*, a royal prince, was designed, like the appointment of the *Etsu Tafiē*, to open responsible state offices to the Nupe 'commoner'. Unfortunately this appointment was once more based on insufficient knowledge of the country. The territory over which the ancestors of the *Sheshi* used to exercise their rule as 'town-kings' of Kacha has been placed in the political rearrangement of the country mostly into a different Division, the Agaie Emirate. Also the town and

[1] See p. 25.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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643 Although the present-day political system of Nupe appears to represent in many respects only a copy and continuation of the pre-Fulani system, the characteristic features of ancient Nupe kingship—the former rule of inheritance, the ritual taboos, and the sacred emblems and form of magic linked with kingship—have disappeared under the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs. But already a new background of religion and myth is forming behind the modern kingship. The memory of the ancestor of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, Mallam Dendo, has become sanctified. The stories of his life and exploits, emphasizing his supernatural faculties, have the flavour of myths. And his tomb at Rabá, over [128] which a mosque has been built, became a place of worship and pilgrimage. At the time of the election of the present Emir, when a number of important political posts were due to change hands, the *Rani*, a Fulani prince anxious to obtain one of these posts, went to Rabá, fasted for seven days, sacrificed in the grave-mosque, and prayed to his ancestor for help.

The disappearance of ancient Nupe kingship reflects the far-reaching historical changes which Nupe kingdom had undergone in the Fulani conquest. In pre-Fulani Nupe the link with magic and myth, ritual rules and taboos, and possibly even the law of succession, separated the king from the rest of the people, even from the members of his own house. Fulani rule, only recently established by undisguised conquest, and dependent upon the co-operation of a band of war-chiefs and faction-leaders, turned semi-sacred kingship into rulership of the strongest. The king becomes a *primus inter pares*, the highest rank-holder in a royal nobility ruled by precedence and promotion. The exclusiveness of primogeniture gave way to a system of succession that allowed for balance of power and could satisfy rival claims. This final balance was not achieved at once. Of the seven sons of Mallam Dendo three only were destined to found royal houses, two directly, Usman Zaki and Masaba, and one in the second generation, Majigi, through his son Umaru. Having once concentrated military and political power in their own hands, these three families eliminated the other sons and grandsons from the succession, paying them off with political offices the importance of which decreased from generation to generation. This resulted in three dynasties which succeed to the throne in strict rotation. In the genealogy given in Appendix II this development is clearly visible. This historical explanation of the present system of kingship is borne out by the views of the people themselves. One of my most enlightened informants, a very learned man and himself a member of the royal nobility, defended the present form of succession against the old primogeniture on these grounds: the old system could work in ancient Nupe, when there was a powerful *kuti* (magic) behind the *Etsu*'s authority. For the Fulani dynasty, which came to power as a large group, composed of jealous relatives and partisans, a divided succession was the only solution. The country too, he added, could only benefit from such balance of power.

643 We may mention here another change from pre-Fulani to Fulani kingship which concerns the political status of the Nupe state. While the 648 Nupe kings were absolute masters in their own country, the Fulani

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims. 643 648

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotũ*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpã*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions. 643 662 [471]

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field. 080

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dakári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 1,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Administration. New house or old, in his mind the position of the Emir remained inseparable from that traditional personal link with the local town faction.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMIRATE

Let me describe the modern Government of Nupe Emirate, in official nomenclature, the Native Administration (N.A. for short) of Bida Division.[1] Out of the multitude of traditional ranks the modern Emirate has taken a certain number and embodied them in the N.A. as official posts, carrying a salary and to some extent also implying specific, new tasks. The salary is graded in accordance with the importance of the office, and the *Etsu* himself heads this new bureaucracy with a salary of £2,000.[2] The *Etsu* Nupe is still elected from the ranks of the royal princes by *gitsúši* and *sarakiši*, or more precisely by those *gitsúši* and *sarakiši* who hold appointments under the N.A. The *Etsu*, assisted by a council of four, looks after the affairs of the Emirate; he watches over law and order in the country, carries through measures of administration, tries certain legal cases, and controls appointments to offices and titles. Advised and guided by the District Officer in charge of the Division, the *Etsu* is the responsible head of his government. The agreement of both *Etsu* and District Officer is necessary for every administrative measure.[3] The appointment of a new *Etsu* is subject to confirmation by the Governor of Nigeria, and in extreme cases the Governor may depose the Emir on the advice of the District Officer and his superior officer, the Resident of the Province. The *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the head-slave of the *Etsu*, is to-day the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office.

The *Etsu*'s council consists to-day of the following members: the *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Nágya*, and *Etsu Tafiẽ*. The *Ndeji*, the old 'Father of the Town', is the 'president' of the council. The *Maiyaki*, from a 'Minister of War', has become a 'Minister of Public Works' and a representative of the *Etsu* on tours of inspection. The *Nágya*, a royal prince, was formerly District Head of Mokwa, and was then co-opted into the council for the ability which he had shown in the administration of his district. The *Etsu Tafiẽ*, finally, was taken into the council in 1931, after the Bida disturbances, as an official representative of the *talakawa* (this is the Hausa form of *talakaši*, commoners), who formerly had no voice in the management of state affairs. I may say a few words about this appointment. Justified as was its aim, the appointment itself seems rather problematic. It was justified officially on the grounds that the

[1] The Administration of the other Provinces and Divisions where sections of the Nupe tribe are living is organized on identical lines; we may disregard them here.

[2] These were the salaries of the *Etsu* and the higher officials of the N.A. in 1934–6: *Etsu* £2,000; *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki* £180; *Nágya*, *Etsu Tafiẽ* £120; District Heads £150; Chief *Alkali* of Bida £180.

[3] No fixed rule can be laid down as regards the relative share of responsibility and initiative in this co-operation of District Officer and Emir. It varies considerably with the personalities of these two men, and also with the general trend of policy that might obtain in the Province at a given time.

631 countries of Beni and Kyedye; the third comprised a wider ring of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, mostly in Trans-Kaduna; the fourth was Bida town, the seat of the central government, which formed an administrative district of its own.

The "outside" peoples consisted of Yoruba (Yagba and Bunu), Kakanda, Kamberi, Gbari, and Gbira, with some Nupe sections (mostly Dibo and Ebe). Their districts were not regularly administered by the central government, but they were recognized as being under the "protection" of Bida, and paid an annual tribute in slaves, collected by royal agents (*tuci* or *ajele*). Other Emirates and chieftainships were bound by "treaties" not to raid Bida's dependent territories, though Bida itself could raid its own "outside" peoples. The royal messengers visited the territories with small armies and the possession of such a force was an essential qualification for the post of *ajele*.

The kingdoms of Beni and Kyedye,[16] the two small "states within the State," were directly under the king and their chiefs acted as a kind of royal agents, their appointment and succession being subject to confirmation by the king. They could administer law in cases which came into the category of *gyara*, "reparation," and collected tax in their areas on the king's behalf.

The rest of the Nupe kingdom was divided into areas each containing a town with its dependent villages and *tunga*, which were administered as fiefs by their lords (*egba*). The latter might be members of the royal house or of the official nobility, or court slaves. Each received his fief from the *Etsu*, together with his title with which the fief remained permanently linked; the appointment to an *egba* post thus conferred a definite status. Fiefs were also bestowed on individuals, usually relatives or favourites of the king, independent of rank or office. A lord rarely visited his fief; his representative, usually one of his slaves or serfs living on his lands, collected tax for him. The *egba* had to give a proportion of this tax to the king. Among his other duties was the administration of justice in lesser cases.

633 Bida town was administered directly by the king and his officers of state, but, like the kingdom, was divided into areas, the inner city, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida lived, greater Bida, and the strangers' quarter. Cutting across these divisions were the small local units, described by Nadel as "factions rather than organized town wards," consisting of the followers of various members of the powerful nobility. In fact, the people of Bida refer to the different parts of the town by the titles of the nobility who have their houses there.

In more recent times the affairs of Bida Emirate have been in the hands of the *Etsu* and a council of four, consisting of the *Ndeji*, President (formerly "father of the town" of Bida), the *Maiyaki* or *Sarkin Yaki*, Minister of Public Works (formerly Commander in War), the *Nágya*, formerly District Head of Mokwa and a member of the nobility, and the *Etsu Tafiey*, official representative of the commoners and formerly chief of the Beni confederacy.[17] Other officials include the *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the *Etsu*'s chief slave and now the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office of the Nigerian Administration. Seven District Heads are appointed by the *Etsu* from the ranks of the higher royal nobility. Exceptions are the *Kuta* of the Kyedye sub-tribe,[18] who is the District Head of Kuta District, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha. The District Heads live in the largest town of their District and make frequent tours of inspection of the area and regular visits to the *Etsu*. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their District and for the collection of taxes.[19]

633 648 The *Dikko*, head of the nomadic Fulani (*bororoši*) in Bida Emirate, fills a traditional position in Fulani social life and ceremonial. He acts as liaison officer

[16] See below, p. 38.
[17] c. 1936.
[18] See below, p. 38.
[19] Nadel, 1942, pp. 138–65.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Agansbu*, and of Shaku *Kpotuŋ*.[21]

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*ẓitsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *ẓitsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*ẓusaẓi*, sing. *ẓusa*, the "old ones," or *ticiẓi*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*ẓigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Ẓitsu* and *ẓigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1928) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is 634 situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under 669 allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above 634 all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the 669 river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company 648 campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The 634 *Kuta* lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of 634 modern government has not been an unqualified success. Admin- 178 istrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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who was reputed to possess strong and deadly magic had threatened his 627
life; a family head in Kutigi that his family was too highly taxed; a man in Pichi that a neighbour had beaten his goat (which the other man had found eating his grain): these are some of the cases which a village chief and his elders may daily be called upon to decide.

The procedure is nearly always the same. The various news, requests, or complaints are communicated at once to the chief, directly, if the supplicant or bearer of the news has the chief's ear, that is, is himself a titled elder, and indirectly, through the family head or the *efutsó* (head) of the *efu* in which he lives, if the bearer of the news is an ordinary peasant. Upon receiving the news the chief will summon the head *nūsa* (the *Sheihi* in Mokwa, the *Lile* in Doko, the *Ndeji* in other villages), and he in turn will call together the other members of the council whose co-operation is required: two or three of the senior elders—the members of the 'inner council'—and always the *nūsa* to whose kinship group or *efu* the litigant or supplicant belongs. Not only does this *nūsa* act, as we have seen, as the official informant of the chief on all matters concerning his group and locality, but his intimacy with the people whose case is to be heard, and his moral influence, make him an important witness and, when a decision has been reached, a guarantor of its execution. Before this tribunal, then, supplicants and litigants in the village appear. The discussion that ensues is informal, and devoid of the stiff procedure that characterizes, for example, the Native Court. Supplicant or plaintiff state their case in a few sentences—the Nupe are not fond of long speeches and elaborate expositions. Obscurities in the statement are unravelled in patient cross-examination, in which everyone present can take part. Then, at one point, the chief or a *nūsa* may suggest a solution, which may be agreed to by the others with the stereotyped expression *u ge*, 'it is well', or revised in renewed discussion. Very rarely do tempers flare up and the discussions become heated. The final decision of the chief and his council is pressed home in the form of advice, persuasion, warning. A discussion of this kind rarely lasts longer than two or three hours, after which time it will be interrupted to be resumed on a following day. Mostly one or two sessions suffice to arrive at the final decision.

But then, in more difficult cases, in which many witnesses have to be 692
called and thorny problems of arbitration settled, the decision is taken
out of the hands of the village executive. For the chief is not entitled to 627
dispense formal justice and to enforce arbitration. He must send all legal cases to the professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*) of the district; moreover, litigants who are dissatisfied with the chief's decision may themselves bring their case before the professional judge or the District Head (a point to which we shall return later). This limitation of village jurisdiction makes it impossible to pronounce in more detail on the efficiency of the village council and the way in which it handles, or could handle, more severe conflicts. The gamut of advice, persuasion, and warning is the only one which it can use: the more strident notes of authoritative orders and severe reprimands are outside its scale.

That they, too, have a rightful existence in the administration of village 651
affairs is shown in the organization, by chief and elders, of all concerted 621

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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651 621 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal ceremonies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nūsaši* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an [694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also, 623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as 661 heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; 622
a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* 623
group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on
their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a 661
rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the 622
economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free him-
self from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the 661
economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important 622
economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) 651
a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe',
from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this [431]
payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, [476]
which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general 622
money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes. 651
Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A.,
receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind 431
has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a

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622 651 [43]

voluntary present. It is, I was told, only the 'old men who are still doing it'. The value of the right to communal farm-work has also lost its former importance. A number of salaried Village Heads have abandoned almost completely their former agricultural work, being too busy with their official duties. One village chief, who is District Head at the same time (in Kacha), has found it impossible to spare even his sons and brothers for farm-work, needing them as messengers and the like. Instead, he has adopted the most recent innovation in Nupe economics, and engages wage-labour to work his land. The chiefs of small villages, however, who draw no wages, and have been given no official position under the N.A., have lost the most important of the old economic prerogatives—unless their people voluntarily continue the old practice—without benefiting from the new. Only the right to special fruit-bearing trees, game, and fishing has survived everywhere without change. It is not surprising, therefore, that the old term *Žitsu* is more and more losing its splendour, overshadowed by the matter-of-fact term *Etsu Nyenkpa*, Money or Tax Chief. And often the small chiefs, who have been passed over in the political reorganization of the Emirate,[1] tell you that to-day there is little difference between chief and commoners.

622 How far did the former economic prerogatives in reality establish a definite, unassailable economic superiority of the chief? The approach to this question must be through the comparison between traditional income and expenditure of chief and elders respectively. Here we see that some of the economic prerogatives of the chief are shared (though in lesser degree) by the other family heads and titled elders. The *nūsaži*, like the chief, have a right to the possession of fruit-bearing trees; they too can avail themselves of communal farm-work—though only after the chief. And if they have a large family, many sons and younger brothers helping in the farm-work, their normal income may not be very much lower than the chief's. Of the economic prerogatives of the chief only the land-tithe (or its modern counterpart, the chief's salary) and the game and fishing rights are exclusive to his official position. The game rights contribute mainly to the symbols of chieftain status—the possession of a leopard or lion skin, allowed only to the chief. The additional capital resources vested in chieftainship—additional in the sense that they are unavailable to ordinary family heads—were thus derived in the main from the tithe.[2] I have calculated that the annual land-tithe of a village the size of Doko would amount to about seventy bundles of corn—twice the annual yield upon which an average peasant household could reckon.[3] Now, on this evidence we are justified in saying that the

[1] See p. 52.

[2] Certain other irregular forms of income it is impossible to estimate to-day: occasional land fees from new tenants, fines or gifts from parties between whom the chief was arbitrating. Moreover, certain chiefs received a small share of the tax money they levied for the *Etsu* Nupe (see p. 116); but this last income, derived from the kingdom, no longer reflects the village system as such.

[3] There is a certain margin of error in this calculation. The constant extension and subdivision of Nupe family groups and households make it impossible to define with any precision the size of the households originally responsible for the payment of the tithe. I have taken an average of the larger groups, such as are

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565 554 693 laws or special judicial practices. Of this aspect of their activity we shall hear more at a later stage. But one point (already mentioned) must be stressed here. The office of *Liman* and *Alkali* could become hereditary; many judges and Mohammedan scholars are of Fulani stock; but this reflects only the political influence and partly also the tradition of learning in these families. As representatives of Mohammedan scholarship *Liman* and *Alkali* are only the most exalted exponents of a professional class which comprises men of every status and birth—the Mallams, 'learned men', who are held in high esteem by everyone. Even without rank or title, when of little and insignificant learning, they are placed above the ordinary commoner. They may marry the daughters and sisters of the high-born. The *Etsu* himself, descendant of a Mallam, puts a 'Mallam' before his name. Like his ancestors he honours and receives at his court all Mallams of reputation. They are a class between the classes, a mobile, privileged intelligentsia.

565 554 467 The description of the hierarchy of Nupe kingdom is incomplete without the mention of a last group of minor rank-holders, composed of the heads of the Bida craft-guilds. The guilds are closed occupational groups, the members of which live together in one locality and practise certain hereditary crafts such as glass-making, brasswork, weaving, &c.[1] The guild-heads receive their titles, together with the usual gift of a turban, from the *Etsu*. Though low down in the scale of ranks, they have yet an official standing, and are raised above the ordinary commoner and peasant. Their headship implies authority over all the members of their craft in town and village. Formerly the guild-heads received a small annual tribute of products of their craft from their fellow craftsmen. Like the members of the nobility, the titled guild-heads are summoned to the *Etsu*'s Council at the *Sallah*, the great Mohammedan festival; and, [651] like the privileged nobility, they are exempted from taxation. Their only tribute takes the form of an annual gift—an *emisã*, or 'salute'—again of products of their craft, the cost of which is borne jointly by the whole guild, and which is presented to the *Etsu* at the *Sallah*.

Certain craft-guilds are linked with the dynastic division of the capital and are divided into three sections each of which resides in a different *ekpã*. The groups of craftsmen also bear more special allegiance to the royal house in whose *ekpã* they live and with the ancestor of which they associate their coming to Bida and the foundation of their guild. But over and above this party allegiance guilds and guild-sections are closely linked with the ruling king of Nupe. For the king and the court represent the most important customers of the Bida craftsmen. All orders which the court intends to place are given through the guild-head, who guarantees their execution and acts as an official 'controller' of his group of craftsmen.

A position similar to that held by the guild-heads is also assigned to the head of the Bida brokers, the *Etsu Dilali*, who again plays the part of an agent of the king in all matters concerning commerce and trade in the capital.

[1] The organization of the Bida craft-guilds will be described in more detail in Chapter xiv.

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CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM

(continued)

THE FEUDAL STATE

WE have seen how in the history of the kingdom a certain territorial nucleus evolved, an area of 'Nupe proper'. This concept of a territorial 'nucleus' also forms the basis of the division of the country for the purpose of government. For the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration the kingdom was divided into four zones. First, the area of the conquered tributary countries outside the boundaries of the 'kingdom proper', in Nupe terminology, the countries of the *zaži kati*, the 'Outside Peoples'. Second, within these boundaries, an innermost core, the countries of Beni and Kyedye; having formed the nucleus of the rising kingdom they are now assigned the privileged position of royal domains. The third zone comprised the wider 'ring' of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, most of which lie in Trans-Kaduna. Bida town, the seat of the central government, formed an administrative district of its own. 631

Under the name of Outside Peoples were comprised the conquered territories of Gbari, Gbira, Kamberi, Kakanda, Yagba, Bunu, and certain sections of Nupe (Dibo and Ebe mostly). These districts were not administered fully by the central government. Their political dependence entailed two things: an annual tribute to Bida, and the recognition by other Emirates and chieftainships of the political status of these territories as 'under the protection' of Bida. It was a one-sided 'protection': Bida itself was free to raid her own outside peoples, but no other country could do this or levy taxes in these territories with impunity. The guarantor of these 'treaties' was, in the last instance, the Emir of Gwandu, the highest feudal overlord of all Fulani Emirs in this part of the world.[1] The central government in Bida did not assume jurisdiction over these countries, nor did it interfere in their own political administration. The tribute was paid in slaves and was collected annually by royal messengers, *tuci*, or as they were also called *ajele* (from the Arabic *ajala*, to dispatch), who visited these countries at the head of small armies, ready to quell any disturbance or to bring recalcitrant taxpayers to heel. Of the tribute levied a little more than half went to the king, the rest to the royal messenger. The office of tax-collector in the outside areas of the kingdom was entrusted mostly to the royal nobility, and the districts over which they were put in charge were linked with 636 651 636 651 662

[1] Such an 'international' agreement existed, for example, between the *Etsu* Nupe, the *Sarkin Sudan* (the Emir of Kontagora), and the Emir of Zaria with respect to Gbari country. These treaties were not always kept by the parties concerned. Thus the *Etsu* of Agaie used to raid the territories of his brother Emir, the *Etsu* Nupe, and had eventually to be stopped by a big war which was led by the Emir of Gwandu himself.

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636 certain ranks. Thus *Edukpã*, the Countries beyond the Niger, were always the province of the *Nágya*, the country of the Kamberi of the 651 *Kusódu*, of the Gbari of the *Etsu Gbari*, of the Yagba of the *Makũ*, and so on. Political influence, however, could alter the rule, and a rich district would sometimes go to the more powerful royal prince irrespective 662 of his rank. Thus *Etsu* Maliki, to win over the powerful *Kpotũ* Abubakari (who became *Etsu* after Maliki's death) transferred the rich fief of *Edukpã* from the *Nágya* to him. Power and the possession of a strong private army was essential for the post of an *ajele*. An *ajele* who failed in his task was dismissed from rank and office and replaced by a 'stronger' man.

635 It is no accident that the two royal domains of Nupe kingdom were the two political organizations which embraced the whole tribe, the two 651 small 'states within the State', Beni and Kyedye. The political unification which they had evolved was recognized and utilized by the political administration of the kingdom. These areas were placed directly under the king. The chiefs of Beni and Kyedye acted somewhat as royal agents. Their appointment and succession was subject to the confirmation of the king, and a gift of sandals, a gown, and a turban which he presented to the new *Žitsu* symbolized, as we have seen, the fact that the local chief held his office 'by the grace of the king'. The town-kings of Beni and the *Kuta* of the Kyedye administered law in all cases which came under the category of *gyara*, 'reparation', and were required to refer graver cases, cases involving *sheri'a*, 'judgement', to the central authority—a point to which we shall return later. The town-kings also collected the tax in their areas on behalf of the king. This tax, *edu*, levied in these areas as in the whole kingdom, was in money, thus differing from the *dzanká*, the local tithe in kind. The tax was collected first by the head chief of the district, i.e. the *Kuta* among the Kyedye, and the town-king of Tafiẽ and (in Fulani times) Bida among the Beni, who placed the money into the hands of the royal tax-collectors appointed for these two royal domains. Of the tax levied in the domains the *Etsu* received two-thirds, the royal tax-collectors and the head chiefs of the two districts sharing between them the remaining third. In the time of *Etsu* Masaba, however, the *Etsu* took all and the town-king of Bida, in order to obtain his share, levied an additional tax of his own. The total tax paid by a Beni village in Fulani times is said to have amounted to £2 under *Etsu* Masaba and £3 under Umaru Majigi; later, under the greedy Maliki, it rose higher and higher till *u de iyaka à*, 'there was no limit'.[1]

000 The rest of Nupe kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

[1] The Bororó Fulani who came regularly to Nupe with their cattle formed another such royal domain with respect to taxation. The organization of this nomadic group evidently lent itself to no other method of administration. Their tax was collected by their own group head, the *Diko*, and then handed over to the royal tax-collector, who was known as *egba Bororó* (Delegate to the Bororó). He was himself a Fulani, who lived—and is still living—in Bida. When the *Etsu* Nupe recently wanted to buy cattle for his new experimental farms he arranged the deal through the man who used to be *egba Bororó*, making use of the old connexion for the new purpose.

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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

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'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and *tunga* which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

[436] [285]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

632 692

A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

631 651 554

[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832-4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

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631 became too great. The towns or villages which were granted as such
personal fiefs could lie anywhere within the boundary of the kingdom, on
651 the royal domains as well as in the areas held as office fiefs by *egba*. The
554 personal fiefs involved no legal or administrative authority, only the
authority of levying an additional tax called *edugi* (small tax) over and
above the royal tax, *edukó* (big tax), after the latter had been collected.
There was no limitation to this additional tax, which must often have
exploited the peasants ruthlessly. Yet I have also seen close personal
attachment between villages and their lord still existing to-day, bearing
witness to the existence of more friendly ties between feudal lord and
tenants.

631 It is clearly impossible to state in more detail how this administrative
system worked, and especially how far the administrative and judicial
554 authority of the feudal delegate worked in harmony with the existing
traditional authority vested in village chief and elders. Later on, I shall
give more data about the working of this legal machinery. But it is easy to
understand that the powerful feudal lord and his delegate could uphold
political and legal authority by the very fact of their power and influence.
They could, for example, secure redress or punishment where the village
chief's limited power might be too weak to enforce judgement or arbitra-
tion. But this intervention might easily distort justice rather than
further it. As aliens, never linked permanently with the people over
whom they rule, the fief-holders were bad guardians of tribal law and
traditional justice. This, in fact, reflects the fundamental conflict in-
volved in the system of feudal administration. The feudal lords were
officially responsible for the well-being of their subjects; they were
agents of a central authority which was vitally interested in the main-
tenance of peace and order; they themselves, like their royal master,
depended on the people of the fief for tax, supply of food, and supply of
men for their armies and wars. But the connexion of fief with rank, in-
volving as it did a change of the fief with every promotion, did not allow
the mutual attachment between the feudal lord and his subjects to grow
really strong and permanent—too strong and permanent for the safety of
the king and the unity of the state. To balance the danger that might
arise from a too firmly entrenched feudal lord, the kingdom had to risk
the other danger of maladministration and discontent among the people
on the fiefs.

642 This policy of preserving the balance of power between dynastic and
feudal interests which had to be re-established and readjusted with every
631 change of régime is reflected in the many changes which the administra-
tion of the kingdom has undergone in the hundred years of Fulani rule.
Etsu Masaba, intent on building up an enormous dynastic power, divided
the whole of Beni and Kusopa country, town for town, among his sons
and daughters and other followers as personal fiefs. There was no place
in the kingdom, the Nupe say, which had not its private 'owner'. The
Nupe nicknamed this generous king *ndá na ma gā na*, Father of Dis-
tributing. *Etsu* Umaru, who succeeded him, adopted the opposite policy
in order to win the support of the native tribes against the feudal lords
who had supported his predecessor. He abolished all private fiefs in

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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaźi kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nîn*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *lálemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nîn* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoźi*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
621 division, still more impôrtant for the life of the town: the division into
554 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
571 ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
571 of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accordance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpã*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women
554 of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The [443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business [651] transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women',
562 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about
624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a
754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

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633 *ungwa* (the same four *ungwa*), defined geographically as Bida North, South, East, and West. Four new officials were appointed who are no 621 longer inhabitants of 'their' *ungwa* but are supposed to be jointly responsible for the whole town, irrespective of their personal connexions with one or the other locality. The Hausa and Yoruba communities of Bida, who live in *lálemi*, were placed under their own ward-heads. These six officials form the present Town Council. A royal prince, the *Natsu*, was appointed as its chairman, and at the same time as the representative of the *Etsu* on the Town Council. The attached sketch-map illustrates the changes in the town administration.

633 A certain inner weakness of this system becomes apparent at once. It lies in the disregard for the factor of locality and for those direct contacts and bonds of 'protection' and personal attachment which alone establish in Nupe a relationship of mutual confidence between the social classes, between ruler and ruled. It is not surprising therefore that the new division into four geographical areas 'did not work', and that in 1936, only three years after its introduction, a fundamental reorganization was contemplated.[1]

TAXATION

651 The taxation of the Emirate is fixed by the District Officer, who tours the country and, assisted by District Head and Village Head, assesses the income of the various villages and districts. The tax unit is the village area.[2] The distribution of the tax among the people of the village and its dependencies is left to the Village Head and his elders. Taxation varies partly from district to district and is also different in town and country. Complaints against too heavy taxation, or reports on defaulting, are forwarded through the District Head to the capital, that is, to the Emir's Council and the District Officer. Tax defaulters can be imprisoned.

Of the total tax revenue of the Emirate (to which are added fines, licence fees, &c.) 30 per cent. goes to the Central Government of Nigeria and 70 per cent. to the N.A. Treasury.[3] From the N.A. share in the revenue are paid the salaries of all (native) N.A. officials, the expenses of all Public Works for which the Emirate is responsible, the maintenance

[1] In a memorandum for the reorganization of the Bida Town Council, which I drew up on the request of the Administration, I have suggested (1) a town division based on the division into three *ekpā*, which is so eminently characteristic of the social life of the kingdom, and (2) a system of election of ward-heads by the people themselves. The latter would, in my view, utilize and render more valuable the channels of personal connexion between patron and client, trusted 'protector' and the ignorant, intimidated commoner who still feels that he could only benefit from the association with a man of rank and learning.—A paper on the same subject was published in abridged form in the *Summary of Lectures*, Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1937, pp. 97–8. See also p. 123.

[2] Lord Lugard, Colonial Reports Misc., No. 40.

[3] This scale corresponds to the position of Bida Emirate as a First Class Emirate. In 1935–6 the scale was slightly altered in favour of the N.A. share, because the building of the *Etsu*'s new official residence—a typical item of N.A. expenditure—would not have been possible without this additional revenue.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of N.A. Hospital and dispensaries, schools, experimental farms, &c. Part of it is used to build up and maintain a substantial reserve fund to be used for unforeseen expenses, in the case of a famine, and suchlike. The apportionment of the tax revenue, above all the allotment of funds for new enterprises, is subject to the joint approval of *Etsu* and District Officer. It is, in fact, in matters of this nature that the harmonious collaboration of the two men is often put to its most severe test. 651

The far-reaching social change that the introduction of modern taxation has meant for Nupe kingdom cannot be easily exaggerated. The universal taxation under British rule has completely overthrown the former prerogative of tax exemption enjoyed by the nobility and the population of the town. It is not surprising therefore that these people should still strongly resent this abolition of their privileges. But those who resent it most strongly are not the men 'on the top', but rather the people of inferior status, such as guild-heads and Bida craftsmen, who had not been recompensed as many of the others had been in the share-out of new, well-paid official posts. The old guild-head of the Bida woodworkers once quite violently insulted and attacked me, and with me all White Men, for having robbed him of his former status and privileges. 'Formerly', he shouted at me, 'the other craftsmen would come humbly to my house prostrating themselves before me and would present me with gifts to show their loyalty. To-day I have to pay the same tax as they—can you wonder that they have become arrogant and simply ignore me?' One would expect, then, that peasants and small craftsmen and traders would appreciate the equalizing effect of the present system. This is not wholly so—partly for reasons to be explained presently, but partly also because the change had done away with the former system of voluntary gifts on which so much of their social security used to depend. By these gifts they established a personal link with the men of rank and influence, on whose assistance they could count in many situations when such assistance was of utmost importance. These situations have not and perhaps never will disappear completely. It is not surprising that the people cannot yet fully appreciate the 'impersonality' of the modern system, nor realize fully that in return for their tax-money, paid to an 'impersonal' Administration, they receive things no less valuable than the former personal link with powerful individuals: public security, law courts, roads, hospitals, schools. 651 565

Taxation is the most sensitive spot in any governmental system. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that the administration of taxes proved the most dangerous stumbling-block on the path of the young N.A. Native official after official, often in the highest position, has lost his post, and even gone to prison, for embezzling tax-money or levying illicit dues. However, there are two more serious weaknesses inherent in the taxation system—more serious because affecting more deeply the inner structure of the society. 651

The first concerns the (in my view) disproportionately high taxes in the Emirate. Bida Emirate as it exists to-day is not a rich country, the masses of the people are not well off; the discussion on the economic system will bring ample evidence of this. Nupe country is in this respect

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651 much less fortunate than, for example, the neighbouring Emirate of Ilorin, a much richer country, yet paying lower taxes. One at least of the reasons for the high taxation in Bida Emirate appears to be the high cost of the N.A.[1] To compare it again with Ilorin: there, with a much higher revenue, the expenditure on the Emir's court and the salaries of the higher N.A. officials are almost the same as in Bida.[2] To understand how such a situation could have come about we must envisage the historical frame of mind with which a Government committed to the policy of Indirect Rule is often tempted to approach the problem of administration. Historically, Nupe Emirate was one of the most important Emirates in the north of Nigeria. Culturally it still is so. Politically, however, it has shrunk to a small country, shorn of many of its former dependencies (e.g. the whole south-west bank of the Niger with the rich rice-growing district of Patigi and the large town of Eggā). Long wars and longer political unrest have impeded its economic recovery. Yet it could hardly be made anything else but a First Class Emirate, and its ruler had to be given the corresponding status, weighing heavily though it does on the country's revenue.

The second weakness lies in the method of assessment. The tax in the more advanced areas of Nigeria is—in theory—an income tax. But how, one is tempted to ask, can any native District Head and group of Village Heads acquit themselves satisfactorily of such a formidable task of assessment? In Bida town, where District Officers themselves have computed incomes and taxes, the taxes are sadly out of proportion with the income (at least to-day, after the economic depression of 1932–4). In certain cases where property and capital are easily assessable some sort of rough approach to an income tax on a sliding scale is possible, e.g. among the Kyedye canoe-men where the amount of tax can be assessed in accordance with the number of canoes owned by an individual. But among the large majority of the people whose taxable income consists exclusively of farm products such a method must fail. The result is a qualified poll-tax assessing the tax per head of the population but admitting two or three different grades: the higher tax is paid by able-bodied married men roughly between the ages of 22 and 50, the lower by men younger and older than this. Children, women (unless they are independent traders), and old men or invalids who can no longer work are free from tax. Now, whereas the traditional productive unit among the Nupe peasants is embodied in the family, taxation takes into account only the individuals. At the time of my stay in the country the last tax-receipts made out for the whole family, to be paid by the family head—as one can imagine very large receipts—were disappearing rapidly, giving

[1] A British trader who knew the economic situation of the country intimately framed his impression in the following words: 'The overhead expenses of the N.A. are too high.' Bluntly expressed though it is, the statement is far from unsound.

[2] In Ilorin, with a revenue of £28,885, the salary of the Emir is £2,250, and the salaries of 17 District Heads amount to a total of £2,539 (an average of £149 per head). In Bida, the revenue of which is £18,161, the Emir's salary is £2,000, and the salaries of 7 District Heads amount to £1,110 (an average of £159 per head). *Nigerian N.A. Estimates*, 1936–7.

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way to the (much smaller) tax-receipts made out for individuals. It is, in fact, the present official policy of the Administration to encourage the issue and acceptance of individual tax-receipts throughout the country. Taxation thus ignores and even denies in its own powerful province the existence of the family unit—with what results we shall see later.

LAW

Let me try first to give a picture of the judicial system of Nupe kingdom as it existed in pre-European times. This is, naturally, an historical reconstruction. But the history to which it refers is not the history of a mythical past. It is a history well documented, and obtained from information which seems reliable and significant and which, collected from different sources, shows remarkable agreement on all main points. My chief informants were village elders and chiefs and the Mohammedan judges of Bida Emirate who, in charge of modern jurisdiction to-day, have witnessed and partly practised themselves the old system.

The theoretical difficulties with which the student of law in primitive cultures is faced are absent in our investigation. The problem, especially, whether to define the province of law on the narrow basis of systematic social control exercised by a politically organized society (Radcliffe-Brown) or, more comprehensively, as embracing all social sanctions that make for uniformity of conduct (Malinowski), is decided for us by the nature of the society which we are studying in the sense of the former essentially modern interpretation. Law in Nupe kingdom is quite conspicuously a concern of the political organization and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. This does not mean that no sanctions or forms of redress exist which are applied outside the political framework and left to the more diffuse workings of public opinion and individual or group 'self-help'. But the scope of this non-political (or extra-political) law is extremely restricted. It comprises only two types of offences: religious offences—desecration of sacred objects or places, both Mohammedan and pagan—and kinship offences—litigation over inheritance, offences against traditional marriage rules (i.e. marriages in forbidden degrees), and also incest. I cannot describe here in detail the treatment which Nupe society meted out to individuals guilty of these offences. Suffice it to say that public ostracism which might force the culprit to self-exile or to confidence in his vindication by the deity was its main feature. The society thus exempted from its otherwise comprehensive scheme of formal political jurisdiction the two offences which were either of a nature transcending human justice (as in the case of religious offences, and also partly incest) or concerned only internal frictions in individual kinship groups. All offences that affected the relations between kinship groups or individuals from different kinship groups, and all crimes against human life, were regarded as a concern of the community at large.

But the comprehensiveness of political jurisdiction admitted of two degrees. Traditional Nupe law operated with a legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between

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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed 423
to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is 621
to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that 423
a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a 621
junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect 423
to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of 622
his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift [431]
to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The
annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid 423
to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the 622
chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three 651
bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nisa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

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423 622 [451] *albárka* (lit. blessing), a gift meant to express the 'blessing' that lay on the land which the family received from the chief.

Another expression of the chief's control over the reapportionment of land is that all land of families or branches of families which have died out, and similarly the land of families who have emigrated, falls back to the common fund of land reserve administered by the chief. The period within which the land of emigrants still remains theirs is fixed everywhere in Nupe as three years. After that time the chief is entitled to reapportion the land. Should an heir from the emigrated group return after a longer period, he could (like any other stranger) claim land in the village, but not as a rule the same land that his family had held previously. The dying-out of a family, or a branch of a family, seems a fact not easy to establish and always open to doubts in a social system in which small sections repeatedly split off the main body of the family. There is always the chance of an unexpected or belated claimant turning up, representing a distant branch which chief and elders may no longer have reckoned as likely to identify itself with the original family. But this is mainly a theoretical speculation; there occur few such cases in Nupe —none in Trans-Kaduna, where land is plentiful and vacated plots unlikely to be much competed for.

[597] In Cis-Kaduna I witnessed an interesting case of this kind. A family head in Doko had died, leaving a small boy, who was then adopted by a childless brother of the deceased, living in a *tunga* on a farm of his own. The boy grew up on this farm and lived there contentedly until recently, after more than twenty years, the chief reapportioned the apparently unclaimed land that had belonged to the boy's father to two elders of high rank, the *Lile* and *Shaba* (both of the chief's family). Not until then did the young man return to Doko and make a formal claim for his ancestral land. But political motives rather than economic interest were behind this move; the parties in this case were, again, the chief of Doko and young Ndakó Gana, the 'dispossessed' descendant of the line of original chiefs. The chief had reapportioned the land in order to blot out the last visible connexion between the 'pretender's' family and the chieftainship of Doko; and the young man disputed the reapportionment on these very grounds. In the end he received back some of the original land and other new land in addition.

Here we discover a new significance in the apportionment of village land—its connexion with the bestowal of rank or office. This is not surprising in the communities (such as Doko) where the village ranks, like the land, remain in the possession of one 'house'. Later, we shall see more clearly, in the discussion of inheritance, that the Nupe kinship system tends indeed to couple attainment of family headship (which goes with rank) with inheritance of ancestral land. Considering, however, that the ordinary village land does not differ widely in quality and productive value, we can understand that this political aspect of land ownership is rather obscure—save in a case such as the one just quoted where political aspirations have attached to a specific property more than its proper share of symbolic significance. The political aspect becomes more prominent in connexion with a natural resource that shows this

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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may
621 return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years—the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on
425 request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have
621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to
[431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the
[431] application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who
609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now
621 the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted
425 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first
651 *dzankú*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose

[1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who
[177] have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankâ* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankâ* is now replaced by the Government tax.

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsoši*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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241 463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

651 322 [672]

[1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

[323 325 171]

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

[1] It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.

423 larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

[562] Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still com-
425 paratively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.
(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* (" borrowing "); land thus acquired is also inalienable.
(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.
(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).
(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.
(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.
(7) By " primary " tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

423 Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:
471

(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).
(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).
(3) The fringe of " reserve " land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[30]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batadi every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[31] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settle-
[43] ment. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers'
65] tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[32]

[30] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.
[31] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.
[32] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

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Kede

634 either case, the dominion of the Kede delegate would stretch some way up and down the river, comprising hamlets and villages on (formerly) both banks. The 'native' villagers live under their own chief and elders, and are on the whole left to themselves, except for the political obligations towards the Kede rulers. In the carrying out of these obligations (to be examined presently), village chief and elders become mere subordinates of the Kede government. The Kede families, on the other hand, which live in the district of the delegate are his subjects in a different sense. They too have their obligations towards the government which he represents. But they share to some extent his privileged official position *vis-à-vis* the 'natives' of the country. The family heads of these Kede families assume certain titles in Nupe fashion, which are to mark them as 'elders' of their community. In this case, however, these are not the usual village ranks, nor are they *tici nya Kuta* ('ranks of the *Kuta*'), but are of the order of personal or 'household' ranks, which the Kede delegate may confer upon the family heads in 'his' town.

The official duties of the delegate relate to the three main concerns of Kede administration. He is charged with the collection of taxes on behalf of the Kede chief, the maintenance of law and order in the districts, and he finally acts as the agent of the chief in all matters requiring concerted action of the tribe as a whole. The first two duties have undergone but comparatively minor changes under modern administration. The last duty, the most important aspect of which used to be contribution to the fighting expeditions of the tribe, is reduced to-day to such relatively irrelevant activities as the arrangement of the periodical tours of inspection through Kede country of the Kede chief or the District Officer.

634 651 *Taxation*. The present system of taxation is based on an income tax on sliding scale, assessed among the Kede on the basis of the number of canoes owned. The tax is collected locally by the official Village Head, and is then transmitted by the District Head to the Native Administration Treasury in Bida. For Kede District read *delegate* for Village Head (a certain number of Kede 'delegates' having been made Village Heads under the Native Administration), and *Kuta* for District Head—in all other respects taxation among the Kede is the same as in the inland districts of the Emirate. This was not so in pre-British times. The *kintsozi* villages,

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like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual 634
money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* 651
and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional 634
Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to 692
whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved 634
in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local 693
delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance 674
with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country, though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his 652 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income 661 firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will 652 find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold 655 Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut 439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over 661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help [782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual 567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

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Out of this large and varied income the king gave directly very little to the common weal: he 'financed' certain public works, the repair or the building of the city mosque, his own palace, and the town walls and gates. The work itself was organized by the members of the lower nobility and carried out by their slaves and serfs; the king contributed only food and drink for the labourers, and small presents for the men in charge of the work. From his income, but assisted by gifts from other members of the royal house, the *Etsu* also paid the annual tribute to the Emir of Gwandu, by which the kings of Bida recognized the sovereignty of that ancient centre of the Fulani Empire.[1] Finally, the king, equipped his army with horses and arms, and formed of his personal slaves the police force which had to keep order in markets and streets. But indirectly the king contributed very considerably to the economic life of the country. The court was the centre round which the economic and cultural life of the capital revolved. The splendour of the court life of Nupe, famous in Nigeria, meant work and income for thousands, incessant production in the workshops of the craftsmen, and rich business for the merchants. Beautifully built houses to live in; gorgeous gowns, horses, saddles, arms, to be given as presents to courtiers and members of the household; food and drink, music and dances, for the great feasts celebrated at court, these were (and still are) the daily needs of the royal household. Presents play an important part in the etiquette of Nupe kingdom: from a small bowl of kola-nuts to a silk gown or a horse range these expressions of the king's favour. And at the great Mohammedan festival of the year, the *Sallah* as it is called in Nigeria, every one of the hundreds of people who by the right of birth or status are entitled to the king's attention are honoured with a smaller or larger gift. To be left out means disgrace; and the sending of a present to a man with whom the *Etsu* was known to be on bad terms expresses conspicuously reconciliation and new favour.

Of the former sources of royal income only two have survived under modern conditions: profits from occasional trade, and the proceeds of the royal estates (materially reduced by the transformation of slave labour into labour on the métayer system, or even wage-labour; see p. 200). To this we have to add to-day the Emir's considerable salary. On the other hand, his expenses, too, have been greatly reduced: public works, the upkeep of a police force, even the building of the royal residence, now form items on the list of Native Administration expenditure. But all the current expenses, all those demanded by status and prestige, by the etiquette of the kingdom, and by the necessity of winning supporters for himself and his house, are still as much part of the unwritten obligations of an *Etsu* Nupe as they ever were.

A DAY OF COURT ROUTINE

Every morning the *Etsu* mounts his horse and, accompanied by members of his household and some of his officers of state, rides round

[1] In the first period of British rule this tribute consisted of 100 gowns worth £300, 200 gowns worth £125, and one silver sword worth £10.

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433 We can now place the two systems of industry side by side and com-
467 pare their respective assets and defects. Against highly efficient co-operation and mutual assistance embodied in the guild organization we have to set the free play of competition allowed in individual crafts. Against the principle of continuity and planned training we have to set higher adaptability and larger scope for individual initiative and inventiveness. Broadly speaking, it cannot be doubted that uncontrolled, 'individualistic', industries stand a higher chance of developing production, possibly on new lines, and of achieving technical progress. Moreover, efficient training and continuity of craft knowledge can, to some extent, also be assured in the narrower form of co-operation vested in the small labour-unit; this is shown in the village groups of blacksmiths and weavers. The question which we have asked at the beginning of this section thus still stands: Why has Nupe society chosen, of these two possible methods of organizing industrial enterprise, the method that assured group efficiency and continuity on the largest scale, and group efficiency rather than progress and individual initiative?

The main reason lies in the political system of the country. The
467 guilds are, as we have seen, built closely into the political framework.
656 Let me recall the main facts: the guild-head is the agent of the king in all matters concerning the group; like the members of the nobility, he is the holder of an official rank, and is admitted to the *nkó*, the King's Council. The guilds themselves enjoy a privileged position in the Nupe state in that they were exempted from tax and were assigned a social position superior to that of other commoners, peasants, or traders. Yet they were, in other respects, very much controlled; they were bound to their profession and could not freely change it. They were even bound to the locality in which they practised their trade and could not move from it without permission of the guild-head. If a village chief desired to have a certain Bida craft represented in his village, he had to apply to the guild-head in the capital; this happened some years ago in Kutigi, when the chief requested the guild-head of the carpenters in Bida to send him a craftsman to settle and practise in his village. The craftsmen, then, are the king's craftsmen. Not only are they dependent on the king for their prosperity, but they are also controlled and supervised by him and his official agent, the guild-master. This organization of the craft-guilds amounts to a full control of the political system over all the more important industries of the country. We may even go further and say that this control was dictated by the needs of the state: based on constant warfare, committed to uphold the splendour of a huge court, the political system has to guarantee a dependable, uninterrupted supply of all that is needed—arms, tools, clothes, saddles, as well as the many symbols of wealth and status. Upon this dedication of the craft-guilds to the service of the state the seal is set by the discriminative social appreciation which the Nupe people extend to the different crafts.[1] The noblest craft is that of the brass- and sword-smiths, for they, as an informant put it, are 'the makers of arms'.

[1] See p. 103.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

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511 583 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks		10	0
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of [656] the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3)—which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

	£	s.
Gba (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or *gbaota* (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks	2	10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

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We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

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651 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal cere-
621 monies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nūsaši* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an [694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also,
623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as
661 heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; 622
a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* 623
group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on
their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a 661
rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the 622
economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free him- 661
self from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important 622
economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) 651
a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe', from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this [431]
payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, [476]
which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general 622
money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes. 651
Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., 431
receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
652 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
661 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of com-
[675] paratively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
652 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that
655 matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help
[782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual
567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war,
642 and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent
675 security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
643 pous title of *Majī Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe
794 kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their
titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
642 after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated
797 the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an
external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Majī Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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It will have been seen already that the land disputes which we have just described reflect more than merely disputable, equivocal land-contracts. The landlords who 'sell' the land are without exception men of the titled classes, courtiers, favourites, or former slaves of the king or of powerful noblemen, and the 'buyers' mostly commoners, peasants who have had no other chance of obtaining additional land. To-day they are coming to realize that their right to the land which they acquire is protected by the Native Court. But till very recently, in order to obtain their rights, they would have had to bribe their way through or to find a protector equal in rank and influence to the landlord who threatened to evict them—a typical source of the institution of clientship, which we discussed in a previous chapter.[1] A final example. A certain farmer had 'bought' land from D., a *bara* of the late *Etsu* Saidu. The *Etsu*, for reasons of his own, refused his confirmation of the deal—D., being a tenant of the *Etsu*, could not transfer the lease without the latter's permission—and the tenant had only one way open: he attached himself to another, more influential, *bara* of the *Etsu* and through him made various gifts to the *Etsu*, over £3 in money, a valuable civet cat, and promised besides an annual rent of two bundles of corn.

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Hereditary Land: Secondary Tenantship

Clientship, combined with a métayer arrangement, becomes a factor in land-tenure also in another respect. A commoner who desired more land, or a new piece of land, could give himself into the service or 'patronage' of a landowning overlord and thus secure land as well as political protection. The conditions were: an initial gift in kind as in all pacts of clientship, occasional presents, visits and other expressions of homage, and finally a tithe (*dzankd* again) from his millet or sorghum crop. This submission to patronage was often the only means by which the peasants in Cis-Kaduna could hope to retain their property when threatened with expropriation, and also the only means by which they could secure new land, that is, access to what under tribal conditions would have been a reserve of village land. The necessity of obtaining land and enjoying its secure possession thus constitutes another of the main roots of clientship. The lease of land obtained by these methods is hereditary, and remains in the family, a comparatively safe possession—unless political factors interfere. The tenants are rarely allowed to forget that the relationship between landlord and client implies more than merely a correct commercial relationship. Lack of respect, an apparent failure to render due homage, or behaviour suggestive of changed

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Etsu himself suggested that the disputed piece of land (a river grove that was claimed by two neighbouring villages) should be bought for money by one of the parties. The purchase price fixed was 15*s*.

[1] Till very recently no peasant tenant would have dared to invoke the *Etsu*'s or *Alkali*'s help against his landlord; he would have been looked upon as somebody who had broken away from a firmly established tradition of loyalty, one-sided though it was. The tenant in the last example quoted above kept silent for fifteen years; not till 1934 did he venture to bring his case before the court and thus to obtain a final confirmation of his ownership.

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662 POLITICAL INTRIGUE--use of the techniques of manipulative mobility to wrest favors from the holders of power or to obtain political preferment; flattery and ingratiation; use of bribery; deals; palace intrigue; opportunism; "playing politics", etc. See also:

Manipulative mobility . . . . . 557 Punishment of bribery 687

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Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims.

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotū*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpā*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions.

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field.

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM

(*continued*)

THE FEUDAL STATE

WE have seen how in the history of the kingdom a certain territorial nucleus evolved, an area of 'Nupe proper'. This concept of a territorial 'nucleus' also forms the basis of the division of the country for the purpose of government. For the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration the kingdom was divided into four zones. First, the area of the conquered tributary countries outside the boundaries of the 'kingdom proper', in Nupe terminology, the countries of the *zaži kati*, the 'Outside Peoples'. Second, within these boundaries, an innermost core, the countries of Beni and Kyedye; having formed the nucleus of the rising kingdom they are now assigned the privileged position of royal domains. The third zone comprised the wider 'ring' of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, most of which lie in Trans-Kaduna. Bida town, the seat of the central government, formed an administrative district of its own. 631

Under the name of Outside Peoples were comprised the conquered territories of Gbari, Gbira, Kamberi, Kakanda, Yagba, Bunu, and certain sections of Nupe (Dibo and Ebe mostly). These districts were not administered fully by the central government. Their political dependence entailed two things: an annual tribute to Bida, and the recognition by other Emirates and chieftainships of the political status of these territories as 'under the protection' of Bida. It was a one-sided 'protection': Bida itself was free to raid her own outside peoples, but no other country could do this or levy taxes in these territories with impunity. The guarantor of these 'treaties' was, in the last instance, the Emir of Gwandu, the highest feudal overlord of all Fulani Emirs in this part of the world.[1] The central government in Bida did not assume jurisdiction over these countries, nor did it interfere in their own political administration. The tribute was paid in slaves and was collected annually by royal messengers, *tuci*, or as they were also called *ajele* (from the Arabic *ajala*, to dispatch), who visited these countries at the head of small armies, ready to quell any disturbance or to bring recalcitrant taxpayers to heel. Of the tribute levied a little more than half went to the king, the rest to the royal messenger. The office of tax-collector in the outside areas of the kingdom was entrusted mostly to the royal nobility, and the districts over which they were put in charge were linked with 636 651 636 651 662

[1] Such an 'international' agreement existed, for example, between the *Etsu* Nupe, the *Sarkin Sudan* (the Emir of Kontagora), and the Emir of Zaria with respect to Gbari country. These treaties were not always kept by the parties concerned. Thus the *Etsu* of Agaie used to raid the territories of his brother Emir, the *Etsu* Nupe, and had eventually to be stopped by a big war which was led by the Emir of Gwandu himself.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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636 certain ranks. Thus *Edukpã*, the Countries beyond the Niger, were
651 always the province of the *Nágya*, the country of the Kamberi of the
662 *Kusódu*, of the Gbari of the *Etsu Gbari*, of the Yagba of the *Makũ*, and so on. Political influence, however, could alter the rule, and a rich district would sometimes go to the more powerful royal prince irrespective of his rank. Thus *Etsu* Maliki, to win over the powerful *Kpotũ* Abubakari (who became *Etsu* after Maliki's death) transferred the rich fief of *Edukpã* from the *Nágya* to him. Power and the possession of a strong private army was essential for the post of an *ajele*. An *ajele* who failed in his task was dismissed from rank and office and replaced by a 'stronger' man.

635 It is no accident that the two royal domains of Nupe kingdom were
651 the two political organizations which embraced the whole tribe, the two small 'states within the State', Beni and Kyedye. The political unification which they had evolved was recognized and utilized by the political administration of the kingdom. These areas were placed directly under the king. The chiefs of Beni and Kyedye acted somewhat as royal agents. Their appointment and succession was subject to the confirmation of the king, and a gift of sandals, a gown, and a turban which he presented to the new *Žitsu* symbolized, as we have seen, the fact that the local chief held his office 'by the grace of the king'. The town-kings of Beni and the *Kuta* of the Kyedye administered law in all cases which came under the category of *gyara*, 'reparation', and were required to refer graver cases, cases involving *sheri'a*, 'judgement', to the central authority—a point to which we shall return later. The town-kings also collected the tax in their areas on behalf of the king. This tax, *edu*, levied in these areas as in the whole kingdom, was in money, thus differing from the *dzanká*, the local tithe in kind. The tax was collected first by the head chief of the district, i.e. the *Kuta* among the Kyedye, and the town-king of Tafiẽ and (in Fulani times) Bida among the Beni, who placed the money into the hands of the royal tax-collectors appointed for these two royal domains. Of the tax levied in the domains the *Etsu* received two-thirds, the royal tax-collectors and the head chiefs of the two districts sharing between them the remaining third. In the time of *Etsu* Masaba, however, the *Etsu* took all and the town-king of Bida, in order to obtain his share, levied an additional tax of his own. The total tax paid by a Beni village in Fulani times is said to have amounted to £2 under *Etsu* Masaba and £3 under Umaru Majigi; later, under the greedy Maliki, it rose higher and higher till *u de iyaka à*, 'there was no limit'.[1]

000 The rest of Nupe kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

[1] The Bororó Fulani who came regularly to Nupe with their cattle formed another such royal domain with respect to taxation. The organization of this nomadic group evidently lent itself to no other method of administration. Their tax was collected by their own group head, the *Diko*, and then handed over to the royal tax-collector, who was known as *egba Bororó* (Delegate to the Bororó). He was himself a Fulani, who lived—and is still living—in Bida. When the *Etsu* Nupe recently wanted to buy cattle for his new experimental farms he arranged the deal through the man who used to be *egba Bororó*, making use of the old connexion for the new purpose.

565 the highest *gitsú* ranks go with the title. First appointment to a title and promotion to a higher one are granted by the king in council with the royal princes and other officers of state. Any able-bodied man of senior age, proved loyalty, and ability, [662] and good health, of the Fulani families, is eligible for admission to a *gitsúiši* title, but favouritism, intrigue, and bribery also play a part, and the titles which a family has been able to accumulate are an indication of its influence at court and its favour with the ruling king. When a title-holder becomes incapable, through age or illness, of fulfilling his duties, a younger man is appointed, the former holder being styled [732] " old *Kpotuŋ* " or whatever the title may be. Nobody with any kind of deformity can hold a title, since the system was originally based on service in war and offices vital to the safety of the state. Investiture takes place in the *Etsu*'s house, in the presence of the *Alkali* or *Liman*, a propitious day having first been selected by mallams or diviners. The candidate is addressed by the *Etsu*, then clothed in a cloak and embroidered gown by the *Alkali* who also places a turban on his head. After prayers in which all join, the new holder rides through the town accompanied by other title-holders, and dismounts to greet princes or heads of houses at their residences.

The second class is that to which the *ticiši* or *rowni* (office-holding nobility) belong. The name *rowni* means " turbans " and refers to the fact that the bestowal of such a title is symbolized by the gift of a turban from the king. There are three groups of *ticiši*, each of which is regarded as a sharply defined social order: the *sarakiši*, the *ena manši*, and the *ena wuši*. The *sarakiši* is a group of civil and military nobility consisting of town elders (*ena ndeji*) and war leaders (*ena 'kuŋ*). The second order, *ena manši*, comprises the mallams, the religious and judicial officials, such as the *Alkali* (judge), and the *Liman* (religious head), with their assistants and scribes. The third order, *ena wuši*, which is the lowest in rank but still possesses great influence, consists of the court slaves.

Many of the *saraki* titles are identical in name with those bestowed on the village elders, but the symbols of status, even when similar, refer to very different social contexts. *Saraki* titles are, like *gitsú* titles, generally granted by the *Etsu* in council with princes and other officers of state. Theoretically, at least, outsiders, even commoners, who have won his favour may be admitted to the ranks. Only a few of the higher titles, which have become the prerogatives of certain families, are hereditary. Several titles cannot be accumulated in a single family. They are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group; no other close relative can then claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his " house." To-day wealth and financial influence are important factors in gaining titles and the *saraki* group includes rich traders, as well as descendants of the old official nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe, and Nupe families who became partisans of the Fulani conquerors. These *sarakiši* received no salary, but were formerly granted land and slaves.

The *Ndeji* (" father of the town "), the head of the *ena ndeji*, is in charge of the affairs of Bida and the most powerful of the officers of state because he is closest to the king. At the head of the other civil title-holders he holds the daily council (*nkó*) with the king himself. The military titles (*ena 'kuŋ*) were formerly those of war leaders, the different titles being associated with special responsibilities.

565 The *ena manši*, the order of mallams, is " a class between classes, a mobile
517 privileged intelligentsia." It includes the *Alkali*, the *Liman*, and their assistants.
554 The detailed knowledge of Moslem law and literature and the specialized training required limits the number of candidates. But the offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* are sometimes hereditary, reflecting a tradition of learning in certain families, and political influence, for many eminent mallams are of Fulani stock. Mallams are highly esteemed by everyone and are placed about commoners even when they are without rank or title and have only little learning. They are allowed to marry daughters and sisters of higher born families.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

●665 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects 566 round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the 579 whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole 754 town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the 683 passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

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567 had been placed in responsible positions proves what I have said about
554 the selection and rise of slave officials at the court of Bida.

Slave Ranks

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Present office*	*Biographical remarks*
Gabi Seidi	Kupa	'Officer of Liaison' between *Etsu* and District Officer	A rich slave who under *Etsu* Bello bought his title for £16.
Ndatwaki	Yagba	On the Bida Town Council	Father was *Ndatwaki* under *Etsu* Maliki; he himself received the same title under *Etsu* Bello.
Dzwoáfu	,,	,, ,,	An hereditary slave title, first granted under *Etsu* Usman.
Ndamáraki	Bunu	,, ,,	Father was *Ndamáraki* under *Etsu* Masaba.
Sántali	Benu-Nupe	..	Grandfather was a slave of Usman Zaki; they remained slaves of this house.
Masántali	Yagba	..	Grandfather was a slave of *Etsu* Umaru Majigi; they remained slaves of this house.
Swajiya'tsu	,,	..	Father held same slave rank.
Ndatódo	,,	..	Father held the same title and also title of *Ndamáraki*.
Manfáda	,,	..	Another slave title which has become hereditary in one house.
Sonmáźi	Kusopa-Nupe	..	Id.
Ndádari	Nupe	..	Id.
Shangbo	Nupe from Rabá	..	Father was a *saraki* (*Somasii*) of *Etsu* Majiya. He was made prisoner in the war and became a slave of *Etsu* Masaba.
(*Sarkin Dogari*	Hausa	Head of police force	To-day not regarded as slave title. Formerly bestowed on a personal slave of the ruling king.)

WAR

124 It will be understood that this description is based entirely on informa-
721 tion and the historical recollections of informants. However, the wars that were fought in Nupe and by the Nupe are not so far distant that there are no longer eyewitnesses left, or people who have themselves borne arms in these wars. Thus information could be checked and cross-checked. For certain details I could, moreover, count on most authoritative informants, who had played a leading part in the last wars of the kingdom; the description of the military organization, for example, is based on information obtained from the late commander of the *élite* troops of Nupe, the king's bodyguard.

721 War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state. No warfare or
669 organized fights occurred between the villages or tribal sections of the

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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dakári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 1,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war,
642 and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the
675 declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

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Kede

634 measure of independence in taxation, jurisdiction, and political management in general.[1]

634 669 In this connexion, we must point out an important development in the history of Nupe kingdom, which in turn greatly affected Kede history. The royal dynasty of Nupe, which traced its origin back to the mythical Tsoede, was in power till the earlier half of last century, when Nupe kingdom, like most of the Native states in Northern Nigeria, fell under the rule of Emirs of Fulani stock who had conquered the country and deposed the indigenous kings. We have no data on the relation between Kede autonomy and the Nupe State under the old dynasty. But it is certain that under Fulani rule conflicts constantly arose, partly perhaps because the Kede (like many other Nupe sections) resented the alien rule, but to a large extent certainly because the Fulani kings, much more than the Nupe rulers before them, had to curb in their own interest the autonomous leanings of their Kede vassals. The Fulani, whose wars at that time were directed chiefly against tribes in the south, could not afford to let an all too independent section control the river—the southern boundary and at the same time the vital artery of trade and traffic of the country. Slave trade, the economic mainstay of the pre-British rulers of central Nigeria, traffic in arms and powder, and troop transports for their military expeditions, all had to cross the River Niger on Kede territory.[2] The Fulani overlords enforced their sovereignty in a number of wars and punitive expeditions, in the course of which (if the reports are true) hundreds were killed, thousands of Kede sold as slaves by the victorious Fulani, Kede notables executed in Bida, and whole districts of Kede country devastated. A typical instance is the Katcha War—the answer of the Fulani to the first attempt of

174 697 [1] There exists certain evidence to show that the Kede chiefs succeeded in enlarging their judicial power at the cost of their overlords and usurped a certain judicial machinery of the Nupe State which had evolved in the river area. To-day, at any rate, the Kede claim that this judicial machinery was under the authority of the *Kuta*, while other, non-Kede, informants state that it represented entirely a prerogative of the kings of Nupe. I am referring to the *Ledu* (lit. prison) villages on the banks of the Niger, which were so called because they served as prisons and places of execution for criminals convicted, by the king's court, of a 'crime of the king'. I have described this system and the attempts of the Kede to claim it as their own in *Man* (1935), 143.

[2] The importance, for example, of Raba as a river port for slave traffic to the south is pointed out by Lander (*Journal of an Expedition* (1832), ii, p. 298). Laird and Oldfield speak of 600 Kede canoes, 'all of which may be employed for Ful troops to cross the Niger on war expeditions' (op. cit., ii, p. 315).

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Kede

the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is 634
situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under 668
allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above 634
all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the 669
river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company 648
campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The 634
Kuta lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of 634
modern government has not been an unqualified success. Admin- 178
istrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

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way to the (much smaller) tax-receipts made out for individuals. It is, in fact, the present official policy of the Administration to encourage the issue and acceptance of individual tax-receipts throughout the country. Taxation thus ignores and even denies in its own powerful province the existence of the family unit—with what results we shall see later. 651

LAW

Let me try first to give a picture of the judicial system of Nupe kingdom as it existed in pre-European times. This is, naturally, an historical reconstruction. But the history to which it refers is not the history of a mythical past. It is a history well documented, and obtained from information which seems reliable and significant and which, collected from different sources, shows remarkable agreement on all main points. My chief informants were village elders and chiefs and the Mohammedan judges of Bida Emirate who, in charge of modern jurisdiction to-day, have witnessed and partly practised themselves the old system. 671 124

The theoretical difficulties with which the student of law in primitive cultures is faced are absent in our investigation. The problem, especially, whether to define the province of law on the narrow basis of systematic social control exercised by a politically organized society (Radcliffe-Brown) or, more comprehensively, as embracing all social sanctions that make for uniformity of conduct (Malinowski), is decided for us by the nature of the society which we are studying in the sense of the former essentially modern interpretation. Law in Nupe kingdom is quite conspicuously a concern of the political organization and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. This does not mean that no sanctions or forms of redress exist which are applied outside the political framework and left to the more diffuse workings of public opinion and individual or group 'self-help'. But the scope of this non-political (or extra-political) law is extremely restricted. It comprises only two types of offences: religious offences—desecration of sacred objects or places, both Mohammedan and pagan—and kinship offences—litigation over inheritance, offences against traditional marriage rules (i.e. marriages in forbidden degrees), and also incest. I cannot describe here in detail the treatment which Nupe society meted out to individuals guilty of these offences. Suffice it to say that public ostracism which might force the culprit to self-exile or to confidence in his vindication by the deity was its main feature. The society thus exempted from its otherwise comprehensive scheme of formal political jurisdiction the two offences which were either of a nature transcending human justice (as in the case of religious offences, and also partly incest) or concerned only internal frictions in individual kinship groups. All offences that affected the relations between kinship groups or individuals from different kinship groups, and all crimes against human life, were regarded as a concern of the community at large. 671

But the comprehensiveness of political jurisdiction admitted of two degrees. Traditional Nupe law operated with a legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between 673

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.'

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *shelá*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1]

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law.

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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the family heads invited the intervention of the political authority in the interest of preserving the existing code of conduct. But once this extraneous authority is admitted, it will have to be obeyed also should its decision run counter to the traditional code. Moreover, the rival authority may be appealed to equally by individuals or groups dissenting from the traditional conceptions of right and wrong. Ultimately, the issue will depend on whether the representatives of state jurisdiction are prepared to uphold customary practices and codes of conduct, or are committed to promote a uniform state law. The trend towards close political co-ordination and centralization must greatly limit the scope of such concessions as might be granted to the divergent legal conceptions in the various subject communities. The extension of state jurisdiction over new domains of social life may thus come to mean the substitution of existing traditional codes and doctrines by a new uniform state law. 692

I have stated this as a hypothetical case, being unable to produce concrete evidence to show that precisely this development occurred in the case of the various delicts and offences over which we found state jurisdiction already firmly established. I can only point to certain evidence of the reaction of group sections against what must have appeared to them as an excessive unification of the law, namely, certain attempts to change state jurisdiction back to independent local jurisdiction: thus the chief of the Kyedye is reported to have obtained from *Etsu* Abubakari the right to exercise full and independent jurisdiction in his tribal group; and the people of Sakpe and Kutigi claim to have been granted a similar legal franchise by *Etsu* Masaba in exchange for heavier taxation. However, the progressive extension of state jurisdiction and the trends underlying this development are still visible and effective in present-day jurisdiction, to which we shall turn presently. They appear, characteristically, in that domain of social life which was the last to be absorbed by state jurisdiction—kinship—and concern the relation between the spreading modern state law of Nupe, Mohammedan law, and pagan customary practice.

Before we describe modern jurisdiction in detail we may examine for a moment the causes of the spreading of Mohammedan law in Nupe. It has no doubt been consciously fostered by the Mohammedan rulers of the country. But to some extent Fulani rule, still in British times, appears to have avoided excessive legal unification by allowing for customary pagan law—the 'straight judgement' in the case of pagans. Here, however, we find that the same effects that accompanied the 'divided authority' occur again in the case of the 'divided law'. The coexistence of two legal systems, one backed by the prestige and supreme power of the rulers of the country, the other reserved for the pagan subject groups, is again reduced to uniformity, the 'stronger law' ousting the 'weaker law'. We have concrete data to illustrate this process. The Mohammedan judges used to ask the parties appearing before them whether they were Mohammedans or pagans. The large majority proclaimed themselves Mohammedans, and desired to be tried according to Mohammedan law. Administrative Officers in areas where pagan and Mohammedan courts exist side by side also said that the people would generally prefer the Mohammedan court. They explain 671

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671 this attitude as due to the reluctance of the people to be classed with the more backward sections of the population. But there is also a more fundamental reason. Offences and litigation involve by their very nature dissension from established rules of conduct. It is thus often in the interest of offenders and litigants to dissociate themselves from traditional justice and to appeal to the rival law existing in the community. We shall see that in certain extreme cases the 'divided law' almost puts a premium on dissension from the traditional concepts of right and wrong.

692 In modern Nupe, then, Mohammedan law is paramount. The legal administration of the country is entrusted to *Alkalai*, judges trained in Mohammedan law, who reside in Bida and in the districts. The District Courts, of which there are seven in Bida Division, are courts of a lower grade—in official terminology, 'grade C courts'—that is, they are entitled to deal with civil cases involving fines up to £50 and criminal cases involving imprisonment up to six months, in case of theft up to twelve months. Bida town possesses a 'grade A court', the chief *Alkali*'s court, which combines the two different functions of a local court for the town and an appeal court for the districts. It has unlimited jurisdiction over all cases which under the Native Courts Ordinance are subject to the jurisdiction of Native Courts, i.e. excepting such cases as sedition, charges against Europeans, treason, trial by ordeal, and corruption of officials. The jurisdiction of the Bida Court also excludes homicide cases—an exceptional limitation which was imposed upon Bida after the disturbances of 1931. The *Etsu* with his councillors forms another 'grade A court' which deals with cases concerned with land, and constitutes at the same time a higher court of appeal for cases from the districts. The District Officer represents a final court of appeal for all cases. Cases excluded from native jurisdiction come before the High Court, which sits from time to time at the Headquarters of Niger Province, presided over by a professional British judge.

695 It is interesting to dwell for a moment on the description of a Native Court in action. Picture the court building: a spacious round house, with a gallery running round its outer wall. The *Alkali* has his place on a raised platform near the wall, books and papers spread out before him. On the floor, leaning against the platform, his assistant is sitting. In the Bida Court there are also scribes who take down the minutes of every case. Ushers, messengers, and sometimes policemen are standing at the doors. The Bida Court sits daily from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m., the District Courts whenever there are cases. The court procedure is very rigid. Plaintiffs and defendants are squatting in the centre of the court room, facing the judge, their hands folded in their laps; to rest one's hands on the ground means disrespect towards the *Alkali*. The place of witnesses is to the side and back of the plaintiffs and defendants. Women must sit in the outer gallery (at least in cases concerning divorce, adultery, and suchlike); they speak through a small window in the wall. You will recognize at once the peasant from the country: he sits there shy and frightened, often quite bewildered by the questions of the judge; often too, he has to be reminded to raise his voice, which is almost inaudible.

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695 But in the Bida Court temper may run high, especially when people of standing and wealth are involved who not infrequently will argue and remonstrate with the judge. I have seen judges lose their patience with such unmanageable parties, shout at them and threaten them with punishment for this 'contempt of court'.

692 Before the pretentious Bida Court with its office hours and fixed rules of procedure, its crowd of subordinate officials, assistants, scribes, ushers, policemen, a multitude of cases are brought daily which fit well into its up-to-date routine: offences against the by-laws of a modern town (riding a bicycle without light, or riotous behaviour in the street or the market, &c.) and all the various disputes bound to occur where you have an intensive trade, complicated money transactions, and suchlike. But before the same court come the cases (and in this book we are only concerned with these) that are the expression of tensions and conflicts of the society in its old unchanged form—cases of inheritance, divorce, witchcraft. The extension of native jurisdiction over the problems and conflicts of a modern urban community, which is merely a question of applying jurisdiction and executive under the guidance of the British Administration, is of less interest to us than the progressive penetration of formal political jurisdiction into the domains of traditional native life, which is a problem of legislation that the native society must itself solve. In this, the modern Native Court is the legitimate heir of the pre-British system of law—heir both to its strength and its weakness.

692 We may say that the modern legal system is both more comprehensive (embracing, above all, the domain of kinship) and, viewed from the 671 standpoint of the groups which submit to its jurisdiction, more alien than the old system. To explain this we must for a moment go back to a question discussed previously. I have said that every extension of a uniform jurisdiction and legislation over new social domains involves potentially the substitution of a new law for original codes and conceptions, and thus a certain disparity between the recognized law and the culture of which the old conceptions were an expression. This disparity is clearly a phenomenon of transition: every society will tend in the course of time to eliminate such a hiatus—either by reacting against the expanding judicial system and forcing it to adjust its too extravagant claims (we shall presently encounter instances of this)—or by completing that process of cultural assimilation of which the co-ordination of legal concepts represents only one aspect. We may assume that our table of jurisdiction in pre-British times, which shows a certain system of law firmly accepted throughout the society, refers to aspects of culture in which this process of mutual assimilation has been completed. Whether or not my hypothesis is historically correct, we must admit that where the process is still in motion, where the politically-backed law is only just extending its hold over new domains, the disparity of which I have spoken must be visible. This is indeed the case to-day, when Mohammedan law is being applied to kinship offences.

671 It would go beyond the scope of this book to study the relation between Mohammedan law as it is practised in Nupe and the traditional 182 concepts of kinship conduct and kinship rights and duties. I may be

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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allowed to reduce this relation to a simple formula: if the former is born of the social conditions of an urbanized stratified society and reflects the specific concepts of property and morality which have evolved there, the latter is typical of the peasant community, its economic pursuits, its values and interests. The Mohammedan law as it is applied in Nupe has undergone a number of significant changes in the comparatively short period of Fulani and later British rule. The knowledge of the more important changes (e.g. in the treatment of seduction and adultery) has spread throughout the country and the changes remain linked in the memory of the people with the names of the judges who were their originators. Some changes are regarded as good, others as bad, and accordingly judges have earned or forfeited the reputation of being 'wise men'. The lawgivers themselves have been aware of the necessity of bringing their extraneous legal machinery into at least partial harmony with existing conditions and conceptions.

Here a new aspect of the 'disparity' between law and culture reveals itself. The very fluidity of this evolution of a new legislation must remove the law from the orbit of the average citizen. He is no longer able to keep track of it as he could when the legal system could be reduced to the short list of 'civil offences' and 'crimes of the king'. I have encountered ample evidence of this kind—erroneous beliefs of individuals as to particular laws or forms of legal procedure. Some ten or fifteen years ago unscrupulous judges made use of the ignorance of the peasants and prosecuted, for 'neglect of their parental duties' the parents of girls and young men suspected of illegitimate sexual intercourse. The repercussions of this abuse are still felt, and many peasants dare not bring a case of seduction before the court for fear of being fined themselves. A conspicuous evidence of this gulf between the law and the people is the continued practice of peasants and commoners to seek out a Mallam or a person of standing and have him accompany them to the court when they are about to commit themselves to the vagaries of an unknown law.

The disparity between law and culture is naturally most marked in the slow-moving peasant communities, where social and economic conditions diverge most fundamentally from the social life of which Mohammedan law is an expression. Here the unfamiliarity of the judges, who come from the highest families of the kingdom and who are Bida born and bred, with the local situation and specific customary practices (e.g. marriage rules) may add yet another source of conflict.[1] Even the religious emblems upon which the Nupe were wont to take the oath are absent in the modern District Court which, instead, is using the Koran.[2] Pagans will always be ready to swear by the Koran if asked to do so by

[1] Some of the local *Alkalai* may be very reluctant to regard themselves as permanently attached to their station. They may be hoping for a speedy promotion, eventually to the court in Bida.

[2] In a court in the Nupe district of Ilorin Province a very enlightened *Alkali* used both Koran and the 'chain of Tsoede' to do justice to Mohammedans as well as pagans. In this as in similar respects much depends on the personality (and special training) of the individual judge.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the *Alkali*, said one of my informants, and will think nothing of perjuring themselves.

Let me quote a significant instance. An Ebe man had refused to let his daughter marry a Hausa whom she loved, having a different suitor from Ebe country in mind for her. The Hausa brought the case before the *Alkali* of Kutigi (some 50 miles away); the *Alkali* instructed the father to give his blessing to the marriage on the grounds that the Koran decreed that no father should stand between two young people who loved each other. The father swore an oath to that effect on the Koran and returned home. But after a month the Hausa came back, reporting that the girl's father had renewed his opposition to the marriage. Three times they were summoned to court, and three times the father agreed in the presence of the *Alkali*, only to revoke his agreement afterwards. At last I happened to be in the court and asked the man if perhaps the Ebe disliked letting their daughters marry outside the sub-tribe or tribe. Evidently relieved, the man said that this was indeed the case. Curiously enough, the girl, who had till then stubbornly maintained her desire to marry the Hausa, declared that she would obey her father as soon as the customary marriage rule was brought up in the court.

This example also illustrates the effects of what I have called above the 'divided law': the girl and her suitor, well knowing that if they submitted to the customary law as it was upheld by her father and most probably the village elders would not be able to marry, appealed to the Mohammedan court, whose decision, as they anticipated, was favourable to them. Here we see what I have mentioned above—that in districts in which the customary conceptions of law still obtain, modern legislation puts a premium on breaches of the traditional usage. This is shown most clearly in litigation over inheritance. According to Mohammedan law the property and land left by a family head should be divided equally among the sons; traditional rules of inheritance hold that land and property should be inherited by the younger brother, and that sons and brothers' sons should stay on the land working under the heir as under their sociological father. This rule expresses the interest of a farming community in maintaining landed property so far as possible intact, while the Mohammedan rule does justice primarily to owners of movable property, money, trade goods, or cattle. Now, for reasons which we shall examine in a later chapter modern economic developments have led increasingly to the adoption of the Mohammedan solution. But were individuals still to attempt to enforce the traditional rule, dissatisfied family members could easily obtain a reversal of this decision by appealing to the Mohammedan court.

Again we observe the effectiveness of the 'social law' which we have formulated above, that a stronger law ousts a weaker law. The existence of the divided authority which favours 'dissenters' from traditional law, must force chief and elders—the guardians of traditional usage—to surrender in ever larger measure the authority which they are still holding to the stronger authority of the state law, even to invite its intervention—as did the family heads who appealed to their feudal lord for support of their paternal authority. It is important to emphasize this, as

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many Administrative Officers think it desirable that the village chiefs and elders should continue to practise their informal arbitration side by side with the existing official courts. Our data preclude the likelihood of such a parallel development; they show that the tendency is rather towards the virtual surrender of one to the other. We have heard that in the present-day judicial arrangement the Village Head is expected to send all legal cases which cannot be settled by arbitration to the District *Alkali*'s court. Now I have found the chiefs quite satisfied with this state of affairs, which freed them of the responsibility in more serious cases. Some seemed, in fact, quite frightened at the idea of taking over this responsibility themselves, and were only too ready to leave a larger and larger proportion of their judicial tasks to the professional judge. 'To-day', a chief said to me, 'people want written judgements in such cases as divorce, inheritance, debts; *ama mi de takarda à*, but I have no papers to give.' ('Papers' are only the modern symbols of the more powerful and more permanent authority wielded by state jurisdiction; in his own words the chief expressed the essence of that principle of 'divided authority'.

Shall we acquiesce with the chief in these results of an inevitable process of change? I think not. Politically, the chief is divested already of much of his former power. To divest him also of all judicial authority is to deprive him of the last vestige of the most vital prerogative of his office, which is the enforcement of a certain line of conduct upon his community, and to sanction all deviations from it as acts detrimental to the welfare of the community. It would amount to turning the chief completely into a petty executive official, entitled only to carry out orders, but with no right to voice public opinion. Besides, the disregard for local customs by the professional Mohammedan judges is felt as a real hardship by many. Even if more change is on the way, bound to promote the final assimilation of Mohammedan law and customary practice, its pace should be set by the people themselves, and not by an alien, uninterested judge. In the nature of things the solution must lie in a compromise. In my view the best compromise would be to vest the Village Head with the right (and, more important, the duty) to act as an assessor in the court, with full consultative authority, whenever cases from his community are brought before the *Alkali*.[1]

This does not contradict what I have said in a previous section about the 'parochial outlook' of the village chief. The parochial outlook may unfit him for responsible posts in the administration of the Emirate at large, such as District Headship, which call for a wide view and an appreciation of policy on, as it were, a national scale. But it is just this parochial outlook which qualifies the village chief eminently for dealing with legal cases, bound up as they are with local conditions. However, there is a wider issue involved in this question—the most intricate problem which modern administration has to solve, the problem of centralization versus local autonomy.

[1] This solution is envisaged in the Native Courts Ordinance, which leaves it to the discretion of the Native Court to appoint assessors from the ranks of village chiefs and elders.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.
692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [884
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more [935]
were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
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For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

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Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [86]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
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from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241/463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185/651/322 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[323/325/171] [1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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some informants the female variety lives in the water while the males prefer the land. The sex of the spirits does not influence their character, which may be either friendly or hostile. The people know where 'good' spirits dwell as well as the places haunted by 'evil ones', and may perform sacrifices to keep their friendship or to ward off their malevolence. Small gifts to the spirits (called *efu*), consisting of a little food, honey, a few kolanuts or cowrie shells, are often left on the roadside, placed beside a spring, or dropped in the river. The behaviour of the good spirits is nondescript and consists in not doing evil or mischief rather than in doing anything positively beneficial. The hostile spirits act erratically and unpredictably, their actions ranging from meaningless pranks (such as throwing stones or making frightening noises) to the infliction of serious harm (causing lunacy or fever, or making pregnant women bear a deformed child). Any locality showing unusual or unnatural features, such as an unexpected clearing in the bush or a grassless patch in a meadow, is likely to be the dwelling place of a spirit; so is any uncommonly large tree in the bush. A woodcutter who is unable to fell a tree, a fisherman who loses his nets in the river for no apparent reason, would equally suspect the presence of an *aljénu*. At midnight, when there is 'no noise and sound', the spirits are likely to be abroad. But on the whole one pays little attention to these 'nature spirits', which can easily be foiled by simply avoiding the haunted locality and against which sacrifices are ample protection.

Only in the Niger valley have I recorded nature spirits ascribed more momentous power as well as names and individualities and worshipped in proper, full-scale rituals. We shall in due course speak of two of them, the spirit *Ketsá*, inhabiting the steep rock of that name which rises in mid-stream near Jebba Island, and the spirit suggestively called *Ndáduma*, 'Father Niger'.

A second group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. I recorded only two isolated instances of fully-fledged beliefs in animal spirits. The first concerns a spirit called *Bukpe* which lives, in the shape of a crocodile, in a stream near Mokwa. It is supposed to be a male spirit, 'black' or evil, causing disease and drought. Yet its malevolence can be controlled by means of an annual ritual, known by the same name, and by means of a pact concluded between the people of Mokwa and the crocodile spirit. It is part of the pact that the people of Mokwa must never kill or annoy this or any other crocodile, while they in turn will not be harmed by any member of the species. This belief, however, is not willingly put to a test; when I visited *Bukpe* in his lair, my Nupe companions were very careful not to come too close. Some time after my visit the crocodile in fact killed a child; whereupon the people

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court, trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [154 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 282] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

41 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [67a] of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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way to the (much smaller) tax-receipts made out for individuals. It is, in fact, the present official policy of the Administration to encourage the issue and acceptance of individual tax-receipts throughout the country. Taxation thus ignores and even denies in its own powerful province the existence of the family unit—with what results we shall see later. 651

LAW

Let me try first to give a picture of the judicial system of Nupe kingdom as it existed in pre-European times. This is, naturally, an historical reconstruction. But the history to which it refers is not the history of a mythical past. It is a history well documented, and obtained from information which seems reliable and significant and which, collected from different sources, shows remarkable agreement on all main points. My chief informants were village elders and chiefs and the Mohammedan judges of Bida Emirate who, in charge of modern jurisdiction to-day, have witnessed and partly practised themselves the old system. 671 124

The theoretical difficulties with which the student of law in primitive cultures is faced are absent in our investigation. The problem, especially, whether to define the province of law on the narrow basis of systematic social control exercised by a politically organized society (Radcliffe-Brown) or, more comprehensively, as embracing all social sanctions that make for uniformity of conduct (Malinowski), is decided for us by the nature of the society which we are studying in the sense of the former essentially modern interpretation. Law in Nupe kingdom is quite conspicuously a concern of the political organization and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. This does not mean that no sanctions or forms of redress exist which are applied outside the political framework and left to the more diffuse workings of public opinion and individual or group 'self-help'. But the scope of this non-political (or extra-political) law is extremely restricted. It comprises only two types of offences: religious offences—desecration of sacred objects or places, both Mohammedan and pagan—and kinship offences—litigation over inheritance, offences against traditional marriage rules (i.e. marriages in forbidden degrees), and also incest. I cannot describe here in detail the treatment which Nupe society meted out to individuals guilty of these offences. Suffice it to say that public ostracism which might force the culprit to self-exile or to confidence in his vindication by the deity was its main feature. The society thus exempted from its otherwise comprehensive scheme of formal political jurisdiction the two offences which were either of a nature transcending human justice (as in the case of religious offences, and also partly incest) or concerned only internal frictions in individual kinship groups. All offences that affected the relations between kinship groups or individuals from different kinship groups, and all crimes against human life, were regarded as a concern of the community at large. 671

But the comprehensiveness of political jurisdiction admitted of two degrees. Traditional Nupe law operated with a legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between 673

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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673 civil and criminal law, defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts, which were settled by 'repairing' the damage that had been done, and here the Nupe did not speak of sentence or judgement but of *gyara*, reparation, or arbitration; and graver delicts, 'criminal' cases in the modern sense, which called for formal judgement and punishment—*sheri'a*. The following table summarizes the various crimes and offences according to this twofold classification. Let me emphasize that these data are widely known, and that every village elder or older man in Bida is able to enumerate and explain the types of offences and the nature of the punishment. This wide-spread legal knowledge is clearly the psychological counterpart of the systematic co-ordination and centralization of Nupe jurisdiction.

Offences involving *gyara*	Offences involving *sheri'a*
Debts, small.	Debts, large.
Theft on a small scale and during the day; theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.	Theft on a large scale, theft of cattle or horses, and all theft committed during the night.
Adultery.	Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
Seduction of girl by unmarried man who is willing to marry her.	Seduction by married man who refuses to marry the girl.
	Murder and manslaughter.
	Highway robbery.
	Arson.
	High treason, i.e. rebellion of feudal lords against the king.
	Lèse-majesté (*gi tokó nyá tsu*, lit. abuse of the king).

692 The first type of offences was a matter for the local authority. In the royal domains it was dealt with by the chief and the elders, in the fief by the delegate of the feudal lord who resided in the village, in consultation with chief and elders. The sentences which this local tribunal could inflict were fines, flogging, and *shelá*, a practice closely akin to pillory: the culprit was marched through the village accompanied by drummers who proclaimed his offence.

The graver crimes, crimes which demanded *sheri'a*, were referred to the central authority—the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. They were, in fact, also called *leifi nyá tsu*, 'crimes of the king'. This highest court of Nupe could inflict sentences of every order, above all, the death penalty. The offences were brought to the notice of the central authority 694 through the feudal lords and delegates. The villagers would report to their overlord in the town, or the feudal lord would have the news from his local delegate, and would then inform the supreme court of Nupe. The criminal was apprehended by the king's slave police and taken to the capital where the court was sitting. This system which made the 696 feudal lords and delegates the 'recorders' of crimes and offences laid itself open to many abuses. The feudal lords could be influenced in favour of a better paying claimant, or prevented by bribes from reporting a particular case. The usual procedure as regards, for example, theft or debts was described to me thus: Up to the value of 10s. nothing

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
674 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing
693 a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

634 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

642 Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war, and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent
675 security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 653).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *eri hata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attachment to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 363, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

565 Below the *sarakiłi* comes a group of minor office-holders, heads of the Bida craft guilds, who receive their titles and the customary gift of a turban from the *Etsu*. The head of the Bida brokers, who acts as an agent for the king in trade and commercial matters in the capital, holds a similar position.

565 The lowest titled class in the Nupe social order is that of the *ena wułi*, whose
567 members bear the titles of the former court slaves.[13] Formerly these titles were held by men of high birth captured in war and given titles in return for loyal service; they could rise in the service of the king as bodyguards, police, messengers, tax collectors, etc. A new king usually took over the officials of his predecessor.

565 Below the orders of title-holders come the commoners (*talakiłi*), who constitute the great majority of the population.

PATRONAGE[13]

566 A system of patronage or clientship is an important feature of Nupe society.
675 The client (*bara*) attaches himself to the household of his patron as a servant or in some other capacity from which he may rise to the position of a trusted friend and may even marry into the patron's family. Clients may be divided into three categories: those who seek political protection without surrendering their independence, who do not work for their patron but are regarded rather as "adopted children"; those who are poor and anxious to avoid hard work on the land; and those who hope to achieve some eminence by attaching themselves to a man of position and influence. The clients of the royal princes may rise to high positions and eventually become the *bara* of a ruling king, their rank then being almost equal to that of the official nobility. Indeed, rich and ambitious men may even buy themselves a clientship in the house of a royal prince or of the king.

The system is beneficial to both parties, the client receiving material benefit and protection and possibly a title, and the patron acquiring servants, soldiers for the contingent he must provide for the king's army, and followers to add to his prestige.

AGE-SETS[14]

561 Boys and young men in a village or town are grouped in three graded associations: *ena wáwágiłi*, for boys between the ages of about 10 and 15; *ena dzákangiłi*, of ages *c.* 15 to 20, and *ena gbarúfułi*, of ages *c.* 20 to 30. Every age-set (*ena*) passes successively through these grades. Except in the capital, there is only one set or association in each grade within the local community at any one time. Each is led by an older man or by a boy from the highest rank of the next grade. The head of the highest, known as *ndákotsú*, is chosen from among adults and has considerable influence. The main emphasis within the age-sets is on seniority. Titles, often copying those for adults in the wider society, are distributed by the leader on the basis of reputation, ability, and merit, sometimes anticipating the future rank of the holder. Those acquired in the highest grade may be retained by the young man for life. The chief public functions of the sets lie in the execution of co-operative tasks, but they also have a recreational side.

For girls, an association (*ena*) exists only for the lowest age-set.

GOVERNMENT[15]

631 Prior to the more recent developments of local government, the Nupe kingdom was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial, and tax administration. The first was the territory of the conquered and tributary "outside" peoples; the second, within the boundaries of the kingdom proper, included the

[13] For a description of slavery proper, see below, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1942, pp. 122–7.
[14] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 383–401; 1935a, pp. 269–71, 292.
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 115–18

571, 675, 642 Nupe FF52

[Information on bara-ship, the sacrifice of individual freedom for the sake of political protection by a patron, has been placed in category 566. --Analyst]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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logy is ever likely to arise, I will not venture to discuss. The point is that Nupe theology is more ambitious; the Nupe do speculate further, and reckon with a great many additional (or 'supererogatory') existences and influences. They seem to feel the need to do justice to the particular features of the world by means of particular conceptions, over and above its broad justification in terms of divine creation. 779 772

This proliferation of thought is, of course, not peculiar to Nupe religion, though we may note that the Nupe ignore many 'particular' features which other religions feel compelled to acknowledge and elaborate. Thus the Nupe find nothing to explain about the heavenly bodies, do not concern themselves specifically with lightning, thunder, or rain, and speculate only vaguely about animals or natural features. Instead, their attention is focussed upon health and disease, birth and death, fertility, misfortunes, dreams, that is, upon things human. The Nupe elaboration of the universe, we might say, is anthropocentric. 779

Yet it concentrates on natural man, not on the moral being. Again it neglects all features which might serve this kind of conception, such as an after-life promising reward or retribution, or natural catastrophies that might signify divine anger or warning. Even where the ethical interpretation suggests itself forcibly it is ignored; thus the metamorphosis of the soul stands apart from any ethical design; the powers of good and evil spirits descend on man at random, and the success or failure of supernatural appeals, to ancestors or even to God, do not reflect upon the moral worthiness of the suppliants. There are a few vague notions of divine retribution. Thus it is admitted, but never spontaneously vouchsafed, that incest is punished by barrenness and blindness, and that persons guilty of concealed crimes may be punished by the *kuti* (in an unspecified manner) or killed by lightning (in the case of theft). But these half-hearted concessions do not alter the picture of a creation devoid of moral purpose. [681]

Are, then, all the 'additional influences' which the Nupe read into creation and all their 'further speculations' merely attemps to 'do justice to the particular things in the world', and no more? It may well seem so. There seems to be no other, ulterior, motive behind the readiness to ascribe the contrariness of a tree or the uncanniness of a locality to spirits rather than to nature just-so created; behind the belief that certain ailments betray the machinations of spirits or witches over and above the weakening of the *anima*, and perhaps natural causes; or behind the subdivision of mental afflictions, which are traced to spirits, to the vagaries of the body, and to God. But consider also that these diverse explanations are not kept apart, by some economical parcelling-out of the universe;

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

530 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crook and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[305] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

793 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Gbere and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Bussa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Gbere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Rába, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 7 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rectangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

696 [681] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Gbere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Bussa legend, Edegi was chief of Gbere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys.

When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutain Edegi.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'ti dzana*, the 'head of Dzana,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own
696 maternal uncle, Dzana, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leiji nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndáce*, the 'father of the shooting,' *i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this: whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic, I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical
[174] basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tete-cígbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

631 weapon so well suited to their hands. And in their small 'state within the state' this jurisdiction
693 over the 'King's Highway.' was still working, a true if smaller copy of the old system, some thirty or forty years ago.

IV.

681 The *ledu* villages are, as we have seen, linked with the king's person by special sacred links;
693 they are made to share the king's guardianship over the law; they thus visibly represent, and almost
642 propagate, the supreme power of the king at what we are tempted to call 'strategic' places. And in this, it seems to me, an important general sociological issue is involved. Strict centralization of legal power, however strong a machinery for political integration it seems, always harbours a disintegrative element as well. For it tends to separate the crime as actually committed from the final act of justice. The element of retaliation and atonement, so essential to the savage mind, becomes meaninglées where the criminal is tried and punished a hundred miles away, and by people who are, practically, strangers. The individual community is deprived of one of the most powerful elements of social cohesion, namely, the title to sanction the violation of its laws and of its social order within its own boundaries. It appears to be the meaning of the *ledu* organization to neutralize this influence for that vital area of the Niger valley. For the most conspicuous, final, phase of jurisdiction is returned to a certain extent to the individual community. It is true this applies only to a few selected places. But we remember their surprising regular distribution on the river; and also the rule that the *ledu* village nearest to the place of the crime had to be called upon to perform the execution. These villages are 'representative' places, and 'strategic' places, and their selection is backed by the strongest charter: mythical and religious belief.

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[p. 132]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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567 themselves; so were children born of a slave father who married a free woman, and also of a slave father who bought a girl slave for himself and married her. If, however, slave married slave, the marriage being arranged—i.e. the purchase price for the girl paid—by the slave's master, the children remained slaves. But these slaves in the second generation were slaves of a different kind. They were no longer called *wuši*, but *mangi*, 'born as child' (i.e. as freeman). Though not really free they were exempted from many of the disabilities of slavery. The children of a *mangi* who married another *mangi* were themselves *mangi* slaves again. But a *mangi* could not be sold by his master, nor could he be maltreated or killed—in the latter case his parents could obtain legal [682] redress and would be paid the usual purchase price as 'blood-money'. At the death of a *mangi* only half of his property could be claimed by the master, the other half was inherited by his own family. The *mangi* also had family farms of their own, and were generally treated like full members of the household in everything except that they were not entitled to any share in the inheritance of their master's property. A *mangi* was brought up together with the children of the house, was given the same education, and, like the sons of the house, served in the mounted household troops. Many *mangi* would free themselves, or at least marry free women. But the names of these house-born slaves in-
[551] variably betrayed their origin; for they were named by their masters, and given not the usual Nupe names but names made up of some well-known blessing formula, of the first words of a proverb, and such like, for example: Adetsua, from *a de 'tsu à sei Sokó*, 'there is no Lord but God'; Barsu, from *bar su ga Allah* (Hausa), 'leave them to God'.

567 It would be wrong, however, to assume that slavery in Nupe carried with it a stigma. True, the people of Bida still speak with contempt of
554 the 'pagans' and 'slaves' (the two terms are almost synonymous) into whose countries their fathers had carried their profitable raids. But, characteristically for Nupe, the stigma attaches to the humble status rather than to the misfortune of having been made a slave. It disappeared with the signs of success and prosperity, open to slaves as to anyone. The wretched slave who could never rise above a menial labourer had to bear the ignominy of his position. But in the case of the trusted slave in a noble household, and above all the successful, freed slave, the taint of slavery meant little more than, in their own words, 'luck of war'. Slaves who served in the houses of the high nobility did indeed share some of the splendour that surrounded the position of their masters. Able and faithful slaves were rewarded with the position of head slaves, overseers, bailiffs; their masters bestowed upon them rich presents and gifts of land—more land than they cared to work with their own hands, having become men of wealth and importance. Their masters bestowed upon them, above all, special titles, household ranks—the ubiquitous symbol of social rise in Nupe, which in this case obliterated even the last external symbol of slave status, the typical slave-names.

000 The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

665 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects 566 round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the 519 whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole 754 town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the 683 passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

*754 of the kind known as *nnákata* (lit. 'mother-of-the-house'), which is best described as that of a patroness and her protégé. Influential and wealthy older women frequently patronize younger men in this fashion, occasionally sending them gifts of food and drink, inviting them to their houses, and helping them in various ways. Ketswamasa, who was the best potter of the village and a rich and clever woman, was in a position to offer this patronage, and probably cultivated the friendship of the young chief-to-be for a particular reason; for it was generally assumed that she hoped to become *Sagi* when Braima succeeded to the chieftainship. There was no suspicion at the time that Ketswamasa was a witch.

*754 Late one evening in November 1935 Braima was drinking beer in his uncle's house with Ketswamasa's husband. After the latter had left, Braima's wife saw her own husband walk out of the house in the direction of the nearby river, presumably, she thought, to relieve nature. From this walk in the dark Braima never returned but simply disappeared, none of the neighbours having seen him. The wife grew terribly excited, wept and screamed, and accused Ketswamasa of having bewitched her husband. She was not at once believed, though the people were certain that Braima had not fallen into the river or met with some other accident. The chief, greatly worried, went for advice and help, first to the missionary at Mokwa, then to the *Alkali* of Mokwa, and finally travelled to Bida to tell the *Etsu* about the mysterious disappearance of his nephew. The *Etsu* apparently only expressed the pious wish 'May God help' and advised the chief to be patient. So the old man returned to his village, waited for three months, and finally performed the usual burial service for people whose bodies cannot be found. By then everyone was convinced, especially the women, led by Braima's widow and the then *Sagi*, that Braima had been bewitched and that Ketswamasa was the culprit. Her husband drove her out, without formal divorce, and she went to live with her brother's family. There she was living when I visited Kpatsuwa, friendless and so feared that my informants refused to take me to her house in the dark (though they did so willingly in daytime).

The Jebba informant had the names all wrong, calling the witch Zena and her victim Jiya. I discovered later that these were the names of persons involved in a different witchcraft case, said to have happened several years ago in some other riverain village; quite probably other details of that story have equally merged with the report on the Kpatsuwa happenings, which would be a familiar feature of myth-making. According to the Jebba version Braima (to call him by his true name) suddenly disappeared in the middle of day, while his wife was busy cooking; she saw him go

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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5. COUNTERMEASURES

x754 Neither the evidence which should precede the countermeasures nor these themselves are uniform or rigidly laid down; rather, 794 there are a number of alternative procedures, employed as chance and expediency may dictate. One can, to begin with, rely on the official 'witchfinder', the *Lelu* or *Sagi*. Then there is that incontrovertible 'proof', the naming of the witch by the victim in dream or delirium, which must occur five times to be truly conclusive; but this testimony is not always applicable nor does one always wait for it. Nor yet does proof by ordeal seem indispensable, although the Nupe know two such methods. The first consists in the application of the snake-bite medicine *wasa* mentioned before, which the accused is made to drink, the belief being that a true witch would be killed by a snake. The second ordeal is administered by the masked members of the *ndakó gboyá* society, who would take the suspect woman into the bush and make her scratch the ground with her finger-nails; if after a time (left to the discretion of the inquisitors) blood comes out from under her finger-nails, this proves her to be a witch. No informant could remember a concrete case when the first ordeal was applied; while the second disappeared with the official ban on the *ndakó gboyá*.

● 683 A witch convicted by one or the other method might be warned x754 by the village chief, perhaps also fined, and if possible ordered to repair the harm she had done; an unrepentant witch was formerly 794 flogged and driven from the village. Several informants maintained that a witch was never killed, since this would bring the revenge of all other witches upon the community; but according to others a dangerous witch was denounced to the *Etsu* Nupe, who would hand her over to his executioners. Above all, there are various magic means whereby witches are killed or at least frightened and subdued, though several of these have disappeared in most of Nupe country and are today known from hearsay only. One such method appears to have employed the bull-roarer (called *vúgu-vúgu*;[1] another consisted in a dance called *kútúkpa* (a word [535] denoting the clanging noise made by a galloping horse), which is said to have afflicted witches watching it with a swollen throat, so that they could not swallow or eat and must die of hunger.[2] Only

[1] I met with an amusing 'secularized' version of the bull-roarer in Katcha, where the nightwatchman of the Niger Company used it to frighten off burglars.

[2] This method, too, has in a sense been secularized. For the steps and passes of the dance and the fantastic dress worn by the dancers have been preserved in another dance, called *sorogi* (a species of tortoise), which is meant for entertainment only and is frequently performed by groups of young men touring the country after the end of the farming season.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

two deadly weapons against witches have survived. The first is private as well as casual, and consists in the anti-witchcraft *cigbe* which individuals can acquire; the second, public and ritualized, lies in the *ndakó gboyá* cult and in the activities of the society of that name. In Nupe eyes, it is the most powerful weapon of its kind, and since its inception, probably several generations ago, it seems to have overshadowed all other anti-witchcraft measures.

754x 683 794

As we know, the cult has merged with the main ritual of Nupe, the *gunnu*, where the *ndakó gboyá* masks appear during the vigil in the bush, to frighten novices, warn the youths to obey their elders, and whip offenders.[1] If in this context the apparition of *ndakó gboyá* is suggestively called 'the policeman of the *gunnu*'; the 'police' duties extend to witchcraft also; for the masks reappear later, during the public phase of the ceremonial, to frighten all women, to discourage would-be witches, and to weaken, by their very presence, the evil powers of witchcraft. If the *ndakó gboyá* is thus thought of as a deterrent and preventive, it may also assume the character of punishment proper; for the masks are expected to drag the suspects into the bush, subject them to the ordeal described before, and kill the 'proved' witch—unless she pays a heavy ransom, which loophole, as we shall see, has far-reaching consequences.

754x 794

But this is only the combination of two distinct cults. It is well understood that the peculiar powers of the *gunnu* do not depend on this addition to its ceremonial, customary though it had become. And as each cult has its own specific aims, so it can, at least on occasion, be performed independently. Nor have the officiants of the *ndakó gboyá* anything to do with the officiants or the priest of the *gunnu*. Normally, in fact, the former are strangers in the village where they perform, being members of a 'secret' society represented only in a few localities and called in specially for the occasion. Furthermore, in the north and east of Nupe, where this society never established its influence, the combination of the two cults is unknown. It is true, however, that in the rest of the country popular opinion, unaware of the esoteric organization of the *ndakó gboyá*, often confuses the two.[2] It is possible that this view was encouraged by the society itself since it kept that organization in the dark. A line in the *gunnu* songs, for example, seems cleverly designed to obscure by its ambiguous meaning the relationship between the two cults. It reads—'*gunnukó u yi Gboyá*', which may mean either 'the *gunnu* priest calls the *Gboyá*'

[1] See above, p. 83.

[2] This applies especially to foreigners. Thus the Yoruba neighbours of the Nupe call the *ndakó gboyá* cult *igunnu*.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

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567 professional slave-trading; they acted as middlemen between the slave markets of the north, Kano, Katsina, and others, and the buyers in the south, on the river and coast.[1]

567 At the time of the Fulani conquest the price paid locally for an able-bodied male slave was 40,000 cowries, i.e. £1, and for a female slave 435 50,000 cowries, i.e. £1. 5s.[2] The price of slaves rose very high in later times. Shortly before the British occupation it had reached the sum of £7 for male, and £7. 10s. for female slaves. As my inquiries from various informants showed, this price had become almost standardized in the last decade before the British occupation and was valid throughout the country. It is interesting to note that this rise in price took place at a time when the largest market for slaves from Nupe was disappearing, shipments of slaves to countries overseas, especially to the Americas, having come to an end. We cannot say how this rise in price started, nor what might have been its cause. I can only suggest that it was due to increased difficulties of supply. Half a century of wars and raids had denuded the country of people who could with no great difficulty be made slaves. Slave-raiders were forced to obtain their human chattels in more distant areas and by more serious warfare—in the language of the economist, under conditions of higher 'cost'. Whatever the cause, this rise in price meant that the commoners and peasants of Nupe could derive from the wars and raids by which their rulers gained their fortunes not even the benefit of cheaper slave labour. Commoners and peasants would suffer when their country was defeated and their villages invaded by the enemy, or when, in civil wars, rival troops fought on their land. But the fruits of victory—rich booty in slaves—they could share only at a price: the same price which foreigners had to pay when buying slaves from Nupe in the open market.

567 Slaves were, in the strict sense of the word, the property of their masters. If anyone killed a slave belonging to somebody else this was [685] not regarded as a case of murder or manslaughter, but only as an offence demanding restitution of the 'destroyed' property, i.e. the full purchase price had to be paid over to the owner. But the slaves who were kept in the houses of the Nupe nobility were on the whole well treated. The master of a slave was quite within his rights if he chose to maltreat him, sell him again, or even kill him. But there is no doubt that this happened rarely—if ever. Many slaves, in fact, preferred to stay on in the houses of their ex-masters when slavery was abolished, in the position of an unpaid servant or retainer, rather than to start life on their own, especially if they were of advanced age. Custom even guaranteed the

[1] Barth states that most of the slaves from Kano were carried by small caravans to Bornu and Nupe; 'the best of slaves now go to Niffee (Nupe) to be there shipped for America. . . . Slaves are sent from Zinder to Niffee. Indeed it now appears that all this part of Africa is put under contribution to supply the South American market with slaves' (Dr. Barth, op. cit. ii, pp. 132 and 135). Lander mentions that the slaves brought to Rabá were purchased by southern peoples, traded down the Niger, and from there 'delivered from hand to hand till they at length reached the sea' (op. cit. ii, p. 298).

[2] See Schoen-Crowther, *Journals*, p. 194, and J. and R. Lander, op. cit. ii, p. 298.

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were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more [935]
were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [86]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound) [862]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.'

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *shelá*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1]

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law.

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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POSSESSION OF LAND

In the discussion of the rights to land obtaining in Nupe two facts must be borne in mind. First, the Fulani conquest, which resulted in the appropriation of part of the vacant tribal land; and second, the very low birth-rate and sparse population of the country. These two factors limit each other's effectiveness; moreover, they affect different parts of the country in different measure. We have seen that the appropriation of tribal land took place only in the area east of the Kaduna (Cis-Kaduna).[1] In the area west of the Kaduna (Trans-Kaduna),[2] land-tenure on the traditional tribal or village basis still obtains, and here the population factor shows itself effective in that it eliminates almost all pressure on the land and all more severe competition for landed possession. Owing to the political factors the opposite is true of Cis-Kaduna, and here a complex system of land ownership and land transfer, which in the extreme case amounts to outright purchase for money, reflects the attempts of the people to counteract the pressure on the land. That land disputes are extremely rare in Trans-Kaduna, but very frequent in the 'conquered' territory, is evidence of the same development. One exception may be mentioned at once: the especially valuable marsh-land groves and plots near river-courses, which the Nupe call *bata* (the Hausa *kurmi*). Disputes about this valuable kind of land occur now and again even in the land-rich Trans-Kaduna, and they are fought with special bitterness in Bida and the crowded 'conquered' territory. The following figures may be quoted in support of this statement: in the years 1934 and 1935 24 cases of land litigation came before the *Etsu*'s Court in Bida; 21 referred to Cis-Kaduna and 3 to Trans-Kaduna; of the latter none was a land case in the narrow sense of the word—one was a dispute about trees, and two were disputes over marsh-land plots.

The description of Nupe land-tenure may start most profitably with an enumeration of the various methods by which a man, stranger or native of Nupe, may acquire land or has been able to acquire land in the past. It must be said first of all that under traditional conditions only men can hold or claim possession of land. The dynastic policy of the Nupe kings has first led to women being invested with fiefs and landed property. Mohammedan law, besides, is inclined to confirm land holding by women in their own right. But the holding of land by women is still extremely rare, and limited to Bida and the surrounding districts I have come across one case only—a court case in which sons and brothers of a recently deceased woman contested the inheritance of her landed property. Needless to say, none of the parties concerned were peasants; the land had been acquired first through the channels of clientship, and the present claimants—Bida Mallams—wanted it only in order to sublet it for profit.

To return to traditional land-tenure. For a Nupe man who comes

[1] The territory between Kaduna and Gbako river, i.e. Beni country, and the districts east of the Gbako river, i.e. Badeggi and Kacha districts.

[2] Trans-Kaduna is the literal translation of the Nupe name for the area: *Lavushpi* (*Lavun* being the Nupe name for the Kaduna river).

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disputes is this: if the original owner or his heirs had allowed the rent to lapse without calling in the lease, and if the other party can prove that he has worked the land for a long period, this is generally considered sufficient evidence that the original owner has abandoned his claim to the land, whether the new owner is at the time actually working the land or keeping it as reserve. Long occupation is thus recognized as tantamount to ownership. In summing-up a land case in 1935 the *Etsu* Nupe said: 'We do not agree that a man should be evicted from the place which he has been working for a long time.' And in another case, heard in 1934, the claim of the new 'borrower' to the land was confirmed by the court 'because of the many years the farm had been in so-and-so's hands'. 427 425

Litigation about 'borrowed' land comes up constantly before the court in Bida. This is a typical case: A. suddenly demanded back two farms which his grandfather and father had 'lent' to another man, because A. was going to be married and needed the land for himself. He based his claim on the fact that only *aro* had been intended, although the rent had been allowed to lapse. Evidence of the original transaction was difficult to obtain, so the court suggested the following compromise: the transfer of the farm of A.'s grandfather was confirmed, but the farm which A.'s father had 'lent' to the other man the latter was ordered to return—a decision which is again based on the length of occupation. The lack of precision in the concept of land-borrowing in Bida and Cis-Kaduna is illustrated still better by the following case, not itself a court case, but, as it were, a typical potential cause for such land-disputes. A certain rich Mallam had 'borrowed' land from the *Cece*, a *bara* of L., a nobleman of high rank. He had paid 8*d.* down, and every year one bundle of sorghum as rent, for five years. The *Cece* died in the meantime, and the present owner maintained in discussion with me that the land was his and could be inherited by his sons after his death. When I discussed the case later with the *Alkali* he confirmed my suspicion that this was not so; the land could in theory be recalled any day after the five years by the heirs of the *Cece*. But the *Alkali* admitted that this may not be the case for ten or even twenty years; by then the rent would have been allowed to lapse and the details of the original transaction would be difficult to establish. [69] 427

In the course of the Fulani conquest certain farms which were at the time without a definite 'owner', the original owner having emigrated before the lease had lapsed, and the lessees having ceased work on the borrowed farms, were simply appropriated by the Fulani landlords within whose territory this 'ownerless' land was lying. 427 425

Trees are included in this short-term lease or 'borrowing'. But the strength of this regulation, in harmony though it is with the general principles of Nupe land-rights, has been weakened under present-day conditions. Economic stress has made fruit-bearing trees a very valuable resource, and farmers have in a few cases ignored the traditional practice, given away trees with the land, and even 'lent' trees independently of the land they stand upon. This sort of temporary transfer of trees is a simple means of obtaining money quickly (for example, for the payment 427

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427 The lease is only for a lifetime—at least in theory—and has to be renewed by another payment in money if the heirs of the tenant intend to keep the land. If tenants and landlord are on good terms, or are social equals, or if the landlord is under some obligation to his tenant, the renewal is a mere formality and may be granted for a small gratuity. Thus tenants often feel justified in regarding their right to the land as implying absolute ownership, ownership *har dbada*, 'for ever'. But the [691] large number of disputes of this kind which come before the court prove that the arrangement is open to misinterpretation as well as misuse. Landlords who for any reason are dissatisfied with their tenants, or have found a higher bidder, may unexpectedly call in the lease, either at the death of a tenant or during his tenancy, or demand on the threat of eviction another, higher, payment from the tenant or his heirs. Here are two examples: A., a rich landlord, had 'sold' the same farm twice, first for 10*s*., and afterwards for 16*s*. E. transferred a farm-plot that had fallen vacant after the death of the tenant twice in two years, pocketing £3 altogether.

427 Like the practice itself the attitude of the court towards these cases of 'purchase' or indefinite lease is ambiguous and uncertain. Only in one 425 respect the issue is certain: all evictions from planted land, between the times of sowing and reaping, is declared illegal on whatever grounds the eviction may be based. Every man is entitled to the fruits of his immediate work. As regards the wider issue the tendency of the court seems to be this: if the transfer of the lease has taken place fairly long ago, the fact of the long occupation (and actual working) of the disputed land is taken to entail permanent ownership; further payments of *dzankâ* rent are discouraged, and thus the purchase of the land is recognized as an accomplished fact. (As already said, in cases of this kind an original short-term lease—'borrowing'—is often confused with transfer for an indefinite period or for lifetime.) In other cases, where the transfer took place more recently, the court suggested the alternative solution of a return either of the money or the land.[1] In one or two cases of this kind the *Etsu* even made it clear that he wished to discourage sale of land for money altogether. In summing up a land case that came before the court in 1934, he said that 'it was right to divide up land for the benefit of people who had insufficient land; but this should not be done for money'—a pronouncement which, though morally admirable, does not quite do justice to actual facts. For how, one might ask, can land be 'divided up' for the needy in an area where such strong pressure on land, and such multitude of vested rights in land, obtains, if no allowance is made for some sort of compensation? In the Nupe economic system, firmly based as it is on money, a monetary compensation, sale and purchase, seems the only solution, unless the Administration is prepared to repudiate the whole system of land ownership as it exists in the 'conquered territory' as well.[2]

[1] This decision, however, made no allowance for the diminished value of the land, in the sense that the man to whom it was returned might have to leave it lying fallow for a considerable period before being able to cultivate it again.

[2] In one dispute of similar nature, which came before the court in 1935, the

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who was reputed to possess strong and deadly magic had threatened his 627
life; a family head in Kutigi that his family was too highly taxed; a man in Pichi that a neighbour had beaten his goat (which the other man had found eating his grain): these are some of the cases which a village chief and his elders may daily be called upon to decide.

The procedure is nearly always the same. The various news, requests, or complaints are communicated at once to the chief, directly, if the supplicant or bearer of the news has the chief's ear, that is, is himself a titled elder, and indirectly, through the family head or the *efutsó* (head) of the *efu* in which he lives, if the bearer of the news is an ordinary peasant. Upon receiving the news the chief will summon the head *nūsa* (the *Sheshū* in Mokwa, the *Lile* in Doko, the *Ndeji* in other villages), and he in turn will call together the other members of the council whose co-operation is required: two or three of the senior elders—the members of the 'inner council'—and always the *nūsa* to whose kinship group or *efu* the litigant or supplicant belongs. Not only does this *nūsa* act, as we have seen, as the official informant of the chief on all matters concerning his group and locality, but his intimacy with the people whose case is to be heard, and his moral influence, make him an important witness and, when a decision has been reached, a guarantor of its execution. Before this tribunal, then, supplicants and litigants in the village appear. The discussion that ensues is informal, and devoid of the stiff procedure that characterizes, for example, the Native Court. Supplicant or plaintiff state their case in a few sentences—the Nupe are not fond of long speeches and elaborate expositions. Obscurities in the statement are unravelled in patient cross-examination, in which everyone present can take part. Then, at one point, the chief or a *nūsa* may suggest a solution, which may be agreed to by the others with the stereotyped expression *u ge*, 'it is well', or revised in renewed discussion. Very rarely do tempers flare up and the discussions become heated. The final decision of the chief and his council is pressed home in the form of advice, persuasion, warning. A discussion of this kind rarely lasts longer than two or three hours, after which time it will be interrupted to be resumed on a following day. Mostly one or two sessions suffice to arrive at the final decision.

But then, in more difficult cases, in which many witnesses have to be 692 ●
called and thorny problems of arbitration settled, the decision is taken
out of the hands of the village executive. For the chief is not entitled to 627
dispense formal justice and to enforce arbitration. He must send all legal cases to the professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*) of the district; moreover, litigants who are dissatisfied with the chief's decision may themselves bring their case before the professional judge or the District Head (a point to which we shall return later). This limitation of village jurisdiction makes it impossible to pronounce in more detail on the efficiency of the village council and the way in which it handles, or could handle, more severe conflicts. The gamut of advice, persuasion, and warning is the only one which it can use: the more strident notes of authoritative orders and severe reprimands are outside its scale.

That they, too, have a rightful existence in the administration of village 651
affairs is shown in the organization, by chief and elders, of all concerted 621

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The rest of Nupe Kingdom was divided up into smaller and larger

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'countries' comprising each a town with its dependent villages and *tunga* which were administered as fiefs through feudal lords or *egba*. The *egba*—a member of the royal house or of the office nobility, or a court slave—received the fief from the king together with his rank with which the fief remained permanently linked. Mokwa was known as the town of the *Shaba*, Eggã as the town of the *Ndeji*, Kutigi and Enagi belonged to the *Ndatwaki*, and so on. Promotion to a higher rank brought with it appointment to another, more lucrative, fief. The feudal lord himself lived in the capital and rarely visited his possession. The local affairs, the collection of tax, were in charge of his representative, one of his slaves or serfs who was residing on his lands as *egbagi*, Small Delegate. Of the tax collected in these fiefs, again a money tax, a quarter went to the king and three-quarters were retained by the *egba*, who returned a small share to his *egbagi*, salary and commission in one. Sometimes the towns or districts also paid an additional tribute in kind both to *Etsu* and *egba*. I have been able to collect some data about the tax levied in these areas. The uniform information which I obtained from different sources leads me to believe that the facts are substantially correct. The town Kutigi, according to my informants, paid under *Etsu* Umaru a money tax of 20,000 cowries (about 10*s*.) to the *Etsu* through the *egba*; to the *egba* himself 10,000 cowries (5*s*.) and to the *egbagi* 5,000 cowries (2*s*. 6*d*.). In addition to this, the people of Kutigi sent the *Etsu* 20 mats of the kind which has made Kutigi the centre of a famous mat industry, worth over £1, 4 bundles of corn worth about 7*s*. 'for the king's horses', and 10 mats and 1 bundle of corn to the *egba*. In modern money, the total tax of the town which at that time had eight *efu* and a population of perhaps 500, amounted to between £2 and £3.[1]

[436] [285]

The feudal lord in Bida was responsible to the king for law and order in his district. The appointment of the village chief was, again, subject to royal confirmation. The overlordship of the king also implied the right of appeal of the villagers to the king against oppression or injustice from their feudal lord.[2] Lastly, the *egbagi*, together with the village chief, administered justice in the smaller cases and sent all bigger cases to Bida, where the *egba* himself would plead the case of his tenants before the court of *Etsu* and *Alkali*.

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A variety of the fiefs just discussed were bestowed on individuals, relatives, courtiers, or favourites of the king, as personal fiefs, independent of rank and office. Even women could hold fiefs of this kind. These fiefs were sometimes hereditary and sometimes reclaimed by the king after the death of the holder. They were very small, single towns or villages, but one person could hold two or more such fiefs—which, however, were never adjacent lest the power in the hands of one person

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[1] Oldfield reports that in 1832–4 (i.e. under *Etsu* Usman) Eggã, one of the largest towns of Nupe at that time, paid an annual tax of 120,000 cowries, that is, about £3 (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit., ii, p. 39). This fits in very well with the data I obtained.

[2] The people of Mokwa once availed themselves of this right to lodge a complaint against their feudal lord. When I asked my informants what the result had been, they shrugged their shoulders and said: 'The *Etsu* promised to help us; but does one Fulani go against another Fulani?'

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673 civil and criminal law, defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts, which were settled by 'repairing' the damage that had been done, and here the Nupe did not speak of sentence or judgement but of *gyara*, reparation, or arbitration; and graver delicts, 'criminal' cases in the modern sense, which called for formal judgement and punishment—*sheri'a*. The following table summarizes the various crimes and offences according to this twofold classification. Let me emphasize that these data are widely known, and that every village elder or older man in Bida is able to enumerate and explain the types of offences and the nature of the punishment. This wide-spread legal knowledge is clearly the psychological counterpart of the systematic co-ordination and centralization of Nupe jurisdiction.

Offences involving *gyara*	Offences involving *sheri'a*
Debts, small.	Debts, large.
Theft on a small scale and during the day; theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.	Theft on a large scale, theft of cattle or horses, and all theft committed during the night.
Adultery.	Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
Seduction of girl by unmarried man who is willing to marry her.	Seduction by married man who refuses to marry the girl.
	Murder and manslaughter.
	Highway robbery.
	Arson.
	High treason, i.e. rebellion of feudal lords against the king.
	Lèse-majesté (*gi tokó nyá tsu*, lit. abuse of the king).

692 The first type of offences was a matter for the local authority. In the royal domains it was dealt with by the chief and the elders, in the fief by the delegate of the feudal lord who resided in the village, in consultation with chief and elders. The sentences which this local tribunal could inflict were fines, flogging, and *shelá*, a practice closely akin to pillory: the culprit was marched through the village accompanied by drummers who proclaimed his offence.

The graver crimes, crimes which demanded *sheri'a*, were referred to the central authority—the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. They were, in fact, also called *leifi nyá tsu*, 'crimes of the king'. This highest court of Nupe could inflict sentences of every order, above all, the death penalty. The offences were brought to the notice of the central authority 694 through the feudal lords and delegates. The villagers would report to their overlord in the town, or the feudal lord would have the news from his local delegate, and would then inform the supreme court of Nupe. The criminal was apprehended by the king's slave police and taken to the capital where the court was sitting. This system which made the 696 feudal lords and delegates the 'recorders' of crimes and offences laid itself open to many abuses. The feudal lords could be influenced in favour of a better paying claimant, or prevented by bribes from reporting a particular case. The usual procedure as regards, for example, theft or debts was described to me thus: Up to the value of 10s. nothing

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.'

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692 control further and further in the course of time into domains of social life hitherto unaffected by state law. This extension proceeded on two planes: centralized control superseding local jurisdiction, i.e. moving the line of division between 'offences' and' crimes', and formal political law usurping domains that had been left originally to the informal workings of public opinion or self-help. An instance of the former is the treatment of witchcraft: we have heard of the secret anti-witchcraft society which the Nupe villagers could summon to detect and punish witches, and we have heard also that this secret society was brought later under the control of the Fulani rulers of Nupe. An instance of the second form of extension appears to be the treatment of adultery. Informants told me that formerly, at least in pagan communities, adultery was dealt with, not by legal measures but either by a religious sacrifice meant to safeguard matrimonial sanctity, or by self-help on the part of the husband, who was within his rights to beat up the paramour whom he caught *in flagrante*, strip him of his clothes, and drive him out into the street naked.

Now this strengthening of state jurisdiction is understandable from the viewpoint of the dynamic state endeavouring to extend its control over new groups and new aspects of social life. But here we note the rather surprising feature that there are indications of the subject groups themselves having welcomed and invited the extension of state jurisdiction. I was told in Mokwa that during the Fulani régime fathers of headstrong sons sometimes appealed to their feudal lord, and that the latter would lend his authority to the more severe forms of domestic punishment (i.e. flogging). This official cognizance of what is essentially a 'family affair' clearly represents an incipient stage of state jurisdiction. It is only one step from this appeal for moral support of the official organ of the state to a full acceptance of political jurisdiction in the sphere of kinship offences or litigations, for example litigation over inheritance or divorce, which has become reality to-day. How are we to explain this readiness on the part of the people to surrender the sanctions of custom and self-help to state jurisdiction?

The explanation lies in the evolution of the divided legal authority which had made this development inevitable. Two competing authorities of different range of power existing side by side and concerned with the same or closely similar domains of social life must be in danger of frustrating each other, as individuals dissatisfied with the decisions of one may be tempted to obtain help from the other. The elimination or (as in Nupe) surrender of the weaker authority is the result. Family heads could maintain their paternal authority only by appealing for support to that authority which had superseded their own in other social domains. We may formulate it almost as a social law that an expanding system of jurisdiction, once it begins to supersede another weaker system of jurisdiction, is bound to expand further; culture change in this sphere appears to be carried on by its own momentum.

But inevitable as is this development, so are the conflicts inherent in it. The surrender of new domains of social life to the judicial authority of the state means potentially surrender to an alien law. In our example

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the family heads invited the intervention of the political authority in the interest of preserving the existing code of conduct. But once this extraneous authority is admitted, it will have to be obeyed also should its decision run counter to the traditional code. Moreover, the rival authority may be appealed to equally by individuals or groups dissenting from the traditional conceptions of right and wrong. Ultimately, the issue will depend on whether the representatives of state jurisdiction are prepared to uphold customary practices and codes of conduct, or are committed to promote a uniform state law. The trend towards close political co-ordination and centralization must greatly limit the scope of such concessions as might be granted to the divergent legal conceptions in the various subject communities. The extension of state jurisdiction over new domains of social life may thus come to mean the substitution of existing traditional codes and doctrines by a new uniform state law.

I have stated this as a hypothetical case, being unable to produce concrete evidence to show that precisely this development occurred in the case of the various delicts and offences over which we found state jurisdiction already firmly established. I can only point to certain evidence of the reaction of group sections against what must have appeared to them as an excessive unification of the law, namely, certain attempts to change state jurisdiction back to independent local jurisdiction: thus the chief of the Kyedye is reported to have obtained from *Etsu* Abubakari the right to exercise full and independent jurisdiction in his tribal group; and the people of Sakpe and Kutigi claim to have been granted a similar legal franchise by *Etsu* Masaba in exchange for heavier taxation. However, the progressive extension of state jurisdiction and the trends underlying this development are still visible and effective in present-day jurisdiction, to which we shall turn presently. They appear, characteristically, in that domain of social life which was the last to be absorbed by state jurisdiction—kinship—and concern the relation between the spreading modern state law of Nupe, Mohammedan law, and pagan customary practice.

Before we describe modern jurisdiction in detail we may examine for a moment the causes of the spreading of Mohammedan law in Nupe. It has no doubt been consciously fostered by the Mohammedan rulers of the country. But to some extent Fulani rule, still in British times, appears to have avoided excessive legal unification by allowing for customary pagan law—the 'straight judgement' in the case of pagans. Here, however, we find that the same effects that accompanied the 'divided authority' occur again in the case of the 'divided law'. The coexistence of two legal systems, one backed by the prestige and supreme power of the rulers of the country, the other reserved for the pagan subject groups, is again reduced to uniformity, the 'stronger law' ousting the 'weaker law'. We have concrete data to illustrate this process. The Mohammedan judges used to ask the parties appearing before them whether they were Mohammedans or pagans. The large majority proclaimed themselves Mohammedans, and desired to be tried according to Mohammedan law. Administrative Officers in areas where pagan and Mohammedan courts exist side by side also said that the people would generally prefer the Mohammedan court. They explain

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671 this attitude as due to the reluctance of the people to be classed with the more backward sections of the population. But there is also a more fundamental reason. Offences and litigation involve by their very nature dissension from established rules of conduct. It is thus often in the interest of offenders and litigants to dissociate themselves from traditional justice and to appeal to the rival law existing in the community. We shall see that in certain extreme cases the 'divided law' almost puts a premium on dissension from the traditional concepts of right and wrong.

692 In modern Nupe, then, Mohammedan law is paramount. The legal administration of the country is entrusted to *Alkalai*, judges trained in Mohammedan law, who reside in Bida and in the districts. The District Courts, of which there are seven in Bida Division, are courts of a lower grade—in official terminology, 'grade C courts'—that is, they are entitled to deal with civil cases involving fines up to £50 and criminal cases involving imprisonment up to six months, in case of theft up to twelve months. Bida town possesses a 'grade A court', the chief *Alkali*'s court, which combines the two different functions of a local court for the town and an appeal court for the districts. It has unlimited jurisdiction over all cases which under the Native Courts Ordinance are subject to the jurisdiction of Native Courts, i.e. excepting such cases as sedition, charges against Europeans, treason, trial by ordeal, and corruption of officials. The jurisdiction of the Bida Court also excludes homicide cases—an exceptional limitation which was imposed upon Bida after the disturbances of 1931. The *Etsu* with his councillors forms another 'grade A court' which deals with cases concerned with land, and constitutes at the same time a higher court of appeal for cases from the districts. The District Officer represents a final court of appeal for all cases. Cases excluded from native jurisdiction come before the High Court, which sits from time to time at the Headquarters of Niger Province, presided over by a professional British judge.

695 It is interesting to dwell for a moment on the description of a Native Court in action. Picture the court building: a spacious round house, with a gallery running round its outer wall. The *Alkali* has his place on a raised platform near the wall, books and papers spread out before him. On the floor, leaning against the platform, his assistant is sitting. In the Bida Court there are also scribes who take down the minutes of every case. Ushers, messengers, and sometimes policemen are standing at the doors. The Bida Court sits daily from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m., the District Courts whenever there are cases. The court procedure is very rigid. Plaintiffs and defendants are squatting in the centre of the court room, facing the judge, their hands folded in their laps; to rest one's hands on the ground means disrespect towards the *Alkali*. The place of witnesses is to the side and back of the plaintiffs and defendants. Women must sit in the outer gallery (at least in cases concerning divorce, adultery, and suchlike); they speak through a small window in the wall. You will recognize at once the peasant from the country: he sits there shy and frightened, often quite bewildered by the questions of the judge; often too, he has to be reminded to raise his voice, which is almost inaudible.

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But in the Bida Court temper may run high, especially when people of standing and wealth are involved who not infrequently will argue and remonstrate with the judge. I have seen judges lose their patience with such unmanageable parties, shout at them and threaten them with punishment for this 'contempt of court'.

Before the pretentious Bida Court with its office hours and fixed rules of procedure, its crowd of subordinate officials, assistants, scribes, ushers, policemen, a multitude of cases are brought daily which fit well into its up-to-date routine: offences against the by-laws of a modern town (riding a bicycle without light, or riotous behaviour in the street or the market, &c.) and all the various disputes bound to occur where you have an intensive trade, complicated money transactions, and suchlike. But before the same court come the cases (and in this book we are only concerned with these) that are the expression of tensions and conflicts of the society in its old unchanged form—cases of inheritance, divorce, witchcraft. The extension of native jurisdiction over the problems and conflicts of a modern urban community, which is merely a question of applying jurisdiction and executive under the guidance of the British Administration, is of less interest to us than the progressive penetration of formal political jurisdiction into the domains of traditional native life, which is a problem of legislation that the native society must itself solve. In this, the modern Native Court is the legitimate heir of the pre-British system of law—heir both to its strength and its weakness.

We may say that the modern legal system is both more comprehensive (embracing, above all, the domain of kinship) and, viewed from the standpoint of the groups which submit to its jurisdiction, more alien than the old system. To explain this we must for a moment go back to a question discussed previously. I have said that every extension of a uniform jurisdiction and legislation over new social domains involves potentially the substitution of a new law for original codes and conceptions, and thus a certain disparity between the recognized law and the culture of which the old conceptions were an expression. This disparity is clearly a phenomenon of transition: every society will tend in the course of time to eliminate such a hiatus—either by reacting against the expanding judicial system and forcing it to adjust its too extravagant claims (we shall presently encounter instances of this)—or by completing that process of cultural assimilation of which the co-ordination of legal concepts represents only one aspect. We may assume that our table of jurisdiction in pre-British times, which shows a certain system of law firmly accepted throughout the society, refers to aspects of culture in which this process of mutual assimilation has been completed. Whether or not my hypothesis is historically correct, we must admit that where the process is still in motion, where the politically-backed law is only just extending its hold over new domains, the disparity of which I have spoken must be visible. This is indeed the case to-day, when Mohammedan law is being applied to kinship offences.

It would go beyond the scope of this book to study the relation between Mohammedan law as it is practised in Nupe and the traditional concepts of kinship conduct and kinship rights and duties. I may be

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the *Alkali*, said one of my informants, and will think nothing of perjuring themselves. 671 182

Let me quote a significant instance. An Ebe man had refused to let his daughter marry a Hausa whom she loved, having a different suitor from Ebe country in mind for her. The Hausa brought the case before the *Alkali* of Kutigi (some 50 miles away); the *Alkali* instructed the father to give his blessing to the marriage on the grounds that the Koran decreed that no father should stand between two young people who loved each other. The father swore an oath to that effect on the Koran and returned home. But after a month the Hausa came back, reporting that the girl's father had renewed his opposition to the marriage. Three times they were summoned to court, and three times the father agreed in the presence of the *Alkali*, only to revoke his agreement afterwards. At last I happened to be in the court and asked the man if perhaps the Ebe disliked letting their daughters marry outside the sub-tribe or tribe. Evidently relieved, the man said that this was indeed the case. Curiously enough, the girl, who had till then stubbornly maintained her desire to marry the Hausa, declared that she would obey her father as soon as the customary marriage rule was brought up in the court.

This example also illustrates the effects of what I have called above the 'divided law': the girl and her suitor, well knowing that if they submitted to the customary law as it was upheld by her father and most probably the village elders would not be able to marry, appealed to the Mohammedan court, whose decision, as they anticipated, was favourable to them. Here we see what I have mentioned above—that in districts in which the customary conceptions of law still obtain, modern legislation puts a premium on breaches of the traditional usage. This is shown most clearly in litigation over inheritance. According to Mohammedan law the property and land left by a family head should be divided equally among the sons; traditional rules of inheritance hold that land and property should be inherited by the younger brother, and that sons and brothers' sons should stay on the land working under the heir as under their sociological father. This rule expresses the interest of a farming community in maintaining landed property so far as possible intact, while the Mohammedan rule does justice primarily to owners of movable property, money, trade goods, or cattle. Now, for reasons which we shall examine in a later chapter modern economic developments have led increasingly to the adoption of the Mohammedan solution. But were individuals still to attempt to enforce the traditional rule, dissatisfied family members could easily obtain a reversal of this decision by appealing to the Mohammedan court.

Again we observe the effectiveness of the 'social law' which we have formulated above, that a stronger law ousts a weaker law. The existence of the divided authority which favours 'dissenters' from traditional law, must force chief and elders—the guardians of traditional usage—to surrender in ever larger measure the authority which they are still holding to the stronger authority of the state law, even to invite its intervention—as did the family heads who appealed to their feudal lord for support of their paternal authority. It is important to emphasize this, as 671 182 692 622

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many Administrative Officers think it desirable that the village chiefs and elders should continue to practise their informal arbitration side by side with the existing official courts. Our data preclude the likelihood of such a parallel development; they show that the tendency is rather towards the virtual surrender of one to the other. We have heard that in the present-day judicial arrangement the Village Head is expected to send all legal cases which cannot be settled by arbitration to the District *Alkali*'s court. Now I have found the chiefs quite satisfied with this state of affairs, which freed them of the responsibility in more serious cases. Some seemed, in fact, quite frightened at the idea of taking over this responsibility themselves, and were only too ready to leave a larger and larger proportion of their judicial tasks to the professional judge. 'To-day', a chief said to me, 'people want written judgements in such cases as divorce, inheritance, debts; *ama mi de takarda à*, but I have no papers to give.' ('Papers' are only the modern symbols of the more powerful and more permanent authority wielded by state jurisdiction; in his own words the chief expressed the essence of that principle of 'divided authority'.

Shall we acquiesce with the chief in these results of an inevitable process of change? I think not. Politically, the chief is divested already of much of his former power. To divest him also of all judicial authority is to deprive him of the last vestige of the most vital prerogative of his office, which is the enforcement of a certain line of conduct upon his community, and to sanction all deviations from it as acts detrimental to the welfare of the community. It would amount to turning the chief completely into a petty executive official, entitled only to carry out orders, but with no right to voice public opinion. Besides, the disregard for local customs by the professional Mohammedan judges is felt as a real hardship by many. Even if more change is on the way, bound to promote the final assimilation of Mohammedan law and customary practice, its pace should be set by the people themselves, and not by an alien, uninterested judge. In the nature of things the solution must lie in a compromise. In my view the best compromise would be to vest the Village Head with the right (and, more important, the duty) to act as an assessor in the court, with full consultative authority, whenever cases from his community are brought before the *Alkali*.[1]

This does not contradict what I have said in a previous section about the 'parochial outlook' of the village chief. The parochial outlook may unfit him for responsible posts in the administration of the Emirate at large, such as District Headship, which call for a wide view and an appreciation of policy on, as it were, a national scale. But it is just this parochial outlook which qualifies the village chief eminently for dealing with legal cases, bound up as they are with local conditions. However, there is a wider issue involved in this question—the most intricate problem which modern administration has to solve, the problem of centralization versus local autonomy.

[1] This solution is envisaged in the Native Courts Ordinance, which leaves it to the discretion of the Native Court to appoint assessors from the ranks of village chiefs and elders.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures."

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense."

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother."

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[17] Nadel, 1942, pp. 86–8, 165–79; 1946a, p. 181; 1933b.
[18] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[19] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual 634
money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* 651
and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional 634
Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to 692
whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved 634
in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local 693
delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance 674
with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*,' Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawaciši nya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kū*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manši* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somarū*, which is the old Nupe title.

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565 the *saraki* ranks and offices. Thus the present Chief *Alkali* of Bida as
well as his assistant is himself the son of an *Alkali*. The same few families
555 supply to-day the judges for the district courts in Nupe and indeed for
693 many courts outside Nupe country, where the reputation of Bida
793 scholarship has found recognition. And, as a final result of this tendency
to make these offices the prerogative of a small group, we find since the
time of *Etsu* Mohamadu the two offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* combined
in one person.[1]

565 The office of the *Alkali* in Bida, the highest Mohammedan judge of
the kingdom, dates back to the first period of Fulani rule. Its impor-
554 tance and distinction is expressed in the fact that Mallam Dendo's eldest
693 son chose for himself the office not of a temporal ruler but of judge of
Nupe. Many of the men who held these offices were of great learning and
outstanding ability. Some have left behind records of the history of

V. Ranks of the Ena Ndeji

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Ndeji	Nupe from Dibo	*Magajin Gari*	Grandfather was *Ndeji*, appointed by *Etsu* Masaba; the father had no title. To-day highest official of the N.A.; head of the Emir's council.
Nyáfyenye	Fulani	*Magajin Gari*	Father and grandfather both *Ndeji*; first appointment under Usman Zaki.
Magajin Gari	Nupe	..	Father was *Nyáfyenye* and later *Ndeji*.
Sonfadakó	,,	*Gadza*	Father had no title; his first appointment was under *Etsu* Maliki, his second under *Etsu* Mamadu.
Gadza	No holder at present, but formerly a very important title.		
Sakima	Fulani	..	Father was *Ndeji*, titled under Umaru Majigi.
Mamasú	,,	..	Father held a lower title; he himself was titled under *Etsu* Maliki.
Etsu Basa	Benu-Nupe	..	A hereditary title held in one family.
Etsu Gbari	Nupe	..	Father was *Uban Dawaki*.
Tsadza	Fulani	*Galadiman Gari*	Father and elder brother have held same title.
Ndasú	Hausa	..	Newly introduced title.
Galadiman Gari	Fulani	..	Father was *Gadza*; he himself was appointed under *Etsu* Bello. He became later a 'ward-head' of the modern town-administration.
Kotonkomu	Nupe	..	Father held same title.

[1] There exist two different kinds of *Liman* offices: the *Liman Ratibi*, the minister of the weekday service held in the various mosques of the town, and the *Liman Jemaa*, the minister of the Friday service, which is held in the big city mosque, in the presence of the king. In every part of the town there is a *Liman* of the first kind; but there is only one *Liman Jemaa*. And it is to this highest priestly office that we referred above.

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2. *Ranks of the Ena Maiyaki*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Maiyaki	Hausa	*Dokoyiringi, Uban Dawaki*	Father received title of *Maiyaki* in the war. To-day official of the N.A.; on the Emir's council.
Uban Dawaki	Nupe	*Sokyara*	Father *Maiyaki* and *Uban Dawaki*. To-day on the Bida town council.
Sokyara	,,	*Wambayi*	Father was *Sokyara, Uban Dawaki*, and finally *Maiyaki*. He himself was formerly on the Bida town council.
Dokoyiringi	,,	*Wambayi*	Father was *Uban Dawaki* and *Maiyaki*.
Ejukó	,,	*Tnwakoko*	Father already *Ejukó*.
Sondzamitsu	,,	..	Father had no title; son got his under the late *Etsu* because of his wealth.
Soulawu	,,	*Sarkin Barayi*	Father had no title; son received his in the war.
Sarkin Barayi	Hausa	..	Father was *Maiyaki*.
Tnwakoko	Nupe	..	Father was *Nagun*.
Nagun	,,	..	Father was made *Nagun* in the war.
Saganawa	Hausa	..	This title is hereditary in one family, followers of the Hausa general and relative (by marriage) of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Wambayi	,,	..	Father was a serf (*bara*) of *Etsu* Abubakari.
Sanaji	Nupe	..	..
Galadiman Masũ	*Komi*-Yoruba	..	Held in Bida now instead of the old Nupe title *Somasũ* (the Nupe equivalent of *Maiyaki*), but is to-day a very small and unimportant title.
Luci	Nupe	..	Formerly a powerful man; lives to-day on a farm in Trans-Kaduna.
Rwafi	Hausa	..	An hereditary title, held by relatives of the Hausa general of Manko, Handi Boshi.
Sonfaddkwa	Nupe	..	..
Baride	,,	..	Father was *Sojetsu*.
Sojetsu	,,	..	Received title from *Etsu* Bello; rich landowner.
Magayaki	,,	..	Received title in the war, under *Etsu* Maliki.
Sonpahi	,,	..	..
Sónkali	,,	..	..
Manlawo	,,	..	..
Mamadi	,,	..	Father was *Soulawu*, a title which he received in the war.

Nupe. The judicial organization of the kingdom left them free hand to interpret and apply, even to alter and create laws. The names of past *Alkalai* are known to everybody, and are associated with certain new

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565 554 693 laws or special judicial practices. Of this aspect of their activity we shall hear more at a later stage. But one point (already mentioned) must be stressed here. The office of *Liman* and *Alkali* could become hereditary; many judges and Mohammedan scholars are of Fulani stock; but this reflects only the political influence and partly also the tradition of learning in these families. As representatives of Mohammedan scholarship *Liman* and *Alkali* are only the most exalted exponents of a professional class which comprises men of every status and birth—the Mallams, 'learned men', who are held in high esteem by everyone. Even without rank or title, when of little and insignificant learning, they are placed above the ordinary commoner. They may marry the daughters and sisters of the high-born. The *Etsu* himself, descendant of a Mallam, puts a 'Mallam' before his name. Like his ancestors he honours and receives at his court all Mallams of reputation. They are a class between the classes, a mobile, privileged intelligentsia.

565 554 467 The description of the hierarchy of Nupe kingdom is incomplete without the mention of a last group of minor rank-holders, composed of the heads of the Bida craft-guilds. The guilds are closed occupational groups, the members of which live together in one locality and practise certain hereditary crafts such as glass-making, brasswork, weaving, &c.[1] The guild-heads receive their titles, together with the usual gift of a turban, from the *Etsu*. Though low down in the scale of ranks, they have yet an official standing, and are raised above the ordinary commoner and peasant. Their headship implies authority over all the members of their craft in town and village. Formerly the guild-heads received a small annual tribute of products of their craft from their fellow craftsmen. Like the members of the nobility, the titled guild-heads are summoned to the *Etsu*'s Council at the *Sallah*, the great Mohammedan festival; and, [651] like the privileged nobility, they are exempted from taxation. Their only tribute takes the form of an annual gift—an *emisa*, or 'salute'—again of products of their craft, the cost of which is borne jointly by the whole guild, and which is presented to the *Etsu* at the *Sallah*.

Certain craft-guilds are linked with the dynastic division of the capital and are divided into three sections each of which resides in a different *ekpã*. The groups of craftsmen also bear more special allegiance to the royal house in whose *ekpã* they live and with the ancestor of which they associate their coming to Bida and the foundation of their guild. But over and above this party allegiance guilds and guild-sections are closely linked with the ruling king of Nupe. For the king and the court represent the most important customers of the Bida craftsmen. All orders which the court intends to place are given through the guild-head, who guarantees their execution and acts as an official 'controller' of his group of craftsmen.

A position similar to that held by the guild-heads is also assigned to the head of the Bida brokers, the *Etsu Dilali*, who again plays the part of an agent of the king in all matters concerning commerce and trade in the capital.

[1] The organization of the Bida craft-guilds will be described in more detail in Chapter xiv.

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like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual 634
money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* 651
and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional 634
Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to 692
whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved 634
in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local 693
delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance 674
with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
674 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing
698 a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

634 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

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173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'tí dzana*, the 'head of Dzana,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own
696 maternal uncle, Dzana, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leifi nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

●693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndáce*, the 'father of the shooting,' *i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this: whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic. I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical
[174] basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tete-cigbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

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sphere of influence of the *ledu*-organization, death penalty was executed, though in secrecy, by the 693
people of the village themselves. But however this be, the actual issue is little affected. For even if there had existed this strong superstitious belief, the problem for us here is that it should be made use of in such a special way. The belief, the sentiments expressed in the belief, and the political institution in which they crystallise, are two entirely different things. The political system of Nupe kingdom, creating the *ledu*-organization, might actually only have adopted existing motives and ideas; but then it lent its own most sacred symbolism to their support, and at the same time formed out of their psychological appeal a rigid judicial monopoly, and a political office which almost comes to deny its origin: for the office of the *ledu* includes as we have seen also cases which have nothing more to do with death, namely the flogging of those who abused the name of the king; and ordinary flogging was done in every Nupe village.

III.

More than a hundred years of Mohammedan law, decades of civil war and political changes, 177
were not powerful enough to break the spiritual influence of the *ledu* institution, the belief in its ordeals, 693
and the sacredness of its office. But they have been able to obliterate certain details of its organization. One point in particular it is difficult to ascertain to-day: who was actually entitled to make use of the organization of 'Tsoede's hangmen'?

I found two different, and conflicting, interpretations. According to the first, the power of the 174
ledu was limited to the river, and the authority over the *ledu* was, from Tsoede's time almost up till 105
now, given into the hands of the chief of one section among the Nupe, the Kyedya. The people 693
who call themselves Kyedya are the most powerful among the riverain Nupe. They are the canoe- 631
and fishermen on the main river; they monopolize river traffic and trade, they look down upon their neighbours, and style themselves the 'Lords of the Waters.' They are united in a very strongly centralised political organization, and their head is the chief of Muregi, who holds the ancient hereditary title of *kuta*. The *kuta*, then, is said to be the legitimate head of the ledu organization. But a second version says that the office of the *ledu* comprised the whole country (or at least stretched inland as well), and that the power over the *ledu* belonged exclusively to the *etsu*, or kings, of the Nupe —the kings who were till the Fulani conquest the direct descendants of Tsoede.

Weighing evidence against evidence, the situation seems to be this:—Originally an organization 174
of the Nupe king the *ledu* system was adopted later by the Kyedya. In the beginning the Nupe king 693
alone was entitled to act through the *ledu* organization. Geographical and historical facts, reflected 631
in the mythology of their ancestor-king, account for the connection with the river area: the territory of the young Nupe kingdom were the river banks. The river Niger, *ndáduma*, as the Nupe call it, 'Father Niger,' marks the path of the mythical Tsoede where he set out to unite the Nupe into a powerful kingdom. Even later, in historical times, when the Nupe state extended far across central [361]
Nigeria, the capitals always remained near the river: Gbara, Jima, Mokwa and Raba.[4] But also economically the Niger was the life centre of the country. The welfare of a large section of the population depended on the river. And traffic and trade, so immensely important in Nupe culture, [487]
were bound up with the Niger. What appears, then, in the context of myth as the path of the ancestor-king of Nupe, plays in the actual tribal life the rôle of a 'King's Highway,' of a vital artery of the political and economic organism over which the king extends his own special, sacred authority. Violation of the law in this area means the violation of this sacredness; and crimes committed here became crimes of a special sort, subject to a special jurisdiction which has the meaning more of a sacred vengeance than of an ordinary punishment.

When, however, during the Fulani wars the political centre moved away from the river, finally to Bida, the present capital of Nupe, the original organization of the *ledu* must have lost force and significance. And then it was, as our evidence points out, that the Kyedya claimed the title over the *ledu*. The power over the river was now theirs, unquestioned. The Kyedya, hostile to the Fulani invaders, always boasting with their ancient lordship over the waters, and regarding themselves still in the days of British rule as equal to the king of Bida, seized this organization which seemed a

[4] *See* the map in my article on *Nupe State and Community* (AFRICA, VIII, 3).

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631 weapon so well suited to their hands. And in their small 'state within the state' this jurisdiction
693 over the 'King's Highway' was still working, a true if smaller copy of the old system, some thirty or forty years ago.

IV.

681 The *ledu* villages are, as we have seen, linked with the king's person by special sacred links;
693 they are made to share the king's guardianship over the law; they thus visibly represent, and almost
642 propagate, the supreme power of the king at what we are tempted to call 'strategic' places. And in this, it seems to me, an important general sociological issue is involved. Strict centralization of legal power, however strong a machinery for political integration it seems, always harbours a disintegrative element as well. For it tends to separate the crime as actually committed from the final act of justice. The element of retaliation and atonement, so essential to the savage mind, becomes meaningless where the criminal is tried and punished a hundred miles away, and by people who are, practically, strangers. The individual community is deprived of one of the most powerful elements of social cohesion, namely, the title to sanction the violation of its laws and of its social order within its own boundaries. It appears to be the meaning of the *ledu* organization to neutralize this influence for that vital area of the Niger valley. For the most conspicuous, final, phase of jurisdiction is returned to a certain extent to the individual community. It is true this applies only to a few selected places. But we remember their surprising regular distribution on the river; and also the rule that the *ledu* village nearest to the place of the crime had to be called upon to perform the execution. These villages are 'representative' places, and 'strategic' places, and their selection is backed by the strongest charter: mythical and religious belief.

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651 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal cere-
621 monies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nûsaži* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an
● [694] emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also,
623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as
661 heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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673 civil and criminal law, defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts, which were settled by 'repairing' the damage that had been done, and here the Nupe did not speak of sentence or judgement but of *gyara*, reparation, or arbitration; and graver delicts, 'criminal' cases in the modern sense, which called for formal judgement and punishment—*sheri'a*. The following table summarizes the various crimes and offences according to this twofold classification. Let me emphasize that these data are widely known, and that every village elder or older man in Bida is able to enumerate and explain the types of offences and the nature of the punishment. This wide-spread legal knowledge is clearly the psychological counterpart of the systematic co-ordination and centralization of Nupe jurisdiction.

Offences involving *gyara*	Offences involving *sheri'a*
Debts, small.	Debts, large.
Theft on a small scale and during the day; theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.	Theft on a large scale, theft of cattle or horses, and all theft committed during the night.
Adultery.	Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
Seduction of girl by unmarried man who is willing to marry her.	Seduction by married man who refuses to marry the girl.
	Murder and manslaughter.
	Highway robbery.
	Arson.
	High treason, i.e. rebellion of feudal lords against the king.
	Lèse-majesté (*gi tokó nyá tsu*, lit. abuse of the king).

692 The first type of offences was a matter for the local authority. In the royal domains it was dealt with by the chief and the elders, in the fief by the delegate of the feudal lord who resided in the village, in consultation with chief and elders. The sentences which this local tribunal could inflict were fines, flogging, and *shelá*, a practice closely akin to pillory: the culprit was marched through the village accompanied by drummers who proclaimed his offence.

The graver crimes, crimes which demanded *sheri'a*, were referred to the central authority—the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. They were, in fact, also called *leifi nyá tsu*, 'crimes of the king'. This highest court of Nupe could inflict sentences of every order, above all, the death penalty. The offences were brought to the notice of the central authority 694 through the feudal lords and delegates. The villagers would report to their overlord in the town, or the feudal lord would have the news from his local delegate, and would then inform the supreme court of Nupe. The criminal was apprehended by the king's slave police and taken to the capital where the court was sitting. This system which made the feudal lords and delegates the 'recorders' of crimes and offences laid 696 itself open to many abuses. The feudal lords could be influenced in favour of a better paying claimant, or prevented by bribes from reporting a particular case. The usual procedure as regards, for example, theft or debts was described to me thus: Up to the value of 10s. nothing

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.'

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *sheld*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1]

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law.

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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671 this attitude as due to the reluctance of the people to be classed with the more backward sections of the population. But there is also a more fundamental reason. Offences and litigation involve by their very nature dissension from established rules of conduct. It is thus often in the interest of offenders and litigants to dissociate themselves from traditional justice and to appeal to the rival law existing in the community. We shall see that in certain extreme cases the 'divided law' almost puts a premium on dissension from the traditional concepts of right and wrong.

692 In modern Nupe, then, Mohammedan law is paramount. The legal administration of the country is entrusted to *Alkalai*, judges trained in Mohammedan law, who reside in Bida and in the districts. The District Courts, of which there are seven in Bida Division, are courts of a lower grade—in official terminology, 'grade C courts'—that is, they are entitled to deal with civil cases involving fines up to £50 and criminal cases involving imprisonment up to six months, in case of theft up to twelve months. Bida town possesses a 'grade A court', the chief *Alkali*'s court, which combines the two different functions of a local court for the town and an appeal court for the districts. It has unlimited jurisdiction over all cases which under the Native Courts Ordinance are subject to the jurisdiction of Native Courts, i.e. excepting such cases as sedition, charges against Europeans, treason, trial by ordeal, and corruption of officials. The jurisdiction of the Bida Court also excludes homicide cases—an exceptional limitation which was imposed upon Bida after the disturbances of 1931. The *Etsu* with his councillors forms another 'grade A court' which deals with cases concerned with land, and constitutes at the same time a higher court of appeal for cases from the districts. The District Officer represents a final court of appeal for all cases. Cases excluded from native jurisdiction come before the High Court, which sits from time to time at the Headquarters of Niger Province, presided over by a professional British judge.

695 It is interesting to dwell for a moment on the description of a Native Court in action. Picture the court building: a spacious round house, with a gallery running round its outer wall. The *Alkali* has his place on a raised platform near the wall, books and papers spread out before him. On the floor, leaning against the platform, his assistant is sitting. In the Bida Court there are also scribes who take down the minutes of every case. Ushers, messengers, and sometimes policemen are standing at the doors. The Bida Court sits daily from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m., the District Courts whenever there are cases. The court procedure is very rigid. Plaintiffs and defendants are squatting in the centre of the court room, facing the judge, their hands folded in their laps; to rest one's hands on the ground means disrespect towards the *Alkali*. The place of witnesses is to the side and back of the plaintiffs and defendants. Women must sit in the outer gallery (at least in cases concerning divorce, adultery, and suchlike); they speak through a small window in the wall. You will recognize at once the peasant from the country: he sits there shy and frightened, often quite bewildered by the questions of the judge; often too, he has to be reminded to raise his voice, which is almost inaudible.

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695 But in the Bida Court temper may run high, especially when people of standing and wealth are involved who not infrequently will argue and remonstrate with the judge. I have seen judges lose their patience with such unmanageable parties, shout at them and threaten them with punishment for this 'contempt of court'.

692 Before the pretentious Bida Court with its office hours and fixed rules of procedure, its crowd of subordinate officials, assistants, scribes, ushers, policemen, a multitude of cases are brought daily which fit well into its up-to-date routine: offences against the by-laws of a modern town (riding a bicycle without light, or riotous behaviour in the street or the market, &c.) and all the various disputes bound to occur where you have an intensive trade, complicated money transactions, and suchlike. But before the same court come the cases (and in this book we are only concerned with these) that are the expression of tensions and conflicts of the society in its old unchanged form—cases of inheritance, divorce, witchcraft. The extension of native jurisdiction over the problems and conflicts of a modern urban community, which is merely a question of applying jurisdiction and executive under the guidance of the British Administration, is of less interest to us than the progressive penetration of formal political jurisdiction into the domains of traditional native life, which is a problem of legislation that the native society must itself solve. In this, the modern Native Court is the legitimate heir of the pre-British system of law—heir both to its strength and its weakness.

692 We may say that the modern legal system is both more comprehensive (embracing, above all, the domain of kinship) and, viewed from the
671 standpoint of the groups which submit to its jurisdiction, more alien than the old system. To explain this we must for a moment go back to a question discussed previously. I have said that every extension of a uniform jurisdiction and legislation over new social domains involves potentially the substitution of a new law for original codes and conceptions, and thus a certain disparity between the recognized law and the culture of which the old conceptions were an expression. This disparity is clearly a phenomenon of transition: every society will tend in the course of time to eliminate such a hiatus—either by reacting against the expanding judicial system and forcing it to adjust its too extravagant claims (we shall presently encounter instances of this)—or by completing that process of cultural assimilation of which the co-ordination of legal concepts represents only one aspect. We may assume that our table of jurisdiction in pre-British times, which shows a certain system of law firmly accepted throughout the society, refers to aspects of culture in which this process of mutual assimilation has been completed. Whether or not my hypothesis is historically correct, we must admit that where the process is still in motion, where the politically-backed law is only just extending its hold over new domains, the disparity of which I have spoken must be visible. This is indeed the case to-day, when Mohammedan law is being applied to kinship offences.

671 It would go beyond the scope of this book to study the relation
182 between Mohammedan law as it is practised in Nupe and the traditional concepts of kinship conduct and kinship rights and duties. I may be

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

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693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical basis of this tradition. According to the existing, [714] very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also Max, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *iste-cigbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

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CHAPTER VII
POLITICAL HISTORY OF NUPE KINGDOM
(*continued*)

KINGSHIP

IN the tradition of Tsoede, that 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom, the essence of the Nupe state is already clearly expressed, sanctioned, almost sanctified, by that paramount authority that attaches to prehistoric events: it outlines a system of political domination, growing by conquest and expansion, and governed by a group detached in origin and status from the rest of the population, and claiming its supreme position by the right of might. The small river kingdom which figures, in the Tsoede tradition, as the nucleus of the great Nupe of later times, and the vast empire under the Fulani Emirs, are essentially of the same nature. The twofold process of expansion over alien groups and cultures, combined with cultural assimilation and absorption, is reflected in both, in the ideological history of the Tsoede myth as well as in the 'real' history of the Fulani kingdom. In one there is Tsoede, who conquers Nupe with the help of alien magic, who brings into Nupe the insignia of alien rulership and culture, but who, himself half Nupe by descent, creates a new, independent, and united Nupe. In the other there is this remarkable piece of empire-policy when Masaba claims succession to the Nupe throne on the grounds of his being half Nupe by birth and full Nupe by education. If the mythology of Tsoede establishes the essence and growth of kingship, later history shows its vicissitudes involved in such system of domination which forces unity upon heterogeneous groups and cultures, revolts and feuds, kings deposed and exiled, usurpers and shadow kings. 175

We know little about the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times. I have mentioned one piece of information already which I obtained from various sources, namely, the ancient rule of succession which made the eldest son 'born in the purple', that is, the son first born during the father's reign, the heir to the throne of Nupe. A few other facts concerning the person of the king I was able to ascertain from the *Etsu* of Patigi. Certain ritual rules obtained at the king's court—and some of these rules are still observed in Patigi. Thus the *Etsu* may only wear white; he can travel and go out whenever he likes, but may not eat any food save that prepared by his wives; nor may any stranger watch him eat. Finally, no one may be killed in the presence of the king or in the town in which he is residing.[1] 643 175

[1] This helps us to understand the organization of the 'King's Hangmen', the crucial fact of which was that the royal executioners killed their victims in places far away from the king's capital. Another effect of this observance, which is still visible, is the rule which forbids the performance of the *ndakó gboyd*, a cult believed to lead to the death of witches, in Patigi, the present 'king's town' or anywhere within a distance from which 'the shrieking of the spirit could be heard in Patigi'. (See *Man*, 1935, 173.) [696]

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673 civil and criminal law, defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts, which were settled by 'repairing' the damage that had been done, and here the Nupe did not speak of sentence or judgement but of *gyara*, reparation, or arbitration; and graver delicts, 'criminal' cases in the modern sense, which called for formal judgement and punishment—*sheri'a*. The following table summarizes the various crimes and offences according to this twofold classification. Let me emphasize that these data are widely known, and that every village elder or older man in Bida is able to enumerate and explain the types of offences and the nature of the punishment. This wide-spread legal knowledge is clearly the psychological counterpart of the systematic co-ordination and centralization of Nupe jurisdiction.

Offences involving *gyara*	Offences involving *sheri'a*
Debts, small.	Debts, large.
Theft on a small scale and during the day; theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.	Theft on a large scale, theft of cattle or horses, and all theft committed during the night.
Adultery.	Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
Seduction of girl by unmarried man who is willing to marry her.	Seduction by married man who refuses to marry the girl.
	Murder and manslaughter.
	Highway robbery.
	Arson.
	High treason, i.e. rebellion of feudal lords against the king.
	Lèse-majesté (*gi tokó nyá tsu*, lit. abuse of the king).

692 The first type of offences was a matter for the local authority. In the royal domains it was dealt with by the chief and the elders, in the fief by the delegate of the feudal lord who resided in the village, in consultation with chief and elders. The sentences which this local tribunal could inflict were fines, flogging, and *sheldá*, a practice closely akin to pillory: the culprit was marched through the village accompanied by drummers who proclaimed his offence.

The graver crimes, crimes which demanded *sheri'a*, were referred to the central authority—the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. They were, in fact, also called *leifi nyá tsu*, 'crimes of the king'. This highest court of Nupe could inflict sentences of every order, above all, the death penalty. The offences were brought to the notice of the central authority 694 through the feudal lords and delegates. The villagers would report to their overlord in the town, or the feudal lord would have the news from his local delegate, and would then inform the supreme court of Nupe. The criminal was apprehended by the king's slave police and taken to the capital where the court was sitting. This system which made the 696 feudal lords and delegates the 'recorders' of crimes and offences laid itself open to many abuses. The feudal lords could be influenced in favour of a better paying claimant, or prevented by bribes from reporting a particular case. The usual procedure as regards, for example, theft or debts was described to me thus: Up to the value of 10s. nothing

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.' 696

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *shelá*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1] 671 563 696 565

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law. 694 687

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial 692

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the " new " law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, " big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a " chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother: custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–60.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filané days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [884
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more [935
were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [866]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), [862]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

539 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crook and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[329] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

793 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Gbere and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Busa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Gbere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Rába, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 7 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rectangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

796 [681] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Gbere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Busa legend, Edegi was chief of Gbere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys.

When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutsin Edegi.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

696 and Wangwa claim to have done so. They state the chains were wound several times round the neck of the victim and the ends drawn tight till he was strangled.

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FIG. 14.

15. Besides the chains there were three pairs of manacles as in fig. 14, staple and neck collar.

16. Edegi's expedition or flight, whichever the case may be, is a well-known historical fact and, in the "Notes on the Tribes, "Provinces, Emirates and States of the North-"ern Provinces of Nigeria," compiled by Mrs. Temple, it is said to have taken place about 1505. A study of this curiously assorted group of relics will hardly assist us in coming to definite conclusions about the nature of this incident or in understanding how Edegi came to found the Nupé state. But it provides interesting material for speculation.

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[p. 172]

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[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tete-cigbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

634 measure of independence in taxation, jurisdiction, and political management in general.[1]

634 In this connexion, we must point out an important development
669 in the history of Nupe kingdom, which in turn greatly affected Kede history. The royal dynasty of Nupe, which traced its origin back to the mythical Tsoede, was in power till the earlier half of last century, when Nupe kingdom, like most of the Native states in Northern Nigeria, fell under the rule of Emirs of Fulani stock who had conquered the country and deposed the indigenous kings. We have no data on the relation between Kede autonomy and the Nupe State under the old dynasty. But it is certain that under Fulani rule conflicts constantly arose, partly perhaps because the Kede (like many other Nupe sections) resented the alien rule, but to a large extent certainly because the Fulani kings, much more than the Nupe rulers before them, had to curb in their own interest the autonomous leanings of their Kede vassals. The Fulani, whose wars at that time were directed chiefly against tribes in the south, could not afford to let an all too independent section control the river—the southern boundary and at the same time the vital artery of trade and traffic of the country. Slave trade, the economic mainstay of the pre-British rulers of central Nigeria, traffic in arms and powder, and troop transports for their military expeditions, all had to cross the River Niger on Kede territory.[2] The Fulani overlords enforced their sovereignty in a number of wars and punitive expeditions, in the course of which (if the reports are true) hundreds were killed, thousands of Kede sold as slaves by the victorious Fulani, Kede notables executed in Bida, and whole districts of Kede country devastated. A typical instance is the Katcha War—the answer of the Fulani to the first attempt of

174 [1] There exists certain evidence to show that the Kede chiefs succeeded in
697 enlarging their judicial power at the cost of their overlords and usurped a certain judicial machinery of the Nupe State which had evolved in the river area. To-day, at any rate, the Kede claim that this judicial machinery was under the authority of the *Kuta*, while other, non-Kede, informants state that it represented entirely a prerogative of the kings of Nupe. I am referring to the *Ledu* (lit. prison) villages on the banks of the Niger, which were so called because they served as prisons and places of execution for criminals convicted, by the king's court, of a 'crime of the king'. I have described this system and the attempts of the Kede to claim it as their own in *Man* (1935), 143.

[2] The importance, for example, of Raba as a river port for slave traffic to the south is pointed out by Lander (*Journal of an Expedition* (1832), ii, p. 298). Laird and Oldfield speak of 600 Kede canoes, 'all of which may be employed for Ful troops to cross the Niger on war expeditions' (op. cit., ii, p. 315).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*,' Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawaciši nya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kū*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manši* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 793

served in Pategi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somasū*, which is the old Nupe title,

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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dakári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

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4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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He may go out to war himself, but more often puts the 701 operations under the War-Chief, Sarkin Yaki, who is himself 562 advised by the Wari-Yaki, a man chosen by the Mallamai for this purpose, and often of so humble a position that the warriors do not know who he is. The Sarkin Yaki, however, obeys him invariably, and indeed it is the Mallamai who direct when and where an attack should be delivered or a retreat made. If the 726 Sarkin Yaki should be killed in war, the army retires to await 562 another appointment by the Emir. It was the custom for the two eldest daughters of the Sarkin Nupe to go to war, each arrayed in two thick rigas, a cummerbund, and carrying a sword and spear. They had large followings, for they gave a big proportion of the spoils to their retinue, but they followed the direction of the Sarkin Yaki. No woman was allowed to accompany them into battle, but many of the sex were discontented with the restriction, and, in consequence, the practice became unpopular amongst the Nupe men. The general feeling became so strong that on the death of the Chief, Umoru Majigi, in 1884, these ladies were no longer allowed to go out to war. Their names were Atiba and Wodiko, names invariably given to the Chief's two eldest daughters. In other respects they lived ordinarily, and were married, but their husbands would never fight in the same war with their wives. Each Chieftain brings his following, and there are bodies of horsemen and footmen, the former armed with spears, the latter with bows and arrows. A war-camp is formed some seven to ten miles from where hostilities are expected to take place, and here the stores and women are left. The Mallamai and a large number of civilian hangers-on advance to the verge of the fight, and wait till success is attained, when they dash in to secure a share of the spoil, the Mallamai giving the word when it is safe to do so. Needless to say their presence is often resented. Envoys may be sent from one army to another in perfect safety, protected by the waving of a white flag, or of green branches; they generally dress in white for additional surety.

Before any campaign is undertaken the Emir consults a [721] Mallam gifted with the power of prophecy, and he says whether the 875 results would be good or bad. A hundred years ago the advent 787 of a fair race from the west was foretold by the prophets in a MS. still extant, and the resistance to their arms was forbidden. That was why the present Emir of Bida and his family, together with all the Mallamai, refused to come out against the British. There are some prophets who are above worldly interest and desire, and others who give advice for 1,000 cowries, or perhaps sixpence. It is a special art in which they receive instruction as youths, and there are books on the subject. The Mallams are consulted on such questions as marriage, trade ventures, and sickness. They look on the ground for about ten minutes and

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FF52 Nupe FF52

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667 554 had been placed in responsible positions proves what I have said about the selection and rise of slave officials at the court of Bida.

Slave Ranks

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Present office*	*Biographical remarks*
Gabi Seidi	Kupa	'Officer of Liaison' between *Etsu* and District Officer	A rich slave who under *Etsu* Bello bought his title for £16.
Ndatwaki	Yagba	On the Bida Town Council	Father was *Ndatwaki* under *Etsu* Maliki; he himself received the same title under *Etsu* Bello.
Dzwodfu	,,	,, ,,	An hereditary slave title, first granted under *Etsu* Usman.
Ndamáraki	Bunu	,, ,,	Father was *Ndamáraki* under *Etsu* Masaba.
Sántali	Benu-Nupe	..	Grandfather was a slave of Usman Zaki; they remained slaves of this house.
Masántali	Yagba	..	Grandfather was a slave of *Etsu* Umaru Majigi; they remained slaves of this house.
Swajiyd'tsu	,,	..	Father held same slave rank.
Ndatódo	,,	..	Father held the same title and also title of *Ndamáraki*.
Manfáda	,,	..	Another slave title which has become hereditary in one house.
Sonmdźi	Kusopa-Nupe	..	Id.
Ndádari	Nupe	..	Id.
Shangbo	Nupe from Rabá	..	Father was a *sarahi* (*Somasú*) of *Etsu* Majiya. He was made prisoner in the war and became a slave of *Etsu* Masaba.
(*Sarkin Dogari*	Hausa	Head of police force	To-day not regarded as slave title. Formerly bestowed on a personal slave of the ruling king.)

WAR

124 721 It will be understood that this description is based entirely on information and the historical recollections of informants. However, the wars that were fought in Nupe and by the Nupe are not so far distant that there are no longer eyewitnesses left, or people who have themselves borne arms in these wars. Thus information could be checked and cross-checked. For certain details I could, moreover, count on most authoritative informants, who had played a leading part in the last wars of the kingdom; the description of the military organization, for example, is based on information obtained from the late commander of the *élite* troops of Nupe, the king's bodyguard.

721 669 War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state. No warfare or organized fights occurred between the villages or tribal sections of the

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Now the council of war meets in the house of the *Maiyaki* to discuss the question of raising the levies. The various feudal lords are informed that they are expected to produce so many guns and horses. Preparations take one or two months—the troops must be raised, recruits trained and equipped, and food supplies provided for the campaign. Finally diviners and Mallams are summoned again by the commander of the army to decide on a propitious day. On the appointed day, drummers and trumpeters sound the assembly, and the troops leave Bida on their march into enemy country.

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though they control severally the executive side of the political machinery, can only use it subject to the agreement of the administration as a whole (of which they form part), else the military machinery is directed against them as breakers of the 'king's peace'. Finally, wars are planned and the military machinery is set in motion by the ruling group as a *representative* group, that is, on behalf of the country at large. In wars against outside enemies the interests of the country and the people are perforce identified with the interests of the ruling group—expansion, conquest, or the destruction of a rival power. But in wars waged against internal enemies—rebellious sections or dangerously independent members of the government—the military action is taken as much in the interest of the ruling group (safeguarding, above all, the revenue) as in the interest of the state and the people in that it re-establishes order and public security. Thus in the Kacha war, referred to above, the ruling group, as the representative group of the state, protected one subject group against abuses by another. The government can take sides and place the political machinery at the support of one section against another only because it is vested in a group (as I put it in a previous section) raised above the heterogeneous component sections of the state. The monopoly control over the machinery of force thus reveals its twofold significance: as a privilege or prerogative, in the sense that it can be used (in war proper) for conquests and expansion, thus serving the specific interests of the ruling group; and as a constitutional duty, in the sense of being used internally, for the purpose of maintaining the 'king's peace'.

These two functions are not, however, securely balanced, and we shall discover the effects of this unstable equilibrium in the internal administration of the country, to the description of which we must now turn.

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When he reappeared, he called again the two men who had brought the earth the previous night, and ordered them to scatter it by night all round the town walls. Next morning Majiya attacked. A thick mist had fallen over the country. Majiya's troops were unable to move in the mist. Then a sand-storm sprang up, blinding men and horses. The horses bolted, and Majiya's cavalry, placed (in accordance with Nupe military principles) behind the infantry, trampled down their own men. When the small army of Ilorin sallied forth from the gates of the town, it met an enemy already half defeated. Majiya was beaten, he fled across the Niger, back to the protected Rabá, with only 1,000 horses and 1,070 men left of his huge army. This was not the end. Idirisu and his followers joined forces with Mallam Dendo. Together they pursued Majiya's troops, marching their men up the Niger as far as Gbajibo, fifty miles north of Rabá, where they were able to cross the river unmolested. Here Mallam Dendo is said to have used a clever ruse: for a week he collected horse-dung, and then threw it into the water; drifting down the river it reached Rabá; and the Nupe, who had hardly recovered from their defeat at Ilorin, thought that an enormous army of horsemen was approaching Rabá and had already crossed the river. Majiya fled into the interior, to Zuguma, leaving Rabá unprotected, an easy prey to the Fulani army.

Mallam Dendo repaid Idirisu's help badly. He let him remain a puppet king of Nupe exiled to Eggã,[1] while he installed himself in the capital Rabá as the real ruler. Dendo and his people collected taxes and tribute; they had the command of the larger part of the army; they began to dispense justice, and generally to direct the affairs of the kingdom. A revolt of Idirisu ended in his being killed by Mallam Dendo's troops, whereupon Dendo, 'true Fulani' (say Nupe informants), turned back to Majiya, previously his enemy, offering him friendship and recognition as king of Nupe—another puppet king, in far-away little Zuguma. Two years after this unification of Nupe, in 1833, the year when Oldfield and Lander visited Rabá, Mallam Dendo died.[2] He left four sons (two having died before their father) and two daughters, the sons being Abdu Gboya, Usman Zaki, Mamudu Gwogi, and Masaba (Mama Saba), the daughters Gogo Sabaci and Gogo Wodiko.

During Mallam Dendo's lifetime Mallam Baba, one of his companions on the flight to Ilorin, set out to conquer a kingdom for himself. Following Dendo's advice, he took twelve men, crossed three rivers, travelling by night and hiding by day from the Nupe troops who might intercept his party. The small troop raided the country, and growing as it marched, finally reached Agaie, which Mallam Baba made the capital of another (much smaller) Fulani Emirate in Nupe country. Revolts of the Nupe of that part, and attacks of Majiya, whose sovereignty had extended over Agaie, were in the end defeated, and soon Mallam Baba could enlarge his small kingdom by new victories: over part of the Bataci tribe on the river; over Kacha, which subsequently fell to Bida;

[1] In 1833 Oldfield, whose ship, the *Quorra*, was anchoring off Eggã, met there the exiled Idirisu (Laird and Oldfield, op. cit. ii, pp. 38–9).

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The Nupe war was carried on till the capital of the enemy, that is, the village or walled town in which the chief resided, was captured. If the chief and the other leaders fled, they would be pursued until they were captured or until further pursuit became impossible. Often a fugitive chief sought refuge with the king of a neighbouring country whose territory the Nupe troops would have to respect. All captured places 727 were looted and burnt, and the whole enemy country devastated. But slaughter was avoided as far as possible—the defeated enemies were more valuable alive, to be sold later as slaves. Only when rebellions had to be put down by force of war the enemies, above all chiefs and leaders, would be killed mercilessly, either in the battle, or later in Bida, whither they were taken to be executed.

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Let me conclude this description with the report of an eyewitness of standing—the youngest son of *Etsu* Masaba—who had fought in one of the last great wars of old Nupe, against the Kyedye. I have referred before to the origin of this war. It was the answer of the central government to the capture by the rebellious Kyedye of the town Kacha, which, having submitted to Fulani rule, appealed to Bida for protection against their unruly fellow tribesmen. It was, incidentally, also the last war in which the Niger Company assisted the Bida government. In the next war Niger Company troops were to turn against the Fulani, and (helped by the same Kyedye) to defeat the armies of the kingdom. 721

Since the time of Manko, *goy* and Kyedye were always at war. It happened like this. The Kyedye refused to recognize the Fulani kings. They contended that they were independent 'kings of the water'. So Manko sent his son Ibrahima from Raba to the *Kuta*, to come to an arrangement and to stop hostilities. But the Kyedye killed the messenger, cut his body to pieces, and threw it to the fish. Thereupon Manko went to fight them, but could not do much. So the wars between the two went on and on.

Later, at the time of *Etsu* Umaru, the Kyedye attacked Kacha under their *Kuta* Usman, because Kacha had submitted to the Fulani and accepted their *egba* (delegate). The Kacha people fled to Bida and asked for help. *Etsu* Umaru sent out a big army led by *Shaba* Mamudu. Most of the *gitsúži* went with him, and I was among them, also many *sarakiži* both from the *ena Maiyaki* and *ena Ndeji*. We were three days on the way, stopping twice for the night (Kacha is about 40 miles from Bida). We made camps of grass huts; some of us lived in a *tunga* near-by. For the great men we built huts with grass fences round. The army had guns and men and horses—you could not count them. In Kacha the water was covered with Kyedye canoes. We attacked at once, shooting from the banks down upon the canoes in the water. The boats of the Niger Company were helping the Fulani then. They closed the Kacha river in the back of the Kyedye. The Kyedye fled, and we crossed the river in canoes which they had left behind. The *Dokoyiringi* led the pursuit, accompanied by *Shaba* Mamudu. The rest of the troops followed later. We pursued the Kyedye on the other bank, both on land and water, for three days, as far as Lafiagi and Shonga. This was a war not only against the Kyedye, but also against Kupa and Ebagi, who were helping the Kyedye. All villages and hamlets were burnt down, numberless men and women captured. We made more than 2,000 slaves. Later they were all sold (although the Niger Company had asked for the release of the prisoners of war). At Shonga the war ended. Many Kyedye had been run down and captured or killed, but some hid in the creeks and the river forest. The chief and the seven elders of the Kyedye fled with their wives and children to Ilorin. It did not help them. Emir Aliyu (the Fulani Emir of Ilorin) sent them back as prisoners to Bida. Here they were held as hostages till *Etsu* Umaru's death. But shortly after his death *Etsu* Maliki condemned them to death, and they were strangled secretly at night in the houses where they lived. 726 727

In war, which is political action *par excellence*, the essence of state structure must reveal itself most clearly. We observe what we have recognized as an element of state organization: the monopoly position of the ruling group with regard to the employment of the political machinery, in this case military action. We see, too, that this monopoly of control is vested in the ruling group *corporately*: its individual members, 721 642

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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×796 paraphernalia. The 'business' of *fitakũ* is to break a drought or to combat illness. I witnessed the ritual in July, during the so-called 'little dry season', when the usual spell of dry weather lasted unexpectedly long. The ritual took place at midday, in a clearing in the bush a few minutes walk from Doko. The place formed a rough circle whose entrance was flanked by two fresh mounds of earth. In the centre of the clearing, under a big tree, there was another, old, mound, said to cover the sacred stone from which the ritual derives its name; a small pot was half buried in the mound. The congregation consisted of the *Žigí*, who performed the sacrifice and spoke the prayer, and of family heads and other old men, the village chief not being present. In the sacrifice the blood of the slaughtered animal (a ram) and some beer were poured into the pot in the mound, thus making the 'stone drink', after which the meat was cooked, divided among the men present, and consumed there and then together with the rest of the beer. The priest ate and drank first, the others following in order of rank and age; a share of both meat and beer was kept for the chief, to be taken to his house after the ceremonial. In the prayer which accompanied the sacrifice the beer was referred to as *nuwã*, 'water' (as is usual in all Nupe sacrifices), so that the stone was made to 'drink' the fluid of which one stood in need. The prayer was brief and addressed to both *kuti* and God, thus—

> '*Kuti*, the thing we are pouring, drink this water. *Sokó*, cause rain to fall, *kuti*, cause rain to fall. *Sokó*, cause that the whole town may prosper, that everyone may (have things) to eat, that everyone may have health.'

Finally, some leaves were plucked from the tree and stuck into the mound of earth underneath. This action was merely meant as a sign that the ceremony had been performed and had no ulterior or symbolic meaning. The whole ceremonial lasted a little over an hour.

769 According to Doko tradition Dibo Saba was the village chief
×796 who ruled at the time of Tsoede's advent, and the second in a long and (until recently) uninterrupted line of chiefs. It was he who received, at Tsoede's hand, the sacred bangles, and of all the graves of more remote ancestors his alone can still be identified. It lies outside Doko, on the old, now abandoned, site of the village, and today forms a narrow uncultivated space surrounded on all sides by farmland. The ritual is performed whenever some grave danger threatens the community, especially illness or, again, drought.
● [731] The present chief of Doko performed it in 1930, during an outbreak of smallpox, and again in 1932, when a horse sickness attacked Doko. It was not performed either in 1934 or 1936,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, 184 Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The 231 forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the 164 highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of 732 leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity, 158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still ● 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [443] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were [778] entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tsda and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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565 554 *Etsu*), and 14 to the house of Umaru, the present ruling house. The death of a high rank-holder and the subsequent appointment of a successor is frequently made an occasion for a far-reaching reshuffle of ranks, called in Nupe *wúruwúru*. It goes hand in hand with a large-scale exchange of houses, younger brothers or sons moving into the vacated house of their older brothers or fathers (vacated by death or promotion), for the state residence of the highest *gitsú* ranks goes with the title. Rarely would a new house be built in Bida to-day for a *wacī*, a Great One, as the members of the royal nobility are also called; 'only *talakaži*, Poor Ones', said an informant, 'must build themselves new homes.' Appointment to a first rank and promotion to a higher rank is granted by the king in council with royal princes and the other officers of state. Any able-bodied man in the Fulani families who has reached senior age and who has proved his ability and loyalty can claim to be admitted to the ranks of the titled *gitsúži*.[1] But there is no rule. Favouritism, intrigues, bribes [557] play their part in appointment and promotion. The ranks which a family can accumulate reflects its influence at the court and its favour with the ruling king. It is no accident that the royal house of the last *Etsu* (who had only just died) counts more ranks than either of the other two dynasties. Unlike the system of ranks which we found in the village these royal ranks do not leave an old man or an invalid who can no longer fulfil his duties in the possession of his office. In such a case a younger man is appointed to the rank, and the old holder is known as the 'Old *Kpotū*', or whatever the rank may be. A similar difference between the rank systems of village and state lies in that perfect health is an indispensable condition of appointments to any state rank. Deformity, even of the slightest kind, is ruled out. The younger brother of one of the [732] Emirs of Bida, who had a withered arm, was unable to obtain any title at all. In the state system of ranks, which was based on service in the war [555] and on offices vital to the safety of the state, respect for old age or consideration for even minor disablements has no place.

The investiture—it is the same for royal princes and for officers of state—is an interesting ceremony, an impressive proclamation of the main facts on which the feudal kingdom is built: social promotion, the oath of fealty and loyalty and responsibility towards king and country. A propitious day for the investiture is first fixed by Mallams or diviners. Then follows the invitation to the ceremony—gifts of kola-nuts sent by the candidate to all men of rank and standing. Drummers in the house of the *Etsu* announce the beginning of the ceremony; all rank-holders are assembled in the *Etsu*'s house. He addresses the candidate ceremonially, proclaiming three times his appointment. The *Alkali* (or *Liman*), as representative of the clergy of the kingdom, clothes the candidate in an embroidered gown and rich cloak—gifts of the *Etsu*—and places a turban on his head. Then he leads the prayer, and the *Etsu* addresses a final exhortation to the new officer of state: 'Practice for-

[1] The Nupe of Patigi have preserved a linguistic distinction which has disappeared in Bida, namely, between royal princes who have received titles and those who have not. The former are called *b'rama* (their traditional salute is *lerama*, i.e. behold the *rama*), and the latter *gitsiži*.

565 the highest *gitsú* ranks go with the title. First appointment to a title and promotion to a higher one are granted by the king in council with the royal princes and other officers of state. Any able-bodied man of senior age, proved loyalty, and ability, [662] and good health, of the Fulani families, is eligible for admission to a *gitsúši* title, but favouritism, intrigue, and bribery also play a part, and the titles which a family has been able to accumulate are an indication of its influence at court and its favour with the ruling king. When a title-holder becomes incapable, through age or illness, of fulfilling his duties, a younger man is appointed, the former holder being styled [732] " old *Kpotug* " or whatever the title may be. Nobody with any kind of deformity can hold a title, since the system was originally based on service in war and offices vital to the safety of the state. Investiture takes place in the *Etsu*'s house, in the presence of the *Alkali* or *Liman*, a propitious day having first been selected by mallams or diviners. The candidate is addressed by the *Etsu*, then clothed in a cloak and embroidered gown by the *Alkali* who also places a turban on his head. After prayers in which all join, the new holder rides through the town accompanied by other title-holders, and dismounts to greet princes or heads of houses at their residences.

The second class is that to which the *ticiši* or *rowni* (office-holding nobility) belong. The name *rowni* means " turbans " and refers to the fact that the bestowal of such a title is symbolized by the gift of a turban from the king. There are three groups of *ticiši*, each of which is regarded as a sharply defined social order: the *sarakiši*, the *ena manši*, and the *ena wuši*. The *sarakiši* is a group of civil and military nobility consisting of town elders (*ena ndeji*) and war leaders (*ena 'kuŋ*). The second order, *ena manši*, comprises the mallams, the religious and judicial officials, such as the *Alkali* (judge), and the *Liman* (religious head), with their assistants and scribes. The third order, *ena wuši*, which is the lowest in rank but still possesses great influence, consists of the court slaves.

Many of the *saraki* titles are identical in name with those bestowed on the village elders, but the symbols of status, even when similar, refer to very different social contexts. *Saraki* titles are, like *gitsú* titles, generally granted by the *Etsu* in council with princes and other officers of state. Theoretically, at least, outsiders, even commoners, who have won his favour may be admitted to the ranks. Only a few of the higher titles, which have become the prerogatives of certain families, are hereditary. Several titles cannot be accumulated in a single family. They are bestowed exclusively on one member of the family group; no other close relative can then claim a title or office in addition to the one already bestowed on his " house." To-day wealth and financial influence are important factors in gaining titles and the *saraki* group includes rich traders, as well as descendants of the old official nobility of pre-Fulani Nupe, and Nupe families who became partisans of the Fulani conquerors. These *sarakiši* received no salary, but were formerly granted land and slaves.

The *Ndeji* (" father of the town "), the head of the *ena ndeji*, is in charge of the affairs of Bida and the most powerful of the officers of state because he is closest to the king. At the head of the other civil title-holders he holds the daily council (*nkó*) with the king himself. The military titles (*ena 'kuŋ*) were formerly those of war leaders, the different titles being associated with special responsibilities.

565 The *ena manši*, the order of mallams, is " a class between classes, a mobile
517 privileged intelligentsia." It includes the *Alkali*, the *Liman*, and their assistants.
554 The detailed knowledge of Moslem law and literature and the specialized training required limits the number of candidates. But the offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* are sometimes hereditary, reflecting a tradition of learning in certain families, and political influence, for many eminent mallams are of Fulani stock. Mallams are highly esteemed by everyone and are placed about commoners even when they are without rank or title and have only little learning. They are allowed to marry daughters and sisters of higher born families.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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bearing enterprises ('interest' understood here in the widest sense). The 454
nature of the enterprise varies with local conditions, and differs above all in town and country. Peasants mostly invest their money in livestock (see Chap. XI). We have seen that Nupe inventiveness is always on the look-out for new opportunities promising a higher 'interest', even in the narrow field of stock-breeding as they know it: we have mentioned the buying and selling of ostriches, and the isolated experiment in horse-breeding of one village chief—incidentally the chief of a typical backwood village, Sakpe. In the town, and in the large trading-centres of the country, money is invested chiefly in trade, even by men and women who do not personally engage in trade. They would trust a certain sum to a trader of their acquaintance for a particular purpose, e.g. to help him finance a trading expedition to Kano or Bornu. The trader will use their capital together with his own, and will return it to them increased by the profits which it has brought when his business has been successfully concluded. The trader, of course, also derives a certain profit from these investments, as they enable him to enlarge the scope of his enterprise and to secure more favourable prices. Many most highly placed notables in Bida, not excluding the king himself, use this profitable method of investment.

Certain traditional and formerly highly important methods of investment, above all war and slavery, have disappeared under the new political order. I have described in an earlier chapter the contributions of the houses of the Bida nobility to the wars and military exploits of their country and have also discussed slavery and slave trade. It remains to discuss the closely related traditional form of investment in 'human capital' which has become a thing of the past only quite recently, namely, money investment in human pledges (*sofa*, in Nupe).

PAWNING

Besides the pawning of human pledges, ordinary pawning—pawning 426
of valuable goods—also occurs. My information is that beads, costly 735
gowns, a sword, or saddle, all things of silver or gold, are frequently pawned as security for a loan. No interest is paid on the loan itself, and the transaction is regarded purely as an act of friendship. I have, however, not discovered any actual instance of this practice. My impression is that it is not, and has never been, very widespread. Pawning of people, on the other hand, has grown to enormous dimensions. When pawning of human pledges was finally suppressed in Nigeria, in 1933–4, 3,000 pawns were released in Bida Emirate alone.

As slavery reflects the insecurity of the political rights of the conquered subjects of Nupe kingdom, pawning reflects the economic insecurity under which a large proportion of the population of the Emirate lives. The lack of flexibility, more particularly, in their economy tends to foster such radical means of escape from financial difficulties. Under the pressure of unexpected demands or certain imperative heavy expenses which cannot be matched by normal efforts—payment of bride-price; a heavy fine; money with which to bail a family member or bribe

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426 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to
procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the
735 bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible.
Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps
to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned,
though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have
recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30
had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find
the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his
son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned
in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house,
and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was
in turn released.

It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference
426 is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary
735 arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect
to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The
567 pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other
558 household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike
slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot
expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be
married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-
price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may
not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a
normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn
who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be ex-
changed for another more promising member of his family. Pawns
and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame
in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their
families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning
poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its
lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them
about as their inferiors.

Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of
426 money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for
735 which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10.
567 The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'inter-
est' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the prac-
554 tice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with
girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they
might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However,
the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.
[517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse
a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which
means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and
profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly
yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or
a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member
of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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trained, slave; for a pawn, with his restricted usefulness, one might have to pay more than twice the amount. There is no doubt, then, that the institution of pawning represented not only a profit-making, 'capitalist' investment, but also, to some extent, a 'humanitarian' duty linked with status and prestige, a crude attempt at alleviating the hardships involved in the unequal distribution of wealth. Well-educated Nupe men, themselves members of the wealthier classes, with whom I discussed pawning, even went so far as to explain pawning (at least on a moderate scale) as an institution of considerable educational value enabling the sons of the poor to study farm-work and husbandry in the houses of prosperous and enterprising men. They would admit drawbacks only in the excessive practice of pawning, which, they maintained, was a recent development, brought about by rising prices and rising cost of living. These drawbacks, as they saw them, were that with the increase in their numbers, the pawns, many of whom frequently worked together in the same household, grew lazy and irresponsible, and showed openly their resentment at having to work for strange masters. The complaints of my informants were thus that in the combination of material and moral rewards which the people of wealth and status expected from the institute of pawning, the material rewards had completely to give place to moral rewards.

A similar combination of material returns from invested wealth with benefits of a more abstract order—status and prestige—is also characteristic of the institution of clientship (already explained in Chap. VIII). The share of the 'abstract' benefits becomes larger the closer we approach forms of expenditure and investment bound up with social status: display of wealth in household arrangements, festivities, the equipment of one's retinue, and so forth. To this and similar questions we shall return later.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
462 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
439 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell groundnuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to
spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in
much the same manner, and children born in captivity were
accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a
medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo,
between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce
fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are
guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven
to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed
"dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It
is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's
milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk
of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom
called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat
different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth
day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain
roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some
is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family
then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine
to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The
guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the
usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's
parents come and live with her for three months to see that she
fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with
them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-
born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotũ*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotũ*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotũ*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows: 182 144 533

> The needle is coming,
> The Mallam of the needle,
> The father of threading.
> O let me go,
> And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 642 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 642 186 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achieving, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *élite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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x796 strangers. Indeed, it is not supposed to be seen by strangers, and these are driven away with much shouting and angry gestures; the contingency arises quite often, for the place of the sacrifice is fairly public, being situated on the open bank of an arm of the [505] Niger, close to the landing place of a canoe ferry.

The ritual takes place in the morning and lasts about four hours. Eight elders accompany the priest to the *kuti* place, where a mound of earth has been thrown up close to the edge of the water. Water, fetched from the river in gourds, is first poured over the mound, followed by a little honey, the rest of which is thrown into the river. Then the white cock is beheaded over the mound so that his blood drips on to the earth; the head is left lying on the mound and the feathers are planted around it in a circle; this is done as a sign that the ritual has been performed and as a suggestion to passers-by to leave a gift to the spirits. A libation of beer follows, the rest of the beer being passed round among the elders. Meanwhile the preparation of the meal has begun, the cock being cooked in corngruel over an open fire; while this goes on, the old men chat freely, without any signs of awe or restraint. When the meal is done, the priest throws a few morsels on the mound and into the river, and the rest is eaten by all present. Finally, all wash their hands in the river and a last gourd of river water is poured over the mound. At each offering the priest repeats the same brief prayer, which is of the usual informal kind; one prays that God may give health, that there should be plenty of food, and that the women may have children. Though the prayer starts with the invocation of 'Father Niger' no further mention is made of the river. During the sacrifice I witnessed a sentence was added *ex tempore*—'God give health to the White Man', a reference to my recent illness. Such special appeals, I was told, were quite in order; though no individual could order the *ndáduma*, the health or fate of any member of the community (which status was accorded to me) can suitably be brought to the notice of the river spirits and of God.

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

x796 The *kuti mamma* is supposed to start the cycle of rites linked with the 9th month. Once more, however, the ritual time table 751 is not rigid; the performance I saw, for example, fell on the 16th November 1934, i.e. in the middle of the 8th month in Nupe reckoning. Also it lasted one day, more precisely one night, instead of the traditional week. The ritual, which is again in the charge of the *Tswanya*, includes two distinct observances which appear to have been merged in a purely fortuitous fashion. The first, called *zumácikã* ('Back of the Bush'), is concerned with the

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sacrifice to a *cigbe* shrine of that name, said to ward off smallpox; the other, the *mamma* proper, consists mainly in the appearance and dance of masked figures called *nāgbc*. The masks themselves are referred to as *kũyí* ('full garment') or simply as *ewo* ('dress'), and their appearance is meant to cleanse the village of evil influences. These are not further specified save negatively, in that they exclude witchcraft. The *zumácikã* is said to have been introduced by an old woman who, many years ago, happened to arrive in Jebba during a smallpox epidemic and taught the people the secret of the appropriate medicine; nothing further is known about her, about the manner of her death, or about her burial place. The medicine is contained (so it is said) in an earthen pot which now stands under a low grass roof in the middle of the village. It is in every respect an unusual version of *cigbe*. It cannot be utilized at will but only at this ceremonial; it belongs to the village and not to any individual owner; nor yet is it used in the manner of other medicines. For the substance in question is neither drunk nor otherwise applied to the body, since its effect would be deadly if it were so used; indeed no one has ever seen it. It is hidden inside the vessel, being periodically increased when blood and beer from the sacrifice are added, and its mere presence is magically effective. This effect bears on the prevention of the disease rather than its cure: smallpox is being 'kept away as you keep away a stranger'; which preventive aspect is also reflected in the date of the ritual, which falls towards the end of the cold season, while outbreaks of smallpox are believed to occur only during the hot season, in the 10th and 11th month.

The masks of the *kuti mamma*, on the other hand, are attributed, with so many other things, to Tsoede. They are made of dried grass, consisting of a skirt and a kind of veil covering face and chest, and during the year are stored in the houses of various elders. While the *cigbe* vessel stands on a public place and is in no way concealed, the masks must be kept hidden and may be put on only in a safe and secret place. The whole ritual is similarly veiled in secrecy; it takes place at night, the women having been warned to keep indoors, and out of the sight of strangers: if women or strangers were to see this *kuti*, they would be killed by its 'force'.[1]

The ceremonial I saw started about 8 p.m. on a moonless night,

[1] The fear of the *mamma* is a very real one. At the time of the performance here described the District Head from Mokwa, a Fulani nobleman, happened to stay in Jebba. He heard that a 'feast' was going to take place, and when he learned that I was going he decided to come also. He arrived when the dance was already in progress, gave one look, and literally fled. His hurried retreat was received with much hilarity by the men present, who added: 'This is how all strangers run away when they hear the *mamma*.'

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*796 and was performed to the light of a hurricane lamp and a number of grass torches. About forty men were assembled in front of the
● 751 *cigbe* shrine. The beating of drums and a high-pitched screech of the men announced the beginning of the ritual, giving also a final warning to women who might still be abroad. The *cigbe* pot had been decorated with a strip of white cloth tied round its neck, which was referred to as the 'dress' of the vessel, that is, by the same name as the masks worn by the dancers. These appeared later, accompanied by two older men, one of them the *Ndakotsu* of the senior age grade, and some youths, all carrying sticks to drive away and beat intruders. There were two masks, worn by young men of the senior age grade, who had dressed in the presence of the *mamma* priest while he spoke this brief prayer:

'Our Lord God, let us go out (as masks); men and women (who must not see the masks), God will kill them. Now the *kuti* enters (into the masks). May God cause that the thing (i.e. smallpox and evil in general) does not stay here (in the village).

At the place of the *cigbe* shrine, the masks keep at first in the shadow without moving. The officiant kneels down in front of the *cigbe* vessel, whose lid has been removed, while the rest of the men sit around him in a triple halfcircle, the old men on the inside, younger men in the middle, youths on the outside. The man who actually performs the sacrifice is the *Ndakotsu*, since the *Tswanya* is too old and weak; but he sits immediately behind the younger man and from time to time instructs or corrects him. Throughout the proceedings the drums continue playing, and repeatedly the congregation breaks out in a high-pitched scream or calls out '*gengebaru*' (a meaningless word)—the 'greeting' of the *cigbe*.

The officiant pours some beer into the *cigbe* vessel, saying—'*Kuti*, we brew beer, we give thee water (i.e. beer), so that the town may have health, everyone may have sweet things, the women may have children, everything may prosper'. The libation is repeated three times, then the officiant drinks a little of the beer and pours the rest into the *cigbe* vessel. He kills a black male kid, slitting its throat, and lets the blood run into the vessel. The body of the animal is removed to be roasted over an open fire while the libation of beer is repeated, the same prayer being now spoken by the old men, one after the other. Finally, the beer goes round according to age and rank, the *Tswanya* drinking first. The men clearly enjoy drinking the beer and behave much as they would at any ordinary drinking party. This concludes the first phase of the ceremonial; the proceedings that follow belong to the *mamma* proper.

[535] They begin with singing and a slow and dignified dance of a few old men. The masks soon join in, being acclaimed with shouts of

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'mamari', the 'greeting' of the *mamma* masks. Later the masks, accompanied by all the young men, set out on a dance-procession through the village, where they beat with their sticks on the doors of houses, to frighten all evil persons (and all women). On the way they 'salute' the houses of chief and elders and also look out for strangers who might have strayed into the village. The dance procession is repeated several times, and on every return the masks join in the singing and dancing, which become more and more general. Let me stress that the dance preserves its restrained and quiet character throughout, the occasional shrieks notwithstanding. Altogether, the general mood is neither excited nor severe. The men who stay behind at the *cigbe* shrine, if they do not dance, talk in whispers but quite informally, about previous performances of the *kuti*, about old times, and so forth; one of the elders takes the opportunity of telling me about the meaning and rules of the *mamma*. Some time during the dance the meal has been prepared and is eaten by the congregation after some morsels of food are dropped into the *cigbe* vessel. It is by then 11 o'clock. There is no washing of hands, and no other formal conclusion of the sacrifice. Singing and dancing, and the drinking of beer while it lasts, go on in the same manner until dawn, though some old men, tired out, have fallen asleep. In the morning, the men return to their houses to sleep, while the womenfolk, now released from the night's prohibition, set about their day's work. Formerly, I was told, this went on for a whole week, with dancing at night and rest during the day. 796x 751 535

The songs sung during the *mamma* refer, on the whole vaguely and obscurely, to the ceremonial and its rules, though the text is interspersed with meaningless words. 796x 751 539

1

The person who offends the *mamma*,
He (the *mamma*) will hear it and tell it
(i.e. the person will be punished with death).

2

The *mamma* instructs the masks;
it is closed to the uninitiated.

3

The masks, *woro woro*,
The masks kill (evil) people,
Eyeh——

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4

Arato, one makes the *mamma*,
Arato, the drum of *mamma* (is playing).
By night, the drum of *mamma* is speaking.

5

They are making the *mamma* with it together,
They are making the *mamma* with it together
('it' refers to the *kuti*, the phrase meaning—
in the ceremonial masks and *kuti* are one).

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The people have no theory why the cult should be particularly frightening to the women; on the contrary, they emphasize that the *mamma* is meant to frighten all evil doers and deny that it has any bearing on witchcraft (which is wielded essentially by women). Yet the cult is clearly the men's secret and seems to express male dominance and some antagonism between the sexes. Oddly enough, one of the ritual paraphernalia, the smallpox medicine, is described as a woman's gift. But let me leave this point for the moment and only point out that the *mamma*, which cleanses the community from evil influences, fittingly initiates the cycle of rites meant to procure more positive benefits—timely floods, as in the *ndáḍuma*, or health and fertility, as in the *dzakó*.

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The latter ritual is supposed to succeed the *mamma* by ten days, though the performance I witnessed took place seventeen days later, on 3rd December. The *dzakó* is performed in public, without secrecy, in front of the sacred relics of Tsoede, two bronze figures of a man and a woman. Special musical instruments are used, two gourd rattles, and three drums hung with brass bells and other ornaments again attributed to Tsoede. The congregation during the sacrifice itself consists of the thirteen elders of Jebba, as usual bareheaded and stripped to the waist, and carrying long staves; but other men and women, even children, may watch and will later join in the dance. The officiant of the ritual is the *Ndace* (the 'Father of Hunting'), though the ritual has nothing to do with hunting. Nor has the rank itself this particular connotation. In Jebba, it is an elder's rank among others, though one specifically connected with the relics of Tsoede; for the *Ndace* is one of the four men who serve (or used to serve) as the 'executioners' wielding the Chain of Tsoede.

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The ceremonial starts in the afternoon, with a sacrifice in front of the bronze figures, during which the officiant has the two rattle players on his right and left. The place on the priest's left, opposite the female figure, signifies 'birth', the place on his right, opposite the male figure, 'health'; which symbolism of right and left is

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or by preparing a potion from bits of earth extracted from a 757
termite mound. For severe headache one applies an ointment to
the eyes, compounded of the dried kernels of a fruit tree, the bark 278
from the roots of another, cloves, and powdered antimony. Sometimes headache is treated quasi-surgically, by a species of bleeding; the barber makes a number of fine incisions into the patient's forehead and then rubs a paste of dried locust-beans and natron into the cuts. The counter-irritation thus induced may well offer a temporary relief, though the bleeding itself is probably too slight to have any effect; the cure, however, has an odd conclusion, the patient's head being knocked gently three times against the wall.

Ulcers and wounds are treated with powdered bark or roots, 752
used either dry or damp, and left on the wound for two to three 278
days. Broken limbs are first massaged with a salve made of palm-oil and the dried and powdered leaves of a certain tree (another remedy including dirt from a hen house and charred earth from a termite mound), after which one applies a ligature of rope, using four sticks as splints. The ligature is removed after three days, but the massage with the ointment is continued. If the fracture does not heal, this treatment is followed up with a 'stronger' one, to wit, a massage with snake poison. For smallpox one gives a potion 757
made of the pods of a certain vine growing in the bush. There is 278
also a 'prophylactic' treatment, applied when an epidemic is
threatening; it consists either in drinking an infusion of the [751]
bark of the locust-bean tree, boiled together with some grains of sorghum or millet, or in fumigating the house, at night, by burning certain herbs. Pounded hibiscus seeds, taken like snuff, are given to patients suffering from asthma. For fever accompanied by rigor (malaria?) one drinks the boiled juice of the pawpaw mixed with natron; a more 'magical' cure consists in inhalations of the fumes from three ingredients burned together in an old, broken pot (never a new one)—a powdered herb, the swamp plant mentioned before, and twigs taken from a vulture's nest. We shall meet again with this predilection for old pots when discussing the medicines of the *cigbeci* experts; the vulture plays a part also in another remedy of the barber-doctors, applied to sore eyes: they are bathed in ash-water mixed with a pulverized vulture's leg. Other herbal concoctions are used in the treatment of gonorrhœa (called *tswashi*), syphilis (called *tunjeri*), and sleeping sickness; these remedies are similar in that the first two are said to increase the typical secretion until 'the whole disease leaves the body', while the last brings on diarrhœa, the germs of the disease being passed with the stool. Lunacy of a non-violent nature may be treated by means of inhalations, repeated several times day and night, or by

278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciži*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciži*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the
789 latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciži* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciži* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[11]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 38–67.

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or by preparing a potion from bits of earth extracted from a termite mound. For severe headache one applies an ointment to the eyes, compounded of the dried kernels of a fruit tree, the bark from the roots of another, cloves, and powdered antimony. Sometimes headache is treated quasi-surgically, by a species of bleeding; the barber makes a number of fine incisions into the patient's forehead and then rubs a paste of dried locust-beans and natron into the cuts. The counter-irritation thus induced may well offer a temporary relief, though the bleeding itself is probably too slight to have any effect; the cure, however, has an odd conclusion, the patient's head being knocked gently three times against the wall. 757 278

Ulcers and wounds are treated with powdered bark or roots, used either dry or damp, and left on the wound for two to three days. Broken limbs are first massaged with a salve made of palm-oil and the dried and powdered leaves of a certain tree (another remedy including dirt from a hen house and charred earth from a termite mound), after which one applies a ligature of rope, using four sticks as splints. The ligature is removed after three days, but the massage with the ointment is continued. If the fracture does not heal, this treatment is followed up with a 'stronger' one, to wit, a massage with snake poison. For smallpox one gives a potion made of the pods of a certain vine growing in the bush. There is also a 'prophylactic' treatment, applied when an epidemic is threatening; it consists either in drinking an infusion of the bark of the locust-bean tree, boiled together with some grains of sorghum or millet, or in fumigating the house, at night, by burning certain herbs. Pounded hibiscus seeds, taken like snuff, are given to patients suffering from asthma. For fever accompanied by rigor (malaria?) one drinks the boiled juice of the pawpaw mixed with natron; a more 'magical' cure consists in inhalations of the fumes from three ingredients burned together in an old, broken pot (never a new one)—a powdered herb, the swamp plant mentioned before, and twigs taken from a vulture's nest. We shall meet again with this predilection for old pots when discussing the medicines of the *cigbeci* experts; the vulture plays a part also in another remedy of the barber-doctors, applied to sore eyes: they are bathed in ash-water mixed with a pulverized vulture's leg. Other herbal concoctions are used in the treatment of gonorrhœa (called *tswashi*), syphilis (called *tunjeri*), and sleeping sickness; these remedies are similar in that the first two are said to increase the typical secretion until 'the whole disease leaves the body', while the last brings on diarrhœa, the germs of the disease being passed with the stool. Lunacy of a non-violent nature may be treated by means of inhalations, repeated several times day and night, or by

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will often know and apply different ones. Also, some specialize in potions or in poultices and lotions; others prefer treatment by means of inhalations, which the Nupe call *turare* (a Hausa word, meaning 'scent' or 'fumigation'). Certain more versatile experts know several remedies for the same illness, which they would try out one after the other. The position is summed up in this statement of a famous Bida 'doctor': 'Sometimes one medicine proves sufficient; but there is only one way of discovering the right one—to experiment and trust in God.' Certain barber-doctors, too, are specialists in particular diseases and are known as such. Thus only two men in Bida knew how to treat lunacy and only one Bida barber (whom I met in Ibadan, where he was staying at the time) knew how to treat sleeping sickness; similarly, there were specialists for venereal diseases, for eye complaints, and so forth. For certain ailments there are no treatments; their list includes blindness, idiocy, leprosy, elephantiasis, deafness, 'incurable syphilis', and, oddly enough, the common cold; my informants made it quite clear that the last was too trifling a complaint to deserve the attention of 'doctors'. 757 759

As we have seen, surgical treatments are almost entirely absent, and the use of splints in fractures is considered no more important than the application of some 'strong' salve or ointment. The barbers, in fact, herbalists at heart, deprecate the 'use of the knife' and emphatically deny its value. Said the head of the barbers' guild: 'The knife begets pain; how could it cure?' Though the same few herbs or plants appear in the majority of remedies, this does not mean that they alone have curative properties. On the contrary, it is considered that all plants contain some medicine, even if its nature or extraction are not known. It is considered equally certain that this medical knowledge, far from being static, is growing all the time, so that the barbers today possess medicines unknown even a short time ago. Once more, this is a question of experimenting 'with the help of God', and there are certain rough rules how to proceed. One tries first the bark of a plant or tree not hitherto used; if this proves worthless, one tries the roots, and finally the leaves or fruits. As to why certain parts of plants should contain *cigbe* and others not, there is no answer; or rather the usual answer is '*cigbe u de 'tsu a*', 'medicines have no king' (that is, follow no proclaimed law): God has made them so, and men can only hope to learn by trial and error or by accepting the wisdom of others. [752] 757

A strikingly large number of remedies employ plant parasites (called *etú*), and their special medicinal properties are strongly emphasized. If the alien growth of the parasites once suggested to the people some affinity with the nature of diseases and hence a 757 278

757 and neighbours first before consulting the accredited experts. One
[431] does not pay in money for this kind of assistance but only offers a small return gift of kolanuts or food. The household remedies are mainly laxatives, or cures for toothache, headache, and slight wounds or bruises, though they include also certain crude treatments to induce abortion or prevent pregnancy—by sucking frogs or drinking the blood from the afterbirth. Normally, one uses infusions of common plants, ash-water or natron (both known as laxatives), ointments made of palm-oil or sheanut-butter, or damp earth (applied to cuts and the like); the more complex herbal concoctions and the use of bark and roots, which make up the *cigbe* proper, are entirely absent.

Certain individuals, are known to possess this more 'professional' knowledge as well. Like the barbers, they apply therapeutic treatments in a profane and would-be rational manner, and like the *cigbeci*, practise the non-therapeutic variety with more or less conspicuous mystical intent. Their skill extends to remedies alleged to increase virility and facilitate pregnancy, though contraceptives are outside the scope of the individual practitioner. 'Fantastic' treatments, however, are not. We already mentioned one such cure meant to remove rheumatic pains through 'drawing them from the body'. Two further treatments are of special interest, one because it is empirically sound, the other because it is surgical as well as daring and involves a clear apprehension of the symptoms of a relatively obscure disease. The first example con-
[278] cerns the use of the severely toxic *datura stramonium*. Many Nupe are aware of the effect of the seeds or powdered leaves which produce stupor and insensitiveness, and the experts prescribe small doses, taken in water, as a cure for pains; with less justification, they also recommend the external application of the leaves, soaked in ash-water and mixed with sheanut butter, for aching limbs. The
757 second example is an alleged cure for sleeping sickness, which must
● 752 be applied in the early stages of the disease, recognized by the swelling of the neck glands. I only met one expert who knew of this treatment, a man from Mokwa, whose repute had spread far and wide. The surgical treatment involves a deep incision in the skin above the glands, charred leaves of a bean variety being rubbed into the wound; the leaves are said to have a caustic effect so that, when the treatment is repeated twice daily for a week, the glands themselves can be removed. As an after-treatment the patient is given an infusion of bark and roots to drink, and a coarse grass and fish to eat. The expert did not claim that his cure was always effective: it would still depend on 'God's will'; but he showed me a man, bearing the scars of the operation, who, he claimed, had completely recovered.

½ [i.e., simple medicinal treatments. - Analyst]

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787 (that is, their *fifíngi*) from the surrounding farmlands and carry them to yours. A rich grain harvest can be obtained by taking the head of an ass or donkey, its saddle cloth, and the excreta of a person who dies of smallpox, tying the three 'ingredients' into a bundle hung from a palm-tree on the farm: the grain will then grow as high as a person, since the *fifíngi* of the donkey, used to carrying loads on its back, will endeavour to 'pull up' the grain 'like a load'. Farmers can finally prepare a potent drink made of a black monkey's left leg, some leaves driven into a heap by a whirlwind, and beer: they will then work 'as fast as the whirlwind' and as 'tirelessly as a monkey'. Ndakotsu's father is reported to have owned also one of those protective *cigbe* which punish evil-wishers; it is said to have been particularly vicious, inflicting body-ache on any person who so much as stared at you. Nothing further, however, is known about this medicine, which has since been lost.

755 The picture changes again when we turn to the medicines hereditary in families or 'houses' or belonging to communities. Let me quote these examples. In Jebba Island I recorded an hereditary *cigbe* called *fúnagba*, which cures headache, pains in the body, and barrenness, and can either be drunk or used externally. Its composition is complicated, including seven ingredients, six of which are roots of specific trees and the seventh the root of any tree growing across a footpath (such roots being particularly 'strong'); these ingredients must be mixed with beer, blood of fowl (that is, the common materials for sacrifices), and some Niger water fetched by a young girl. Apart from its therapeutic effect, this medicine also protects the house from thieves and evil-minded intruders. In another village on the Niger I found a medicine called *atafá*, which has only the latter effect; it could, in fact, never be renewed if it were actually dispensed since its composition is unknown. In several villages I met with a medicine called *wasa* or *gába*, compounded of ten ingredients, one of which is the boiled head of a [752] poisonous snake, severed before it released the poison; this medicine operates as an antidote against snake-bite, as a cure for stomach-ache, and sometimes also as a potion applied in ordeals; while its presence in the house affords protection from thieves and evil-doers. A medicine called *égbo*, from Shari, is used to treat headache and stomach-ache, and is also taken by the devotees of the *ndakó gboyá* before they put on the masks that go with the cult. Then there is the Jebba medicine *zumácikã*, which belongs to the village and is believed to protect the community from smallpox; as we remember, its composition is unknown and it acts through merely being present.[1]

[1] See above, p. 91.

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insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'. 779 773

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds. 779 774

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses. 779 774 753 828

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of 779 774

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779 and the world is less sharply conceived than we have phrased it. It is blurred, above all, by the ambiguity of that crucial phrase 'of God'.[1] We can now define it more sharply: The Nupe will generally assert that only certain things in the world are *nya Sokó*, and that others are not; but, when pressed, they will admit that even these 'independent' entities are yet known to God and must in some sense be by his will. Nupe theology, in other words, has not refined its conceptual tools sufficiently to carry this dualism to its logical conclusion. The contrasted concepts which we employed, of things 'willed' by God as against those he only 'suffers' to exist, is beyond its capacity or intentions. Yet the Nupe do express something of the kind in a different way, by default as it were rather than in positive statements, for they leave the share of God in the creation of these 'independent' things of the world unemphasized, like matters that are unimportant and of no consequence. Thus it is important and always stressed that God gave life and ritual to man; and it is unimportant and not normally mentioned that in some fashion divine creation also includes *cigbe*, illness, the shadow soul, evil spirits, lunacy, and witchraft.

I would read a further meaning into this unequal emphasis of the divine share in creation. It suggests, it seems to me, an attempt to gloss over the philosophical difficulties entailed in this conception of a creation which is imperfect and neutral with regard to good and evil. These difficulties might have been resolved in a more sophisticated theology by some pseudo-Thomist doctrine, equating the divine design of the world with perfection and making the world 'left to itself' the source of all imperfections and evils. Yet though Nupe doctrine fails to furnish any such vindication of divine providence, the failure can at least be concealed by the manner in which the doctrine is handled, through emphasis here and 'glossing over' there. These attempts are never more than crude and half-hearted; but the motives behind them are, I think, unmistakable. Indeed, in one instance they even intrude upon the formulated doctrine; and this relates, significantly, to the one form of evil which is specifically and unreservedly ascribed to the deity.

779 The two most dreaded diseases are in this sense 'of God'—sleeping sickness (*kpatsũgi*) and leprosy (even called *Sokó 'gũ* or *sokogũci*—the 'Illness of God'). Now, God did not pre-ordain them in their deadly form; he created only their possibility, while the actual evils are a consequence of the 'world left to itself', that is, of accident and unpredictable circumstances. When creating man, God placed leprosy and sleeping sickness into every human organism, but he created the two diseases both in male and female form, and an organism possessing one form only remains healthy and

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[1] See above, p. 10.

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normal. The actual disease materializes when the two forms happen to be combined in the same person, and the prospects of a cure depend on which 'germ', male or female, is the stronger. Predominantly male leprosy is curable; predominantly female leprosy, fatal. In the case of sleeping sickness everything depends on the treatment, though the prospects are bleak in either case; if a *cigbe* expert succeeds in killing the male 'germ' only, the disease will take its fatal course; in the opposite case death at least will be avoided, though another incurable disease, lunacy, will result.

This is once more a half-hearted vindication of divine providence; all it attempts to prove is that creation is not necessarily evil and that evil things slip into it by chance. Fundamentally, the whole Nupe universe is thus ruled by accident. Such benevolent design as is discernible in it is all too vulnerable and all too easily vitiated by the coexistence of evil. Yet neither are evil and malevolence more securely established. It is true that there is no real struggle between the two, as between opposed wills or destinies, but only the casual share-out of fortunes and misfortunes. Even so there are grounds, if not for an inspiring faith, yet for its cruder version, optimism. And to this, as we shall see, the Nupe firmly cling.

This is not, however, the whole picture. Our view of Nupe religion is still one-sided, based as it is on the doctrine alone, on ideas asserted, taught, and learned as such. Another kind of faith or assurance, less articulate but perhaps more powerful, may spring from the concrete acts of worship, that is, from the psychological stimulations and experiences gained in ritual and other observances. With these the following chapters will deal.

For the moment we need point out only one of the consequences of the Nupe conception of the universe. Clearly, it vouchsafes little certainty or guidance for action. Even the promises of supernatural aid only add to the uncertainties, for as they offer the chance of several trials so they confront the user with the problem of choice, which problem is not always readily solved. But the Nupe universe holds out some promise of certainty and some guidance for action. Both are mechanical and of a case-to-case kind; in other words, they are such as divination can offer. And since this guidance is required both for the problems of everyday life and for the handling of the supernatural tools meant to aid man in these problems, divination becomes a prerequisite, not only of provident action in general, but also of religious actions. It seems logical, therefore, to turn to divination first, and afterwards to ritual, medicine, and to all the other 'supernatural tools'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

665 566 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 519 754 683 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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562 put it, the '*Sagi* of the poor'; what the royal princesses do for the women
554 of the nobility the *Sonya* does for the women of her own class: she advises them and arbitrates in their quarrels, taking, however, the more serious cases to the *Sagi*. The *Sonya* might almost be called a female officer of state. All large-scale women's work that is done in Bida by order of the king is organized and supervised by her—for example, the beating of the floors in the houses of the king and the royal nobility. The
[443] *Sonya* is, above all, entrusted with the supervision of the market. She is elected by the Bida women who are regular traders on the market, and her rank is confirmed by the *Etsu*. The respect and deference with which all Bida women greet their *Sonya* illustrates the importance of her position. Formerly she was a royal fief-holder on a small scale, holding land of her own; she was also allowed to levy a small due on all business
[651] transacted on the market. Of this levy the *Sonya* returned one-third to the *Sagi* or *Nimwoye* as a symbol of her submission to the highest authority of these royal princesses over the women of Bida. To-day, the *Sonya* is still supervising the market and the work of the women. She has kept her status and her official position as well: for she has been made an official of the Native Administration and granted a small salary.

In every Nupe village, finally, we find a titled 'head of the women',
562 called *Sagi*, like the royal princess in Bida. She is usually a woman about
624 or over 50. She is elected by the married women of the village and her appointment is confirmed by the chief. In larger villages there may be a
754 *Shaba Sagi* as well, an appointed successor to the headship of the women. The title *Sagi* itself seems to be of comparatively recent origin and was probably, like many other village titles, copied from the Bida rank system. The original title which it replaced was *Lelu*. This title, though no longer used, was explained to me in most villages to be the exact equivalent of the modern title *Sagi*. Yet this is not quite true: with the change in the title a subtle change in the significance of the rank has taken place. As I have described elsewhere, the Nupe chiefs used to bestow the rank *Lelu* on the woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could thus be made to benefit the interests of the community. Turned into an organ of village administration, this woman could be used, in the opinion of the people, to check and control the subversive activities of the other witches.[1] With regard to witchcraft, then, the Nupe have adopted the proverbial policy of making a (reformed) criminal chief of police, or rather an imaginary criminal controller of an imaginary crime. Their belief in the efficiency of this measure has not changed. Yet the curtailed power of the present-day village chief, who is no longer free to act upon the advice of his female 'controller of witchcraft'; the general fear in the country, born of the experiences in the witchcraft trial in 1932, even so much as to mention the word witch or witchcraft; and in certain places also the growing importance of other more prosaic business for the head of the women, have all contributed to suppress the magical aspect

[1] See *Africa*, 1935, 4.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of the office of the village *Sagi* and to emphasize its harmless business side instead. 562

Thus we find that in many Nupe villages an efficient business-like head of the women has succeeded the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the old type. In other places, again, the people would not admit the magic significance of the woman's rank. Yet the strength of the belief, concealed though it may be, was shown in a witchcraft case which I happened to witness in Gbajibo, a small village on the Niger above Jebba. Here the *Sagi*, the very business-like head of the local women, was yet behind the public outcry against an alleged witch. The women much more than the men were leading in this persecution; they had been the first to ostracize the victim; and when I questioned them about their motives, they all referred me to the *Sagi*. Her own motive appeared to be jealousy of the other woman, the alleged witch, in whom she saw a dangerous rival, possibly even for the position of a *Sagi*. 624 754

The office of the *Sagi*, modern or traditional, is invariably a much-coveted one. Her moral hold over the women, as our example has shown, is complete. It is equally strong in the less sinister spheres of communal life: like the *Sonya* in Bida, the village *Sagi* advises the women, organizes women's work, arbitrates between them, and receives small presents from every business transaction which they carry through.

MARRIAGE AND STATUS

The ranks and offices already discussed all belong to married women. But we have seen that they represent forms of status which the women acquire in their own right, on the grounds of descent, or personal ability, or both, independent of their status as wives of men who occupy this or that social position. We shall see later that the same principle applies also to the status won by wealth. In particular the status by descent of the Nupe women is affected but little by marriage, i.e. by the social status of their husbands; in so far as it is so affected, this change is in the direction of social advancement. Women of low birth who marry above their status into the aristocracy can claim the status of their husbands; and women who marry beneath their station do not lose their status but raise their husbands to their own social level. The men will be allowed to share most of the social and political privileges of the class into which they marry. Two cases were reported to me in which the men could even acquire *saraki* ranks after marrying a woman of the *saraki* nobility. But even if the men are not admitted fully into the titled class, their children would always acquire the status of their mother. Daughters may thus inherit the status of their fathers, and both sons and daughters that of their mothers; husbands may be adopted into the social sphere of their wives and parents-in-law. This social regulation may seem surprising in an otherwise strongly patrilineal society. But this one-sided interpretation of the change of status that goes with marriage is not an expression of matrilineal kinship tendencies, nor of 'feminist' leanings in Nupe society (though we shall find ample evidence of these, too); rather it expresses political 562 554 565

2: Nadel
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[For information on witches, withcraft, and anti-witchcraft societies, see category 116, pp. 30, 144, 157-160, 163-197, and 201-206. --Analyst]

643 The ndakó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuŋ* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

Status and Titles[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuŋ*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.

[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.

[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.

[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–105.

[9] See below, p. 35.

[10] See below, p. 36.

[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuŋ* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

278 789 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 759 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciži*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 789 The *cigbeciži*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciži* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciži* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

● 754 751 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[11]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 38–67.

787 widespread in West Africa, based on the patterns made by strings of shells when they are thrown, and a form of Arabic sand pattern divining performed only by Moslem "teachers."

Shell divination (*eba*) is similar in technique to Yoruba *ifa*, and is practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts. The diviner's apparatus consists of the divining strings themselves and a series of marked slabs which serve as a key for interpreting the throws. He receives a small fee—money, rice, or kola-nuts—each time he is consulted, but these payments are regarded as "gifts," and diviners cannot live on what they earn in this way. Most of them are also farmers and some are medicine experts at the same time. The skill is only incidentally hereditary in a family and is generally learned from an expert, payment being made for tuition.

Sand divination (*hati*) is an even more thoroughly learned skill than *eba*, though its performance is less dramatic. The craft can only be acquired by mallams, i.e., men who have at least some rudiments of Moslem learning. The various signs are drawn with the finger-tips on sand smoothed out on the ground. The "key" is carried in the diviner's head, though there is a book on divination written in Arabic which some diviners possess but which they do not consult when actually divining. *Hati* diviners are of widely differing status and learning, but in general the more scholarly mallams do not engage in divination and diviners are often men who have been unsuccessful as mallams.

Witchcraft

754 The Nupe conceive of witchcraft (*ega*) as a supernatural power by which people can be possessed; they then use it for evil and anti-social purposes. It is believed to be practised mainly by women; male witches are said to be "good" people, who would curb the evil desires of the female witches, though the killing of the victim is thought to be the work of both sexes in "partnership."

A witch (*gaci*) is thought to belong to an organization (*ena gaciši*) whose head is known as *lelu*. This title used to be officially bestowed by the Nupe chiefs on a woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could then be used for the benefit of the community. The equivalent title to-day is that of *sagi*,[12] although a change in the significance of the rank has taken place and the *sagi* is now concerned with more prosaic business.

The powers of a witch are not hereditary but a witch may pass them on to her child by feeding it on witchcraft *cigbe*. A person desiring to become a witch may also approach anyone known to be one and thus gain entry into the circle of witches, or may buy a witchcraft medicine.

Witchcraft is believed capable of making its possessor invisible and of enabling her to recognize other witches; a witch is thought to be fully conscious of her secret powers and does not act against her will. Witches attack people at night when they are asleep and feed on the life force (*rayi*) causing them to fall ill and waste away. Only rarely are they thought to spirit away the body itself.[13]

There are two methods of combating witchcraft. One, applied to individual cases and when a definite person is suspected, consists of an ordeal or other test of guilt, whereupon the witch is heavily fined and expelled from the village. The other is effected through the activities of the *ndakó gboyá*, a "secret" but officially recognized anti-witchcraft society which is applied only when a large-scale outbreak of witchcraft is believed to have occurred. The head of the society (*Majiŋ Dodo*) comes from a particular lineage of Kusogi Danci, a small riverain village. Initiations take place here, the training lasting five years. Initiates are said to be able to make spirits materialize and to exercise control over witches. Paraphernalia associated with the society include a medicine for ritual washing, a white cloth mask on a pole, and magical objects for producing rain, etc., including the chain of

[12] See above, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1935c; 1942, pp. 146–9; 1954a, pp. 163–87.

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754 Tsoede which links the society to the paramount political authority of the country. Some of these become the property of the initiate and are kept in a shrine in his compound, where they become the centre of a general magical cult performed annually.

The society holds a special ceremony in which masked dancers[14] single out alleged witches and take them into the bush for ordeals, where, it is said, victims are killed unless they are able to buy their freedom. The ceremony is never performed in Bida town but produces much social and economic disorganization elsewhere. It is unknown among some groups, such as the Ebe and Dibo. It was formerly controlled by the Fulani Emirs who shared the proceeds with initiates, but this exploitation of the society was ended in 1921, when it was forbidden in what was then Nupe Province. It still functions in Pategi Emirate and in small remote villages in Bida Emirate, where it sometimes takes the form of a spectacular display at festival times. A form of *ndakó gboyá*, under the Hausa name of *magiro*, is found among the Kamberi, Kamuku, Gbari, and other tribes in the north of Niger Province. Among the Gbari, however, it seems to be connected with the cult of the ancestral spirits.[15]

[14] The mask consists of a long tube of white cotton cloth suspended from a wheel-shaped bamboo frame fixed to the top of a pole about 12 feet high; the man representing the spirit stands inside the cloth tube, which comes down to the ground, and holds the pole in his hands. The *ndakó gboyá* masks are unlike any others used in the cults of Nigerian peoples.

[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 188–201; Glasson, 1937 (?).

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V

MEDICINE

I. RATIONAL AND MYSTICAL PROCEDURES

755 757 THE term 'medicine' has been adopted mainly because it is simple and convenient without distorting too much the meaning of the Nupe word *cigbe*. The English equivalent, however, does not quite render the implications of the vernacular concept; for though the latter includes typical remedies, that is, materials applied for a strictly therapeutic purpose (as the Nupe see it), it equally includes materials whose alleged efficacy goes far beyond the treatment of ailments. In this latter sense *cigbe* is a substance or object which exercises remote and miraculous effects upon the efficacy of other objects, for example, tools or weapons, upon the outcome of human efforts of all kinds, and upon human fate in general. The correct though clumsy translation, then, would be 'efficacious substance' or 'force-in-substance' (as *kuti* meant 'force-in-ritual').

755 757 278 Indeed, the important thing about *cigbe* is that it is always a substance, compounded of natural materials which anyone in possession of the recipe can collect and process by relatively simple procedures such as pulverizing, boiling, mixing, or charring. Most Nupe, incidentally, maintain that the essential ingredients of *cigbe* are always roots of trees.[1] It is tempting to conclude that here the empirical knowledge of the processes of plant growth has led to the assumption of some inherent but communicable force stored up in the roots of plants and trees. Which assumption would fit in well with the idea that all forms of illness connote a weakening of the life soul. But no one theorizes on these lines. Altogether, Nupe medicine shows little concern with theory, metaphysical or otherwise. As regards the alleged importance of roots, the various *cigbe* recipes show that herbs, grasses, the leaves of trees, or animal matter are employed as often. The power of *cigbe*, then, lies in materials of almost any sort if suitably processed and combined, and the knowledge of *cigbe* is precisely this skill of 'using ingredients'.[1]

[1] Two informants, in fact, assured me that the very word *cigbe* was a contraction of *cigbá gbere*, 'tree root'.

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We must now ask—to what extent is this knowledge empirically sound and the skill rationally employed? It can obviously not be entirely so since the non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, credited as it is with remote effects upon objects or human actions, reveals at first sight already its non-empirical, miraculous nature. Yet the twofold use of medicine, therapeutic as well as non-therapeutic, suggests the corresponding distinction between rational practices and others irrational or 'magical'. To some extent this will prove a valid distinction, though one far less clear-cut or consistent; and this in turn is partly due to the ambiguity of the concept of rationality when it is applied to the practices of a primitive people. For they may act with rational intent but insufficient or faulty knowledge, so that their would-be empirical practices will conflict with our scientific knowledge, and hence strike us as irrational or 'magical'; while in a sense the converse case may equally occur.

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I spoke of this before and need here only state the four possibilities entailed in these considerations. First, a procedure 'subjectively' rational, involving for the people the application of ordinary learned skills, may also be 'objectively' rational, that is, appropriate to the ends for which it is employed. Secondly, a subjectively rational procedure may prove futile and incongruous when assessed by 'objective' standards. Thirdly, a procedure professedly supernatural or mystical may yet prove appropriate, concealing some valid empirical principle. Lastly, a professedly mystical procedure may be such also from our point of view, that is, empirically false and incapable of achieving the ends for which it is employed.

Before examining each possibility in turn we must restate our criteria for assessing the mystical as against the professedly rational intent behind *cigbe* practice. In a very general sense, every *cigbe* procedure implies both kinds of intent. For even though Nupe medicine is, by definition, 'knowledge', which is usually purely technical as well as transferable through tuition or purchase, it is also given a mythical pedigree and related to the remoteness of God.[1] But these mystical associations are left almost entirely unemphasized, furnishing only a vague and ineffectual background, and can thus be disregarded. If, then, we are to credit certain procedures with mystical intent, they must exhibit it in a more pronounced and specific fashion. In the most obvious case the manufacture or application of *cigbe* will involve invocations of the deity and sacrifices proper, that is, open appeals for supernatural intervention. Where these are absent, we may yet search for that other evidence, of awe, fear, and a sense of the extraordinary or miraculous, which would set the procedure apart from pursuits

[1] See above, p. 18.

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755 757 813 and interests of a profane kind. The 'sense of the extraordinary' if it is not vouchsafed by verbal expressions, is clearly the most difficult to identify. But it is at least likely to go together with uncommon procedures and with rigid rules, barring even minute departures from a given course of action, that is, with ritualization. In sum I would list these criteria of professedly mystical as against professedly rational intent: the degree of ritualization implied in the preparation or application of medicines; their secrecy or otherwise; their commercial or non-commercial, public or private character; the diverse ways in which the knowledge of *cigbe* is transmitted; and the different kinds of faith placed in it.

If previously we described 'ritual' behaviour as behaviour exhibiting a degree of rigidity not accounted for by its professed aim, we may now say, of the 'ritualized' procedure of *cigbe*, that its rigidity is not accounted for by the rational intent. For the Nupe, the latter lies in the application of material substances which as such possess a given efficacy. But often we find additional and incongruous rules such as these: certain medicines may only be prepared in certain months of the year; in certain treatments a particular procedure must be repeated three times; in the operation of setting a broken limb four splints (no more and no less) must be used. Here, then, the Nupe no longer rely on the empirical or pseudo-empirical knowledge of 'ingredients'; rather, they abandon their own 'scientific' principles, diluting them with rules of a different order—with ritual, and hence with 'mystic' observances.

Again, certain medicines, their preparation and disposal, are cloaked in rigorous secrecy, while others are not secret or no more secret than the skills or tricks of a particular trade. The latter kind is usually freely bought and sold, while the secret medicines can be given away only with special formalities or not at all, being accessible only to the relatives or perhaps friends of the 'owner'; so that some medicines are available to the public, like any commercial commodity, and others are unalterably 'private'. As we know, the knowledge of *cigbe* is mostly transmitted through [428] ordinary teaching, and is such as any clever, observant, or widely-travelled person can acquire; but occasionally it is hereditary, the ultimate provenance of the knowledge remaining unexplained. Finally, while no one would assume that ordinary remedies, administered without ceremonial, are infallible, precisely this faith is put in the other, 'miraculous', medicines, even if they involve no explicit appeals to the deity.

These features, however, occur with varying degrees of definiteness; and, though they all hang together logically, they do not always appear together in practice. But considered singly, they

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offer only ambiguous criteria. Ritualization, for example, especially when it is slight, may represent only an item of 'knowledge', empirically futile and 'superstitious', but for all that entirely profane. And secrecy may attach to medicines, not because they are sacred or credited with miraculous efficacy, but because they are morally reprehensible. Our assessment of 'mystical' and 'rational' intent will therefore sometimes be uncertain and admit of borderline cases. Even so, it enables us to examine *cigbe* practice in the terms of the four 'possibilities' mentioned before.

(i) It is clear that this possibility can apply only to the therapeutic medicines. But only very few even of these satisfy our two conditions of rational intent and objective appropriateness. For several of the therapeutic medicines require the accompaniment of invocations or sacrifices, or otherwise exhibit at least an admixture of mystical intent; and those which do not, often fail on the second count. It is clear, however, that in this relatively backward society we must not assess the appropriateness or otherwise of remedies by too exacting a standard. Thus, if they do not conflict in principle with our scientific ideas and are such that their efficacy might at least conceivably be of the alleged kind, their actual worthlessness may be ignored; at least, it does not make them 'mystical', but only shows them to be crude, inadequate, or ill-chosen. This would be true of such remedies as herbal potions used for intestinal troubles, of salves or powders rubbed into snake-bites, or of certain simple surgical treatments. Few of these betray any true medical lore; the surgical operations are rarely applied and have little merit; most potions or salves prove on chemical analysis to have no positive value, though I found none that was actually harmful and a few that had a slight medicinal property, such as the absorptive or laxative effect of charred vegetable matter. Even so, these practices are at least of the right kind or resemble the right kind of treatment, and will for this reason be included in our first category.

Many more treatments are without even this semblance of appropriateness, suggesting merely blundering attempts, unguided even by faulty knowledge. Lunacy, for example, is treated by means of inhalations; smallpox is prevented by burning herbs in the entrance hut; pregnancy, by the wearing of a 'magic' belt; and for rheumatic pains one has this abstruse cure: the patient stands inside a hut, pressing the aching part of his body against the wall; the doctor stands outside and holds the 'medicine' with his foot against the wall, opposite the place where, on the inside, the patient's body touches the wall; the doctor then slowly drags the medicine to the ground, thus 'drawing the pain from the body'. Though this treatment seems to imply some crude

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755 reasoning from analogy, it clearly belongs, with all the other treat-
757 ments just mentioned, to our second category, of practices utterly incongruous and not even conceivably capable of the alleged effects.
813 We must add, further, that a great many therapeutic remedies are ascribed so multifarious an efficacy that their 'rational' application to one kind of ailment is belied by the other, extravagant claims. The same substance will serve as an antidote for snake-bite, as a cure for headaches, and as a potion applied in ordeals; and a herbal concoction for intestinal troubles will also be used to cure rheumatic pains in the fantastic manner just described. Thus the borderline between rational and pseudo-rational treatments is once more blurred, and the province of the former narrowed further. And here we may note that in a sense the Nupe wish to keep it narrow. For the one version of medicine which comes nearest to satisfying our two conditions of rational intent and empirical (if crude) appropriateness, that practised by the barber-doctors, is also criticized for this very reason. The barber-doctors
[759] are entirely profane practitioners, whose skill is a matter of cleverness and learning, involves no secrecy, and is at the disposal of all who can pay for their services. But their practice is largely restricted to the capital and the more sophisticated large villages, and little known or little thought of elsewhere. Indeed, the country people simply laugh when you suggest that the barbers have a knowledge of *cigbe*; 'barbers', I was always told, 'know no *cigbe*; all they can do is to cure headache'. Now some of my informants certainly knew that this was incorrect; furthermore, several village *cigbe* of the secret and mystical kind were also supposed to cope with headache. It was therefore not the efficacy of the remedies which the people held in ridicule but their purely profane character; and in denying that the barbers possessed any worthwhile knowledge of medicine, they really denied that their knowledge deserved the name of medicine. We note, then, a bias towards excluding from the genus *cigbe* those remedies which combine all the characteristics of a rational practice. The true *cigbe*, the people seem to feel, must at least in some respects bear the mark of the extraordinary or 'magical'. But this is no more than a bias since even in the villages where the art of the barber-doctors was so de-
[369] rided there exist purely profane, would-be rational remedies.[1] Their number, however, is strikingly small; so that in the peasant culture of Nupe, unlike the urban culture of the capital, the non-mystical or non-'magical' *cigbe* represents an exception from the rule.

[1] Also, this 'bias' is being obliterated by the modern usage of the word *cigbe* for all European drugs and medical appliances, in which the Nupe see nothing transcendental or magical, but the application of 'knowledge' proper.

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(ii) We have already mentioned the therapeutic medicines which fall in this category in virtue of their fantastic nature or of the extravagant claims made for them. We need only add that there are no non-therapeutic *cigbe*, that is, medicines at first sight already 'miraculous' and irrational, which are handled in a would-be rational manner; all also imply at least some expression of mystical intent. 755 757 813

(iii) Strictly speaking, this possibility of professedly mystical but unwittingly appropriate practices does not apply to Nupe medicine. Trance possession attributed to spirits, magic dances meant to cure mental disorders, and similar treatments which might conceal a psycho-therapeutic efficacy under the mystical trappings are altogether absent. But the combination of invocations and sacrifices with remedies which are 'of the right kind' constitutes a borderline case since the people would attribute the success of the remedy (such as it is) as much to supernatural intervention as to the inherent properties of the ingredients employed. In a sense even the most absurd therapeutic remedies have a share of such a concealed empirical efficacy. In calling them absurd and worthless we were considering only their intrinsic inappropriateness to the effects ascribed to them; we cannot deny that the patient's trust in the efficacy of the medicine or the repute of the doctor may well produce at least an apparent relief. Which means, further, that the practitioner's medical notions will repeatedly receive some empirical support, whose spuriousness he is unable to judge.

(iv) Our last category comprises all the non-therapeutic medicines and a considerable number of therapeutic ones. Their objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. When a potion is said to make a person invisible, a salve to secure invulnerability, a herbal concoction kept in the village to keep away smallpox, or a powder applied to a hoe to double the farm output, there can clearly be no question but that only a miracle could make these 'medicines' effective. Nor is the mystical intent any less certain, being visible in the prescribed invocations, sacrifices, forms of ritualism, and so forth. It is interesting to note that several of these practices are based upon the principle 'like causes like'; by itself, this spurious 'theory would not establish the mystical intent since for the people it represents only one more item of would-be scientific knowledge. The same principle, in fact, also underlies a few therapeutic and strictly profane cures. But it seems significant that it is employed on a large scale only in the fully irrational practices, that is, in situations where success is vouchsafed also by mystical procedures. In other words, false knowledge tends to go together with transcendental guarantees (though more sound knowledge does not necessarily discard them).

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755 757 813 Let me summarize. By our criteria of rational and mystical intent the whole range of non-therapeutic *cigbe* together with a good portion of the therapeutic ones would fall in the category of transcendental practices (religious or 'magical'); while only the rest of the cures proper, good, bad, and indifferent, would belong on the side of reason or near-reason. And since a great many of the cures in the former category are 'objectively' as futile or absurd as the non-therapeutic variety, it may be said that the Nupe tend to treat as 'magical' what is, by all standards, magical and to aim at miraculous effects by means openly designed for miracles.

2. PHARMACOPOEIA NUPEANA

757 278 759 It seems convenient to insert here a fuller description of Nupe medicines and medical (or pseudo-medical) treatments. Their therapeutic or non-therapeutic character will become clear from the description, as will also the share of 'irrational' or mystical observances. We must, however, anticipate the various classes of medicine experts and briefly state their respective specialities. First, we have the guild of barber doctors, who are all Mohammedans and whose craft is entirely therapeutic and would-be empirical; a few minor instances of 'ritualization' do not contradict the generally rational intent. Secondly, there is the corresponding and predominantly pagan order of *cigbeciži* or *bociži* ('medicine-men'), whose practice, both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, invariably betrays mystical intent. Thirdly, there are a few individual experts who belong to neither organization and may employ any kind of *cigbe*. Lastly, we shall meet with the owners of hereditary medicines, vested in the lineage or (in Nupe parlance) 'house'; these are both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, and always conspicuously mystical. In one isolated case a conspicuously 'mystical' medicine is owned by a whole community. Let me also recall that some medical practitioners are diviners at the same time, though there is no firmer link between the two professions.

757 278 These are some of the remedies known to the barber-doctors of Bida. Stomach trouble is treated by means of various potions: one consists of the infusion of a certain swamp plant; another, of the infusion of the charred bark of the oil-palm, sheanut tree or locust-bean tree, mixed with natron;[1] a third, of the pounded roots of a certain tree, mixed with powdered eggshell, dried in the sun and then taken with water. Light headache is cured by burning a certain common plant and making the patient inhale the fumes,

[1] The 'natron' is natural carbonate of soda from Lake Chad which is on sale in all Nupe markets.

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757 278 possible application of the principle 'like cures like', no one today is aware of this notion. Nor are there any 'theories' as regards such abstruse ingredients as eggshells, the excreta of fowls, twigs from the nest of vultures, or grass from inside an ant-heap. Yet it is also difficult to see how the precept, 'experiment with the help of God', can have led to these peculiar discoveries. If they are 'superstitions', they are not, like other superstitions, the degraded offspring of more elaborate mystic or cosmological speculations. The treatment of lunacy, with its 'male' and 'female' ingredients, seems to suggest something of the kind; but there is no clear link between this cure and that other idea, that lunacy is a residue of 'male' sleeping sickness.[1] And in all the other fantastic remedies their intellectual antecedents are simply not traceable, not even to legends or folk-tales. Perhaps the remedies have been adopted, more or less blindly, from other groups and countries, on some of those informative travels of which the barber-doctors boast. As they stand, they are merely crude and absurd attempts at 'empirical' treatment, instances of that 'blundering' I spoke of before.

278 755 [759] Any of the medicines just described might equally be the product of the *cigbeciži*, and a number are in fact identical. But unlike the barber-doctors, the *cigbeciži* also employ the fully irrational, non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, and even their remedies proper, salves, potions, and the like, are much more often based on recipes of an incongruous and abstruse kind.[2] Thus a 'strong' potion taken for intestinal troubles includes the fluid extracted from the gall-bladder of snakes, a potion alleged to cure smallpox contains a boiled lizard tail, and an ointment for rheumatic pains is composed, among other things, of powdered potsherds which must be obtained from old pots found lying about with the broken side up, any other position rendering the remedy worthless.

While these recipes seem as random and arbitrary as the more abstruse examples of the barber-doctors' art, others betray some underlying 'theory', some vague and often uncertain reasoning from analogy or from the principle 'like cures like'. Thus one [842] expert had a cure for impotence consisting of a potion whose ingredients included, besides various roots and two kinds of pepper, also the powdered genitals of a he-goat.[3] A contraceptive credited with lasting effect is concocted from the roots of the

[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Of the twenty-two *cigbeci* medicines I recorded fifteen belonged to that category, while the corresponding proportion in the case of the barbers' remedies was six in thirty-four.

[3] I have this incongruous evidence for the efficacy of the treatment. My servant, who was with me when I visited the expert, at once bought and drunk the potion to increase his virility. The next day I had to doctor him for severe indigestion.

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tamarind tree, leaves of baobab, sorghum stalks, and the skin of a fish said to 'die at once when you hold it in your hand', the last ingredient being the most important. Another, temporary, contraceptive is prepared with grass taken from an ant-heap which must have three round mounds and must be broken open with the heel. The magic belt mentioned before, said to prevent pregnancy, is made of leather into which these two ingredients are sewn—hair from the tail of a mule and seeds from locust-beans 'forgotten' (i.e. overlooked) at the harvest. The reasoning from analogy is fairly obvious in the recipe for impotence and in the last appliance. In the lasting contraceptive the underlying 'theory' seems to rest upon this argument: since a freshly caught fish stands for fertility (in dream interpretation), a fish that 'dies at once' might plausibly be identified with its destruction. And of ants, which figure in the temporary contraceptive, it is said that 'one does not know their father and mother'; so that a medicine derived from ants would seem to promise precisely what its users desire. The former 'theory' is my own inference, while the latter, as we shall see, is explicitly mentioned. But it is incomplete apart from being abstruse; for it fails to account for the three mounds that are required and for the peculiar method of opening the ant-heap; nor yet does it state why grass taken from an ant-heap should, in other remedies, serve quite a different purpose.

The moral attitude of the *cigbeciži* towards such dubious practices as facilitating contraception and sterility differs considerably from that of the barber-doctors. While the latter simply claim that they have no chance of dispensing these remedies and shift the blame on their pagan colleagues, these both admit dealing in them and try to justify their actions. They maintain that they dispense these medicines only rarely and in deserving cases. At least, this is true of the medicine alleged to procure permanent sterility; the expert in question assured me that he had given it only once, out of pity, to a woman whose husband was forcing her to sleep with him while her first-born had not yet been weaned. In the case of the temporary expedients the conscience of the *cigbeciži* is more easily satisfied; they merely put up the price for frivolous clients, that is, for 'rich people who do not want children'. As a corrollary, the medicine for impotence is similarly expensive (costing as much as ten shillings), not only because it is difficult to prepare, but because it is something of a luxury; for the expert argued that since this remedy did not 'save people from death' but afforded them 'enjoyment' it was worth paying for. He was fairminded enough to add that he would lower the price in the case of poor clients.

As regards the non-therapeutic medicines, they are credited

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755 with widely varying but uniformly fantastic properties. Thus a certain potion is said to make you invisible and invulnerable to guns; a similar protection is afforded by a powder carried in a leather bag which must be of two colours, red and black. Another powder, which may either be drunk in water or rubbed on the gun, assures success in big-game hunting. Two potions protect the drinker from all evil-wishers, who would in one case be struck with lunacy or sleeping sickness and in the other with blindness. It is interesting to note that while one of these medicines, called *zabadi*, can be used by both sexes, the other, called *imi-ya-ga* (both undecipherable words) is designed for women only. Conversely, there is a 'male' medicine called *eshe*; its composition is extremely complicated, numbering fifteen ingredients, and it can be rubbed on the body or on a hoe, or buried in farmland: its effect is to divert the fertility of all adjacent fields to the one farmed by the owner of the *cigbe*. Finally, there are two medicines associated with witchcraft; the first is the 'female' medicine *imi-ya-ga*, which, used as a potion or as an ointment or simply kept in the house, protects you x [754] from witches as well as spirits; the other is a potion called *waka*, which must be taken by the performers in the anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá* but is deadly to the uninitiated. Most of these medicines serve more than one function. Thus a snake-bite antidote called *dabwalé* can also be used as ordeal or kept in the house to guard it against thieves (who would be bitten by a snake), and the anti-witchcraft remedy *waka* similarly protects the house where it is kept, the thief being punished with blindness.

As has already been mentioned, the *cigbeciži* always employ professedly mystical procedures. To some extent these are visible already in the conspicuous ritualization attaching to certain of their remedies. More importantly, the practice of the *cigbeciži* also involves ritual invocations and rigid rules of secrecy, though the latter refer only to the recipe itself and do not otherwise restrict the use or disposal of the medicines. The invocation consists of the proper name for the medicine and of its particular *emisa* or 'greeting'. The names themselves do not necessarily distinguish this species of *cigbe* from the other, profane, variety; for several of the barbers' remedies similarly have names, which serve as labels and abbreviated references to the composition or efficacy of the medicine. Some of the names given to the *cigbeci* medicines, however, are more mystically obscure and as inexplicable as the names of most *kuti* or those that occur in divining. The *emisa* are fully ritual formulæ: they must be uttered, without the slightest deviation and in a respectful and humble manner, at various stages in the preparation of the *cigbe* and whenever it is dispensed. They play much the same part as the 'greetings' used in divining and

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are, like the latter, composed of sayings more or less trivial or apposite. A medicine alleged to facilitate childbirth, for example, is called *lamá*, from *lá má 'gi*, 'causing childbirth', and has a meaningless 'greeting'; the antidote for snake-bite *dabwalé* (an undecipherable word) commands the following 'greeting'—'The thing for washing, when a snake bites a person, (this) thing drives the illness away'. The 'contraceptive' made of grass taken from special ant-heaps, is called *botáfĩ*, a word derived from *botá*, the name for a species of grass and *fĩ*, 'to drink'; when the grass is removed from the ant-heap one repeats three times: 'One does not know the father of ants; one does not know the mother of ants'; of which crude allusion to the users of this remedy we have already spoken. The 'greeting' of another contraceptive remedy similarly plays upon an analogy—'A person without speech cannot tell', which means, a woman without fertility cannot bear children. The miraculous medicine alleged to make a person invisible and invulnerable has a name and 'greeting' which are highly suggestive; it is called *akpára*, the Nupe word for 'rifle', and is addressed thus—'The night brings darkness. The eye sees in daylight, the eye does not see at night. There is nothing inside the earth save God' (that is, save things God alone can see, as he alone can see a person who has applied this medicine). 755

Perhaps the term 'invocations' will seem inappropriate in the case of these nondescript addresses or 'greetings'. But let me leave this point for the moment and only mention that invocations proper also have their place in *cigbe* practice. The *cigbeci*, like the barber-doctor, may add some new medicine to those already known; at least, this is true of the head of the order of 'medicine-men'. And whenever he discovers or invents a new remedy, he must perform a sacrifice composed of beer, a fowl, and a small portion of the new *cigbe*, speaking thus—'God, the medicine that has been prepared, here it is. May the medicine be successful. I am sacrificing to Kpara, I am sacrificing to Tswasha Malu, I am sacrificing to Tswako Dzana.' The names mentioned are those of ancestors of the head of the *cigbeci* guild; and the sacrifice is performed over the vessel in which the new medicine will henceforth be kept. As we shall see, both the invocation of ancestors and the treatment of the medicine vessel almost as a sacred shrine are features typical also of the hereditary medicines, which even more conspicuously reveal their irrational or mystical intent.

To turn to the medicines known to individuals. We may mention first that certain simple treatments are familiar to nearly everyone, being applied in the manner of household remedies or as a kind of 'first aid'; only when this fails or seems inadequate does one turn to 'professional' medicines. And even then one often asks friends 757

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Among the non-therapeutic medicines we meet again with the substance which makes invisible, and with another which enables you to see witches and also protects you from them. The latter consists of various rare roots and four cowrie shells, sewn into a leather bag dyed black and red, which you must keep under your pillow while asleep. Before handing the charm to the customer it is buried for one night together with a live chameleon, which contact communicates to the charm the peculiar powers of the animal (which is said to 'see in the dark'). The invisibility potion is concocted from the head, blood, and claws of a completely black fowl, a creeper torn off a tree while one's eyes are covered by a black cloth, and a mudfish. The emphasis on black accords with this notion of a substance whose effect resembles that of darkness and which is in fact known as *badúfu*, a mixed Nupe–Hausa word meaning 'dark place'.[1] The symbolism of covering your eyes is obvious, as is that of the mudfish, which buries itself in the river-bed. The same substance, in powder form, may also be carried in a black leather bag on the body, though in this case a piece of human skin must be added.[2]

There are several other non-therapeutic *cigbe* of less gruesome nature. The following examples all come from the same source, old Ndakotsu of Bida, a descendant of the old Beni chiefs and a noted diviner and 'wise man'. His medicines were as secret as they were fantastic; yet though they were not for sale, they were freely given to friends and acquaintances or to the young men over whose age grades Ndakotsu presided. Neither the application nor the preparation of these medicines involves invocations, sacrifices and the like; but their professedly mystical character is usually clear from the peculiar nature of their efficacy, which is attributed to the power of *fifíngi* of animals or plants and hence presupposes explicitly religious conceptions. All medicines also imply, more or less clearly, the principle 'like causes like'. One example, mentioned before, is the powder applied to hoes which causes them to 'double' their output; its effect rests on one particular ingredient, leaves from a palm-tree split in two by lightning, the 'doubling' of the tree being responsible for the doubled efficiency of the tool. Another farming 'medicine', meant to secure a rich yam harvest, is made up of the head and left leg of a bush rodent and some grass torn out by the roots, and must be buried annually in the farmland in a new, covered pot; the explanation is that the *fifíngi* of the rodent, which is known to feed on yams, will 'steal' all the yams

[1] For a different meaning of this term see below, p. 159.

[2] I was offered this useful *cigbe*, but the deal broke down since I was unable to supply the human skin, to the great surprise of the expert, who thought that I could easily obtain it from the local hospital.

789 (that is, their *fifíngi*) from the surrounding farmlands and carry them to yours. A rich grain harvest can be obtained by taking the head of an ass or donkey, its saddle cloth, and the excreta of a person who dies of smallpox, tying the three 'ingredients' into a bundle hung from a palm-tree on the farm: the grain will then grow as high as a person, since the *fifíngi* of the donkey, used to carrying loads on its back, will endeavour to 'pull up' the grain 'like a load'. Farmers can finally prepare a potent drink made of a black monkey's left leg, some leaves driven into a heap by a whirlwind, and beer: they will then work 'as fast as the whirlwind' and as 'tirelessly as a monkey'. Ndakotsu's father is reported to have owned also one of those protective *cigbe* which punish evil-wishers; it is said to have been particularly vicious, inflicting body-ache on any person who so much as stared at you. Nothing further, however, is known about this medicine, which has since been lost.

755 The picture changes again when we turn to the medicines hereditary in families or 'houses' or belonging to communities. Let me quote these examples. In Jebba Island I recorded an hereditary *cigbe* called *fúnagba*, which cures headache, pains in the body, and barrenness, and can either be drunk or used externally. Its composition is complicated, including seven ingredients, six of which are roots of specific trees and the seventh the root of any tree growing across a footpath (such roots being particularly 'strong'); these ingredients must be mixed with beer, blood of fowl (that is, the common materials for sacrifices), and some Niger water fetched by a young girl. Apart from its therapeutic effect, this medicine also protects the house from thieves and evil-minded intruders. In another village on the Niger I found a medicine called *atafá*, which has only the latter effect; it could, in fact, never be renewed if it were actually dispensed since its composition is unknown. In several villages I met with a medicine called *wasa* or *gába*, compounded of ten ingredients, one of which is the boiled head of a [752] poisonous snake, severed before it released the poison; this medicine operates as an antidote against snake-bite, as a cure for stomach-ache, and sometimes also as a potion applied in ordeals; while its presence in the house affords protection from thieves and evil-doers. A medicine called *égbo*, from Shari, is used to treat headache and stomach-ache, and is also taken by the devotees of the *ndakó gboyá* before they put on the masks that go with the cult. Then there is the Jebba medicine *zumácikã*, which belongs to the village and is believed to protect the community from smallpox; as we remember, its composition is unknown and it acts through merely being present.[1]

[1] See above, p. 91.

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Most of these medicines, then, are 'multifarious', combining a therapeutic with a mystical or 'magical' efficacy. The latter may even be paramount and take an extreme form, as in the medicines efficacious by their mere presence and of unknown composition. Equally, these medicines are treated as 'magical'. They may only be prepared in certain months and not in others, unlike all other medicines; and while the latter are kept in the usual household containers, gourds or ordinary pots, the hereditary medicines are preserved in special earthen vessels, placed apart and decorated in the manner of sacred objects, with a strip of white cloth, a ring of palm-fronds or a crown of white chicken feathers. They all have mystically obscure names and more or less elaborate *emisa*, and some also involve regular sacrifices, either when the *cigbe* is newly prepared or on the occasion of the usual kinship rites and invocations of ancestoral *kuci*. Finally, all these medicines are extremely secret and never sold for money, if indeed they are disposed of at all; if so, they may be given away only to close relations or perhaps friends, as a free gift 'for the sake of God'. Nor is their recipe (even if it is known) ever taught to others. 755

The special position of the hereditary *cigbe* is reflected in the nomenclature, for these medicines alone merit the epithet 'great', while all other medicines are called 'little'. Let us note that the verbal distinction refers, not so much to the miraculous effects with which the *cigbe* is credited, as to the procedure it sets in motion; for even a 'great' medicine may only cure headache or stomach trouble, at least with part of its efficacy. But the 'great' medicine alone involves proper acts of worship; and as it is bound up with the identity of kin groups through being hereditary, so it serves as a focus of kinship life, affording its supernatural aid primarily or even exclusively to the group to which it belongs and mobilizing it in the fashion of kinship rituals. The 'greatness' of the *cigbe*, then, lies in its social implications rather than in its concrete efficacy. Let us note also that its very 'ownership' is far from concrete. For the *cigbe* whose composition is unknown is also never examined, being renewed only from the beer and blood of the sacrifice. What is truly 'owned', is not any tangible, physical substance but only the vessel in which it is supposed to exist; so that this becomes a shrine for religious ministrations indistinguisable from ritual proper. 755 182

3. THE FAITH IN MEDICINE

The distinction between 'great' and 'little' medicines is drawn only by the practitioners and 'owners' of *cigbe*. The bulk of the people know little about these implications, and so grade the 755 184

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755 184 medicines differently. For them, medicines are simply either easily procured or not, available to the 'public' or monopolized, by families or perhaps communities. And they conclude, equally simply, that the more secret and private a medicine, the more powerful it must be. Experts and public, we may say, speak different languages. And here certain other discrepancies also arise. There are a great many stories current about extremely powerful (and extremely secret) medicines 'owned' and rarely if ever disposed of by certain villages, families or occupational groups (blacksmiths, hunters). When you know the 'owners' you will usually discover either that they credit the medicine with far less impressive powers or that it is by no means as secret as the public believes, or even that the medicine in question does not exist. Again, the people generally are convinced that certain very 'private' and miraculous medicines can yet be acquired at exorbitant prices: in reality, the medicines so described may not be for sale or, once more, may not exist. The public is also impressed or swayed by certain clever tricks which the experts perform with the ingredients of medicine in order to astonish the layman and advertise their skill but which they never regard as a true part of their craft. Thus a certain medicine for headache and stomach pains can be shown to extinguish flames or, more wonderful still, to make hands and feet insensible to burns; a piece of ironwood used in a very secret anti-witchcraft medicine can be shown miraculously to sink in water. But the Nupe expert rarely resorts to this method of self-advertisement; rather, he strongly insists on the difference between *cigbe* and *enya mã*, mere 'conjuring tricks', such as the Hausâ charm peddlers and 'magicians' are fond of performing. Nor does he ever offer 'fakes', of this or any other kind, for the 'real thing' or show any cynicism regarding the value of his products. He believes in them as much as do his clients; and if their trust shows in the eagerness and awe with which they approach the expert, his seriousness and scrupulous attention to detail leave no doubt as to his good faith.

755 The question arises, what concrete proof the believers can have of the efficacy of the more fantastic and 'magical' medicines. In the case of the therapeutic remedies there exists, as I suggested, at least the possibility of some apparent if spurious empirical support; also their efficacy is understood to be in some measure uncertain and subject to the will of God. But no amount of belief in those medicines which turn a man into a miraculously successful farmer or make him invulnerable and invisible can conjure up the desired proof. The confidence inspired by their possession may indeed make the owner a keener farmer or a more courageous soldier and hunter; but though fortune may favour the brave it

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falls lamentably short of the absolute assurance the Nupe place in these *cigbe*. 755

The answer to our question can only lie in the rigid secrecy which surrounds these magic medicines. No one using them will talk about it; indeed if he did, the efficacy of the magic would be gone. Thus, though I might use the wonderful farming *cigbe*, my neighbours may, for all I know, also use it, or even a stronger version; and though I could make myself invulnerable, my enemies might have *cigbe* to make their guns infallible. If in these instances the belief in *cigbe* is such that it protects itself from being disproved, this is even more so in the case of the *cigbe* protecting you from witchcraft. For this is clearly itself an imaginary threat whose defeat by an imaginary weapon is altogether outside empirical considerations. To some extent the efficacy of the medicines said to procure invisibility equally belongs to the realm of imaginary happenings. Two of the many informants with whom I discussed this point supplied the clue. The first, who himself owned this medicine and maintained that I too could use it with the desired effect, added this odd instruction: the medicine must be taken at night, before going to sleep. He meant by this that the medicine affected, not the physical body of a person awake, but the *fifíngi*, the disembodied shadow soul, of persons asleep. The second informant was even more explicit. He explained that the person drinking the medicine was able, in *fifíngi* shape, to wander about at night when all were asleep, to enter their houses unseen, to touch the bodies of the other sleepers, give them nightmares, and even to kill them if they struggled or hit out: to which extreme, however, no 'good' man would resort, save perhaps against enemies. 755 828

If we should consider invisibility achieved under such conditions to be hardly worth the trouble, let alone to prove the wonderful powers of the medicine, this is not so for the Nupe. For them, the medicine does two things one cannot 'normally' do; it enables you to control the movements of your *fifíngi*, which otherwise wanders about at will, in the random fashion exemplified by dreams; and it causes the *fifíngi* to be hidden from the people it visits, while ordinarily it would appear to them in their dreams. Furthermore, precisely such willed and hidden nightly visits are thought to be peculiar to witches, so that the *cigbe* makes you their equal. I must add, however, that the rest of my informants did not describe the efficacy of the invisibility *cigbe* in such mystic terms. They spoke of it as being concretely effective and hiding your body from the eyes of others when you meet them, say, in the street. But they would emphasize, as in the case of the other miraculous *cigbe* mentioned before, that this medicine must be used in utter secrecy

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755 828 lest it lose its power. And here, it seems to me, we have the required loophole; for 'utter secrecy' I take to mean that the medicine may only be used at night, when you cannot be seen, or among strangers, when at least you cannot be recognized, that is, in situations when no one can prove anything. My informants refused to commit themselves on this point. But exactly this kind of argument was brought up in connection with another, similar, medicine not previously mentioned, namely, a *cigbe* said to enable a man to feign death and to arise from the grave unharmed and invisible; thus magically equipped he can disappear from his village unbeknown to all, to reappear, now in visible shape, in foreign parts. This seems to be the only advantage offered by this *cigbe*. Now this advantage, my informants assured me, was past, thanks to railways and motor-cars of all things; for nowadays the person using the *cigbe* could reach the strange place no more quickly than would others, using the modern means of transport. But it is not merely the utility of the *cigbe* which has disappeared, but its virtue. Since other people, travelling non-magically, might well arrive together with and run into the person who did so magically, the secrecy of the proceedings has been lost, and with it the efficacy of a *cigbe*. If this argument seems less compelling to us than to the Nupe, it yet confirms the point made before, that this notion of miraculous medicines protects itself from proof or disproof.

755 789 Let us return to the *emisa* which accompany various *cigbe* procedures. Clearly, they must have some share in fostering or confirming the faith which the people put in their mystical medicines. I have so far treated these formulæ mainly as evidence for 'mystical intent'; but they would seem to define a particular species of this intent and one particularly reassuring. For the *emisa* comes closest to a magic spell, having the same rigidity and being similarly indispensable for the desired effects; if so, it would turn the whole *cigbe* practice into a strictly magical procedure, that is, a procedure resting on the mechanical manipulation of substances and words rather than on appeals to some transcendental intelligence.

Neither conclusion, however, is quite correct. The names and addresses of *cigbe*, the Nupe insist, carry no power in themselves; this lies in the 'ingredients' alone. If the *emisa* is indispensable it is so only in the sense in which the titles and formal greetings of men of rank are indispensable, being meant to acknowledge or indicate the power that lies in the rank but adding nothing to it. Furthermore, the *emisa* of medicines is meant to acknowledge also the ultimate source of their power, that is, the presence and will of God. If the wording of the *cigbe* greetings hardly reveals that

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exalted function, the Nupe would point out that other, ordinary 755
'greetings' are similarly nondescript and uninformative. We re- 789
call, further, that on certain occasions the practice of *cigbe* also includes sacrifices and invocations proper, addressed to God or *kuci*.

We may conclude, then, that even the mechanical manipulations of *cigbe* carry some of that awareness of a transcendental intelligence which turns an otherwise 'magical' act into a religious appeal; and though the faith in this manipulation of 'ingredients' is partly a belief in their mechanical efficacy, this is yet understood to reflect, however indirectly, divine intervention. The *emisa* itself is neither fully a spell nor yet fully a prayer; it is an expression, couched in a conventionalized code, for the varieties of power mobilized in the *cigbe* procedure. Those who know the appropriate expressions also know the entities to which they refer and hence can manipulate them: for in the Nupe way of thinking as in ours there is no true and workable knowledge of anything unless that thing can also be named. Thus, though the *emisa* has no share in the powers it identifies and names, the very fact that it does so makes it an integral part of the mystically powerful operation. Finally, since these 'code' expressions are respectful ones, they stand, not for a simple command, but for a command tinged with submission, for a mastery which is half supplication, in brief, for 'invocations'.

4. THE PERSONNEL

The organization of the Nupe barber-doctors has been described 759
elsewhere, and I need here summarize only the main facts.[1] The barbers are grouped in three guilds, centred in Bida, one in each of the three sectors into which the town is divided. They travel a good deal; a number have also settled in the larger villages in the country, and quite a few in towns outside Nupe. Each guild has its own titled head, elected by the guild and confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe, who is also the most experienced and most highly reputed member of the profession; which standing is measured, simply, by the number of treatments known to him. In all my discussions with barber-doctors it was always the guild-head who proved the best informed and to whom all others turned when in doubt or at a loss. The profession is loosely hereditary, some usually following in their fathers' footsteps; but men of other families may join the profession through being apprenticed to an established barber-doctor for about five years, during which period they pay for the tuition by surrendering the larger part of their earnings.

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 289–301.

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*754 577 of medicines almost as unequivocally evil. The same men, let us note, will also administer helpful, beneficial, 'good' medicine. On the whole, the latter are more numerous, and are considered more important when it comes to discussions or arguments. As for the others, the experts would claim that they take due precautions, giving the medicine away only to 'good people' and 'for the sake of God', not for ordinary gain. But these personal qualms do not explain away the confusion of moral standards and do not answer the question why practices contemptible by common agreement should yet be accepted and actively pursued. The answer seems to lie in the amoral character of the Nupe universe. There it is, composed of good things and bad, the handiwork of a deity which unconcernedly sets good beside evil. Man, it would seem, has no call to improve upon creation. The qualms of the *cigbeciži* are a concession to social conscience not to religious scruples; in the last resort they are concerned only with appearances—that their craft should not look like witchcraft. As regards the evil potentialities of 'medicine', they are accepted with the same optimistic cynicism with which the Nupe view the very world in which they live.

6. MODERN INFLUENCES

177 Islam has on the whole brought little change. It bans the hereditary medicines, since they approximate to the pagan worship of ●755 *kuci* and *kuti*, and may well have caused some of them to disappear. But the craft of the barber-doctors enjoys the respectability of a truly Mohammedan profession; while the medicines of individuals and the craft of the *cigbeciži* flourish among Mohammedans no less than among the pagans. Indeed many of these experts would regard themselves as good Moslems. Even the Master of the *cigbeciži* dresses like a Moslem, goes to the mosque, observes the fast and other rules of Islam, and boasts of his descent from men who served the Mohammedan Emirs of Nupe.

Nor do specifically Moslem practices compete seriously with the traditional craft. A great many mallams administer cures and sell charms or amulets, both prepared in strict accordance with the Moslem creed as they understand it. The cures all take the same form: the attributes of Allah or certain verses of the Qoran are written in ink on a wooden slate which is then washed clean, the inky water being drunk by the patient. The amulets, called *laya* (a Hausa word), consist of pieces of paper similarly covered with sacred writing, which are sewn into small leather cases and worn on the body. But Nupe religious conscience is accommodating: pagans wear the Mohammedan charms as often as Mohammedans

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consult a pagan (or semi-pagan) *cigbeci*. That the powers of *cigbe* are greater as well as more varied few will doubt; nor do the mallams themselves deny that many of the cures and other effects of *cigbe* are beyond their ken. It was, for example, a Moslem scholar of high repute who put me in touch with the *cigbeciži*, being himself [illegible] believer in the excellence of their art. 177 755

Modern me[illegible], as practised in hospitals and dispensaries, is a more serious rival. Nupe men and women who for the first time face this novel version of *cigbe* may be suspicious or openly afraid; often they will discontinue the visits to the doctor or dispenser, or leave unused the drugs they are given. A steadily increasing number, however, now have fair confidence in doctors and drugs and would be prepared to admit that our cures are on the whole better than theirs. This is true especially of minor surgical treatments and of injections of all kinds, that is, of treatments utterly unlike the indigenous practices and often 'miraculous' in their effect. This may seem a lukewarm statement; but I do not think that it can be put more positively or optimistically, at least as regards the average Nupe. Administration officials, teachers, and others who have been in close contact with Europeans are exceptions (though only to some extent).[1] Certainly, the Nupe are turning to European medicine much more slowly and waveringly than other African groups I know. 177 755 757

Now these other groups are also more primitive than the Nupe or without a similar, highly organized and would-be rational therapeutic skill. The diverse reaction is thus no accident. Fear and suspicion there would be in either case. But in the more primitive groups organized medicine, as a purely profane skill or knowledge, is entirely novel and unprecedented; it may have to fight religious prejudice, but not its own kind: while in Nupe precisely this is true. Other Africans might feel that European medicine clashes with their religious notions, or identify it with evil magic or witchcraft. The more sophisticated Nupe merely mistrusts the knife which, as everyone knows, 'cannot heal', or cynically suspects the doctors of poisoning patients who fail to recover. At best, he regards the European remedy as one of several possibilities, which he is wont to try out one after the other. And here the odds are not all in favour of the former.

[1] To wit, the following extract from an English composition on *The Hospital*, written in 1936 by a Nupe secondary school boy and corrected by his teacher. 'The disadvantage (of hospitals) is that when a man is taken there to be cured and if the nurses see that they cannot cure him, or perhaps he is given any kind of drugs and he still is exactly opposite as he was brought in, they give him a kind of medicine which makes he will die away.' The teacher found that only the last sentence needed correction, thus—'they give him a poison and he will die'.

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177 Many cases are already hopeless when they reach the doctors and hospitals, with the result that their remedies will appear to be no
● 755 better than those of barbers or *cigbeciži*; above all, the European
757 doctor does not profess to cure impotence or sterility, or to procure sterility; so that the most widely sought treatments are also an admitted gap in this new knowledge of 'medicine'.

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V

MEDICINE

1. RATIONAL AND MYSTICAL PROCEDURES

755 757 THE term 'medicine' has been adopted mainly because it is simple and convenient without distorting too much the meaning of the Nupe word *cigbe*. The English equivalent, however, does not quite render the implications of the vernacular concept; for though the latter includes typical remedies, that is, materials applied for a strictly therapeutic purpose (as the Nupe see it), it equally includes materials whose alleged efficacy goes far beyond the treatment of ailments. In this latter sense *cigbe* is a substance or object which exercises remote and miraculous effects upon the efficacy of other objects, for example, tools or weapons, upon the outcome of human efforts of all kinds, and upon human fate in general. The correct though clumsy translation, then, would be 'efficacious substance' or 'force-in-substance' (as *kuti* meant 'force-in-ritual').

755 757 278 Indeed, the important thing about *cigbe* is that it is always a substance, compounded of natural materials which anyone in possession of the recipe can collect and process by relatively simple procedures such as pulverizing, boiling, mixing, or charring. Most Nupe, incidentally, maintain that the essential ingredients of *cigbe* are always roots of trees.[1] It is tempting to conclude that here the empirical knowledge of the processes of plant growth has led to the assumption of some inherent but communicable force stored up in the roots of plants and trees. Which assumption would fit in well with the idea that all forms of illness connote a weakening of the life soul. But no one theorizes on these lines. Altogether, Nupe medicine shows little concern with theory, metaphysical or otherwise. As regards the alleged importance of roots, the various *cigbe* recipes show that herbs, grasses, the leaves of trees, or animal matter are employed as often. The power of *cigbe*, then, lies in materials of almost any sort if suitably processed and combined, and the knowledge of *cigbe* is precisely this skill of 'using ingredients'.[1]

[1] Two informants, in fact, assured me that the very word *cigbe* was a contraction of *cigbā gbere*, 'tree root'.

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We must now ask—to what extent is this knowledge empirically sound and the skill rationally employed? It can obviously not be entirely so since the non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, credited as it is with remote effects upon objects or human actions, reveals at first sight already its non-empirical, miraculous nature. Yet the twofold use of medicine, therapeutic as well as non-therapeutic, suggests the corresponding distinction between rational practices and others irrational or 'magical'. To some extent this will prove a valid distinction, though one far less clear-cut or consistent; and this in turn is partly due to the ambiguity of the concept of rationality when it is applied to the practices of a primitive people. For they may act with rational intent but insufficient or faulty knowledge, so that their would-be empirical practices will conflict with our scientific knowledge, and hence strike us as irrational or 'magical'; while in a sense the converse case may equally occur.

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I spoke of this before and need here only state the four possibilities entailed in these considerations. First, a procedure 'subjectively' rational, involving for the people the application of ordinary learned skills, may also be 'objectively' rational, that is, appropriate to the ends for which it is employed. Secondly, a subjectively rational procedure may prove futile and incongruous when assessed by 'objective' standards. Thirdly, a procedure professedly supernatural or mystical may yet prove appropriate, concealing some valid empirical principle. Lastly, a professedly mystical procedure may be such also from our point of view, that is, empirically false and incapable of achieving the ends for which it is employed.

Before examining each possibility in turn we must restate our criteria for assessing the mystical as against the professedly rational intent behind *cigbe* practice. In a very general sense, every *cigbe* procedure implies both kinds of intent. For even though Nupe medicine is, by definition, 'knowledge', which is usually purely technical as well as transferable through tuition or purchase, it is also given a mythical pedigree and related to the remoteness of God.[1] But these mystical associations are left almost entirely unemphasized, furnishing only a vague and ineffectual background, and can thus be disregarded. If, then, we are to credit certain procedures with mystical intent, they must exhibit it in a more pronounced and specific fashion. In the most obvious case the manufacture or application of *cigbe* will involve invocations of the deity and sacrifices proper, that is, open appeals for supernatural intervention. Where these are absent, we may yet search for that other evidence, of awe, fear, and a sense of the extraordinary or miraculous, which would set the procedure apart from pursuits

[1] See above, p. 18.

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755 757 813 and interests of a profane kind. The 'sense of the extraordinary' if it is not vouchsafed by verbal expressions, is clearly the most difficult to identify. But it is at least likely to go together with uncommon procedures and with rigid rules, barring even minute departures from a given course of action, that is, with ritualization. In sum I would list these criteria of professedly mystical as against professedly rational intent: the degree of ritualization implied in the preparation or application of medicines; their secrecy or otherwise; their commercial or non-commercial, public or private character; the diverse ways in which the knowledge of *cigbe* is transmitted; and the different kinds of faith placed in it.

If previously we described 'ritual' behaviour as behaviour exhibiting a degree of rigidity not accounted for by its professed aim, we may now say, of the 'ritualized' procedure of *cigbe*, that its rigidity is not accounted for by the rational intent. For the Nupe, the latter lies in the application of material substances which as such possess a given efficacy. But often we find additional and incongruous rules such as these: certain medicines may only be prepared in certain months of the year; in certain treatments a particular procedure must be repeated three times; in the operation of setting a broken limb four splints (no more and no less) must be used. Here, then, the Nupe no longer rely on the empirical or pseudo-empirical knowledge of 'ingredients'; rather, they abandon their own 'scientific' principles, diluting them with rules of a different order—with ritual, and hence with 'mystic' observances.

Again, certain medicines, their preparation and disposal, are cloaked in rigorous secrecy, while others are not secret or no more secret than the skills or tricks of a particular trade. The latter kind is usually freely bought and sold, while the secret medicines can be given away only with special formalities or not at all, being accessible only to the relatives or perhaps friends of the 'owner'; so that some medicines are available to the public, like any commercial commodity, and others are unalterably 'private'. As we know, the knowledge of *cigbe* is mostly transmitted through [428] ordinary teaching, and is such as any clever, observant, or widely-travelled person can acquire; but occasionally it is hereditary, the ultimate provenance of the knowledge remaining unexplained. Finally, while no one would assume that ordinary remedies, administered without ceremonial, are infallible, precisely this faith is put in the other, 'miraculous', medicines, even if they involve no explicit appeals to the deity.

These features, however, occur with varying degrees of definiteness; and, though they all hang together logically, they do not always appear together in practice. But considered singly, they

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offer only ambiguous criteria. Ritualization, for example, especially when it is slight, may represent only an item of 'knowledge', empirically futile and 'superstitious', but for all that entirely profane. And secrecy may attach to medicines, not because they are sacred or credited with miraculous efficacy, but because they are morally reprehensible. Our assessment of 'mystical' and 'rational' intent will therefore sometimes be uncertain and admit of borderline cases. Even so, it enables us to examine *cigbè* practice in the terms of the four 'possibilities' mentioned before.

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(i) It is clear that this possibility can apply only to the therapeutic medicines. But only very few even of these satisfy our two conditions of rational intent and objective appropriateness. For several of the therapeutic medicines require the accompaniment of invocations or sacrifices, or otherwise exhibit at least an admixture of mystical intent; and those which do not, often fail on the second count. It is clear, however, that in this relatively backward society we must not assess the appropriateness or otherwise of remedies by too exacting a standard. Thus, if they do not conflict in principle with our scientific ideas and are such that their efficacy might at least conceivably be of the alleged kind, their actual worthlessness may be ignored; at least, it does not make them 'mystical', but only shows them to be crude, inadequate, or ill-chosen. This would be true of such remedies as herbal potions used for intestinal troubles, of salves or powders rubbed into snake-bites, or of certain simple surgical treatments. Few of these betray any true medical lore; the surgical operations are rarely applied and have little merit; most potions or salves prove on chemical analysis to have no positive value, though I found none that was actually harmful and a few that had a slight medicinal property, such as the absorptive or laxative effect of charred vegetable matter. Even so, these practices are at least of the right kind or resemble the right kind of treatment, and will for this reason be included in our first category.

Many more treatments are without even this semblance of appropriateness, suggesting merely blundering attempts, unguided even by faulty knowledge. Lunacy, for example, is treated by means of inhalations; smallpox is prevented by burning herbs in the entrance hut; pregnancy, by the wearing of a 'magic' belt; and for rheumatic pains one has this abstruse cure: the patient stands inside a hut, pressing the aching part of his body against the wall; the doctor stands outside and holds the 'medicine' with his foot against the wall, opposite the place where, on the inside, the patient's body touches the wall; the doctor then slowly drags the medicine to the ground, thus 'drawing the pain from the body'. Though this treatment seems to imply some crude

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755 reasoning from analogy, it clearly belongs, with all the other treat-
ments just mentioned, to our second category, of practices utterly
757 incongruous and not even conceivably capable of the alleged effects.
813 We must add, further, that a great many therapeutic remedies are ascribed so multifarious an efficacy that their 'rational' application to one kind of ailment is belied by the other, extravagant claims. The same substance will serve as an antidote for snake-bite, as a cure for headaches, and as a potion applied in ordeals; and a herbal concoction for intestinal troubles will also be used to cure rheumatic pains in the fantastic manner just described. Thus the borderline between rational and pseudo-rational treatments is once more blurred, and the province of the former narrowed further. And here we may note that in a sense the Nupe wish to keep it narrow. For the one version of medicine which comes nearest to satisfying our two conditions of rational intent and empirical (if crude) appropriateness, that practised by the barber-doctors, is also criticized for this very reason. The barber-doctors
[759] are entirely profane practitioners, whose skill is a matter of cleverness and learning, involves no secrecy, and is at the disposal of all who can pay for their services. But their practice is largely restricted to the capital and the more sophisticated large villages, and little known or little thought of elsewhere. Indeed, the country people simply laugh when you suggest that the barbers have a knowledge of *cigbe*; 'barbers', I was always told, 'know no *cigbe*; all they can do is to cure headache'. Now some of my informants certainly knew that this was incorrect; furthermore, several village *cigbe* of the secret and mystical kind were also supposed to cope with headache. It was therefore not the efficacy of the remedies which the people held in ridicule but their purely profane character; and in denying that the barbers possessed any worthwhile knowledge of medicine, they really denied that their knowledge deserved the name of medicine. We note, then, a bias towards excluding from the genus *cigbe* those remedies which combine all the characteristics of a rational practice. The true *cigbe*, the people seem to feel, must at least in some respects bear the mark of the extraordinary or 'magical'. But this is no more than a bias since even in the villages where the art of the barber-doctors was so de-
[369] rided there exist purely profane, would-be rational remedies.[1] Their number, however, is strikingly small; so that in the peasant culture of Nupe, unlike the urban culture of the capital, the non-mystical or non-'magical' *cigbe* represents an exception from the rule.

[1] Also, this 'bias' is being obliterated by the modern usage of the word *cigbe* for all European drugs and medical appliances, in which the Nupe see nothing transcendental or magical, but the application of 'knowledge' proper.

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(ii) We have already mentioned the therapeutic medicines which fall in this category in virtue of their fantastic nature or of the extravagant claims made for them. We need only add that there are no non-therapeutic *cigbe*, that is, medicines at first sight already 'miraculous' and irrational, which are handled in a would-be rational manner; all also imply at least some expression of mystical intent. 755 757 813

(iii) Strictly speaking, this possibility of professedly mystical but unwittingly appropriate practices does not apply to Nupe medicine. Trance possession attributed to spirits, magic dances meant to cure mental disorders, and similar treatments which might conceal a psycho-therapeutic efficacy under the mystical trappings are altogether absent. But the combination of invocations and sacrifices with remedies which are 'of the right kind' constitutes a borderline case since the people would attribute the success of the remedy (such as it is) as much to supernatural intervention as to the inherent properties of the ingredients employed. In a sense even the most absurd therapeutic remedies have a share of such a concealed empirical efficacy. In calling them absurd and worthless we were considering only their intrinsic inappropriateness to the effects ascribed to them; we cannot deny that the patient's trust in the efficacy of the medicine or the repute of the doctor may well produce at least an apparent relief. Which means, further, that the practitioner's medical notions will repeatedly receive some empirical support, whose spuriousness he is unable to judge.

(iv) Our last category comprises all the non-therapeutic medicines and a considerable number of therapeutic ones. Their objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. When a potion is said to make a person invisible, a salve to secure invulnerability, a herbal concoction kept in the village to keep away smallpox, or a powder applied to a hoe to double the farm output, there can clearly be no question but that only a miracle could make these 'medicines' effective. Nor is the mystical intent any less certain, being visible in the prescribed invocations, sacrifices, forms of ritualism, and so forth. It is interesting to note that several of these practices are based upon the principle 'like causes like'; by itself, this spurious 'theory would not establish the mystical intent since for the people it represents only one more item of would-be scientific knowledge. The same principle, in fact, also underlies a few therapeutic and strictly profane cures. But it seems significant that it is employed on a large scale only in the fully irrational practices, that is, in situations where success is vouchsafed also by mystical procedures. In other words, false knowledge tends to go together with transcendental guarantees (though more sound knowledge does not necessarily discard them).

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755 Let me summarize. By our criteria of rational and mystical intent the whole range of non-therapeutic *cigbe* together with a
757 good portion of the therapeutic ones would fall in the category of
813 transcendental practices (religious or 'magical'); while only the rest of the cures proper, good, bad, and indifferent, would belong on the side of reason or near-reason. And since a great many of the cures in the former category are 'objectively' as futile or absurd as the non-therapeutic variety, it may be said that the Nupe tend to treat as 'magical' what is, by all standards, magical and to aim at miraculous effects by means openly designed for miracles.

2. PHARMACOPOEIA NUPEANA

757 It seems convenient to insert here a fuller description of Nupe medicines and medical (or pseudo-medical) treatments. Their
278 therapeutic or non-therapeutic character will become clear from
759 the description, as will also the share of 'irrational' or mystical observances. We must, however, anticipate the various classes of medicine experts and briefly state their respective specialities. First, we have the guild of barber doctors, who are all Mohammedans and whose craft is entirely therapeutic and would-be empirical; a few minor instances of 'ritualization' do not contradict the generally rational intent. Secondly, there is the corresponding and predominantly pagan order of *cigbeciži* or *bociži* ('medicine-men'), whose practice, both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, invariably betrays mystical intent. Thirdly, there are a few individual experts who belong to neither organization and may employ any kind of *cigbe*. Lastly, we shall meet with the owners of hereditary medicines, vested in the lineage or (in Nupe parlance) 'house'; these are both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, and always conspicuously mystical. In one isolated case a conspicuously 'mystical' medicine is owned by a whole community. Let me also recall that some medical practitioners are diviners at the same time, though there is no firmer link between the two professions.

757 These are some of the remedies known to the barber-doctors of Bida. Stomach trouble is treated by means of various potions: one
278 consists of the infusion of a certain swamp plant; another, of the infusion of the charred bark of the oil-palm, sheanut tree or locust-bean tree, mixed with natron;[1] a third, of the pounded roots of a certain tree, mixed with powdered eggshell, dried in the sun and then taken with water. Light headache is cured by burning a certain common plant and making the patient inhale the fumes,

[1] The 'natron' is natural carbonate of soda from Lake Chad which is on sale in all Nupe markets.

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or by preparing a potion from bits of earth extracted from a 757
termite mound. For severe headache one applies an ointment to 278
the eyes, compounded of the dried kernels of a fruit tree, the bark from the roots of another, cloves, and powdered antimony. Sometimes headache is treated quasi-surgically, by a species of bleeding; the barber makes a number of fine incisions into the patient's forehead and then rubs a paste of dried locust-beans and natron into the cuts. The counter-irritation thus induced may well offer a temporary relief, though the bleeding itself is probably too slight to have any effect; the cure, however, has an odd conclusion, the patient's head being knocked gently three times against the wall.

Ulcers and wounds are treated with powdered bark or roots, 752
used either dry or damp, and left on the wound for two to three 278
days. Broken limbs are first massaged with a salve made of palm-oil and the dried and powdered leaves of a certain tree (another remedy including dirt from a hen house and charred earth from a termite mound), after which one applies a ligature of rope, using four sticks as splints. The ligature is removed after three days, but the massage with the ointment is continued. If the fracture does not heal, this treatment is followed up with a 'stronger' one, to wit, a massage with snake poison. For smallpox one gives a potion 757
made of the pods of a certain vine growing in the bush. There is 278
also a 'prophylactic' treatment, applied when an epidemic is threatening; it consists either in drinking an infusion of the [751]
bark of the locust-bean tree, boiled together with some grains of sorghum or millet, or in fumigating the house, at night, by burning certain herbs. Pounded hibiscus seeds, taken like snuff, are given to patients suffering from asthma. For fever accompanied by rigor (malaria?) one drinks the boiled juice of the pawpaw mixed with natron; a more 'magical' cure consists in inhalations of the fumes from three ingredients burned together in an old, broken pot (never a new one)—a powdered herb, the swamp plant mentioned before, and twigs taken from a vulture's nest. We shall meet again with this predilection for old pots when discussing the medicines of the *cigbeci* experts; the vulture plays a part also in another remedy of the barber-doctors, applied to sore eyes: they are bathed in ash-water mixed with a pulverized vulture's leg. Other herbal concoctions are used in the treatment of gonorrhœa (called *tswashi*), syphilis (called *tunjeri*), and sleeping sickness; these remedies are similar in that the first two are said to increase the typical secretion until 'the whole disease leaves the body', while the last brings on diarrhœa, the germs of the disease being passed with the stool. Lunacy of a non-violent nature may be treated by means of inhalations, repeated several times day and night, or by

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757 means of a potion. For the inhalation one uses leaf-tips of the oil-
278 palm, hair of a she-goat, and the pulverized genitals of a he-goat, all burned together in a pot; the potion is made of the sap of a certain 'male' shrub (that is, the fruitless variety, called *darabagi*, 'male *dara*'), the charred bark of another, mixed with natron. The patient, having been treated in this fashion, is said to calm down and eventually to recover, though the cure can never be certain. For violent and dangerous attacks there is no agreed cure. The barber-doctors, in fact, do not treat this form of insanity at all, but other people sometimes know a treatment, though it is always said to be difficult and uncertain. Thus one informant suggested that the patients must be made to fast until they calm down; and another recommended flogging (a treatment apparently widely applied in Yoruba country).[1]

757 A final group of medicines bears on conception and virility.
278 Dried cocoyam, the charred bark of the *savi* tree, and onions,
842 pounded and taken in water, are said to constitute a powerful
[832] aphrodisiac. Fertility of women is ensured by a potion, drunk the morning before cohabitation, made of an infusion of leaves of the tamarind tree mixed with natron. Delivery is facilitated by rubbing the womb with three herbs after they have been soaked in water for a night. There are also two 'contraceptive' medicines, one having a temporary effect only, the other believed to cause permanent barrenness. The former consists of two powdered herbs, mixed with bits of grass from a termite mound, and taken with water; the latter, of the charred stalk and leaves of a young cassava plant, mixed with henna root and natron, boiled in water, and drunk. The knowledge, incidentally, of the permanent 'contraceptive' is claimed to be purely platonic; the Bida practitioner at least has no chance of applying it in practice, not because he is reluctant to do so or because the Bida women avoid these shameful practices, but because they would not risk their reputation by thus openly consulting a 'doctor' in the town. Instead, my informants assured me, they go to 'medicine-men' in the villages, where they are unknown and their secret will be safe. A secret in fact it is; and here we meet with a first, though fairly mild, instance of reprehensible medicines, employed for immoral ends.

757 This list is far from complete, omitting, especially, the many
759 variants of the same kind of cure.[2] The barber-doctors do not believe in specifics in the strict sense of the word; rather, there are several treatments for each ailment, and different practitioners

[1] The informant in question came, in fact, from Shari, a village on the border of Nupe and Yoruba.

[2] I recorded altogether thirty-four remedies known to barber-doctors, which number is probably fairly exhaustive.

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will often know and apply different ones. Also, some specialize in potions or in poultices and lotions; others prefer treatment by means of inhalations, which the Nupe call *turare* (a Hausa word, meaning 'scent' or 'fumigation'). Certain more versatile experts know several remedies for the same illness, which they would try out one after the other. The position is summed up in this statement of a famous Bida 'doctor': 'Sometimes one medicine proves sufficient; but there is only one way of discovering the right one—to experiment and trust in God.' Certain barber-doctors, too, are specialists in particular diseases and are known as such. Thus only two men in Bida knew how to treat lunacy and only one Bida barber (whom I met in Ibadan, where he was staying at the time) knew how to treat sleeping sickness; similarly, there were specialists for venereal diseases, for eye complaints, and so forth. For certain ailments there are no treatments; their list includes blindness, idiocy, leprosy, elephantiasis, deafness, 'incurable syphilis', and, oddly enough, the common cold; my informants made it quite clear that the last was too trifling a complaint to deserve the attention of 'doctors'.

As we have seen, surgical treatments are almost entirely absent, and the use of splints in fractures is considered no more important than the application of some 'strong' salve or ointment. The barbers, in fact, herbalists at heart, deprecate the 'use of the knife' and emphatically deny its value. Said the head of the barbers' guild: 'The knife begets pain; how could it cure?' Though the same few herbs or plants appear in the majority of remedies, this does not mean that they alone have curative properties. On the contrary, it is considered that all plants contain some medicine, even if its nature or extraction are not known. It is considered equally certain that this medical knowledge, far from being static, is growing all the time, so that the barbers today possess medicines unknown even a short time ago. Once more, this is a question of experimenting 'with the help of God', and there are certain rough rules how to proceed. One tries first the bark of a plant or tree not hitherto used; if this proves worthless, one tries the roots, and finally the leaves or fruits. As to why certain parts of plants should contain *cigbe* and others not, there is no answer; or rather the usual answer is '*cigbe u de 'tsu a*', 'medicines have no king' (that is, follow no proclaimed law): God has made them so, and men can only hope to learn by trial and error or by accepting the wisdom of others.

A strikingly large number of remedies employ plant parasites (called *etú*), and their special medicinal properties are strongly emphasized. If the alien growth of the parasites once suggested to the people some affinity with the nature of diseases and hence a

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757 278 possible application of the principle 'like cures like', no one today is aware of this notion. Nor are there any 'theories' as regards such abstruse ingredients as eggshells, the excreta of fowls, twigs from the nest of vultures, or grass from inside an ant-heap. Yet it is also difficult to see how the precept, 'experiment with the help of God', can have led to these peculiar discoveries. If they are 'superstitions', they are not, like other superstitions, the degraded offspring of more elaborate mystic or cosmological speculations. The treatment of lunacy, with its 'male' and 'female' ingredients, seems to suggest something of the kind; but there is no clear link between this cure and that other idea, that lunacy is a residue of 'male' sleeping sickness.[1] And in all the other fantastic remedies their intellectual antecedents are simply not traceable, not even to legends or folk-tales. Perhaps the remedies have been adopted, more or less blindly, from other groups and countries, on some of those informative travels of which the barber-doctors boast. As they stand, they are merely crude and absurd attempts at 'empirical' treatment, instances of that 'blundering' I spoke of before.

278 755 [759] Any of the medicines just described might equally be the product of the *cigbeciži*, and a number are in fact identical. But unlike the barber-doctors, the *cigbeciži* also employ the fully irrational, non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, and even their remedies proper, salves, potions, and the like, are much more often based on recipes of an incongruous and abstruse kind.[2] Thus a 'strong' potion taken for intestinal troubles includes the fluid extracted from the gall-bladder of snakes, a potion alleged to cure smallpox contains a boiled lizard tail, and an ointment for rheumatic pains is composed, among other things, of powdered potsherds which must be obtained from old pots found lying about with the broken side up, any other position rendering the remedy worthless.

While these recipes seem as random and arbitrary as the more abstruse examples of the barber-doctors' art, others betray some underlying 'theory', some vague and often uncertain reasoning from analogy or from the principle 'like cures like'. Thus one [842] expert had a cure for impotence consisting of a potion whose ingredients included, besides various roots and two kinds of pepper, also the powdered genitals of a he-goat.[3] A contraceptive credited with lasting effect is concocted from the roots of the

[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Of the twenty-two *cigbeci* medicines I recorded fifteen belonged to that category, while the corresponding proportion in the case of the barbers' remedies was six in thirty-four.

[3] I have this incongruous evidence for the efficacy of the treatment. My servant, who was with me when I visited the expert, at once bought and drunk the potion to increase his virility. The next day I had to doctor him for severe indigestion.

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are, like the latter, composed of sayings more or less trivial or apposite. A medicine alleged to facilitate childbirth, for example, is called *lamá*, from *lá má 'gi*, 'causing childbirth', and has a meaningless 'greeting'; the antidote for snake-bite *dabwalé* (an undecipherable word) commands the following 'greeting'—'The thing for washing, when a snake bites a person, (this) thing drives the illness away'. The 'contraceptive' made of grass taken from special ant-heaps, is called *botáfī*, a word derived from *botá*, the name for a species of grass and *fī*, 'to drink'; when the grass is removed from the ant-heap one repeats three times: 'One does not know the father of ants; one does not know the mother of ants'; of which crude allusion to the users of this remedy we have already spoken. The 'greeting' of another contraceptive remedy similarly plays upon an analogy—'A person without speech cannot tell', which means, a woman without fertility cannot bear children. The miraculous medicine alleged to make a person invisible and invulnerable has a name and 'greeting' which are highly suggestive; it is called *akpára*, the Nupe word for 'rifle', and is addressed thus—'The night brings darkness. The eye sees in daylight, the eye does not see at night. There is nothing inside the earth save God' (that is, save things God alone can see, as he alone can see a person who has applied this medicine). 755

Perhaps the term 'invocations' will seem inappropriate in the case of these nondescript addresses or 'greetings'. But let me leave this point for the moment and only mention that invocations proper also have their place in *cigbe* practice. The *cigbeci*, like the barber-doctor, may add some new medicine to those already known; at least, this is true of the head of the order of 'medicine-men'. And whenever he discovers or invents a new remedy, he must perform a sacrifice composed of beer, a fowl, and a small portion of the new *cigbe*, speaking thus—'God, the medicine that has been prepared, here it is. May the medicine be successful. I am sacrificing to Kpara, I am sacrificing to Tswasha Malu, I am sacrificing to Tswako Dzana.' The names mentioned are those of ancestors of the head of the *cigbeci* guild; and the sacrifice is performed over the vessel in which the new medicine will henceforth be kept. As we shall see, both the invocation of ancestors and the treatment of the medicine vessel almost as a sacred shrine are features typical also of the hereditary medicines, which even more conspicuously reveal their irrational or mystical intent.

To turn to the medicines known to individuals. We may mention first that certain simple treatments are familiar to nearly everyone, being applied in the manner of household remedies or as a kind of 'first aid'; only when this fails or seems inadequate does one turn to 'professional' medicines. And even then one often asks friends 757

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757 and neighbours first before consulting the accredited experts. One
[431] does not pay in money for this kind of assistance[1] but only offers a small return gift of kolanuts or food. The household remedies are mainly laxatives, or cures for toothache, headache, and slight wounds or bruises, though they include also certain crude treatments to induce abortion or prevent pregnancy—by sucking frogs or drinking the blood from the afterbirth. Normally, one uses infusions of common plants, ash-water or natron (both known as laxatives), ointments made of palm-oil or sheanut-butter, or damp earth (applied to cuts and the like); the more complex herbal concoctions and the use of bark and roots, which make up the *cigbe* proper, are entirely absent.

Certain individuals, are known to possess this more 'professional' knowledge as well. Like the barbers, they apply therapeutic treatments in a profane and would-be rational manner, and like the *cigbeci*, practise the non-therapeutic variety with more or less conspicuous mystical intent. Their skill extends to remedies alleged to increase virility and facilitate pregnancy, though contraceptives are outside the scope of the individual practitioner. 'Fantastic' treatments, however, are not. We already mentioned one such cure meant to remove rheumatic pains through 'drawing them from the body'. Two further treatments are of special interest, one because it is empirically sound, the other because it is surgical as well as daring and involves a clear apprehension of the symptoms of a relatively obscure disease. The first example con-
[278] cerns the use of the severely toxic *datura stramonium*. Many Nupe are aware of the effect of the seeds or powdered leaves which produce stupor and insensitiveness, and the experts prescribe small doses, taken in water, as a cure for pains; with less justification, they also recommend the external application of the leaves, soaked in ash-water and mixed with sheanut butter, for aching limbs. The
757 second example is an alleged cure for sleeping sickness, which must
752 be applied in the early stages of the disease, recognized by the swelling of the neck glands. I only met one expert who knew of this treatment, a man from Mokwa, whose repute had spread far and wide. The surgical treatment involves a deep incision in the skin above the glands, charred leaves of a bean variety being rubbed into the wound; the leaves are said to have a caustic effect so that, when the treatment is repeated twice daily for a week, the glands themselves can be removed. As an after-treatment the patient is given an infusion of bark and roots to drink, and a coarse grass and fish to eat. The expert did not claim that his cure was always effective: it would still depend on 'God's will'; but he showed me a man, bearing the scars of the operation, who, he claimed, had completely recovered.

[1] [i.e., simple medicinal treatments. - Analyst]

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consult a pagan (or semi-pagan) *cigbeci*. That the powers of *cigbe* are greater as well as more varied few will doubt; nor do the mallams themselves deny that many of the cures and other effects of *cigbe* are beyond their ken. It was, for example, a Moslem scholar of high repute who put me in touch with the *cigbeciži*, being himself a firm believer in the excellence of their art.

Modern medicine, as practised in hospitals and dispensaries, is a more serious rival. Nupe men and women who for the first time face this novel version of *cigbe* may be suspicious or openly afraid; often they will discontinue the visits to the doctor or dispenser, or leave unused the drugs they are given. A steadily increasing number, however, now have fair confidence in doctors and drugs and would be prepared to admit that our cures are on the whole better than theirs. This is true especially of minor surgical treatments and of injections of all kinds, that is, of treatments utterly unlike the indigenous practices and often 'miraculous' in their effect. This may seem a lukewarm statement; but I do not think that it can be put more positively or optimistically, at least as regards the average Nupe. Administration officials, teachers, and others who have been in close contact with Europeans are exceptions (though only to some extent).[1] Certainly, the Nupe are turning to European medicine much more slowly and waveringly than other African groups I know.

Now these other groups are also more primitive than the Nupe or without a similar, highly organized and would-be rational therapeutic skill. The diverse reaction is thus no accident. Fear and suspicion there would be in either case. But in the more primitive groups organized medicine, as a purely profane skill or knowledge, is entirely novel and unprecedented; it may have to fight religious prejudice, but not its own kind: while in Nupe precisely this is true. Other Africans might feel that European medicine clashes with their religious notions, or identify it with evil magic or witchcraft. The more sophisticated Nupe merely mistrusts the knife which, as everyone knows, 'cannot heal', or cynically suspects the doctors of poisoning patients who fail to recover. At best, he regards the European remedy as one of several possibilities, which he is wont to try out one after the other. And here the odds are not all in favour of the former.

[1] To wit, the following extract from an English composition on *The Hospital*, written in 1936 by a Nupe secondary school boy and corrected by his teacher. 'The disadvantage (of hospitals) is that when a man is taken there to be cured and if the nurses see that they cannot cure him, or perhaps he is given any kind of drugs and he still is exactly opposite as he was brought in, they give him a kind of medicine which makes he will die away.' The teacher found that only the last sentence needed correction, thus—'they give him a poison and he will die'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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177 Many cases are already hopeless when they reach the doctors and
755 hospitals, with the result that their remedies will appear to be no
better than those of barbers or *cigbeciži*; above all, the European
757 doctor does not profess to cure impotence or sterility, or to procure sterility; so that the most widely sought treatments are also an admitted gap in this new knowledge of 'medicine'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XVI

FREE PROFESSIONS

463 IT is not surprising that a rich and complex culture like Nupe should possess its clearly defined *artes liberales*—its professional scholars, scientists, and artists, or, in a terminology more akin to the native conception, its Mallams, barber-doctors, and drummers and dancers. I will leave the discussion of the profession of Mohammedan scholars for the chapter on education, and deal here with the last two of these 'free professions'.

BARBER-DOCTORS

'Free professions' in the sense in which we are using the term here does not necessarily mean 'individualistic' professions or professions unattached to any organization or co-operative unit. If what I have said in the preceding chapter about the meaning of guild-organization is correct, we may expect to find it developed also in the field of these native *artes liberales*. In fact, we do find it, adjusted to the new field of activity, in the barber-doctors of Nupe. We can no longer speak here of home industry; nor is the element of co-operation and mutual assistance the same as in the industries. But the other factors that tend to call into being a closely co-operative organization are clearly visible: we find again the necessity of long, specialized training, even to the degree of adoption into a trade secret; we also find the existence of a constant 'market' for the products and services of the craft; and lastly, we find a close relation between the group of craftsmen and the political system of the country.

305 759 As in medieval Europe and the Orient, the barber of Nupe, *gozan*, is also doctor and surgeon. His activities are numerous: he cuts the hair of men, women, and children; he shaves the head and cuts the tribal marks of newborn babies at the name-giving ceremony. For a tenth of a penny he cuts finger- and toe-nails: a few barbers have specialized in tattooing. The barbers also dispense medicines (mostly worthless[1] infusions and charred powders made of herbs) for every known disease; they perform certain minor surgical operations—circumcision or blood-letting—and administer the *turare*, a potent inhalation of the smoke from certain medicinal herbs. Certain barbers know the secret of contraceptive medicines, others know cures against barrenness; others, again, are experts in the treatment of lunacy. This far-reaching competency is the most characteristic feature of the craft of Nupe barber-doctors. Leaving aside the ordinary routine work of the barber and certain simpler operations such as the cutting of tribal marks, we may say that every barber

[1] This judgement is based on an analysis in the Wellcome Research Laboratory in London, for which I am greatly indebted to this institution, of certain drugs made by the Nupe barber-doctors which I had brought home from Nigeria. The discussion of the more specifically medical questions I must leave for a future publication.

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1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpã* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciši* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciši* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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larger group, the guild section or guild). The work of the barbers is organized on the familiar lines of *efakó* and *bucá*. Although their work does not entail actually working together, a certain kind of work is regarded as a concern of the family group as such and as falling under the rules of *efakó*. The *efakó* principle itself is interpreted in an unusual sense. In the work of the barbers orders or summons do not usually reach the individual barber directly, but come to him via the head of the household, who allots the various tasks to the different family members. The proceeds from all work carried out on these lines are divided among the whole *efakó* group, in accordance with a certain schedule which takes into account the seniority of the different family members. The tasks which come under *efakó* rule are the most highly paid jobs: the shaving of the hair and the cutting of tribal marks at the name-giving ceremony, and the circumcision of boys. The first task is performed at the occasion of an important household feast, and the barber-doctors rarely fail to benefit from the generosity that goes with festal mood. These simpler operations are executed by the younger men of the family, but the family head and the older men will also be present, as guests quite as much as in their professional capacity—which latter may reveal itself in no more than an occasional hint thrown out to the young colleague. The barbers will all sit together, and in front of them there will be a bowl into which every visitor is expected to drop a coin, the largest contribution coming from the parents of the newborn child. Let us follow the fate of a shilling dropped into this bowl of the barbers at a name-giving ceremony in a Bida house: 2*d*. is retained by the grandmother, who held the infant during the operation; 1*d*. goes to each of the five junior members of the *efakó* group (including the young man who performed the operation); 1½*d*. each to two older men of the family, the family head and his younger brother; and 2*d*., finally, to the head of the guild section.

All other work of the barbers is regarded as *bucá*: ordinary haircutting and shaving as well as medical treatment.[1] The latter, more lucrative, work is a prerogative of the older men, who alone know herbs and drugs and can perform the *turare*. The younger men will be taught these craft secrets when they reach a certain age. And thus another principle of family work is realized in the organization of the Nupe barber-doctors, namely, the balance in favour of senior family members which we have observed in the organization of farm-labour and native industries.

We have seen that in the distribution of *efakó* income a certain contribution goes to the head of the guild section. This, then, is a first instance of economic co-operation of the large professional unit. This co-operation is visible also in another, external, feature of this professional organization. In each of the three day-markets of Bida there is a special barbers' 'hall', a spacious open hut, where all the barbers (specially the family heads) meet in the afternoon, and sit and wait for clients and summons. This hut is built and kept up from a common fund. The existence of this common fund is itself evidence of a close co-operation in the financial field. Into this fund, which is called *dashi*, every barber

[1] The barbers are usually paid in money; but when the Bida barbers tour the country villages they often take firewood or food in lieu of payment.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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305 759 467 pays a small amount of money at regular intervals; the fund is administered by the guild-head; he deducts from it money for possible common expenses, and pays out the rest in full to every member of the guild section in turn, after every pay-day. This financial arrangement is fairly common in Nupe, specially among traders and labourers, and we shall discuss it in more detail later. The barbers, however, are the only professional group which has embodied it in its professional organization and utilizes it as a system of mutual financial assistance vested in the craft-guild.

The guild organization is restricted to Bida town. In the villages, even in the larger places, one or two barbers are sufficient to meet the normal demand. Besides, the medicine-man of the pagan districts would constitute a serious competition to the Bida doctors. But so far as barbers and barber-doctors are wanted in the country, the organization in the capital supplies them, either permanently or temporarily. Certain Bida barbers, for example, have settled in villages; others tour the country regularly, stopping in this or that place for longer or shorter periods. Even in these tours of the country districts round Bida, the barbers keep to the territory of 'their' royal house, i.e. the royal house on whose land in Bida their home stands. Although it clearly cannot be said of the barber-doctors that they 'serve the state' in the same way as blacksmiths or leather-workers, this arrangement is a striking evidence of the fact that their association with the political structure of the country is as strongly marked, and that they, again, are in certain respects the 'king's craftsmen'.

DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

533 467 The drummers in Bida, true to the more 'advanced' urban conception of art, are individualists; in the village, where the art of drumming belongs not only to the recreational side of social life, but also forms part of the organization of ritual and ceremony as well as production (we remember the part drumming plays in the farming *egbe*), it is less an 'art' in the modern sense of the word than a 'craft', working for well-defined institutionalized demands, and charged with responsibilities of a graver order. Drumming in the village thus moves in the framework of a close organization on guild lines. In every larger Nupe village we find a special group of drummers and musicians who, though belonging to different families and houses, yet recognize the authority of a common head, the *Etsu Dzã*, the King of the Drummers. Certain other subordinate titles, are distributed, in guild fashion, among the other members of the craft. The art of drumming remains in the family and is handed on from father to son. You may see small boys practising [868] drumming on little toy-like instruments under the eye of the father. They will go with him wherever he is called to perform, watching him and, when they are sufficiently advanced, accompanying him on their own drums. Sometimes boys from other families desire to become drummers. Their father will then get in touch with the head of the drummers, and give him his son as apprentice. The young apprentice will visit the drummer's house every day for his lesson. In the beginning

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18. Levelling the ground over a new grave

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19. The master of the *cigbeciši* in his 'dispensary'

[p. 118 (B)]

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755 reasoning from analogy, it clearly belongs, with all the other treat-
757 ments just mentioned, to our second category, of practices utterly incongruous and not even conceivably capable of the alleged effects.
813 We must add, further, that a great many therapeutic remedies are ascribed so multifarious an efficacy that their 'rational' application to one kind of ailment is belied by the other, extravagant claims. The same substance will serve as an antidote for snake-bite, as a cure for headaches, and as a potion applied in ordeals; and a herbal concoction for intestinal troubles will also be used to cure rheumatic pains in the fantastic manner just described. Thus the borderline between rational and pseudo-rational treatments is once more blurred, and the province of the former narrowed further. And here we may note that in a sense the Nupe wish to keep it narrow. For the one version of medicine which comes nearest to satisfying our two conditions of rational intent and empirical (if crude) appropriateness, that practised by the barber-doctors, is also criticized for this very reason. The barber-doctors
[759] are entirely profane practitioners, whose skill is a matter of cleverness and learning, involves no secrecy, and is at the disposal of all who can pay for their services. But their practice is largely restricted to the capital and the more sophisticated large villages, and little known or little thought of elsewhere. Indeed, the country people simply laugh when you suggest that the barbers have a knowledge of *cigbe*; 'barbers', I was always told, 'know no *cigbe*; all they can do is to cure headache'. Now some of my informants certainly knew that this was incorrect; furthermore, several village *cigbe* of the secret and mystical kind were also supposed to cope with headache. It was therefore not the efficacy of the remedies which the people held in ridicule but their purely profane character; and in denying that the barbers possessed any worthwhile knowledge of medicine, they really denied that their knowledge deserved the name of medicine. We note, then, a bias towards excluding from the genus *cigbe* those remedies which combine all the characteristics of a rational practice. The true *cigbe*, the people seem to feel, must at least in some respects bear the mark of the extraordinary or 'magical'. But this is no more than a bias since even in the villages where the art of the barber-doctors was so de-
[369] rided there exist purely profane, would-be rational remedies.[1] Their number, however, is strikingly small; so that in the peasant culture of Nupe, unlike the urban culture of the capital, the non-mystical or non-'magical' *cigbe* represents an exception from the rule.

[1] Also, this 'bias' is being obliterated by the modern usage of the word *cigbe* for all European drugs and medical appliances, in which the Nupe see nothing transcendental or magical, but the application of 'knowledge' proper.

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755 Let me summarize. By our criteria of rational and mystical
757 intent the whole range of non-therapeutic *cigbe* together with a
813 good portion of the therapeutic ones would fall in the category of transcendental practices (religious or 'magical'); while only the rest of the cures proper, good, bad, and indifferent, would belong on the side of reason or near-reason. And since a great many of the cures in the former category are 'objectively' as futile or absurd as the non-therapeutic variety, it may be said that the Nupe tend to treat as 'magical' what is, by all standards, magical and to aim at miraculous effects by means openly designed for miracles.

2. PHARMACOPOEIA NUPEANA

757 It seems convenient to insert here a fuller description of Nupe
278 medicines and medical (or pseudo-medical) treatments. Their
759 therapeutic or non-therapeutic character will become clear from the description, as will also the share of 'irrational' or mystical observances. We must, however, anticipate the various classes of medicine experts and briefly state their respective specialities. First, we have the guild of barber doctors, who are all Mohammedans and whose craft is entirely therapeutic and would-be empirical; a few minor instances of 'ritualization' do not contradict the generally rational intent. Secondly, there is the corresponding and predominantly pagan order of *cigbeciži* or *bociži* ('medicine-men'), whose practice, both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, invariably betrays mystical intent. Thirdly, there are a few individual experts who belong to neither organization and may employ any kind of *cigbe*. Lastly, we shall meet with the owners of hereditary medicines, vested in the lineage or (in Nupe parlance) 'house'; these are both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, and always conspicuously mystical. In one isolated case a conspicuously 'mystical' medicine is owned by a whole community. Let me also recall that some medical practitioners are diviners at the same time, though there is no firmer link between the two professions.

757 These are some of the remedies known to the barber-doctors of
278 Bida. Stomach trouble is treated by means of various potions: one consists of the infusion of a certain swamp plant; another, of the infusion of the charred bark of the oil-palm; sheanut tree or locust-bean tree, mixed with natron;[1] a third, of the pounded roots of a certain tree, mixed with powdered eggshell, dried in the sun and then taken with water. Light headache is cured by burning a certain common plant and making the patient inhale the fumes,

[1] The 'natron' is natural carbonate of soda from Lake Chad which is on sale in all Nupe markets.

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757 means of a potion. For the inhalation one uses leaf-tips of the oil-
278 palm, hair of a she-goat, and the pulverized genitals of a he-goat, all burned together in a pot; the potion is made of the sap of a certain 'male' shrub (that is, the fruitless variety, called *darabagi*, 'male *dara*'), the charred bark of another, mixed with natron. The patient, having been treated in this fashion, is said to calm down and eventually to recover, though the cure can never be certain. For violent and dangerous attacks there is no agreed cure. The barber-doctors, in fact, do not treat this form of insanity at all, but other people sometimes know a treatment, though it is always said to be difficult and uncertain. Thus one informant suggested that the patients must be made to fast until they calm down; and another recommended flogging (a treatment apparently widely applied in Yoruba country).[1]

757 A final group of medicines bears on conception and virility.
278 Dried cocoyam, the charred bark of the *savi* tree, and onions,
342 pounded and taken in water, are said to constitute a powerful
[832] aphrodisiac. Fertility of women is ensured by a potion, drunk the morning before cohabitation, made of an infusion of leaves of the tamarind tree mixed with natron. Delivery is facilitated by rubbing the womb with three herbs after they have been soaked in water for a night. There are also two 'contraceptive' medicines, one having a temporary effect only, the other believed to cause permanent barrenness. The former consists of two powdered herbs, mixed with bits of grass from a termite mound, and taken with water; the latter, of the charred stalk and leaves of a young cassava plant, mixed with henna root and natron, boiled in water, and drunk. The knowledge, incidentally, of the permanent 'contraceptive' is claimed to be purely platonic; the Bida practitioner at least has no chance of applying it in practice, not because he is reluctant to do so or because the Bida women avoid these shameful practices, but because they would not risk their reputation by thus openly consulting a 'doctor' in the town. Instead, my informants assured me, they go to 'medicine-men' in the villages, where they are unknown and their secret will be safe. A secret in fact it is; and here we meet with a first, though fairly mild, instance of reprehensible medicines, employed for immoral ends.

757 This list is far from complete, omitting, especially, the many
759 variants of the same kind of cure.[2] The barber-doctors do not believe in specifics in the strict sense of the word; rather, there are several treatments for each ailment, and different practitioners

[1] The informant in question came, in fact, from Shari, a village on the border of Nupe and Yoruba.

[2] I recorded altogether thirty-four remedies known to barber-doctors, which number is probably fairly exhaustive.

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will often know and apply different ones. Also, some specialize in potions or in poultices and lotions; others prefer treatment by means of inhalations, which the Nupe call *turare* (a Hausa word, meaning 'scent' or 'fumigation'). Certain more versatile experts know several remedies for the same illness, which they would try out one after the other. The position is summed up in this statement of a famous Bida 'doctor': 'Sometimes one medicine proves sufficient; but there is only one way of discovering the right one—to experiment and trust in God.' Certain barber-doctors, too, are specialists in particular diseases and are known as such. Thus only two men in Bida knew how to treat lunacy and only one Bida barber (whom I met in Ibadan, where he was staying at the time) knew how to treat sleeping sickness; similarly, there were specialists for venereal diseases, for eye complaints, and so forth. For certain ailments there are no treatments; their list includes blindness, idiocy, leprosy, elephantiasis, deafness, 'incurable syphilis', and, oddly enough, the common cold; my informants made it quite clear that the last was too trifling a complaint to deserve the attention of 'doctors'.

As we have seen, surgical treatments are almost entirely absent, and the use of splints in fractures is considered no more important than the application of some 'strong' salve or ointment. The barbers, in fact, herbalists at heart, deprecate the 'use of the knife' and emphatically deny its value. Said the head of the barbers' guild: 'The knife begets pain; how could it cure?' Though the same few herbs or plants appear in the majority of remedies, this does not mean that they alone have curative properties. On the contrary, it is considered that all plants contain some medicine, even if its nature or extraction are not known. It is considered equally certain that this medical knowledge, far from being static, is growing all the time, so that the barbers today possess medicines unknown even a short time ago. Once more, this is a question of experimenting 'with the help of God', and there are certain rough rules how to proceed. One tries first the bark of a plant or tree not hitherto used; if this proves worthless, one tries the roots, and finally the leaves or fruits. As to why certain parts of plants should contain *cigbe* and others not, there is no answer; or rather the usual answer is '*cigbe u de 'tsu a*', 'medicines have no king' (that is, follow no proclaimed law): God has made them so, and men can only hope to learn by trial and error or by accepting the wisdom of others.

A strikingly large number of remedies employ plant parasites (called *etú*), and their special medicinal properties are strongly emphasized. If the alien growth of the parasites once suggested to the people some affinity with the nature of diseases and hence a

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757 278 possible application of the principle 'like cures like', no one today is aware of this notion. Nor are there any 'theories' as regards such abstruse ingredients as eggshells, the excreta of fowls, twigs from the nest of vultures, or grass from inside an ant-heap. Yet it is also difficult to see how the precept, 'experiment with the help of God', can have led to these peculiar discoveries. If they are 'superstitions', they are not, like other superstitions, the degraded offspring of more elaborate mystic or cosmological speculations. The treatment of lunacy, with its 'male' and 'female' ingredients, seems to suggest something of the kind; but there is no clear link between this cure and that other idea, that lunacy is a residue of 'male' sleeping sickness.[1] And in all the other fantastic remedies their intellectual antecedents are simply not traceable, not even to legends or folk-tales. Perhaps the remedies have been adopted, more or less blindly, from other groups and countries, on some of those informative travels of which the barber-doctors boast. As they stand, they are merely crude and absurd attempts at 'empirical' treatment, instances of that 'blundering' I spoke of before.

278 755 [759] Any of the medicines just described might equally be the product of the *cigbeciži*, and a number are in fact identical. But unlike the barber-doctors, the *cigbeciži* also employ the fully irrational, non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, and even their remedies proper, salves, potions, and the like, are much more often based on recipes of an incongruous and abstruse kind.[2] Thus a 'strong' potion taken for intestinal troubles includes the fluid extracted from the gall-bladder of snakes, a potion alleged to cure smallpox contains a boiled lizard tail, and an ointment for rheumatic pains is composed, among other things, of powdered potsherds which must be obtained from old pots found lying about with the broken side up, any other position rendering the remedy worthless.

While these recipes seem as random and arbitrary as the more abstruse examples of the barber-doctors' art, others betray some underlying 'theory', some vague and often uncertain reasoning from analogy or from the principle 'like cures like'. Thus one [842] expert had a cure for impotence consisting of a potion whose ingredients included, besides various roots and two kinds of pepper, also the powdered genitals of a he-goat.[3] A contraceptive credited with lasting effect is concocted from the roots of the

[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Of the twenty-two *cigbeci* medicines I recorded fifteen belonged to that category, while the corresponding proportion in the case of the barbers' remedies was six in thirty-four.

[3] I have this incongruous evidence for the efficacy of the treatment. My servant, who was with me when I visited the expert, at once bought and drunk the potion to increase his virility. The next day I had to doctor him for severe indigestion.

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exalted function, the Nupe would point out that other, ordinary 755
'greetings' are similarly nondescript and uninformative. We re- 789
call, further, that on certain occasions the practice of *cigbe* also includes sacrifices and invocations proper, addressed to God or *kuci*.

We may conclude, then, that even the mechanical manipulations of *cigbe* carry some of that awareness of a transcendental intelligence which turns an otherwise 'magical' act into a religious appeal; and though the faith in this manipulation of 'ingredients' is partly a belief in their mechanical efficacy, this is yet understood to reflect, however indirectly, divine intervention. The *emisa* itself is neither fully a spell nor yet fully a prayer; it is an expression, couched in a conventionalized code, for the varieties of power mobilized in the *cigbe* procedure. Those who know the appropriate expressions also know the entities to which they refer and hence can manipulate them: for in the Nupe way of thinking as in ours there is no true and workable knowledge of anything unless that thing can also be named. Thus, though the *emisa* has no share in the powers it identifies and names, the very fact that it does so makes it an integral part of the mystically powerful operation. Finally, since these 'code' expressions are respectful ones, they stand, not for a simple command, but for a command tinged with submission, for a mastery which is half supplication, in brief, for 'invocations'.

4. THE PERSONNEL

The organization of the Nupe barber-doctors has been described 759
elsewhere, and I need here summarize only the main facts.[1] The barbers are grouped in three guilds, centred in Bida, one in each of the three sectors into which the town is divided. They travel a good deal; a number have also settled in the larger villages in the country, and quite a few in towns outside Nupe. Each guild has its own titled head, elected by the guild and confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe, who is also the most experienced and most highly reputed member of the profession; which standing is measured, simply, by the number of treatments known to him. In all my discussions with barber-doctors it was always the guild-head who proved the best informed and to whom all others turned when in doubt or at a loss. The profession is loosely hereditary, some usually following in their fathers' footsteps; but men of other families may join the profession through being apprenticed to an established barber-doctor for about five years, during which period they pay for the tuition by surrendering the larger part of their earnings.

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 289–301.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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759 This, then, is a purely profane craft organization. Side by side with it exists that other, more secret and 'mystical' order, of the *cigbeci* practitioners. 'Side by side' is not quite the correct phrase; for the latter are active predominantly in the rural areas, though a few *cigbeciži* reside in small hamlets quite close to Bida, as does the present Master of the order. Theirs is quite clearly the older organization, which, in the modern capital, has given way to the Mohammedan barber guilds. Nor does the *cigbeci* organization today enjoy the official sanction of the Nupe State or any affiliation with the ruling dynasty. Yet it did so formerly, even in the Fulani régime, where its Masters were appointed and invested with a special hereditary rank by the sovereign of the country. Indeed, the *cigbeciži* trace the growth of their order back to the *fons et origo* of all things politic and traditional in Nupe country, the first kingdom of Tsoede. The somewhat fantastic pedigree of the *cigbeciži* betrays the mystic nature of the craft; for the third Master was no other than that Kpara who, as we have heard, went up to the sky and brought back the wisdom of 'ingredients'.[1]

This pedigree comprises eight ancestors, the son of the last being the present Master (and my informant), one Sheshi Benu. The first ancestor, said to have lived in the days of Tsoede, came of the sub-tribe Cekpã, from across the Niger, which even today is regarded by all Nupe as deeply versed in all kinds of secret knowledge. It was not he, however, who was the first *cigbeci*, but his son Malu, who acquired that knowledge by unknown means and was granted the title *Tswasha* still by Tsoede. He and his successors always lived in the capital of the kingdom, wherever it happened to be, as the king's official experts. The father of the present Master of the order, Mina Gunu, is said to have lived first in Rabah, the then capital, and to have come to Bida when the centre of the kingdom moved there. His son is a 'Master' only to the members of the order, bearing no longer an official rank, and not very well known to the general public.

I have called the *cigbeci* organization an 'order' rather than a 'guild' to do justice both to its dispersal through the country and to its secrecy which yet allows for the admission of new members. The organization is also extremely loose, involving little actual co-operation beyond occasional ceremonial gatherings and a few 'refresher courses' for the specially keen. But it has a common centre and source, constituted by the Master and his 'house'. Thus all known medicines have been discovered by one or the other Master of the *cigbeciži* and were handed on to the other members of the order. My informant claimed that he himself had discovered

[1] See above, p. 18.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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certain new *cigbe*, and that on such occasions he had called together all his disciples, so that they might be present at the ceremonial preparation of the new medicine and learn its properties. Before him, his ancestors had similarly taught their knowledge to pupils, who in turn handed it on both to their offspring and to others, until the order spread through the whole country and even beyond Nupe. Yet all 'great' *cigbeciɨ* received their training at the source, from the present Master or his predecessors, and he mentioned five of his disciples to me, two of whom I also knew and from whom I obtained confirmation of this account.

During the period of tuition the pupil lives with his teacher, paying in gifts for the instruction. The secret of the more complicated medicines, known to the Master alone, the pupil must buy for money; which course is also open to any other *cigbe* practitioner even if he never underwent tuition proper. The period varies with the ambition of the pupil; those who wish to become really great experts must study continuously for three to four years, while those with lesser ambition can become proficient by intermittent tuition, for a month or so at a time, during a period of five to six years.[1] No one is refused; anyone who wishes to learn can do so if he has the required intelligence, and the time and funds. No *cigbeci*, however, can live merely on his professional earnings; even the Master practises, at least today, farmwork besides.

The individual *cigbe* experts are once more part-time practitioners, even if, occasionally, they own hereditary medicines at the same time. Nor do they confuse the two kinds of expert knowledge, one possessed by them as individuals, the other vested in the lineage or 'house' to which they belong. The former is often said to have been acquired, more or less fortuitously, on travels, especially to foreign parts; sometimes it is inherited, though only in the fortuitous way in which sons may (or may not) follow their fathers' interests or professions. One owner of *cigbe* thought that his grandfather, from whom he had inherited the skill, had learned it from the *cigbeciɨ*; but all other informants denied any such connection. The medicines differ greatly in secrecy according to whether they are therapeutic or not. The former are readily disposed of, against payment or return gifts, while the more miraculous medicines are given only to persons one knows well, or with some formality and ostensible hesitation. Let me quote this

[1] My informant drew a terminological distinction between the 'greater' and 'lesser' practitioners; the former alone, he claimed, were legitimately called *cigbeci*, while the proper name for the latter was *boci*. No one else, however, made this distinction, which seems to reflect only the familiar predilection of the Nupe 'intellectual' for neat linguistic categories. *Bóci* is in fact only the Nupe-ized version of the Hausa word *boka*, 'native doctor'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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759 description of the procedure by an expert of great repute; it is interesting also since it illustrates the Nupe bent for neatly schematic and enumerative arrangements. When the expert is approached by a would-be customer he will at first deny all knowledge of the *cigbe* in question and maintain this attitude on three successive occasions; the fourth time, if the client still insists and so shows his eagerness or anxiety, the expert will at last relent and promise to prepare the *cigbe*.[1] He will not, incidentally, communicate the recipe itself; for the individual expert does not teach his craft, save to his own offspring or, perhaps, to a great friend.

We turn to the hereditary medicines proper, hereditary not only incidentally like the individually owned *cigbe*, but as it were *ex hypothesi*, being bound up with the identity of lineages or 'houses' and descending from family head to family head. We already discussed most of the features which set this species of medicine apart from others or, as the Nupe would say, make it 'great' where all others are 'little'. It now remains to examine the role of the sacrifices involved in this possession of *cigbe*.

The sacrifices are of two kinds. A first variety is still concerned with the practice of *cigbe* only. The owner of the 'great' medicine *fúnagba*, for example, who knew numerous other *cigbe* besides, performed a sacrifice of fowl and beer at the *fúnagba* shrine whenever he brewed any of the other, 'little', medicines. Sometimes he added a small quantity of the 'great' medicine in order to make the others more potent, thus using the former as a 'master medicine', unspecific and almost pure force or power. He would accompany the sacrifice with a brief invocation in which the *emisa* is followed by a proper prayer addressed to God and *cigbe*, thus:

'*Fúnagba!* The carpenter who uses the *nunci* tree (i.e. the wrong kind of wood) will fail to build a canoe. *Fúnagba* that now drinketh, Lord God, cause (that it) give us health.'

We note the close similarity between this invocation and those usually addressed to *kuti* or ancestors. The second variety of *cigbe* sacrifice in fact serves the latter purpose; more precisely, it overrules and replaces the normal kinship rites and sacrifices to ancestors. For while ordinary people perform such sacrifices (at birth, marriage, death, and so forth) over a grave or perhaps at a twin shrine, the owner of a 'great' *cigbe* does so over the vessel containing the medicine. In other words, the more rare and more specific instrument of supernatural appeal overrules the more common kind. It seems logical that the owners of such *cigbe*, who are usually well known even though everything else about it will

[1] My own experience bears out the necessity for repeated approaches, though not of the rule 'fourth time lucky'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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be secret, should be considered more fortunate than the ordinary run of people. Yet why this should be so, why some families should have this special standing *in rebus sacris* and others not, is not a question in which the people show any interest. 'There is no fixed number of medicines,' they say, and hence no rule governing or accounting for their distribution. 759

We need not speak again of the community medicine *zumácikā*, which represents an isolated instance.[1] But we may note certain transitional forms, in which ownership by lineages shades over into ownership by the community. For certain of the hereditary medicines are vested in 'houses' which equally hold hereditary ranks and offices, so that the two possessions go together. When the family head succeeds to the rank, he also assumes charge of the *cigbe*; and the people in fact say of this kind of medicine that it is 'owned' by such-and-such a rank (not person). Now as the rank represents a privileged position ultimately derived from the community and entails duties on its behalf, so the possession of the medicine assumes the aspect of a privilege and duty delegated, by the community, to the particular lineage and its head: these are not so much 'owners' as trustees or guardians, much as the hereditary village priests are appointed guardians of a community *kuti*. Usually the analogy remains on this abstract level; but in one instance it becomes more tangible, when the properties of the hereditary *cigbe* include efficacy as an ordeal: here, then, the possession of *cigbe* ceases to be private, and its application turns fully into a right or duty executed for the well-being of the community.

5. CIGBE AND MORALITY

Excepting the isolated community medicine, no class of *cigbe* is unequivocally good, or for that matter unequivocally evil. But particular medicines may be morally reprehensible, so that all the various groups of *cigbe* experts must in varying degree face the responsibility of practising a craft not above blame or suspicion. 754 x 577

The contraceptive remedies of the barber-doctors and *cigbeciti* represent the mildest case; for though their immorality is a matter of common agreement, almost everybody ignores it in practice, and the *cigbe* practitioners could easily claim the neutrality of experts catering for a public demand. This is indeed the attitude of the barber-doctors. The *cigbeciti*, whose craft is bound up with mystic rules and sacred knowledge, are also more fully aware of the moral conflict; their attempts to justify the dubious practices

[1] There may of course be others, in parts of Nupe which I did not visit. But it is certain that their number is very small.

467 286 by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

306 467 *Beadworkers* are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the "refining" of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

323 467 *Glass-makers* (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

294 467 *Tailoring and embroidery* are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a "shape" of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a "lazy" occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

467 [285] *Mat-makers* of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

[282] *Leather-workers* formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

305 759 467 *Barber-doctors* cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a "closed" craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also "*medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

533 535 467 *Drummers and dancers*, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciži*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciži*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the
789 barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciži* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciži* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[11]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 38–67.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifíngi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifíngi*.

Fifíngi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifíngi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifíngi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifíngi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'ti dzana*, the 'head of Dzana,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own
696 maternal uncle, Dzana, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leifi nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndóce*, the 'father of the shooting,' *i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this: whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic, I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
● [761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *iste-cigbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the tenth day she will for the first time sweep the hut, having until 585
then been waited upon by her companions, and join the other women of the house in the routine of household work. But she may not yet leave the women's part of the house and hence still remains separated from her husband. The same evening she sits down outside her hut, where she is visited by all the relatives and friends of her new family, receiving a small gift of money or kolanuts from each. This custom is called the 'buying of shame', since the bride will no longer need to feel ashamed when meeting the strangers among whom she is to live. On the twelfth day the concluding observance takes place. In the morning the bridegroom sends two fowls, one cock and one hen, to the bride's mother or, if she lives in another village, to his bride's aunt who has come with her. This woman will cook the fowls, adding various spices, and take them at midday back to the bridegroom. The hen is then sent to the bride, who will offer a small portion to her mother-in-law and eat the rest together with her companions. The cock is cut in two, the bridegroom and his best friend eating one portion, while the other is eaten by his father, alone in his hut. Afterwards the bride's companions finally depart, leaving her by herself in her new home. Now, as the Nupe put it, the 'path is open at last', that is, the marriage will be consummated the same night.

No religious significance is attributed to the observance just described, which pagans and Mohammedans alike perform; it is merely taken to express or affirm, in the manner of an obvious gesture, the new, friendly relationships which are henceforth to obtain between the husband and his wife's family, and between the bride and her in-laws. In this sense the observance represents the last step in the circuitous traditional procedure of 'tying the marriage'. That this exchange of food includes both a male and a female animal would seem to throw into relief the crucial nature of the occasion, the union of man and woman. But the fact that [812]
men eat the cock and women the hen appears to harbour also a further meaning, namely, an expression of that sharp dualism of male and female which pervades the whole of Nupe philosophy.

(iii) *Death*

Of the three 'crises of life' death is most heavily weighted with 764
ceremonial. This seems consistent with the trend of Nupe religion, to emphasize 'ends' rather than 'beginnings'. But it does not reflect the more sinister nature of the event, doubly sinister, it might be thought among a people ignorant of after-life and knowing only the vague chance of reincarnation. For though death itself is always felt to be uncanny and disturbing, the ritual elaboration is heaviest at the death of old people, in which one

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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764 sees nothing tragic, and is meant to meet social demands as much as metaphysical fears. The ceremonial surrounding death differs somewhat in different communities; mostly, these variations are of [184] a minor character (concerning, for example, the precise duties of the grave-diggers), and can be ignored.

The full funeral ceremonial includes a whole series of rituals, beginning with the burial, called *mba*, and spun out over three funerary rites, performed after eight days, forty days, and one hundred and twenty days, and called after these time intervals. Poor [184] families may be unable to perform the last rite, which is altogether absent in the riverain area and in a few pagan inland villages. Several informants maintained that the Hundred-twenty Days' rite was an innovation, though long since established in many parts of the country (both among pagans and Mohammedans), and that it had come to Nupe with Islam. This last assumption is without foundation since the Mohammedan funeral customs include no such observance. Yet it does seem likely from the present distribution of the ritual that it originated in the Mohammedan capital and then spread to the pagan villages. The villagers, of course, show in a great many ways their readiness to imitate the 'superior' way of life in the town; and there need have been no stronger reason for an innovation otherwise congenial to the traditional outlook. But in the town the addition of another funerary feast fits more specifically into the social conditions.

764 To some extent it merely reflects the greater preoccupation, in the town, with occasions for the display of wealth and status. But 587 there seems to be this also. When discussing the final funerary rite the Nupe always stress that it is 'important for the women' or concerns 'the women especially'; as we shall see, it does in fact bear specifically on the end of widowhood and on the parentage of posthumous children. In the villages which do not perform this rite, these questions are settled, three months after the death, in an informal family council. The last funerary rite thus ceremonializes the same occasion as well as postpones it. Now, this occasion is much more important, the issue being more uncertain, among the townspeople than among the peasants in the villages. Only in the town, among the aristocracy and the wealthier classes, does large-scale polygyny occur, so that the re-marriage of widows becomes a complicated matter; equally, levirate and marriage of the mother's brother's widow which, in the villages, greatly simplify the problem, are disappearing among the Mohammedans of the town. The postponement of the decision by another month would thus seem to be a useful expedient; while the added ceremonial lends moral weight to an occasion grown more critical.

764 The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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The Number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with the age, sex, and status of the deceased. The full series is performed only for married men; in the case of old men who are not survived by widows the last ritual is omitted. Children, young men who are as yet unmarried, and most women are accorded only the Eight Days; only old women, married or widowed, who hold the position of *nũsako* (the 'Great-old-one') are entitled also to the Forty Days. This position goes to an eldest surviving sister in the oldest generation, and the nature of this qualification, referring as it does to the woman's own descent and not to her status by marriage, is also reflected in the arrangement of the ceremonials; for in the case of widows who returned to their own family after the husband's death (as many do), both rites take place in that house; while if the woman died in her husband's house, the Eight Days is performed there, and the Forty Days in the house of her kin. Differences of age and kinship position also determine the burial proceedings and the choice of the burial place. Old men and family heads, and old women, are buried in their sleeping huts, beneath the floor, and a sacrifice is performed over the grave; everyone else is buried, without special ceremony, in the space between huts or by the compound wall, or perhaps in a disused, roofless hut. At the death of old people, finally, the Eight Days' and Forty Days' rites include (among pagans) drumming, singing, and dancing, while this festive aspect is absent in the case of younger people; for their death makes 'the heart ache', while old people 'have seen the world', and there is no cause for grief.[1]

[764] 766

At the death of chiefs or priests the performance of the particular *kuti* they 'owned' may replace the funerary rites of the Eight Days and Forty Days. Similarly, the hunters will perform their own rituals on these occasions. But the rules differ widely; in some communities, as we know, the *gunnu* is the ritual appropriate to the funeral of chiefs and elders. Whichever solution is adopted, the combination of the funeral ceremonial with a fully-fledged *kuti* once more exemplifies the Nupe view of death as warranting the heaviest ceremonial.

[184]

The general rules are further modified when the death has been

[1] The qualification of old age cannot be stated more precisely. Old women who do not also hold the position of *nũsako* are sometimes treated like younger people. And in the case of men one always considers these three things—ripe age; possession of an elder's rank and title; and headship of the family. When these three qualifications coincide, there can be no doubt as to the appropriate ceremonial, burial place, and so forth. When only one or the other applies, there is some latitude, the final decision depending mainly on practical considerations, such as the economic position of the family and the likely number of mourners. Thus the observances appropriate to 'old' people do not always form an unbroken series; a person may, for example, be buried in the sleeping hut, with a sacrifice, but without the subsequent festivities of the Eight Days or Forty Days.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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766 of an abnormal kind. Lepers, we remember, are buried in the bush, by the *Ndazo*; people who die of smallpox are buried in the normal manner, though their body is wrapped in dirty rags instead of a new piece of cloth, and there is no ceremonial or mourning. In most parts of Nupe death by lightning does not affect the ceremonial; but in the north and east, apparently under Gwari in-
[[84]] fluence, such persons are buried by the priests of the *sogba* cult, which flourishes in Gwari country.[1] When a person dies on the farm or in one of the outlying hamlets, the body is taken to the village for burial, and all ceremonies are performed there. A person who dies on a journey or in another part of the country is buried locally, without ceremony, all the rites being performed at his or her home; but if the deceased's kinsfolk are not certain that he has been buried at all (say, in the case of people killed in the war), they will perform a fictitious burial with a shroud representing the body. Criminals who have been executed used to be buried, without rites, by the executioners; but in the case of unconvicted criminals, even if they are known to have been guilty of the most hideous crimes, the usual ceremonial is observed: as moral depravity does not count in the beyond, so it ceases to be important on the threshold.

764 Let me begin with a few words on the technique of burial. The grave is oblong, square, and shallow, only about two feet below the ground. There are no marks on the grave; on the contrary, the ground is carefully levelled and repaired so that it looks like any other place. If the grave is inside a sleeping hut, the latter remains in use after the burial, the same hut often containing two or three graves of successive inhabitants. The body is placed in the grave lying on its side, 'as though asleep', and, among Mohammedans, facing east. The grave chamber is kept clear of earth by a roof of wooden beams, covered with a white grass mat; the body rests on another mat of the same kind. Among Mohammedans, fresh leaves and boughs are in addition scattered over the floor
764 and roof of the grave chamber.[2] The grave-diggers are called *goro*,
767 and are charged also with preparing the body and performing a first sacrifice over the grave. Their duties, ritual already in their secrecy, are usually hereditary in certain families which hold no other religious function. Among Mohammedans the body is prepared by four male or female relatives, according to the sex of the deceased, and mallams are grave-diggers.

[1] See below, p. 211.

[2] I was told of an older form of burial, in which the grave chamber is dug into the side of a circular shaft five to six feet deep. This practice has now disappeared, though the people of Doko assured me that chiefs would still be buried in this fashion. I have seen burials of this kind only in the neighbouring country of Gwari.

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The burial is marked by extraordinary haste, the *goro* being sent for immediately. If possible, the dead are buried within three or four hours, at all times of the day, even at dawn or dusk, if only there is sufficient light to see by. There is no articulate fear or concern behind this haste, say, fear of the ghost of the dead or concern with the fate of the soul; rather is it the presence of the corpse as such which the Nupe find disturbing. The people in the house especially, who must stay with the body until the grave-diggers take over, are anxious to see it go; for 'the person who sees a dead body, his heart sinks'. For the same reason children are at once sent out of the house and not allowed to return until after the burial. When the *goro* arrive (usually three or four men) they wash the body with soap and water, rub it with aromatic cam-wood, wrap it into a new indigo-dyed cloth, and pull a cap (in the case of a man) or a kerchief (in the case of a woman) over the face of the deceased. Men of rank are today buried, in Moslem fashion, in a white gown, with a turban on the head. The grave is dug, the body placed in it, and the grave covered with loose earth, without ceremony. If the deceased was an old man or woman, the *goro* perform a libation of beer over the closed grave and speak a brief prayer, thus:

'Grandfather of the *kuci* (i.e. the deceased) who is returning to the earth, (thy) grandchild is now coming. (When) he arrives, spread (thy) two hands, receive him to your heart.'

All this is done in secrecy, no one watching; the mourners stay away, and when the *goro* leave the grave they will shut the door of the hut with a curtain or bar the access to the burial place with branches placed across the path. On the next day the ban will be lifted, the earth over the grave will be beaten down and levelled by the young women of the house, and if the grave had been dug in a sleeping hut (that is, for an old man), his heir will at once move in. When the grave-diggers have completed their task they join the mourners, being offered refreshment and a small fee, and leave shortly afterwards.

The news of the death travels fast, and an hour or two later the house will begin to fill with guests. Men and women stay apart, the former in the entrance hut of the house, the latter in the women's huts. All are dressed in old clothes, simply and without ostentation, and sit about stiffly, with expressionless faces. Only the chief mourners among the women—the mother, sisters, and the widows of the deceased—are expected to express their grief more violently, by loud sobbing and an occasional high-pitched wail (called *tigi*) which is the conventional expression of deep sorrow. The nature of the gathering will vary with the status of the departed; if he is a titled elder, all the other village elders will

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765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably so, that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 184 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the

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pious aims are again made a vehicle for ostentation. The gifts of condolence are once more in money and are made, not once only, but two or three times, every guest being expected to give in accordance with wealth and status. Equally, the gifts have changed their name, being now known as *sadaka*, 'pious alms', although like the pagan 'greeting' gifts they are intended as contributions towards the funeral expenditure. The subsequent ceremonials become further occasions for alms giving, now on the part of the hosts; for a portion of the food prepared at these feasts is sent out to the mallams of the town or distributed among the poor.

The three funerary feasts are in fact described as *sadaka*, 'alms', or as *walima*, 'sacred feast'. The latter name seems hardly appropriate, since in the Mohammedan version these rites are almost entirely devoid of sacred or religious features. The sacrifice of beer and the private invocation of the deity have, naturally, disappeared; yet the mallams' prayer, which might have taken their place, is not repeated after the burial service. In other words, there is nothing in the funerary ceremonies that would show them to be 'ceremonies', sacred and not secular events, save the pious distribution of alms. But perhaps there is also less chance of confusing the sacred with a worldly occasion; for the Mohammedan version of the Eight Days and Forty Days does not admit singing and dancing and thus maintains the outward appearance of mourning. Only the last ceremonial includes 'merry-making' and finally discards the show of grief.

The Mohammedan funeral ceremonial clearly represents something like a compromise between traditional Nupe practice and the orthodox requirements of Islam; and like most compromises it led to unintended results. To begin with, the contrast between youth and old age has been minimized; for while traditionally only the old were buried with special religious offices (the *goro* sacrifice) and mourned in the early stages with singing and dancing, the former (in the form of the mallam's prayer) are now generally applied, and the latter are altogether omitted. Moreover, there has been a certain loss of mystic appeal and of emotional weight; for the secrecy which traditionally surrounds the burial has been allowed to disappear; and in the subsequent ceremonials the religious appeal is sustained, no longer by an esoteric sacrifice and invocation, but merely by the exercise of charity. If I considered both results to be unintentional and accidental I did so for these reasons. If we took the first result to be a planful adjustment to changed conditions, then we should have to assume that the distinction between youth and old age has been made less sharp because it ceased to be important; yet it has lost none of its

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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764 relevance in Nupe social life.[1] And we should have to assume further, to account for the loss of mystic appeal, that Islam has 184 radically altered the Nupe view of life and death; which, as we shall see, is once more untrue.

5. SOLEMNIZATIONS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 There is no need to point to the close affinity of the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death, with the rituals of more general religious bearing. Both operate with the same elements—private (or esoteric) invocations, libations, communal meals, and public 'merry-making' in the concluding phase. Both, too, conspicuously involve numerical calculations defining the occasion and sequence of rites. The congregations, of course, differ, though there is some overlap; for certain *kuti*, like the solemnizations, mobilize the kin group only, while at the funerary rites of men of standing all the dignitaries of the community will be represented. Like the *kuti*, finally, the ceremonials surrounding the crises of life have their implicit as well as their professed aims. The latter could not be 'professed' more clearly. The *suna* is there to name the infant in solemn fashion, and hence to assign to it its future place in the society while at the same time invoking divine protection; the wedding ceremonial sanctifies the union of man and wife and holds out the promise of progeny; and the funeral ceremonial disposes of the dead while one prays that there may be no further deaths; it imposes mourning as well as cancels it, and thus repeats or dramatizes, in the ritual sequence, the endless cycle of human existence. We have, I think rightly, called these rituals solemnizations; for they hallow all these events through relating them with the supernatural. But they do more. Through the form they take, that is, through the manner in which the rituals mobilize their particular congregations, they also express the principles and values governing the structure of the society. Think of the rules assigned to the father and grandfather in the ceremonial of birth, the former being expected to collect the 'medicines' needed for an easy confinement and to consult the diviner, the latter to announce the new-born's name. Or think of the complicated exchange of gifts which concludes the marriage ceremonial, of the double sacrifice in the bride's and the bridegroom's house, and of the selection of the bridegroom's envoys and the bride's companions. The funerary rites throw into relief both the social distinctions that go with sex,

[1] I am here referring to status in the society at large, i.e. to the access to rank and office open only to older men and to the respect they generally command, not to the kinship authority of family heads; the latter has indeed been weakened (see pp. 83, 251.)

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[13]

DIVORCE

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

BURIAL

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[13] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 221–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [574] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[181] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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18. Levelling the ground over a new grave

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19. The master of the *cigbeciži* in his 'dispensary'

[p. 118 (B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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The burial is marked by extraordinary haste, the *goro* being sent for immediately. If possible, the dead are buried within three or four hours, at all times of the day, even at dawn or dusk, if only there is sufficient light to see by. There is no articulate fear or concern behind this haste, say, fear of the ghost of the dead or concern with the fate of the soul; rather is it the presence of the corpse as such which the Nupe find disturbing. The people in the house especially, who must stay with the body until the grave-diggers take over, are anxious to see it go; for 'the person who sees a dead body, his heart sinks'. For the same reason children are at once sent out of the house and not allowed to return until after the burial. When the *goro* arrive (usually three or four men) they wash the body with soap and water, rub it with aromatic cam-wood, wrap it into a new indigo-dyed cloth, and pull a cap (in the case of a man) or a kerchief (in the case of a woman) over the face of the deceased. Men of rank are today buried, in Moslem fashion, in a white gown, with a turban on the head. The grave is dug, the body placed in it, and the grave covered with loose earth, without ceremony. If the deceased was an old man or woman, the *goro* perform a libation of beer over the closed grave and speak a brief prayer, thus: 764

'Grandfather of the *kuci* (i.e. the deceased) who is returning to the earth, (thy) grandchild is now coming. (When) he arrives, spread (thy) two hands, receive him to your heart.'

All this is done in secrecy, no one watching; the mourners stay away, and when the *goro* leave the grave they will shut the door of the hut with a curtain or bar the access to the burial place with branches placed across the path. On the next day the ban will be lifted, the earth over the grave will be beaten down and levelled by the young women of the house, and if the grave had been dug in a sleeping hut (that is, for an old man), his heir will at once move in. When the grave-diggers have completed their task they join the mourners, being offered refreshment and a small fee, and leave shortly afterwards. [767]

The news of the death travels fast, and an hour or two later the house will begin to fill with guests. Men and women stay apart, the former in the entrance hut of the house, the latter in the women's huts. All are dressed in old clothes, simply and without ostentation, and sit about stiffly, with expressionless faces. Only the chief mourners among the women—the mother, sisters, and the widows of the deceased—are expected to express their grief more violently, by loud sobbing and an occasional high-pitched wail (called *tigi*) which is the conventional expression of deep sorrow. The nature of the gathering will vary with the status of the departed; if he is a titled elder, all the other village elders will 765

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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765 come to mourn him; if he is a young man, all his age mates will be present. Messengers have also been sent to nearby hamlets, and if visitors live too far to arrive on the day of the burial, they will come later and stay for the first eight days. The family head (or his heir if it is the former who died) will receive the guests and offer them food and drink. Every new visitor, before joining the mourners, kneels down before the family head and speaks the conventional formula of condolence, *okú be hákuri*—'Hail with Compassion'.

The mood of the mourners, which must be kept up for eight days, is rigidly conventionalized, though the convention is maintained with varying success. Also, it differs for the sexes. The men keep a severe, dignified and calm countenance; there must be no irrelevant chatting, only subdued talk, one topic alone being allowed, the dead person, his achievements and qualities. But the rule is often broken; on one such occasion I heard the mourners discuss farming prospects and taxes (if in whispers), and one man, whom I had some time previously presented with a watch, thought nothing of asking my wife, in the middle of the mourning, to wind up his watch for him. However, as soon as a new visitor enters, everyone at once puts on the rigid look that passes for a show of grief. Nor is the violent mourning of the women uninterrupted; now and again they may cease their sobbing and wailing and rest for a while. Female relatives who come from distant places will join in the wailing for one day and afterwards stay as ordinary guests. They, too, sit together and talk in whispers, but do not omit their more prosaic duties; for young mothers come with their babies, who must be fed and looked after, and others will help with the work in the house.

For eight days the relatives of the deceased may not wash, dress their hair or change their clothes. None of the older people may leave the house, and the women not even their huts (save for calls of nature). The men observe this rule for four days only, so that afterwards they may help with the preparations for the Eight Days' feast. But even before that household work has been going on all the time, being shouldered mainly by the younger folk. The young men will continue to go to the farms or to the market, joining the mourners in the evening, while girls and young women look after the house. These are least affected by the duties of mourning; when, the day after the burial, they level the floor over the grave, they exhibit no signs of grief, but laugh and joke freely. This, the Nupe will tell you, is quite in order: for the workers are always in-laws and 'joking relations' of the deceased (daughters-in-law or the wives of younger brothers), and are hence exempt from mourning.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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765 [43]

On the eighth day or some time during the first week each guest makes a small gift of food to the family head, which is meant to be used in the funeral meal and represents the guests' 'greeting' or 'salute'. That day starts with a beer sacrifice, performed by the family head outside the sleeping hut of the deceased. The congregation consists of his (or her) male relations, the old men forming the usual inner ring while the youths, including the sons of the deceased, sit on the outside, looking forlorn and dejected, and being generally ignored. The family head addresses God (or sometimes the *kucs*), saying:

'We make mourning for so-and-so, who died. God, cause all people to have health. We offer you water (i.e. beer) because of the death. God, grant health to everyone; may no one die from now on.'

The beer is then drunk by the old men, which act concludes the ceremonial. Let me add that during this brief sacrifice, though it conforms so closely to the general formula of rituals, the men wear their ordinary clothes, only the bared head indicating the sacred occasion.

Soon afterwards the general meal begins. And now the house loses all appearance of mourning. It is crowded with visitors, there is constant coming and going, children get in one's way at every step, and everyone is busy preparing food, handing it round, or consuming it. The women laugh and joke while they work, the men no longer endeavour to behave severely, and even the chief mourners have turned into ordinary hosts or guests. If it is the funeral of an old man or woman, drummers and musicians will have been engaged, and soon the younger folk will sing and dance, men and girls apart, each group keeping to its own songs and dances. These are in no way peculiar to the occasion, but correspond in style and expression to any ordinary form of 'merry-making'. Ample supplies of beer keep up the spirits of the gathering until nightfall, when the feast comes to an end, the visitors departing and the hosts retiring to their huts.

The period following the Eight Days' ceremony involves few prohibitions. Widows must continue to wear the simple dress of mourning and must not wash or do their hair; nor must they leave the compound, though they are now free to pursue their daily tasks. As regards the men, the brothers (or the husband) of the deceased should refrain from shaving until the Forty Days' ceremony, though this custom has now fallen into disuse. The men go about freely but will try to be at home at night. Guests will still occasionally visit the house, but now these visits are free from the restraint and show of grief that marked the earlier occasion. Forty days after the death and burial, the family head repeats the beer

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably ~~so,~~ that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 184 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

● 765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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spread in the course of years through Beni country and the whole of Nupe, is the *gunnu*; the hill is known as *Gunnu* Hill; and the white sand is said to possess special healing properties (a claim which chemical analysis did not confirm). The *gunnu* priest of that village is regarded as the senior among all other *gunnu* priests, almost as the spiritual head of their fraternity; for at the beginning of the month of the *gunnu* celebrations every born *Ndazo* of Beni country makes a pilgrimage to *Gunnu* Hill, travelling by night and in secrecy, to salute and consult the local priest, and to collect a little of the sand and a few pebbles from the sacred place. The sand will later be used as medicine and for divining (in *hati* fashion); the pebbles will be placed on the place of sacrifice, and when the *Ndazo* opens the *gunnu* dance he will put one of the pebbles in his mouth.

These are all the tangible links between the myth and the ritual practice. We note that they apply only to the Beni subtribe, a section more closely united by kinship ties as well as politically,[1] so that the collaboration of the *gunnu* priests goes together with co-operation in other, secular spheres. In the rest of the country the religious collaboration and the myth sustaining it are alike unknown; at least, the myth might be known only sketchily, and would be quoted merely as a curious tale of no real consequence.

Apart from these few references to details of procedure, the myth offers only a vague and incongruous pedigree for the ritual itself; it merely relates certain mysterious happenings in the distant past, which seem to have no bearing on the aim or the general design of the ritual, and then concludes summarily—'And this was the beginning of the *gunnu*'. This kind of jumpy logic is of course not unfamiliar in the mythology of primitive peoples; its incongruity in the present case can be seen from these three instances. To begin with, so unique a feature as the *Ndazo* priesthood is completely omitted in the mythical account. Conversely, the arrival and death of the stranger and the whole notion of this saint-like personage, buried by God Himself, are in no way touched upon in the ceremony; indeed, they represent utterly alien features in the conceptual framework of Nupe religion. Characteristically, when the Nupe tell the story they have no other term to describe the character of the stranger than the Arabic word *wali* ('saint'). Finally, the crucial motif in the myth, leprosy, is without bearing upon the aim and design of the ritual. There are certain indirect and tenuous links: everywhere in Nupe (not

[1] I am referring to the old federation of the twelve Beni 'towns', which in some respects survived to the present day. See above, p. 70, and *A Black Byzantium*, p. 25.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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only among the Beni) the burial of lepers is the responsibility of the *gunnu* priests; and leprosy, as we know, is considered a 'disease of God', as the *gunnu* is a '*kuti* of God.' In their speculations about the meaning of the myth the Nupe indeed seize upon this last point. But they would only enlarge upon the terrifying aspects of leprosy and its divine preordainedness, being content to draw the parallel with a *kuti* equally powerful, dangerous, and divinely preordained. Their interest does not go further; none of my informants, for example, referred to the male-female principle believed to govern leprosy (and unrepresented in the ritual); nor did they attempt to relate the name *gunnu* to the name for leprosy, *Sokó 'gũ*, an etymological speculation which, from my knowledge of the Nupe ways of thinking, I should have expected. The Nupe, in brief, do not feel the need for any closely argued 'mythical charter' of their religious practices; and indeed, as I have stressed, the *gunnu* myth is altogether an exception. 796x [766]

A few informants offered me their theories about the derivation of the name *gunnu*. According to one the ritual was so called because of *egũ na dã miní 'nu õ na*, because of the 'red earth that is inside (the furrows) of hoeing'; according to another the reason was that, in the ritual, 'one reaches the end of the wandering, it is accomplished', *àgũ̃ 'nu mã, nwa dà zo*; in a third interpretation *gunnu* was taken to be the word *nugũ̃* ('boundary', 'limits'), reversed.[1] The first version would merely bring out the character of the *gunnu* as a farmer's ritual; the other two versions go more deeply, alluding to the characteristic concern of the ritual with the completion of a phase, and with 'end' and 'renewal'. Even so, the arguments are specious ones, ignoring, for example, the tone structure of Nupe language. Let us call them what they are, a play upon words and mere speculation. 796x 829

To turn to the ceremonial itself. It lasts for three to five days, according to the amount of food and drink which the people are able to accumulate. The celebration I observed in Doko started on the 17th of February and lasted until the 19th.[2] Like the *ɓiba*, the *gunnu* has an esoteric part, performed outside the village, in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'bà* ('*gunnu* place'), and a public one, performed on the village dancing ground. The congregation of the esoteric rite includes both older men and youths, the youngest being about 15. The *gunnu* place looks much like the places of 796x

[1] Such reversals of bisyllabic nouns occur quite often in Nupe language; they turn the noun into the corresponding verb, so that *nugũ̃*, 'limit', would become *gũ̃(ɛ)-nu* 'reaching the limit', 'accomplish'. [193]

[2] The date is not inflexible; in the same year the nearby village of Pichi celebrated the *gunnu* almost a month later, since the people had no 'leisure' before that, being kept busy by the collection of tax arrears.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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The different rituals are again in the charge of different officials. 796x 793

Two of these are priests in the strict sense of the word—the *Ndazo* of the *gunnu*, whose office has the same miraculous connotation as elsewhere, and the hereditary priest of the *ketsá* ritual. The priestship of the remaining rituals goes with secular status, that is, with certain ranks vested in family heads and with the appropriate positions on the council of elders. Yet while the large majority of the Jebba ranks (eleven out of thirteen) are non-hereditary, being based on election and promotion, only one of these (a minor rank) entails a religious office, the rank *Ndace*, whose encumbent officiates in the *dzakó* ritual. The two hereditary ranks, on the other hand, *Ejukó* and *Tswanya*, are both linked with duties of priestship. The *Ejukó* is the guardian of the Chain of Tsoede and officiates in the corresponding ritual; he is at the same time an important member of the village council and was formerly its chief 'legal officer' as well, since the Chain of Tsoede figured prominently in the legal machinery of the country. The connection between religious and political office is even more pronounced in the case of the *Tswanya*. In the religious sphere he takes charge of the ritual *mamma*; in the secular sphere it is his privilege and duty to deputize for the (non-hereditary) village chief during an interregnum and to name the successor. In other words, he is an hereditary 'king-maker' who, as I have explained elsewhere, appears in all Nupe communities which are without hereditary chieftainship and whose investiture with a sacred office replaces the religious connotation which otherwise attaches to chieftainship itself.[1] As in Doko, then, religious and secular power are at once united and kept distinct, though in Jebba the separation is the more marked.

If the priestship of several rituals is thus linked with secular ranks, the same kind of link applies to the rituals as such. For two of these, the *gunnu* and *dzakó*, also form part of the funerary ceremonials for titled elders, being added to the rites known as 'Three Days' (after the burial) and 'Forty Days'.[2] Thus the *gunnu* is performed at the death of the chief, the *gunnu* priest, the *Tswanya* and *Ejukó*, and at the death of seven other elders; the *dzakó*, for the *Ndace* and two other elders. Only one rank is left out, that of *Kpotuy*, which was introduced relatively recently, having been copied from the hierarchy of ranks in the capital; being an innovation, it is also unconnected with the traditional usage.[3] When thus employed in the funerary ceremonial, the *dzakó* is greatly reduced in scale; the scale of the *gunnu* varies with the importance of the rank held by the deceased; the death of the chief, *Ndazo*, *Tswanya*, and an elder styled *Cece* commands the 796x 766

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 52–3. [2] See below, p. 122.
[3] This rank was not included in the thirteen mentioned above.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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full-scale performance, while in the remaining cases there is a mere suggestion of the ritual.

This association of two fixed rituals with the funerary ceremonial presents several puzzling features. To begin with, the distribution of the two rituals among the thirteen ranks of Jebba is strikingly uneven, ten ranks being linked with the *gunnu* and only three with the *dzakó*. This, I was told, was not always so; but a more even distribution was upset in the course of time, when certain ranks originally linked with the *dzakó* were allowed to lapse because at the death of the incumbents there happened to be no suitable successors. This may be so; during my stay in Jebba, for example, three minor ranks of the *dzakó* group (not counted among the thirteen) were in fact vacant, and several more may have completely disappeared. Even so, the fact remains that no attempt was made to even out the inequality, though this would present no difficulty in this non-hereditary rank system. Furthermore, the dual division on the grounds of the suitable funerary ceremonial extends, not only to the men holding the respective ranks, but to their whole 'house' (i.e. lineage); thus the Jebba people generally class any individual or family as belonging either to the *gunnuciži* or *dzakociži* (the '*gunnu* people' or the '*dzakó* people'). This fits in oddly with a rank system based mainly on election and promotion; for it would imply that whole kin groups might have to change their religious affiliation if their titled head is promoted from a rank belonging to one section to a rank belonging to the other, or if a new family head is elected to a rank, say, of the *dzakó* group while his predecessor belonged to the *gunnu* section. Such promotions and elections do in fact occur and, as might be expected, entail considerable confusion. Most puzzling of all, this comprehensive division of the population into ritual moieties seems to have no relevant consequences, religious or otherwise. At least, the only consequence ascribed to it is both incongruous and obscure. It was claimed by most informants that the sons of *gunnuci* families alone were formerly allowed to join in the esoteric part of the *gunnu*, while no such rule applied to the *dzakó*.[1] One informant, an old man of high rank belonging to the *dzakó* section, maintained that that ritual was similarly exclusive. Since the rule concerning the *gunnu* is no longer in force (if it ever existed), it was impossible to verify the respective information; the *dzakó* ceremonial I witnessed certainly failed to

[1] If this were true it would obviously mean that boys and young men originally admitted to the secret part of the *gunnu* might be excluded from it when their family head changed his rank, or that boys not previously admitted might suddenly acquire the necessary qualifications. Either contingency is difficult to credit.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division. 796x 766

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe communities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *žiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Samaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements. 616 554 [184]

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage. 796x

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the 796x 773

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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unique in Nupe religious practice.[1] First, water is sprinkled on the ground and a little beer poured out; immediately afterwards the priest kills a white cock, cutting off its head and letting the blood drip on the earth. The head of the cock is left lying there while the body is taken away to be cooked later in the evening. Before the meal, in which only the elders share, a further offering of a few morsels of the meat is placed before the bronze figures. During each offering the *Ndàce* utters this brief prayer—'God, may the town have health; may the (several) towns prosper; may the women bear children; the children, may they be plentiful.[2] The killing of the cock concludes the sacrifice proper: what follows is '*dzodzo*', '*jì raha*', mere 'playing' and 'merry-making'. 796x

Even during the sacrifice an old woman and later an old man did a few dance steps. Afterwards more old women (bareheaded like the men) and all the old men, carrying their staves, join. Even very old men, who can hardly stand on their legs, try a few shaky steps. Later still, young women and girls form a ring round the musicians, singing and swaying rhythmically with the music without moving from the place; this motion is called the 'dance of the female bronze figure'. The two sexes never truly join in the dance; for the younger men do not dance at all, and the girls keep to themselves. Only old men and old women dance together, occasionally holding hands and behaving with jocular amourousness, almost like grandfather and grandmother remembering their youth; some such comments in fact come from the onlookers, who are greatly amused seeing 'the old people playing young couples'. Throughout, the dance is strikingly calm; nor is there any time for a more excited mood to gather force, for at dusk, after three hours, the ceremonial comes to an end. The songs sung at the *dzakó* are irrelevant little ditties, which have no bearing on the ritual. 796x 535

About the *gunnu* I can be brief. I saw it in its small-scale version, as part of the funerary rites for the *Ejukó* who died during my stay in Jebba. It included only the sacrifice of a fowl (on the village dancing ground), the mixed dance, and the playing of the *gunnu* drums; the young men carried their whips, and the dance was a close replica of the one in Doko, though the funeral version omits the sexual taboo and loses much of the hectic excitement typical of the true *gunnu*. From the description given me of the full-scale ritual I gather that it used to correspond closely to the one I saw elsewhere, being, however, more elaborate, comprising the vigil in the bush of the adolescents as well as the appearance of 796x 766

[1] *Ebe* divination provides the only parallel, the slab called 'man' lying to the right of the slab called 'woman'.

[2] The plural in the second sentence is unusual; it refers to all the 'towns of Tsoede', that is, to all the settlements on the river possessing Tsoede relics.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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*796 766 the *ndakó gboyá*. As mentioned before, the practice was abandoned apparently in the early twenties. But it was since revived once, in 1931, at the death of the village chief, when even the *ndakó gboyá* society played its part (in spite of the official ban).

4. RITUAL AND CULTURE CHANGE

*796 177 This seems an opportune place to consider the impact of changed conditions upon Nupe ritual, at least in its negative, disruptive aspects. The changes undergone by the Jebba rituals do not of course stand alone; in the last generation or two numerous pagan rituals all over Nupe country have been disappearing or have suffered more or less radical modifications. But the conditions in Jebba are in some respects unique and hence capable of illuminating factors and processes obscured elsewhere.

Let me, to begin with, say a few words about one of the abandoned Jebba rituals, the *sokokó*, whose name suggests a ceremonial of uncommon importance. It belonged to the cycle of rites performed in the 9th month; it was concerned with fertility, health, and prosperity in general and centred upon a sacrifice performed on the top of a hill overlooking the river valley. It is said to have been discontinued in 1914, when the residence of the Governor was built on the site of the sacrifice.

Now, similar reasons, similarly fortuitous, are also quoted in connection with certain other changes of ritual practice. In each case, my informants maintained, the disappearance of the *bà žiko*, the 'black' or 'secret place', led to the disappearance of the respective ceremonial or at least to some radical change in the observance. It is true that the place formerly chosen for the esoteric part of the *dzakó*, which used to lie on an uninhabited bank of the river, is today occupied by a riverside camp of Hausa fishermen; the old *gunnu* grove and the place in the bush where the *mamma* masks used to dress in secrecy have similarly lost their former seclusion, being now close to crowded thoroughfares. Yet it is equally true that suitable adjustments could be made: the *dzakó* is still regularly performed, with a programme only slightly changed; the *mamma*, though performed irregularly, has suffered this change for different reasons, and the masked dancers can still dress in secrecy, now in the privacy of an elder's house. Only the observance of the *gunnu* has been altered in a more far-reaching manner. These facts bear out a point made previously, that sacred places and the like are of relatively little importance in Nupe religion. If, then, a ritual is abandoned altogether or radically modified, this must be due to factors other than the loss of the customary locality and seclusion, inconvenient though the loss might be.

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The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with the age, sex, and status of the deceased. The full series is performed only for married men; in the case of old men who are not survived by widows the last ritual is omitted. Children, young men who are as yet unmarried, and most women are accorded only the Eight Days; only old women, married or widowed, who hold the position of *nũsako* (the 'Great-old-one') are entitled also to the Forty Days. This position goes to an eldest surviving sister in the oldest generation, and the nature of this qualification, referring as it does to the woman's own descent and not to her status by marriage, is also reflected in the arrangement of the ceremonials; for in the case of widows who returned to their own family after the husband's death (as many do), both rites take place in that house; while if the woman died in her husband's house, the Eight Days is performed there, and the Forty Days in the house of her kin. Differences of age and kinship position also determine the burial proceedings and the choice of the burial place. Old men and family heads, and old women, are buried in their sleeping huts, beneath the floor, and a sacrifice is performed over the grave; everyone else is buried, without special ceremony, in the space between huts or by the compound wall, or perhaps in a disused, roofless hut. At the death of old people, finally, the Eight Days' and Forty Days' rites include (among pagans) drumming, singing, and dancing, while this festive aspect is absent in the case of younger people; for their death makes 'the heart ache', while old people 'have seen the world', and there is no cause for grief.[1]

At the death of chiefs or priests the performance of the particular *kuti* they 'owned' may replace the funerary rites of the Eight Days and Forty Days. Similarly, the hunters will perform their own rituals on these occasions. But the rules differ widely; in some communities, as we know, the *gunnu* is the ritual appropriate to the funeral of chiefs and elders. Whichever solution is adopted, the combination of the funeral ceremonial with a fully-fledged *kuti* once more exemplifies the Nupe view of death as warranting the heaviest ceremonial.

The general rules are further modified when the death has been

[1] The qualification of old age cannot be stated more precisely. Old women who do not also hold the position of *nũsako* are sometimes treated like younger people. And in the case of men one always considers these three things—ripe age; possession of an elder's rank and title; and headship of the family. When these three qualifications coincide, there can be no doubt as to the appropriate ceremonial, burial place, and so forth. When only one or the other applies, there is some latitude, the final decision depending mainly on practical considerations, such as the economic position of the family and the likely number of mourners. Thus the observances appropriate to 'old' people do not always form an unbroken series; a person may, for example, be buried in the sleeping hut, with a sacrifice, but without the subsequent festivities of the Eight Days or Forty Days.

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766 of an abnormal kind. Lepers, we remember, are buried in the bush, by the *Ndazo*; people who die of smallpox are buried in the normal manner, though their body is wrapped in dirty rags instead of a new piece of cloth, and there is no ceremonial or mourning. In most parts of Nupe death by lightning does not affect the ceremonial; but in the north and east, apparently under Gwari in-
[[184] fluence, such persons are buried by the priests of the *sogba* cult, which flourishes in Gwari country.[1] When a person dies on the farm or in one of the outlying hamlets, the body is taken to the village for burial, and all ceremonies are performed there. A person who dies on a journey or in another part of the country is buried locally, without ceremony, all the rites being performed at his or her home; but if the deceased's kinsfolk are not certain that he has been buried at all (say, in the case of people killed in the war), they will perform a fictitious burial with a shroud representing the body. Criminals who have been executed used to be buried, without rites, by the executioners; but in the case of unconvicted criminals, even if they are known to have been guilty of the most hideous crimes, the usual ceremonial is observed: as moral depravity does not count in the beyond, so it ceases to be important on the threshold.

764 Let me begin with a few words on the technique of burial. The grave is oblong, square, and shallow, only about two feet below the ground. There are no marks on the grave; on the contrary, the ground is carefully levelled and repaired so that it looks like any other place. If the grave is inside a sleeping hut, the latter remains in use after the burial, the same hut often containing two or three graves of successive inhabitants. The body is placed in the grave lying on its side, 'as though asleep', and, among Mohammedans, facing east. The grave chamber is kept clear of earth by a roof of wooden beams, covered with a white grass mat; the body rests on another mat of the same kind. Among Mohammedans, fresh leaves and boughs are in addition scattered over the floor
764 and roof of the grave chamber.[2] The grave-diggers are called *goro*,
767 and are charged also with preparing the body and performing a first sacrifice over the grave. Their duties, ritual already in their secrecy, are usually hereditary in certain families which hold no other religious function. Among Mohammedans the body is prepared by four male or female relatives, according to the sex of the deceased, and mallams are grave-diggers.

[1] See below, p. 211.

[2] I was told of an older form of burial, in which the grave chamber is dug into the side of a circular shaft five to six feet deep. This practice has now disappeared, though the people of Doko assured me that chiefs would still be buried in this fashion. I have seen burials of this kind only in the neighbouring country of Gwari.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

N 771 177

So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

N [766]

At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

N [821]

N 771 177 842

The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [884
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more [935]
were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [86]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), [842]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

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4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

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766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

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768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

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The burial is marked by extraordinary haste, the *goro* being sent for immediately. If possible, the dead are buried within three or four hours, at all times of the day, even at dawn or dusk, if only there is sufficient light to see by. There is no articulate fear or concern behind this haste, say, fear of the ghost of the dead or concern with the fate of the soul; rather is it the presence of the corpse as such which the Nupe find disturbing. The people in the house especially, who must stay with the body until the grave-diggers take over, are anxious to see it go; for 'the person who sees a dead body, his heart sinks'. For the same reason children are at once sent out of the house and not allowed to return until after the burial. When the *goro* arrive (usually three or four men) they wash the body with soap and water, rub it with aromatic cam-wood, wrap it into a new indigo-dyed cloth, and pull a cap (in the case of a man) or a kerchief (in the case of a woman) over the face of the deceased. Men of rank are today buried, in Moslem fashion, in a white gown, with a turban on the head. The grave is dug, the body placed in it, and the grave covered with loose earth, without ceremony. If the deceased was an old man or woman, the *goro* perform a libation of beer over the closed grave and speak a brief prayer, thus:

'Grandfather of the *kuci* (i.e. the deceased) who is returning to the earth, (thy) grandchild is now coming. (When) he arrives, spread (thy) two hands, receive him to your heart.'

All this is done in secrecy, no one watching; the mourners stay away, and when the *goro* leave the grave they will shut the door of the hut with a curtain or bar the access to the burial place with branches placed across the path. On the next day the ban will be lifted, the earth over the grave will be beaten down and levelled by the young women of the house, and if the grave had been dug in a sleeping hut (that is, for an old man), his heir will at once move in. When the grave-diggers have completed their task they join the mourners, being offered refreshment and a small fee, and leave shortly afterwards.

The news of the death travels fast, and an hour or two later the house will begin to fill with guests. Men and women stay apart, the former in the entrance hut of the house, the latter in the women's huts. All are dressed in old clothes, simply and without ostentation, and sit about stiffly, with expressionless faces. Only the chief mourners among the women—the mother, sisters, and the widows of the deceased—are expected to express their grief more violently, by loud sobbing and an occasional high-pitched wail (called *tigi*) which is the conventional expression of deep sorrow. The nature of the gathering will vary with the status of the departed; if he is a titled elder, all the other village elders will

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173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'ti dzana*, the 'head of Dzana,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own
696 maternal uncle, Dzana, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leifi nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndáce*, the 'father of the shooting,' *i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this: whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic, I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical basis of this tradition. According to the existing
[174] very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tete-cígbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is
held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's
money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave
their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the
presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there
is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in
some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have
been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego
their right in her favour. If she has no children her property
goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child 848
inherit. 428

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according
to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-
head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals
of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin
forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan
produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and
land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the
oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust
for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole
family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head
to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer,
always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied.
The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to
the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their
flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months
the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been
buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide
circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground.
The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance
follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the
appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being
also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she
may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man
then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after
dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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the existing political structure of the community in a kinship sense. The ancestors of the chief who are regarded as founders of the village are also thought of vaguely as ancestors of the whole community. These essentially mythical kinship links exercise no influence upon concrete kinship claims and obligations. 602

Political factors are also responsible for the development of the large units which characterize kinship among the ruling family. We shall see that the ruling house of Nupe crystallized in three dynasties, which trace their descent from different sons of the founder of the ruling house, and divide between them the rights and duties vested in the ruling house. The ancestors of the three dynasties lived only two or three generations back; but already certain religious observances (prayers on their grave) mark them off from all subsequent royal ancestors. In this rigidly defined system of reckoning descent in the father's line back to these almost sanctified 'first ancestors', and in the relationship with one another which is in the nature of mutual obligations for the sake of the larger unit, the royal house itself, the three dynasties correspond from kinship point of view to incipient *clans*—the only analogy to clan structure which we find in Nupe. 643 769 [613]

Let me say in conclusion that kinship structure in Nupe is not that dominant, all-enveloping structure which we know from many primitive societies. Although it bears upon religious life, education, and the organization of production, it is greatly overshadowed as a determinant of social behaviour by the factors of political organization and, in economic life, by economic interests proper. Indeed only because of its lesser significance in social life could we omit the detailed description of Nupe kinship from the sociological analysis with which this book is concerned. 601

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notion was rejected by everybody else. A second view was more widely held, namely, that the *kuci* remains on earth but is watched by God, so that your appeal to the *kuci* will yet reach God; the *kuci*, then, would be 'with God' only in a metaphorical sense. A third informant argued as follows, with somewhat dubious logic: Since you cannot see either God or *kuci*, it follows that they are together. Finally, there was the unprofitable but incontrovertible reply, that here we have a mystery of which 'man is ignorant'.

If the Nupe failed to work out a clear and consistent conception of this survival of 'personal souls', they equally failed to exploit its potentialities. The belief in souls of the dead which remain concerned with the fate of their living kin and are reincarnated in progeny would seem to lend itself ideally to an ethical interpretation. Yet there is no trace of this. There is no conception of the *kuci* being angered by the sins or offences of the living, perhaps refusing its aid or sending punishment. In appealing to the *kuci* the suppliant expects help, not rewards, and help untempered with justice; the help may not come; but this only means that the circumstances were unfavourable or the difficulties too great. Nor is the fate of the soul after death affected by the deeds or character of the living person. It is the same for good men and evil, and the idea that the two might fare differently in the beyond is simply not understood. 'When a person dies, we no longer see him', is all the Nupe find to say on this topic. Which is another facet of that ethical indifference we noted before.

The *kuci* is invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding the crucial events of kinship life—birth, marriage, death. Apart from this, *kuci* worship has no special domain, nor is it subject to any regular routine. The sacrifices to ancestors represent casual appeals, performed *ad hoc*, for a variety of reasons, and nearly always on the advice of diviners. Of ten informants one had performed the sacrifice three times in the last four years, because of his ill-health; one had sacrificed twice, first because his horse was sick, and then because his child had smallpox; six informants had sacrificed once during that period—three because of illness, two because of a drought, and one for no particular reason and without consulting a diviner. One informant had performed no *kuci* sacrifice for seven years, and another had sacrificed regularly every year; but he was a village chief, and in his case the sacrifice, addressed to the ancestor who was also the founder of the village, had merged with a *kuti* 'belonging' to the community.

This fusion of *kuci* worship with another type of observance is not an isolated case. As we shall see, it is also entailed in the possession of certain 'great', hereditary medicines, which similarly

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779 absorb the appeals to ancestors. This is only another aspect of their lack of a special 'domain'. And even where *kuci* worship does not 769 lose its independence so completely, it yet has little autonomy; for the kind of supernatural aid it promises can equally be procured by other forms of worship or sacrifice. But of this, too, we shall speak later.

769 Let me conclude the present account with the brief mention of a further ambiguous practice, a form of sacrifice which stands half- 777 way between an appeal to *Sokó* and the appeal to *kuci*. It is per- 779 formed by families in which there are or have been twins and is known by that name, *bakomba*. Such houses will possess a special 845 shrine, consisting of a number of small earthenware pots built into the outside wall of a hut, which the women will regularly fill with beer and porridge. Once a year, on the birthday of the twins, the family head will bring a sacrifice of beer and blood of fowl. Now, twins are lucky and a sign of divine benevolence; equally, they represent a special incarnation, a concentration as it were of the 'kinship soul'. In this sacrifice, then, one addresses *Sokó* as well as (an anonymous) *kuci*; and the people who have such a twin shrine will perform all their sacrifices to *kuci* there, and not over the grave of an individual ancestor.

(v) *Spirit Beings*

776 In the preceding discussion we touched upon certain beliefs in spirits—in 'ancestral spirits', which are an aspect of the personal 779 soul, and in 'ghosts', which are transmutations of the shadow soul. But when the Nupe mention 'spirits' among the things that make up the world they do not mean either of these; they mean immaterial beings which exist in their own right and are not derived from humans, although they have some quasi-human attributes and inhabit the same earth. It is possible that this belief is not an original tenet of Nupe creed; for the Nupe call these spirit beings by a Hausa–Arabic name, *aljénu* (pl. *aljenúži*), and may well have borrowed certain of their aspects from Islam. However this may be, the Nupe do not regard this belief as in any way alien or 'borrowed'. And whether the name for spirits is Nupe or Arabic, it is a name, sharply distinguishing this class of beings from all others.

Though circumstantial and readily expressed, the spirit beliefs are fluid and far from uniform. The most varied opinions will not be thought unorthodox, but will be taken as evidence for the multifariousness of the spirit world. A first group of spirits, vaguely anthropomorphous but without distinct individualities, is said to inhabit the inanimate parts of nature, hills, trees, watercourses, the bush, and so forth. These spirits have sex, and according to

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This roughly uniform timing of the fixed rituals might suggest that they are bound up with important seasonal events, farming activities and the like, which are similarly uniform throughout the country. The 9th month, which is so regularly accompanied by rituals, in fact represents a crucial phase in the life of a farming people, coinciding with the end of the rains and the time of the sorghum harvest, the staple crop of the country. But the 11th month, which falls in the middle of the dry season, coincides only with a minor agricultural activity, the harvesting of the last bean crop. Conversely, an important agricultural phase, the 1st (or 13th) month, when rains and planting begin, is infrequently accompanied by ceremonials. Other dates marked by rituals in different communities coincide with the first millet harvest (5th month), with the first yam harvest (7th month), or fall in the early rains (3rd month), when nothing in particular happens. 796x 795

The Nupe rituals are thus neither firmly linked with important agricultural activities nor yet concentrated in the season when farmwork is at a standstill, when the granaries are full, and when the people have both food and time to spare. But there is a nexus of a more general kind; for the Nupe rituals tend to be associated with the reaping of the crops more than with the planting, with 'ends' more than with 'beginnings', bearing upon the renewal of the fertility of which one has just received a token rather than upon attempts to secure it at the outset. The subsequent discussion will bear out this view. Here we must note that the ceremonials which happen to coincide with this or that harvest are in no way strict first-fruit rites, meant to signal the proper time for reaping or to control the first consumption of the new food; nor yet are they special feasts of thanksgiving. Rather is their religious import more unspecific, bearing on fertility, the thriving of crops, and health in general, irrespective of the particular occasion.

2. THE INLAND VILLAGE

(i) *Priestship*

The list of Doko rituals is brief. There are two movable ones —*fitakū* ('The Stone drinks') and *Dibo Saba* (named after an ancestor chief),—and three fixed rituals: *ḿba*, which is performed twice, in the 5th and 9th month; *sakó*, performed one month after the first *ḿba*; and *gunnu*, performed in the 11th month.[1] 796x

The ceremonials are in the charge of different officiants. The ritual *Dibo Saba*, addressed to an ancestor chief, is also performed by the chief. The ritual *sakó* concerns only the small group of [769 622]

[1] In our calendar the 5th month corresponds roughly to July–August, the 9th to December, the 11th to February.

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x796 paraphernalia. The 'business' of *fitakũ* is to break a drought or to combat illness. I witnessed the ritual in July, during the so-called 'little dry season', when the usual spell of dry weather lasted unexpectedly long. The ritual took place at midday, in a clearing in the bush a few minutes walk from Doko. The place formed a rough circle whose entrance was flanked by two fresh mounds of earth. In the centre of the clearing, under a big tree, there was another, old, mound, said to cover the sacred stone from which the ritual derives its name; a small pot was half buried in the mound. The congregation consisted of the *Žigí*, who performed the sacrifice and spoke the prayer, and of family heads and other old men, the village chief not being present. In the sacrifice the blood of the slaughtered animal (a ram) and some beer were poured into the pot in the mound, thus making the 'stone drink', after which the meat was cooked, divided among the men present, and consumed there and then together with the rest of the beer. The priest ate and drank first, the others following in order of rank and age; a share of both meat and beer was kept for the chief, to be taken to his house after the ceremonial. In the prayer which accompanied the sacrifice the beer was referred to as *nuwã*, 'water' (as is usual in all Nupe sacrifices), so that the stone was made to 'drink' the fluid of which one stood in need. The prayer was brief and addressed to both *kuti* and God, thus—

'*Kuti*, the thing we are pouring, drink this water. *Sokó*, cause rain to fall, *kuti*, cause rain to fall. *Sokó*, cause that the whole town may prosper, that everyone may (have things) to eat, that everyone may have health.'

Finally, some leaves were plucked from the tree and stuck into the mound of earth underneath. This action was merely meant as a sign that the ceremony had been performed and had no ulterior or symbolic meaning. The whole ceremonial lasted a little over an hour.

● 769 According to Doko tradition Dibo Saba was the village chief who ruled at the time of Tsoede's advent, and the second in a long x796 and (until recently) uninterrupted line of chiefs. It was he who received, at Tsoede's hand, the sacred bangles, and of all the graves of more remote ancestors his alone can still be identified. It lies outside Doko, on the old, now abandoned, site of the village, and today forms a narrow uncultivated space surrounded on all sides by farmland. The ritual is performed whenever some grave danger threatens the community, especially illness or, again, drought. [731] The present chief of Doko performed it in 1930, during an outbreak of smallpox, and again in 1932, when a horse sickness attacked Doko. It was not performed either in 1934 or 1936,

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during my stay in the country, so that my description is based on the account of informants. But their account tallies with the ancestral sacrifices I had seen elsewhere; and the *Dibo Saba* ritual is, in essence, nothing but a sacrifice to the *kuci* of an ancestor, though both the ancestor and his invocation are here matters of public concern. This double significance of the ritual is clearly expressed by the people, who would say that, on this occasion, the chief is performing two sacrifices at once, one for his own 'house', and the other for the 'whole town'. It is interesting to note that the present chief of Doko does not come of the dynasty of Dibo Saba but of a new family, which came to power two generations ago; even so, he continues the sacrifice to this alien ancestor. In other words, the transformation of the chief's private kinship rite into an official and public ceremonial has become complete. In the ceremonial the chief, accompanied by the older men, sacrifices beer, a goat, or some other food over the grave of Dibo Saba and addresses both the *kuci* and *Sokó*. The choice of the sacrificial animal depends on the diviner's instruction. The formula of prayer is of the usual kind, mentioning the need of rain (or whatever the cause), of food in abundance, and ends with the stereotyped wish that 'the whole town may prosper'.

796x 769

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

Let me start with the simplest of the three, the ritual called *sakó* (meaning 'Great Deer'). As already mentioned, it is 'owned' by the hereditary hunters of Doko, that is, by a small number of families, all kinsmen of the *Maji Egbe* ('Master of the Hunt') and descended from some earlier holder of that office. In Doko everybody is also a hunter, or can be one if he is so inclined, and every house has its bows and arrows, traps, and hunting nets. Conversely, all the hereditary hunters are also farmers. But it falls to them to organize the large-scale drives carried out in the dry season (now increasingly rarely since the bigger game is fast disappearing), and it falls to the head of this group to ensure, by ritual means, success in hunting. He receives a share of the big game killed by any Doko man; he also keeps the horns of buck and deer killed by his own group in a small hut in his house, while other people would throw these trophies away. Whenever the Master set out on a large-scale hunt or desires to invoke his ancestors, he pours a small libation of beer outside this hut, addressing an anonymous *kuci*. In his case, then, the hut containing the trophies replaces the ancestral grave or shrine of other families. Once a year, the same offering is brought in order to secure good hunting for the whole community, the ritual being now performed in the Master's sleeping hut. No particular secrecy surrounds the sacrifice, though it

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prosperity. But again, both kinds are irregularly employed; all that can be said is that the sex, colour or species of the animals is *laid down*, and hence stands for a rule significant as such. 796x 182

A few words must here be said about the whole conception of the Nupe sacrifice. It seems anomalous that a non-personified deity or an abstract 'cosmic force' should be offered food and drink. But the prayer formula accompanying the offering speaks concretely of 'giving' these to God or *kuti*, just as the name of at least one ritual implies that the *kuti* (or the stone representing it) 'drinks' the fluid offered. The name for sacrifice, *labá*, offers no further clue; denoting the actual offering as well as the prayer accompanying it, it does not separate the former from the general act of worship. The offering is thus a gesture among others: like the prayer formula, meant to break through the aloofness of the deity, the sacrificial gift serves to attract and hold his attention. In either case the gesture used is borrowed from everyday life, the prayer employing ordinary language, the sacrifice items normally offered by clients to patrons. And this conception of a 'normal' gift is once more consistent with the notion that the various *kuti*, precisely like persons of rank and standing, command their special 'greetings'. If the offerings are anomalous, they share this character with all the other forms of addressing God and *kuti* and indeed with the very conceptions of the deity and of the Force-that-is-in-ritual. 782

Let me note briefly that the same anomaly also holds in the case of sacrifices made to ancestors or over the vessels of 'great' medicines. The former, as we remember, are brought to the disembodied souls which are 'with God'; mostly, too, they are accompanied by invocations addressed at once to God and *kuci*. The sacrifices to medicines again involve the invocation of God; and though they consist in offerings of beer, morsels of food, and the blood of the sacrificial animal, they are, as we shall see, also understood to strengthen the impersonal force that is imputed to the substance of medicine. Nor are the offerings to spirits, de-humanized beings that they are, any less anomalous; indeed, in a different context I recorded the positive assertion that 'spirits do not eat'. 796x 182 782 769

The first two observances may, like ritual proper, include the sacrificial meal of the congregation; the sacrifice to ancestors does so in most cases, the sacrifice to 'great' medicines only where it has fused with a *kuti* or with *kuci* worship. Invariably, however, the inclusion of the communal meal, even where it means merely a sharing-out of beer, entails the invocation of God, and not only of ancestors or of the 'force' of medicine. Yet the sacrificial meal has in no way the significance of a sacrament. The meal undoubtedly represents a sacred occasion, although it may show

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X796 little trace of awe or emotional thrill.[1] But there is no conception
182 of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing
782 bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial
● 769 meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations' between deity and congregation. Much the same point was made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties'.[2]

X796 Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of
the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of
182 very general social import and established by means of a relevant
183 parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal, efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence. The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and afterwards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition, rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dance', and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis, and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, however, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols. They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

[1] This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *bikí* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

[2] *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

General

771 The majority of the Nupe are now Moslems and there is at least one small [162] mosque in every village. The 1931 Census gave 235,990 Moslems out of a total of 324,375 for all religions.[1] But in many communities pagan ritual exists side by side with some Moslem observances, the latter being increasingly adopted for reasons of prestige.

Among the pagans there is common belief in a sky god *Sokó*, who is believed to have created the world and then withdrawn himself from communion with man. The Nupe concept of the cosmos is, according to Nadel, fundamentally amoral. God, having created the world, gave men access to certain mystical forces, making them at the same time subject to these and leaving them to make such use of these "powers" and of the material world as they would and could. First among these mystical forces is *kuti*, the compelling power of ritual, believed to be harnessed in varying degrees in a multiplicity of rites belonging to persons, communities, and associations, and conferring both special benefits or protection and increasing general well-being. At the same time, invocation of the ancestors of kinsfolk, of the people at large, and of the ancient rulers, can afford some measure of benefit or protection. This can also be gained through a separate use of "medicines" which are believed variously to combine pseudo-therapeutic and magical properties. Finally, the evil power of witchcraft, which God also put into the world, has to be discovered, punished, and driven out by special rites. Since, moreover, there are these alternatives with reference to both good fortune and bad, divination has a great part to play in determining the rites to be performed in particular situations.[2]

Spirits

776 The Nupe believe that immaterial beings, existing in their own right and with some human attributes, live in the bush or in hills, trees, watercourses, and other natural features. Their Hausa-Arabic name (*aljenúši*, sing. *aljénu*) suggests that some aspects of this belief may be borrowed from Islam. The spirits may be male or female, friendly or hostile, though only two—*Ndáduma* (Father Niger) and *Ketsá* (associated with a rock in midstream near Jebba Island)—are thought to possess any considerable powers.[3] Another group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. The least clearly conceived are personal spirits or spirit doubles, which belong to every individual from birth to death and cannot be changed. These may be good or bad.[4]

769 Spirits of the dead (*kuci*) may be reincarnated in their own descendants. 776 Approach to the Supreme Being can be made through ancestral spirits. Special sacrifices are performed either in the house or on the grave of a particular ancestor and the *kuci* are invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death. Otherwise it seems that ancestral sacrifices are performed only sporadically and for a specific reason, such as illness in the family.[5]

776 Tsoede, who is regarded by all Nupe as their common ancestor, is venerated in an elaborate cycle of myths and rituals surrounding sacred objects—chains and bronze figures—connected with him.[6] He is, however, outside the general framework of Nupe religious beliefs.

[1] Census of Nigeria, vol. II, p. 63. Unfortunately there are no later figures available for comparison.
[2] See below, pp. 47–8.
[3] See below.
[4] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 26–31.
[5] Ibid., pp. 22–5.
[6] Ibid., pp. 31–2.

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Kudu and occupy the rich oil-palm district of Yeti. The name Kyedye, finally, is often used synonymously for all canoe-men and fishermen on the main river. Unity of environment, a uniform productive system, a uniform material culture, represent a first aspect of the cultural unity of the sub-tribe. 184

Then there is language, certain linguistic differences which throw into relief the cultural boundaries between sub-tribes. The Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa still speak dialects which differ considerably from each other and from the Nupe spoken in the rest of the country. To-day most people in these sub-tribes are bilingual and understand and speak both their own dialect and 'Nupe proper'. The Gbedegi, too, are said to have spoken a special dialect, only a generation or two ago. No trace is left of their language; I found only one old man in Jebba Island who could speak a little Gbedegi. In the area where Nupe proper is spoken only insignificant dialectal differences exist. This linguistic unification within Nupe is the counterpart of the expansion of Nupe language (Nupe proper) and culture beyond the tribal boundaries. Both reflect the same development. The linguistic unification proceeded from the political centre of Nupe kingdom, the area of the Beni, Kyedye, and Bataci sub-tribes. Their dialects, identified with the language of the Nupe state, gradually came to embrace all other tribal sections. The language map of Nupe reveals the phases of this process, the stages in the growth of a supreme, unified culture. We can see the resistance to assimilation increase as we move away from the centre of expansion: the dialects spoken on the borders of the kingdom are losing their identity more slowly and more reluctantly than the dialects of the groups in the centre. The last phase of this development is not yet completed. We are yet to see the full Nupe-ization of Žitako, Ebe, and Kupa. 184 197

But in the centre of this expansion the differentiation between cultural centre and periphery gains a new meaning. It is conceived of as a differentiation not of dialects representative of tribal sections, but of dialects, or forms of *patois*, representative of a cultural and social milieu and upbringing. To-day we have a Bida-Nupe, a 'higher', more refined Nupe (a Nupe which, for example, has replaced many Nupe words by words adopted from Hausa and Arabic); and we have, besides, the cruder, 'low', peasant Nupe—sometimes called 'pagan' Nupe—spoken in the districts. However, this new attitude towards cultural differences, this evaluation on the scale of a 'lower' and 'higher', a more or less refined culture, belongs to another chapter.

The cultural unity of the sub-tribe manifests itself also in the religious field. Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to single sub-tribes, and inter-tribal contact and assimilation have hardly obscured these cultural boundaries. Certain cults, bound up with conditions of environment, seem linked naturally to special areas: a sacrifice to the mythical ancestor of kola-nut planting among the Kusopa; cults which have to do with the water, with floods, with the dangers of the river, and success and safety in fishing, among the riverain groups. The *elo* ritual, and the *mamma* cult, masked ceremonies, are known only among the Gbedegi; the *žikinta* among the Ebe, the *gani* among the Benu, the 'white' *gunnu* 184 771

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among the tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, and (a negative evidence mentioned already) the *ndakó gboyá*, which is regarded as 'typical' Nupe by Hausa and Yoruba, is unknown among Dibo and Ebe. There are also other rituals and cults which cannot be assigned (at least not to-day) to a certain sub-tribe, and finally rituals and cults which represent the cultural possession of single village communities. In brief, the possession of a common cult means only an external uniformity of culture. None of these rituals implies co-operation and actual contact in the group at large. They are still but the expression of parallel, 'like', behaviour and not of concrete co-activity and 'togetherness'.

This is equally true of the other cultural features on which the cultural identity of the sub-tribe rests. The consciousness of a cultural uniformity is supported by the actual existing uniformity. But there is still no organized centre of co-activity behind this uniformity or behind the transmission of the consciousness of this uniformity. We can only say this: the sub-tribe, much more than the tribe, constitutes a potentiality of such co-activity and intensive 'togetherness'. The links of a common language, of similar ~~economic pursuits, similar~~ interests, parallel religious ideas, may grow ~~easily into links of co-operation~~ and 'togetherness'. Only in two cases, however, has this potentiality become reality—among the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. In no other section are there contacts and forms of co-activity which make the sub-tribe 'one country', and its people 'one group'. How, then, does that cultural uniformity crystallize into the unified, conscious commonness of 'one country'?

I have described elsewhere the growth and organization of one of the two sub-tribes which have evolved such unified structure.[1] Let me repeat here the main facts. The growth of the Kyedye organization was the growth of a colonizing and conquering group. Expanding from one centre—Muregi, near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna—the Kyedye established themselves in the course of time all along the river banks. They built their settlements on the land of the aboriginal sections, Bataci and riverain Gbedegi, and claimed rulership over them. Twin villages arose, half Kyedye and half Bataci or Gbedegi, from which the Kyedye administered the district, assuming judicial authority and levying taxes. This colonization is still going on, and their rulership, rigidly centralized, is still alive and undisputed.[2] Close contact, intermarriage, and regular new emigration link the settlements, old and new, capital and colonies. Delegates from Muregi, relatives of the Kyedye chief, reside in the settlements, and these administrative 'posts' are correlated with the ranks which the delegates hold in the Kyedye hierarchy; promotion in rank involves promotion to a more important as well as more lucrative post. This closely knit ruling group precludes all permanent links between the cultural groups which this political development has thrown

[1] See 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940, pp. 165–95.

[2] Only twenty or thirty years ago have the Kyedye established themselves on the river Kaduna, or on Jebba Island, a place which had only then become of economic importance.

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PREFACE

THIS book is intended as a sequel to my first monograph on the Nupe people, *A Black Byzantium*, the material presented there—on economic and political organization, and on kinship and the regulations of adolescence—being largely presupposed in the present volume. Here and there, however, the run of the argument necessitated a somewhat fuller reference to the data contained in the earlier book, so that repetitions and some overlapping could not altogether be avoided. Much the same applies to various papers which I previously published on particular aspects of Nupe culture. 128

In one respect the present account might seem incomplete; for it omits the full discussion of a topic not previously treated and one well suited to the context of a book on religion, namely, myths and legends. The reason for this omission is partly a practical one, since an exhaustive treatment of Nupe legends, which would inevitably lead on to ordinary tales and folklore, would have overburdened the present volume. But partly, the omission can be justified on the grounds that these tales and legends are of relatively little relevance for the understanding of Nupe religion, which point will be dealt with in due course.

As readers of *A Black Byzantium* will know, the Nupe people are today in great measure Mohammedanized, the influence of Islam steadily encroaching upon the indigenous form of worship. If, therefore, in this description of Nupe religion I were to take my lead from the actually obtaining state of affairs, I should have to assign equal weight to Nupe–Islam and to the traditional creed, if not indeed to give prominence to the former. In fact, I have done the reverse; more precisely, I have treated Islam in Nupe as an intrusion, as an instance (to use the familiar phrase) of 'culture contact', and the indigenous religion as my true or main subject-matter. I do not think that this viewpoint needs to be specially defended. The fact that the traditional observances had already disappeared from many parts of the country during my stay in 1934–6 and have probably receded even further since, far from detracting from our interest in the indigenous creed, only renders 128 771

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the task of recording and analysing it more important as well as pressing.

A purely technical point in conclusion. It is always difficult to decide, in books of this kind, just how much scope should be given to vernacular words and quotations. Clearly, in a topic like religion certain crucial terms must be given, or must at least be introduced, in the vernacular. But too generous a use of the indigenous language is both clumsy and confusing to the reader. I have therefore tried to reduce it to a minimum. Nor do I think that this entails a serious loss of accuracy; for even the most intricate vernacular terms are translatable, even though the translation itself might have to be specially explained and perhaps justified: which is precisely the procedure I propose to adopt.

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I

THE NUPE CREED

I. PROLEGOMENA

THE title of this book, *Nupe Religion*, suggests a logical unity in our subject-matter which, at the very outset, might appear problematical. Two questions, in particular, might be raised. First, are we in fact dealing with *one* religion of *one* people, that is, with beliefs and practices which both form a coherent system and occur uniformly throughout the society? And second, how far are we dealing with 'religion' in the strict sense of the word, and with it alone, to the exclusion of 'magic', mere 'superstitions', and other, cruder forms of belief? 771 128

The answer to the first question cannot be given in the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no'; nor can all the issues involved properly be judged so early in the discussion. Let me, however, anticipate the relevant points. The religious beliefs and practices of the Nupe differ considerably in different parts of the country; we shall frequently meet with local cults and with forms of worship varying from region to region, even from village to village. Furthermore, the main acts of worship, their execution and promises, concern the single village community, and not that widest group, the Nupe people or tribe. Nor indeed is that widest group an unequivocal unit. The people who call themselves Nupe are internally divided in various ways—by ethnic descent, by tribal segmentation and, partly, political allegiance, by the cleavage between urban and peasant population, and by the barriers of social class. The bulk of the Nupe people is held together in the kingdom of that name, and in the following description we shall mainly be concerned with the politically united tribe or nation. Even so, certain of the internal divisions remain, and these, too, entail corresponding divergences in religious belief and practice. 771 184 128

It might seem, therefore, that in speaking of 'Nupe religion' we are merely employing a convenient descriptive phrase, a summary reference of the kind ethnographers find useful when they wish to state that such-and-such observances are found in a particular group or area. But the phrase is intended to mean more than this. 771 128

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The varieties of belief and practice found in Nupe are at least roughly akin, both in their content and in what might be called their style; though they exhibit no conspicuous uniformity or even consistency, they yet hang together in relevant respects and also reflect an identical psychological tenor. Most important of all, the people themselves think of their religion in terms of such an underlying unity; indeed, as we shall see, they tend to exaggerate it. Thus, though the local observances may differ and the congregations in acts of worship be no larger than single village communities, there is a clear understanding that the diverse and separate practices are instances of a common creed. When the people performing one kind of ceremonial comment on the different usage in another part of the country, they yet imply that the two belong together or, more precisely, belong to something wider than both. So that, over and above internal divisions, the people draw the (to them) much more important distinction between the sum total of beliefs and practices in their tribe, and the different totals of this kind in others.

It must be emphasized, however, that for the people this over-all unity is not constituted by the intrinsic coherence of the religious usages that happen to occur in their tribe; it is constituted, rather, by the fact that these usages do occur in their tribe and hence are typical of and valid for a given people or society. That collective entity—the people called Nupe—is the basic premiss; the diverse beliefs and practices are construed into a common creed on that basis.

The precise relationship between the total society and the 'total creed' will occupy us at a later stage. Here we might note that the Nupe have no special, collective name for their religion. They have names only for particular conceptions, single practices, local ceremonials. As for the total creed, the Nupe can describe it only circuitously and enumeratively, as being concerned with the God *Sokó*, and not with deities named differently; with such-and-such rituals or 'medicines', and not with others; with spirits, but not anthropomorphous ones, and so forth. Yet it is for them a 'total creed' none the less. If it be argued that this cannot be so, since in this case the people would have found a way of summarizing all these aspects in a name indicative of their over-all unity (as we do when we speak of Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism), the answer is that they do not think of their creed in that way. As they think of it, it has no identity apart from its validity-for-a-society, so that it would be meaningless to define it by a separate concept. Differently expressed, Nupe religion is a tribal or national religion, and *one* inasmuch as a tribe or nation claims it as its own.

To turn to our second question, which, let this be stressed, is of a purely preliminary order. It is here raised, not for the sake of

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discussing the meaning or essence of religious belief or of separating its relevant varieties, but merely in order to outline the kind of data that have been included in this book and to justify their inclusion. The word 'religion' will here be understood in the widest and loosest sense. I have not, for example, made the familiar distinction between religion and magic a criterion for the selection or arrangement of the material. Not that the Nupe are without observances and concepts which merit the name 'religious', however narrowly understood. But other beliefs and practices, though they might not satisfy the criteria of 'religion proper', will not for that reason be excluded or kept on one side.

It does not seem very difficult to define our position in general terms. Convenient phrases are at hand, such as: By 'religion' shall here be meant all beliefs and practices implying communication with and control of the supernatural, whether this is attempted through appeals and prayers to some transcendental intelligence (in the manner of religion) or quasi-mechanically, by the manipulation of 'magic' agencies. But this equation of religion with 'supernaturalism' (as Lowie would say), convenient though it may be, only poses further problems of definition; and the familiar category of the 'supernatural' proves on closer inspection to be itself ambiguous.

When speaking of attempts at communicating with or controlling the supernatural we are clearly viewing the situation through the eyes of the people we are studying, imputing to *them* the thought of transcending the given reality; we should probably impute to them also definite attitudes and feelings relating to the things transcendental, such as awe or fear, humility or ecstasy, or the emotional concentration we call worship. Yet when we try to define the supernatural itself we are driven to assume the opposite viewpoint and to judge the transcendentality of things by our own way of thinking. Nor, indeed, can we avoid veering round from one viewpoint to the other, since neither is by itself fully satisfactory.

Consider that any definition of the supernatural must introduce the contrast with the domain of empirical and scientific knowledge; more precisely, when judging any action or notion to be concerned with the supernatural we assert by implication that it is concerned with existences or influences (beings, 'powers', 'forces') the assumption of which conflicts with the principles of empirical enquiry and verification.[1] And since these principles and

[1] It must be emphasized that the relevant conflict is with the *principles* of empirical knowledge and with the *methods* of scientific enquiry, not merely with the body of information extant at any given moment. For in the latter case any scientific theory in advance of existing ideas or techniques of verification would be 'supernatural'.

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000 besides 'religion proper', also that 'border zone', composed of mere superstitions; of science misconstrued or all-too-crudely attempted; and of science aiming too high or incompletely severed from mystic thought.

2. DOGMA AND MYTH

771 The preceding discussion has to some extent laid down already what must be our first concern—to outline the basic categories in which the Nupe frame their transcendental knowledge and thus to express the crucial distinction between things religious and profane. This task clearly implies more than merely compiling a glossary and commenting on its items. These basic categories will embody already an essential part of the dogma or doctrine of the religion. For any dogma or doctrine, being a body of assertions and propositions, must employ the language of these basic categories; the significance we discover in the latter will already point to the tenets of the creed; while whatever further information might be derived from the doctrinal assertions, will in turn elucidate the terms of the 'glossary'.

In a sense, we cannot approach the dogma of Nupe religion in any other way. Like most primitive societies, the Nupe have not formulated their creed *ad hoc*, in a specific and coherent body of statements; nor is there any institutionalized teaching of doctrine on which we could rely. Rather, we must piece the creed together, from current sayings and from comments or arguments put forth in discussion, from the songs and prayers accompanying ceremonials and from the observation of the latter. There is, in many primitive societies, another source, again linguistic, which we could use, namely, the mythology of the people. Though dogma and myth are clearly not the same thing, they are akin in that both embody the tenets of the creed and the basic categories of religious thought: myths, of course, do so indirectly, through presenting (or concealing) the articles of creed in accounts of miraculous happenings, in narratives of some kind, which are meant to illustrate and exemplify rather than enunciate (in the manner of dogma). It has, in fact, been suggested long ago that in primitive religions, since they are without formulated doctrine, we must look for the 'key to ritual and practice', not in dogma, but in myth.[1]

None of this holds for the Nupe. To begin with, they do not separate 'myths' conceptually from secular traditions or 'historical' narratives, having the same term for both and relating

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, pp. 16–17.

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both on the same, profane, occasions.[1] More important, Nupe mythology is altogether flimsy and rudimentary. It illustrates only two tenets of the creed, the conception of a supreme deity and the role of 'medicine', while others, for example, the equally basic conception of 'ritual', are given no such expression. Nor does the mythology concern itself more than scantily with cosmological speculations or with the justification of particular ceremonies. 771

Certain legends meant to account for particular practices or ceremonials will be quoted later, in that context. Let me here illustrate my point by relating the one cosmological myth the Nupe possess. It is, strictly speaking, only 'near-cosmological', being concerned, not with the origin of the world and of all the things and creatures in it, but only with the origin of man, of the Nupe people, and of one observance (which is incorrectly stated). The myth, incidentally, may not be entirely a Nupe creation; the names of the first human beings mentioned in it have a Mohammedan flavour;[2] and certain details of the narrative (the bull who appears out of the water, and his strange language) occur in almost the same form among the Bororó Fulani.[3] However this may be, the myth is far from well known, so that for this reason also it cannot be considered a relevant expression of the Nupe creed. 771 773

'In the beginning, there was a man called Ancestor Adā and a woman called Ancestress Adama. They had two children, one male, one female, who in turn begot two children, male and female. The male child died immediately after birth, while the girl stayed alive. When she grew up she spoke a strange language which her parents could not understand. But a bull who one day rose from the river when the girl was standing on the bank understood the language. He talked to the girl, and the two became friends. Later the bull became the girl's lover, and she bore him a male child. This child again spoke and understood the strange language. When the boy grew up, he used to go to the bank of the river to talk to the bull, until one day the bull climbed out of the river and followed the boy on dry land wherever he went. This boy was the ancestor of the "Cow Fulani", and the bull the first of the Fulani cattle. 771 773 539

'Ancestress Adama had a third child, a girl called Mureamu (Miriam or Mary), who had three children, two sons and a daughter. When they grew up the two young men both desired their sister. They quarrelled and one was killed. It was thus that

[1] The word in question is *etā*, meaning 'stories of old times', and these are told in daytime, not at night (as are stories meant for amusement), when people would be 'too tired to listen to serious things'.

[2] See below, p. 247.

[3] See F. W. de St. Croix, *The Fulani of Northern Nigeria*, p. 8.

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771 death and murder first appeared in the world. The couple who remained did not know what to do with the dead body. They 773 carried the corpse on their shoulders for three days, lamenting and 539 crying, but could not get rid of it. At last, God caused the earth to open, and they placed the body inside. Thus the practice of burial and of the three days' mourning for the dead began.[1] The couple now stayed together and begot a male child, who became the ancestor of the Nupe people.'

771 If, then, Nupe mythology is a very inadequate guide to dogma and doctrine, this inadequacy is itself significant, revealing the Nupe attitude towards their creed and indeed the whole tenor of their religious thought in their true perspective. Mythology, as we have said, illustrates and exemplifies rather than enunciates the creed. We may go further and say that it expresses the creed in a form less abstract and theoretical than does formulated doctrine. For myths borrow the phraseology of realistic accounts, dealing as they do with near-humans and near-natural events; thus they make less demand upon sheer credence, compromise with ordinary imagination, and as it were vulgarize the dogma. If, then, primitive religions rely on mythical narratives rather than on dogmatic assertions they seem to discard the more abstract contents of religious thought. Yet Nupe religion, which does not employ mythology either to any great extent, is clearly not of this kind. If the Nupe do not attempt a specific, coherent formulation of their creed, neither do they seek to re-phrase it in more concrete and would-be realistic language. In other words, Nupe religion forgoes the means of 'vulgarizing' the dogma. Thus, though its creed may be inarticulate, yet it is held in all abstractness.

3. CATEGORIES

(i) *God and the World*

779 The most basic concept of Nupe theology, that of the supreme being, is also the widest. In a sense it stands for the whole realm 776 of religion, serving to separate all things that belong to that realm from others that do not. For in order to express this distinction the Nupe say of an object, phenomenon, or type of action that it is, or is not, *nyá Sokó*—'of God' or 'belonging to God'. There are two inaccuracies in this broad category of things religious. The clause 'of God' in the sense here understood is properly applied only in the context of discussions turning upon the dichotomy of the religious and profane. In a wider context the phrase loses its disjunctive implication; for ultimately everything is 'of God', that

[1] There is no such rule of 'three days' mourning'.

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fessional divination in some measure duplicate one another. If this means that the diviner has no monopoly of prophecy, it equally means that one need not be very seriously concerned over one's dreams, since the message they might hold would also transpire in some other way. Normally, in fact, the people are not inclined to take their dreams very seriously, even in the localities where there are experts versed in that lore. I used to record all the dreams of the Nupe men with whom I was in daily contact; though they were quite often puzzled about their dreams, they performed sacrifices and so forth only when their dreams referred to dead relatives. Dream interpretation, then, represents another 'supererogatory' element in Nupe religious thought, another 'additional' notion about the meaning of the things in the world, and now one conspicuously treated as such.

Let me add that in other respects, too, the diviner holds no monopoly of prophecy. If he pronounces upon lucky or unlucky days, some knowledge of this kind is common throughout Nupe. Thus two months, the seventh and thirteenth, are held to be unlucky, and people will avoid travelling or having wedding feasts and other celebrations at these times. In all other months certain days are specially lucky—the second, seventh, twelfth, seventeenth and eighteenth day; so is the time of full moon, while moonless days are unlucky and dangerous for all tasks.[1]

If divination and the interpretation of dreams represent supernatural aids which overlap in their efficacy but are of different ease of access, this is true also of the knowledge, shared by everybody, of propitious and unpropitious dates. In other words, for much the same kind of guidance you can rely on your own knowledge, on what you or your friends know about dreams, and on the professional advice of diviners. Once more we note the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought and that tendency to multiply the mystic tools, that is, to have 'several strings to one's bow.'

[1] It is usual in Nupe to refer to months and days in this way, by numbers rather than names. The interval of five between the lucky days, incidentally, plays no further part in Nupe thought or religious observances.

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procedure would remain powerless. The notion of a blessing is quite alien to the Nupe: they say 'May God cause so-and-so to happen', not 'May God make our efforts successful'; the prayer simply duplicates the other features in the ritual performance. Nor yet is there any conception of moral worthiness, of 'showing reason' why God should grant success or give his blessing. The paradox remains, and the only way to dissolve it is to call the Nupe ritual a bow with two strings. 796x

This viewpoint fits well into the conceptual framework of Nupe religion, where different rituals and even different forms of supernatural appeal appear as alternatives which may replace each other, one being effective where the other happened to fail. Their possible failure is thus to some extent anticipated. The efficacy of the 'fixed' and more general rituals, especially, may be corrected by that of the 'movable' and more specialized ones. As we know, divination will suggest the suitable alternative, while the wide overlap in the ritual aims makes such choices and changes feasible. There is some hierarchy of power among the rituals, some being definitely 'stronger' than others; nor are they all interchangeable. The supreme or unique rituals, therefore, such as the *gunnu* or *mamma*, may suffer a failure which is irreducible. But even this failure does not assail the confidence that is placed in them; for there are the loopholes which we know well: the ultimate unconcern of the remote deity, and the evil forces he suffers to exist. 771 ● 796x

The fact that the failures of ritual can in this fashion be explained away does not, however, account for the initial source of the confidence which is thus protected. It might be argued that no special explanatory hypotheses are needed; since people, after all, believe in what they practice, the assurance found in the practice is likely to be implicit already in the belief. Differently expressed, the confidence in the ritual would simply be part of its conceptual content. Undoubtedly, this must be true, in some measure, of all rituals, and wholly true of the movable rituals and all the other casual observances, whose aims are not self-confirming and whose procedure is prosaic and businesslike. Here the rule holds—if you believe, then you will find assurance in the practical application of this belief; if you do not, the practice will carry no conviction; for the application itself offers nothing further in the way of persuasion. The ritual, as it were, draws upon faith but does not add to it, save accidentally, when its professed aim happens to come true. 796x

It is different in the fixed and more elaborate rituals; for here the belief is affirmed by the practice, and the content of the ritual sustained and reinforced by its form. Let me explain this more

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disease, sudden death, misfortune, injustice, that is, by the evil things in the world. Thus in all religions there are attempts to justify or resolve, or to dismiss as merely apparent, this contradiction of promise and fulfilment. The attempts vary in philosophical refinement. The religious doctrine may, in the vein of stoic philosophy, explain the presence of evil as a foil for the visibility of the good; or it can make the evil things, like the sufferings of Job, a touchstone of faith; or it may lay their cause into the imperfection of man, so that his sins (willed or not, actual or intended) are behind the apparent failures of divine providence. Or finally, and more crudely, the religion may contain a loophole within itself, admitting a province where evil is simply allowed to reign. The devil of naïve belief is one embodiment of this loophole-idea; the witch another.

It is true that the belief in the evil actions of witches bears only upon a narrow variety of that abstract 'evil in the world' meant by philosophers or theologians. Even so, the 'loophole' remains. Let us remember also that the belief in witches safeguards itself from being 'found out' and proved or refuted by empirical means; in embracing this incontrovertible belief, then, religious faith itself is safeguarded from being found illusory and refuted by reality. Speaking practically, the acceptance of witchcraft (or of the devil) saves the believer from false hopes or disillusion; speaking philosophically, the acceptance of an ultimate X within the divinely ordered universe saves that order. Admitting that there is a province where the believed-in guidance and protection do not fully reach, we save the belief in laws to guide us and in that promise of protection. Witchcraft, in brief, is a chapter in apologetics, albeit crudely written.

So far my original conclusions (somewhat paraphrased). Now though they are, I believe, correct for other systems of religious belief, they do not seem to apply to Nupe religion. Granting that beliefs in witchcraft can save faith in a divine order of the universe, in Nupe religion, there is nothing of the kind to save; if in other societies or cultures there must be the admission of that ultimate X to account for, or explain away, the failure of religious guidance and promise of protection, in Nupe, this guidance and promise have never been offered. Nupe religion, as we know, admits accidents at every step; it promises only fallible guidance and protection; the observances or ethical rules it upholds are not meant to be counted upon against the many evils which are also in the world—malevolent spirits, diseases, uncontrollable misfortune. Indeed, the deity himself has put them in the world and suffers them to exist, being unconcerned with the fate of his creation. Why, then, should there be this further, special

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assumption of the evil of witchcraft? The problem which it might serve to solve simply does not exist.

Yet there remains another problem, requiring a kindred solution. With the admission of accident, with the conception of an unpredictable and amoral universe, the problem of the presence of evil is solved intellectually or, at least, argued away on the intellectual plane. But this solution leaves an emotional gap. For I hold that there is a deeply seated desire for certainty, which demands satisfaction of an essentially emotional kind, that is, the awareness that the world is not only certain, but concerned with *you*—your fate, your happiness. And where this demand is refused (as in Nupe) anxieties and frustrations must again arise and press for some ab-reaction and solution. But now those other outlets which might relieve the pent-up tension, through random acts of aggression or some explosive catharsis, would prove inadequate; they would take care of the symptoms but not of the conflicts from which these spring. Nor can the disturbance of the longed-for certainty be overcome save by discovering the disturber; the vague dissatisfaction with an abstract state of affairs must be capable of crystallizing into the accusations of concrete agents. Above all, there must be the chance of practical action, so that the people aware of the threat also have the satisfaction of dealing with it. In other words, precisely because you know that the world around you holds out no promise of certainty nor any supreme design, you conjure up an arch-enemy with whom at least you can reckon, on whom you can vent fears and hatreds, and over whom you may hope to triumph, be it Satan or the witch.

The witch is, perhaps, less of an arch-enemy, since only some of the evils of the world can be laid at her doorstep. Yet the conjured-up picture of human beings who are unaccountably evil and unaccountably cause death and disease does take care of a portion of the uncertainty in the world. Now, we previously said that the admission of a province of life where the benevolent design of the universe does not reach saves the faith in that universe: this clearly does not apply. We must now say—the admission of a province of life where malevolent forces can be defined (and attacked), makes it possible to bear a universe devoid of such design. To be sure, this is no longer our 'loophole' theory; but it is as it were its photographic negative, or the same mathematical formula with all pluses changed into minus signs. Crudely speaking, you may have a God of Justice and Mercy, naïvely conceived, and devils or witches in the background; or you may have an Idle God, remotely in the background, but at least devils or witches to grapple with.

That the notion of witchcraft may arise from such opposed con-

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VII

STRANGE GODS

In this chapter I propose to discuss the adoption, by the Nupe, of originally alien beliefs and practices. We shall not be concerned with the pure mechanics of 'borrowing' or 'diffusion'; at least, we shall be concerned only with the motives behind these processes. For we cannot but assume that the adoption of novel or alien elements into any religious system, far from being haphazard, does follow from intelligible motives, which must in turn relevantly bear on the character of the religion and, ultimately, of the whole culture of which it is a part. So that the information so gained will either confirm our interpretation of that character or correct it, bringing to light hitherto unperceived aspects.

This may only be a heuristic assumption to begin with; and other, more specific ones, could at once be added—that the novel features must bear some affinity to the traditional pattern; or that they serve to redress some pre-existing inadequacy; or that they offer a chance of expression to some new trend, say, a changed outlook of the people, which the traditional beliefs and practices failed to satisfy. It must be admitted that in the anthropological field the prerequisite evidence is not easy to procure and that even the first step, the mere discovery of the alien elements, may be difficult or uncertain. Fairly recent additions are usually readily traced; but in the absence of historical records originally alien features long since absorbed may remain unidentifiable. Which proviso holds fully in the case of Nupe religion. Furthermore, the inferences we might draw from our study of 'adoptions' must be corroborated by the appropriate negative evidence, that is, by instances of 'rejection'. But though here we are likely to meet with further technical difficulties, mainly because there might be no record of the rejected chances, the situation in Nupe does afford relevant evidence of this kind. It lies in the religious observances practised by close neighbours of the Nupe or by immigrant groups in their midst, with which the Nupe people are fully familiar, yet which they did not choose to adopt or imitate. Finally, the adoption of alien features, or indeed of a whole alien creed, may conceivably have taken place under pressure; in which

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case none of our assumptions would apply, or would apply without considerable qualifications. Again, the situation is simplified in Nupe; for only in the case of Islam was the adoption of the alien creed backed by social and political pressure; all other adoptions (or rejections) were spontaneous and voluntary. Let us make this aspect our starting point and begin with a brief outline of the chances of this nature that were offering to the Nupe.

I. ADOPTIONS AND REJECTIONS

The southern neighbours of the Nupe, the Yoruba, possess a religious system which contains many features diametrically opposed to those characterizing Nupe religion. Yoruba religion is based upon a pantheon of deities, all anthropomorphously conceived, who severally govern the universe. Each deity has his (or her) definite sphere—the sky, thunder, rain, land, sea, forests, animals, fishes, crops, special diseases, special skills, divination, and so forth; so that the universe is as it were split up and departmentalized in detailed fashion. The deities are served by a number of specialized orders of priesthood; they are represented, with beautiful realism, in bronze, wood, terracotta, and stone; and masked dances and ritual drama, employing again realistic likenesses, play a prominent part in all Yoruba cults. As has been mentioned, the average Nupe is familiar with the main features of Yoruba religion. Not only has he encountered them on his many travels, but in the area west and south of the Niger Nupe and Yoruba settlements are interspersed, and in certain cases even joined together in twin villages (as in Shari or Shonga). Above all, since 1860 or thereabouts colonies of Yoruba known as *Konú* have been settled in numerous villages of Nupe country, where they form well-defined sections and specialize in their traditional crafts of weaving and indigo dyeing. Though today wholly 'Nupe-ized' in language and mode of life, they still publicly perform one of their masked ceremonies, the *eguŋguŋ*, known as *gugu* to the Nupe, which serves both as a funeral rite and as an annual ritual safeguarding fertility and well-being. The northern and north-eastern districts of Nupe are conquered territory, inhabited by people of Gwari extraction, who came under Nupe domination in the last hundred years and are still referred to as 'Gwari slaves'. Their traditional culture must have closely resembled that of Nupe, while an effective process of Nupe-ization has obliterated most of the differences that did exist. But a few sections of the Gwari-Nupe have preserved a cult alien to Nupe practice; it is called *sogba* and is concerned with childbirth and the cure of barrenness, with the conviction and punishment of

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criminals, and with the special burial rites for people killed by lightning. Again, there is a large and influential colony of Hausa in the capital Bida. These immigrants too have kept alive one of their typical cults, the *bori*, which they stage publicly in the streets and squares of the town. Another group of immigrants settled around Kutigi, in the centre of Nupe country, towards the end of the eighteenth century; they were Mohammedans hailing from Bornu and brought with them one of their traditional ceremonials, the *gani*, which contains several features strikingly 'un-Nupe' in character.

All these, then, were potential models for the Nupe to follow; as we shall see, the Nupe reaction towards them was neither uniform nor, at first sight at least, consistent.

(i) *The Hausa Bori*

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To begin with a clear case of 'rejection'. It is represented in the *bori* cult, which can at once be described as utterly uncongenial to Nupe religious conceptions. It is based upon the shamanistic idea of spirit possession, revealed in hysterical or cataleptic fits and in trance states, when the person so affected is believed to speak with the voice of a spirit and to behave like one. These states may occur spontaneously or may be artificially induced, especially by the use of music, which is again distinctly foreign to Nupe, employing the monotonous, arhythmic playing of a single-string fiddle. When spontaneous, the fits or trance states are regarded as spirit-caused mental disorders, while the induced states are regarded both as therapeutic measures and as means of spirit control in general. The 'theory' behind the cult is briefly this. There exists a wide variety of spirits (*aljannu*), some benevolent, others evil, each bearing a special name and character, and revealing itself in the particular gestures, gait and voice exhibited by the possessed person. Each spirit also has a tune and dance step peculiar to it, and one believes that the playing of the tune and the performance of the dance both evoke the spirit in normal individuals and placate and control it in those 'possessed'. Any person exhibiting the spirit-caused disorders is therefore placed under the observation of a cult member, who is expected to identify the spirit, and to placate and exorcise it. The latter act does not mean the final departure of the spirit; the aim is, rather, to bring the spirit 'visits' under control, so that they materialize only when evoked in the *bori* dances but do not otherwise threaten the human host. Each person so cured becomes a member of the *bori* cult; but many others will try to join it without this particular qualification, seeking the occasional trance induced in the *bori* dances. The *bori* cult thus has its own society, which is loosely organized (though

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it has a number of officials of varying rank) and is constantly enlarged through the inclusion of 'cured' patients and of those 'normal' individuals who have been successful in soliciting the 'spirit possession'.

There is no secrecy about the cult and its dance performances; they are staged at frequent intervals, both in private houses and in public, and are always watched by interested Nupe crowds. But no Nupe will join in the dances or has ever entered the society. Note that the cult thus rejected revolves upon a 'treatment' of mental derangements, of diseases, that is, for which Nupe therapeutic art admits to have no reliable remedy. Yet, though always ready to experiment with new cures, neither the Nupe public nor the medicine experts have been persuaded by the *borí*. Admittedly, the *borí* is not simply another cure or remedy: it involves the wholly strange experience of auto-suggestion and hysterical abandonment or ecstasis. It equally involves, on the intellectual plane, the acceptance of new premisses (the detailed spirit universe). But as we shall see from our next example, a somewhat similar intellectual readjustment did in fact occur in the case of another alien cult and 'cure'.

(ii) *The Sogba Cult*

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This cult occurs among a section of the Gwari who call themselves Gwari-Basa and live near Wushishi, to the north of Nupe, and also in a number of villages belonging to the conquered, Nupeized parts of Gwari country. Its name, *sogba*, means 'lightning', both in Gwari and Nupe. The cult is widely known also in other parts of Nupe country, and is everywhere regarded as alien, in spite of certain obvious 'Nupeisms'.[1] The name for the hereditary priest, for example, is *Žigí*, while the Gwari priests bear different names, and the whole cult is called a *kuti*, which is once more not Gwari nomenclature. In its more elaborate form the *sogba* cult culminates in an annual communal ceremony, fixed for the 2nd or 7th month, at which the men sacrifice a dog in great secrecy and the women sing and dance, carrying iron rods with bells closely resembling the *sãyi* of the *ndakó gboyá*.[2] The cult further includes a small-scale ritual of the movable type, performed by the priest at the request of clients, both fellow villagers and strangers.

These *ad hoc* ministrations are invoked for one of two reasons,

[1] It is not certain that the cult is in fact of Gwari origin; according to some informants it came originally from Yagba (a southern section of the Yoruba), and has been brought to Gwari and Nupe by immigrants from that country.

[2] This annual ritual was absent in the place I visited, Wushishi, its sketchy description being derived from verbal information only. The account that follows, however, is based on direct observation.

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either to procure the fertility of childless women or to bring about the punishment of offenders, especially of thieves, whose identity is unknown. In either event a small payment in kolanuts and money is made to the priest. The ritual involves the use of a special cult object unknown in the rest of Nupe; it consists of a forked wooden post, cut from a certain tree in such a manner that it resembles a 'tree cut in two by lightning' and planted in the ground in the priest's house, either inside a hut or in the open. Around the foot of the post there are a number of flat, black, polished stones which are described as 'thunderbolts' (*sogba* or *sokógba*). Nothing is known about the origin of the stones save that some had been collected by the grandfather of the present priest and others inherited from more distant ancestors. The priest also owns a few of the bell-rods mentioned before and a *cigbe* shrine containing a nameless 'medicine'.

The client is made to sit in a hut away from the scene of the actual rite, which is executed by the priest and two assistants (his sons or brothers). The priest crouches in front of the forked post, his assistants standing on his right and left, each gripping one of the branches of the fork. The priest pours a little beer on the 'thunderbolts' and on the ground, and briefly and informally invokes the *kuti*, explaining the nature of the request. The operative phrase is—'*Sogba*, may the woman bear a child', or—'*Sogba*, may the evil person (for example, the thief) be killed'. If the aim of the rite is to procure childbirth, the priest afterwards goes to the woman, touches her with one of the bell-rods and gives her a little of the *cigbe*, which she must drink daily for four days. The barren woman will then hope to bear a child; and the person who had suffered injury at the hands of an unknown culprit will be assured that the latter will be killed by lightning—not at once or within a definite period, but surely some time in the future. The latter notion bears on a final duty of the *sogba* priest, which is to bury all persons killed by lightning and to perform the appropriate rites for these victims of divine punishment.

The children born after the intercession of the *kuti sogba* are tied to the cult for life. Immediately after the birth of the child the *Žigí* must be informed, so that he may in turn 'inform the *kuti*' by means of another sacrifice. Afterwards the *Žigí* presents the infant with a special charm in the form of a tiny dagger, which the child (and later the grown person) must always wear around the neck. Invariably, the child is given the name *Sogba*, and is generally referred to as *egi sogba*, 'child of *Sogba*'. If such a child falls ill, his parents will seek help, not from some other *kuti* or from professional medicine-men, but again from the *Žigí*, who does not charge for this further assistance: the child thus remains

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the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

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So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

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At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

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The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

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communities all over the country, have made the pilgrimage to the nearest shrine and priest, and numerous persons, both young and old, bear the tell-tale name *Sogba*. The degree to which the alien cult has taken root is best seen from a text on the practices surrounding childbirth which I recorded in Bida long before I knew anything about the *sogba* cult, and which contains this straightforward statement:

'If a woman has no child and she is a pagan, she would go and visit the place of *sogba*, she would go and pray for a child. The pagans have a hut with a *kuti* inside. The priest will translate (talk to the *kuti*) on behalf of the woman or man who come to visit the *sogba*. The priest receives money from the person who comes. If God agrees and that person has a child, it will be named *Sogba*. It will wear a charm round his neck, everybody seeing that person will know that he is a child of *sogba*.'

The traditional religious or quasi-religious practices of Nupe certainly do not lack 'cures' of sterility. If here a further magic treatment has been added to the numerous existing ones, this would seem to bear out the ever-visible desire for children. Nor do the religious conceptions of the people, which so readily allow for alternative practices and several trials, conflict with the desire behind this addition. But let us note this. Though the Nupe make use only of one particular feature or benefit of the alien cult and disregard its wider context (of which, in fact, they are mostly ignorant), this piecemeal adoption yet commits them to a radically changed outlook. For they accept, with the miraculous powers of *sogba*, also the tie forged between these powers and the beneficiary. And this whole idea, that an ordinary person can for life be dedicated to a *kuti* and stand under its protection, has no parallel in Nupe religion. The practical consequences of this dedication are neither burdensome nor very important; even so, they clash with the conventional way of looking at 'medicines' or *ad hoc* rituals as at so many expedients, solicited when one needs them, paid for, and then forgotten.

(iii) *Yoruba Influences*

Yoruba religion, the third on our list, has hardly touched Nupe. The elaborate cosmology of the Yoruba, their pantheon, and their effigies or idols had no influence upon the beliefs and practices of the Nupe. Nor has the *gugu* cult of the Yoruba settlers in Nupe found any response other than detached or amused interest.

There seem to be two exceptions. The first is exemplified in the bronze figures on Jebba Island which have been accepted as sacred

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effigies and cult objects.[1] It is unlikely, incidentally, that these figures are Yoruba in origin; but they are of the same kind as the effigies of deities worshipped by the Yoruba. Now, the Nupe do not regard their figures as representations of deities; indeed the whole question, what or whom they represent, evokes no great interest. For the Nupe, the figures are merely 'likenesses' of a man and a woman (who is sometimes called the man's mother) and, more importantly, relics of Tsoede. Their possession is understood to be exceptional and indeed unique; and even though they figure prominently in one of the Jebba rituals, they do not add anything relevant to the purely religious conceptions. The images are simply the unusual objects of an unusual, 'royal' cult, but not more magically effective or possessed of special meaning because they happen to be shaped in human likeness.

The second exception is more important. In Mokwa and one or two villages in the river valley, we meet with a masked dance called *elo* (a meaningless word in Nupe), which is quite unlike any Nupe dance or ritual.[2] It does, however, somewhat resemble the Yoruba *gugu*, which equally occurs in Mokwa, not only in its paraphernalia but also in certain gestures and motions of the dancers. [532] The *elo* dancers wear long-sleeved hoods of coloured cloth cut like those worn in the *gugu* and cover their faces with coloured wooden masks, carved in grotesquely human features and surmounted by horns. The masks resemble those of the *gugu* only in that both are meant to represent a human face; but in the *gugu* the design is produced by cowrie shells sewn on to the cloth, while the *elo* type is reminiscent rather of the masks used by the southernmost sections of the Yoruba, or by the Ibo and other tribes in Southern Nigeria. The people who perform the *elo* know little about the origin of the masks or, indeed, of the whole ceremonial. It is said that Tsoede brought it from the south and established it in certain villages of his small river kingdom 'because he liked the dance so much that he wanted to see it again and again'. The masks now used are the work of the wood-carvers of Shonga (a mixed Yoruba-Nupe village on the Niger), though this particular skill has since disappeared; one or two masks are quite recent, having been made by a craftsman at Rabah who has preserved the old art. The hoods of cloth, on the other hand, are an innovation; in the youth of one

[1] As has been mentioned, similar figures, though both smaller and cruder, are found in Tada, another riverain village. What is said here about the Jebba figures equally applies to the Tada 'idols'.

[2] I recorded the *elo* in Mokwa, in Rabah (a few miles away on the river) and in Gbajibo, north of Jebba. In addition, smaller villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood, which do not themselves possess the *elo* masks, perform the dance annually with masks borrowed from Mokwa.

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of my Mokwa informants, a man of about sixty, the *elo* dancers used to wear skirts and cloaks made of dried grass, probably like those worn in the *mamma* ritual of Jebba; it was only later that the cloth hoods were adopted, 'because they looked nicer'. I have no doubt that they were modelled on the almost identical dress of the *gugu* dancers, with which the Mokwa people at least are so thoroughly familiar. They themselves disclaim any such connection, which is admittedly not borne out by any other features of the two cults. 771 177

Granting the alien origin of the *elo*, we must add that it has been fairly thoroughly Nupe-ized. To begin with, it has taken its place among the 'fixed' ceremonials, being performed annually in the 9th month (in Mokwa and Rabah) or 6th month (in Gbajibo). Like the other Nupe ceremonials, the *elo* is in the charge of one of the titled elders, whose office includes the responsibility for the annual performance and the tuition of the dancers. The most important mask, called *elokó* ('Great *elo*'), is also stored in his house, while the other masks and dresses are kept in the houses of other rankholders. When the masks appear in the dance they are addressed, in Nupe fashion, by a special salute, *elulo* ('Bird of *elo*'); the songs are in Nupe, the style of the music and most dance steps are typically Nupe, as are also the drums which are played throughout the dance.[1] But the dance performance itself has retained its uncommon character. All the dancers are men; but among them are three, wearing highly ornamented masks with curved twin horns, who are said to represent 'female' figures, the mask of the 'Great *elo*' belonging to this category. Two other dancers, wearing hoods pulled over their faces and head-dresses of feathers, are described as 'male'. Two more figures, wearing simple masks surmounted by one straight horn, are called *gara* (lit. 'robber'). These last figures are perhaps the most unusual; for while the 'male' and 'female' masks stalk about, or jump and dance much as do ordinary dancers or the masks in the *ndakó gboyá* and *mamma*, the *gara* plays the part of a bogey-man who frightens the children, and of a clown whose pranks delight old and young; which double role is otherwise unknown in Nupe dance ceremonial. The behaviour of the 'male' and 'female' masks, incidentally, is in no way suggestive of this ascription of sex. In addition, there are two unmasked young men who join in the dancing and clowning and wear fringed skirts made of leopard skin, their bare legs being painted with white spots ('like the spots of leopards')—another conspicuously non-Nupe feature. 771 177 535

The most incongruous aspect of the *elo* lies in its purpose, or

[1] The *elo* includes only one musical instrument uncommon in Nupe, an iron double-bell, beaten with a stick. [534]

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rather in its absence of purpose. Although it has a definite date like other rituals and although the masks must dress in secrecy, there is nothing sacred about the performance. No sacrifice or ritual preparations precede or accompany it; and the *elo* is positively stated to be nothing like a *kuti*, but merely *dzodzo*, 'play'. The dance seems to contain the remnants of some plot or dramatic theme; the various roles of 'male' and 'female' figures and of 'clowns' or 'robbers' can suggest nothing else. But again, the people deny that there is such a plot or that these 'roles' have any meaning. The *elo* songs, certainly, betray none. Here are a few of them, each consisting of a brief line which is endlessly repeated throughout the corresponding phase of the dance.

> *Zwákule, zwákule* (meaningless).
> I am calling Kolo (a name, here applied to *elo*),
> he is coming slowly.
> The *elo* matures every year.
> They are calling Kolo, he swings his leg,
> *ebi du, ebi du* (meaningless).
> Every year we are making *elo*.
> The *gara* appears, there is his face.

In a sense, the *elo* is a mixture of ritual and entertainment. But unlike the usual Nupe ceremonial, in which the ritual part precedes the 'play', the *elo* involves ritual only as it were in its administration (in the fixed date, the secret dressing-up of the actors, the formal apportionment of relevant duties); the rest is pure entertainment. Perhaps, in its original form, the *elo* was more fully a ceremonial, with some religious purpose as well as a plot. But even this the Nupe would deny; for although they sanctify the practice by ascribing it, in familiar manner, to the ancestor king, they impute to him no reasons other than (we might say) aesthetic ones. Nor have these reasons quite ceased to work. At the Bida *salla* in 1936 I saw a dancer with an unusual headdress which I had never seen before, neither at the previous *salla* nor on other occasions. The dancer himself was one of the *sorogi* dancers mentioned in a previous context;[1] but on his head he wore a brass cap with two horns. Subsequent enquiries elicited the fact that the headdress had been made by a Bida brass-smith to the specifications of the dancer: and the latter had meant to copy the horns of the *elo* masks which he had seen and admired in Mokwa.

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(iv) *The Gani of Kutigi*

I have elsewhere described this cult and the manner in which it took root in Kutigi and the adjacent communities, so that I need

[1] See above, p. 188.

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only summarize the salient facts.[1] Unlike the *elo*, the *gani* can clearly be traced to its alien origin, and its importation into Nupe, by Moslem immigrants from the north, can even be dated with fair accuracy (having occurred probably about 1760–70). The Moslem character of the ceremonial is visible, above all, in the esoteric part, which takes the form of a symbolic burial in the Mohammedan manner; it is further emphasized by the often voiced claim that the whole ceremonial represents an observance of Islam, namely, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet—a claim which has little validity.[2] Even so, the *gani* has been firmly adopted also by the pagan population and, what is more important, has been adopted as a ritual or at least as a ceremonial of serious and sacred import. Yet in calling the *gani* a ritual or ceremonial I am stating my own conclusions, couched in our conventional terminology. The Nupe have no suitable name for this performance which has many aspects of a ritual act without conforming to a 'ritual' as the pagans understand it. They all emphasize that it is not a *kuti*; but neither do they call it *dzodzo*, mere 'play', in spite of the great scope given to mummery, display, crude pranks, and merry-making generally. They either use the non-committal term *nya'nya*, 'dancing', or simply argue that 'the *gani* is the *gani*', that is, unlike any other tribal festivity. Linguistic usage, it seems, has not quite caught up with this novel and ambiguous species of ceremonial.

The *gani* ceremonial has for its main theme the periodical reconstitution of the village age-grade associations, that is, the acceptance of novices into the first grade and the promotion of older boys and youths to higher grades. These corporate promotions go hand in hand with a reshuffling of the various ranks held in each age-grade association, and hence with an upgrading or downgrading of its members. If the age grades thus appear dominated by competition and the notions of rank and career, they merely mirror as well as anticipate interests paramount in Nupe political life. As I phrased it elsewhere, age-grade life serves as an 'education for citizenship';[3] and this aspect too is given expression in the *gani* ceremonial, together with other ideas of more general import, bearing on growth and maturity.

In the ceremonial each age grade is assigned a specific role, acting under its leader, who bears the title *Ndakotsu*—'Grandfather of

[1] See 'The Gani Ritual of Nupe', *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949.

[2] This is clearly shown by the discrepancy in the dates. The Birth of the Prophet (*Ma'ulid*) falls on the twelfth day of the first lunar month of the Mohammedan calendar (in 1934 the 29th March), while the *gani* celebrations start on the tenth day of the 4th month in Nupe reckoning (in 1934, the 25th June).

[3] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 383 *et seq.*

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771 the king'. Thus led, the age grades walk in procession through the
177 village to salute the chief and all the other notables of the com-
561 munity, join in the dancing, engage in wrestling matches, and meet one another in a realistic 'battle', to be described presently. The esoteric rite of the *gani*, the 'burial service' mentioned before, is performed by the leaders alone, in a secret place away from the scene of the public festivities. The younger boys are all dressed up as girls and imitate, in exaggerated and ridiculous fashion, the walk and dance steps of the women. This masquerade, though highly elaborate and considered a most relevant aspect of the celebration, is not further explained; but the context makes it clear that it carries the same meaning of a change of roles which underlies the similar mummery of the *gunnu*.[1] For this meaning is again expressed, now by means of a conspicuous symbolism which everyone understands, in certain other episodes of the *gani*, meant to dramatize the admission of the novices and the various promotions from grade to grade. There is the 'death and burial', loudly mourned by the crowd, of a 'little girl', indicating the abandonment of infancy by the young boys about to enter the first grade. In a preceding phase a 'little boy' is similarly buried and mourned, that is, shown to abandon boyhood for adolescence. Lastly, the youths of the most senior grade appear dressed up as 'warriors' and 'horsemen', meeting their juniors in a mock battle which seems to symbolize the final stage of adolescence, when youth must hold its own against adults, compete and struggle with them, and break into their ranks. All these things actually happen in the 'battle', whose very realism seems symbolic of the severe competition for position and power which characterizes Nupe life. In brief, the *gani* ceremonial is a typical *rite de passage*, dramatizing the crucial phases of male adolescence and adoption into manhood. Seen against this background, an ususual feature of the *gani*, too, falls into place. Obscene sexual jokes and allusions, normally never used, appear in the *gani* songs and are freely bandied about during the festivities, both by old and young: we may conclude that they serve to throw into relief a final aspect of adolescence, sexual maturity.

771 The ceremonial lasts three days, and each day concludes with a
177 hectic dance in which the sexes meet in utterly unrestrained
786 fashion. Nor does this unrestraint end with the dance; for during
561 the three nights all the normal rules of sex morality are in abeyance. This temporary abandonment of moral restraint, which applies to every person in the community, implies, of course, more than merely a symbolic reference to adolescence and sexual maturity. It represents one of those periodical concessions to moral

[1] See above, p. 113.

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or sexual licence which are familiar from many societies, primitive and advanced. We know that they occur also in the traditional annual celebration of the *gunnu*. And here it seems significant that the people of Kutigi and the other communities now performing the *gani* have abandoned the *gunnu* in this fixed, annual form.[1] Whatever other reasons have contributed to the abandonment of the annual *gunnu*, the fact that it shared with the *gani* this one feature may well have been decisive; for it would seem to be in the very nature of this concession to unrestraint that it must not be duplicated.

There is evidence to show that the sexual licence belonged to the *gani* already in its original form in which it reached Nupe country. This original *gani* equally included some connection, apparently broad and unspecific, with age-grade life and male adolescence.[2] To some extent, then, the Nupe found in the *gani* a cult fortuitously congenial to their own interests and ideas. But let us note that the *gani* expresses them with unaccustomed sharpness: the masquerade of boys as girls, sketchily treated in the *gunnu*, is fully exploited in the *gani*; and nowhere else is age-grade life dramatized with such effect.

Other 'Nupeisms' in the *gani* are clearly the result of adaptation and remodelling. Thus, though the ceremonial retained its original name, its songs and prayers are in Nupe; the latter, spoken at the secret 'burial service', conclude with the typical Nupe formula—'May the whole town have health'; the musical instruments, the music itself, the dance steps, and the whole design of the ceremonial, with an esoteric part preceding the public 'merry-making'—all these are taken from the traditional practice. Yet equally, the *gani* contains conspicuously novel and 'un-Nupe' features. The very notion of a ceremonial having a proper plot and being staged as a drama with consecutive scenes has no parallel in Nupe. The same is true of the precise symbolism of the *gani* and of the masquerade of warriors and horsemen: the latter, incidentally, appear as riders of hobby-horses, which mummery is equally unknown in the rest of Nupe. So are the standards with which the age grades parade during the ceremonial, some of which are combined with crude symbols of the sexes. The open eroticism of the *gani*, finally, contrasts strikingly with the normal mood of Nupe ceremonials.

[1] See above, p. 83. It will be remembered that the performance of the *gunnu* as a movable rite (which is still practised in Kutigi) does not include the 'mixed' dance and the period of erotic licence.

[2] The evidence in question is based on accounts of the *gani* celebrations in its country of origin and among the nomadic Fulani. See *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949, p. 177, n. 2.

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Let me stress that the 'congenial' aspects of the *gani* did not cause it to be simply accepted into the ceremonial repertoire of Nupe; nor do its 'uncongenial' features represent merely unassimilated remnants. In a sense both such a straightforward acceptance and complete assimilation were precluded by the circuitous manner in which the *gani* was adopted and which was meant to preserve rather than to obliterate its alien character. Here I must explain that the community where the *gani* took root represents, on a small scale, a composite or 'plural' society. It is composed of three distinct sections—the Bornu immigrants (called *Benu*); a group of hereditary hunters (*ndaceži*); and a group claiming the status of aboriginal inhabitants and calling themselves 'Owners of the Land' (*kintsoži*). In this heterogeneous community the alien provenance of the *gani* ceremonial remained intact; its esoteric rites are performed only by members of the immigrant group, and the whole *gani* is still, for the people of Kutigi, an observance unequivocally 'belonging to' or 'owned' by that section, even though all others join in the public celebrations. They in turn remained the 'owners' of their own traditional cults, the *žikinta* (performed by the group of hunters) and the *gannu* (performed, as a movable rite, by the *kintsoži*). But in performing its proper ceremonial each congregation acts on behalf of the whole composite community; and all three ceremonials are considered indispensable, in a supernatural sense and in their diverse ways, for the well-being of that wider group. The *gani*, therefore, came to be adopted, not through simply diffusing to the other sections, but through being acknowledged by them as a vital contribution which its 'owners' can make to the common weal. The sectional 'ownership', in other words, was transformed into a sectional 'task', and the divided congregation, into a religious division of labour.[1]

It is clear that this manner of adoption is adjusted to the particular problems of a 'plural society', helping to maintain or buttress its precarious, divided unity. And other societies, facing the same problems, have evolved much the same solution. Yet though the religious division of labour has this very wide application, it may be pointed out that, in Nupe, it remains 'congenial' to the character of the religious system; for it only develops further the ideas underlying Nupe priestship and the Nupe form of ritual, 'owned' by kin groups but operating for the 'common weal'.

[1] Let me note briefly that the same conception reappears, somewhat modified, in the attitude of the Nupe people at large towards the *gani*, which they regard as the 'possession' of the people of Kutigi. This aspect, which has been fully treated in the article mentioned above, is not relevant to the present discussion.

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2. ON MOTIVES

We turn to our crucial problem, the motives underlying these adoptions and rejections of alien observances. Since in our examples both responses were voluntary, not imposed by extraneous pressure or constraint, we may legitimately argue that the acceptance must have rested upon some appeal, some kind of pull, which the novel practice exercised upon the recipients-to-be, and the rejection upon the lack of such an appeal or perhaps its opposite. This 'appeal' or 'pull' is clearly a complex thing. First and foremost, it is a pull of interest; in other words, we may search for some specific interest or 'need' pre-existing in the recipient culture, which the novel practice seems capable (or incapable) of satisfying.[1] The relevant factor, however, is not the pre-existing interest or need as such, but a residual interest or need; what we must show is not so much that the society is deeply concerned over such-and-such issues (for example, the fecundity of women) but that this concern is unsatisfied even where it is met by pre-existing institutions. The *gugu* ceremonial, for example, answers interests strongly pronounced in Nupe life in the fixed rituals promising communal well-being, and in the ritualization of death; but since a series of traditional ceremonials profess the same aims, the residual interest must be small, if it is felt at all. The concern over childbirth, on the other hand, is by its nature such that it would always remain active and press for additional promises or safeguards.

The concern or aim of the alien observance may obviously be expressed in a form more or less novel and unprecedented; and the degree of novelty must clearly itself affect the ease of adoption. But this effect is difficult to assess. Often, we shall no doubt argue that, the more novel a practice, the more uncongenial must it be to people still thinking in terms of traditional ways of acting; so that the novelty would act as a brake upon the free play of interests, as a counter-pull as it were. Yet we cannot exclude the possibility that the novelty of the practice will help rather than hinder the adoption; for its 'uncongenial' form may itself correspond to some pre-existing interest, that is, to a diffuse desire for unusual and unprecedented experiences. Now all the alien religious practices which the Nupe have adopted contain some 'uncongenial' or unprecedented features. Shall we then say that the latter must have exercised a certain appeal in their own right? Perhaps—though

[1] The term 'pre-existing' is here used in a somewhat loose sense, without the implication of precise chronological evidence. It implies, however, that the interest or need in question can be established independently, that is, can be shown to obtain apart from the adopted (or rejected) practice.

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the same lack of congeniality also characterizes the practices which have been rejected. Or shall we assume that, for the adoption to occur, the pre-existing interest must have outweighed the uncongenial character, while in the case of rejected practices the balance was the other way? There is evidence for this. The *gani*, with all its alien elements, clearly answers powerful pre-existing interests, and indeed improves upon the respective traditional institutions; the *gugu*, conversely, has nothing of the kind to offer: it is only another fixed ritual, duplicating the aims of the traditional rites, so that, apart from being uncongenial in form, it also appears redundant in content. The *bori* could answer at least a weak pre-existing need, since it offers a cure for lunacy of which the Nupe are deficient; yet it also clashes utterly with their religious beliefs and, above all, with the psychological tenor of their religious life. The *sogba* cult seems to exemplify this balance between interest and congeniality even more clearly. For the Nupe adopted only that aspect of it which corresponds to a strongly pronounced and in a sense inexhaustible interest (in fecundity), while rejecting both the annual ceremonial, whose aims seem redundant, and the *sogba* ordeal, which was altogether alien to the pre-existing aims or interests. Much the same is true of the bronze figures of Tsoede, which were embodied in Nupe ritual only as emblems of kingship, without any of the features normally implicit in the worship of 'idols'.

Let us be clear that this assessment of a balance between interests and congeniality holds only with two provisos. First, it is largely based on *ex post facto* arguments. The *gani*, for example, fits a 'pre-existing need' only in the form in which it exists today. If we judge this affinity of interest to be sufficiently great to have outweighed the uncongenial features we do so because in the event the latter proved no insuperable obstacle; but we cannot be certain how much remodelling, of content and purpose as well as of form, has gone into the acceptance. Nor can we say that the *bori* or *gugu* would have proved incapable of such remodelling. All we can really say is that no such attempts have been made. Have they not been made because there was no sufficiently strong interest to make the effort worthwhile? Again we can only answer—perhaps; for the *elo* would seem to contradict this argument. There, an uncongenial practice has been fitted into Nupe life for no apparent 'need' at all, unless we are prepared to consider the addition of a pleasurable (and novel) occasion a felt 'need'. And if we do so, the mummery of the *gugu* and the unusual dance of the *bori* would seem similarly acceptable.

Secondly, our arguments hold only if other factors in the situation can safely be neglected; and of one of these, the relationship

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between the potential donors and recipients, this cannot be assumed *ab initio*. Rather, this factor must be added as a likely third determinant of adoption or rejection. Surveying our data from this new angle we meet with a wide variety of situations. The *elo*, the Tsoede 'idols', and the *sogba* cult were adopted strictly from outside, without any corresponding fusion or integration of the 'owners' with the recipient groups. But here a further distinction must be drawn: while the Tsoede idols and the *elo* were taken over from fully distinct and in fact unknown donors, the *sogba* was found among neighbours and was 'taken over' only in the sense in which people turn to some promising, if otherwise unfamiliar, place of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the 'owners' of the *sogba* cult, viewed with Nupe eyes, occupied the inferior position of a conquered 'slave' population. Perhaps, then, the barrier of status was readily overcome only in the case of the fertility ritual, with its strong affinity of interest, while in the case of the other aspects of the cult it added to the 'counter-pulls' which made for their rejection.

The *gani*, *gugu*, and *bori* represent observances adopted or rejected in circumstances which involved the fusion or integration of donor and recipient groups. But again, the conditions differ in relevant respects. The Bornu and Yoruba immigrants arrived *en bloc*, maintained themselves as compact groups, and were thus integrated, as segments, in the host communities; the Hausa colony in the cosmopolitan city grew haphazardly, as the result of the irregular immigration of individuals of all classes and occupations, and never achieved internal cohesion; it only fused amorphously with the host community, but was not integrated in it. The kind of adoption, therefore, which turned the *gani* into a 'sectional task' was neither feasible nor called for in the case of the *bori*. It might, on the other hand, conceivably have worked in the case of the Yoruba ritual, even though this cult answers no 'residual' need. But here we must consider that the Yoruba came to Nupe, not as immigrants claiming equal status (as did the Benu), nor yet as free immigrants, but as prisoners of war freed and settled by royal command. Whatever the effect of the other 'pulls' in this rank-conscious society, the barrier of status must have weighed heavily on the side of rejection. Admittedly, it did so effectively only as regards the cult as such; minor features, such as the dress of the dancers which reappears in the *elo*, were adopted across the barrier, for their aesthetic attraction and novelty. Yet the barrier has at least prevented this 'borrowing' being acknowledged.

In brief, the acceptance or rejection of the alien observances involves the efficacy of several conditions and results from their

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varying combination and interplay. I have tried to tabulate the relevant data in the form of a synoptic chart capable of exhibiting the multiple correlations. The features listed are those discussed above, plus and minus signs indicating their presence and absence respectively. I also attempted to grade the interests satisfied by the various cults by doubling the plus signs in the appropriate cases; a similar grading of 'congeniality' seemed irrelevant in the light of the final result.

	(I) *Integration of donors and recipients*	(SD) *Status distinction operating against donors*	(C) *Congeniality of form*	(SI) *Satisfaction of interest*	*Outcome*
bori	−	±	−	+ (as therapeutic measure)	Rejection
gugu	+	+	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Rejection
gani	+	−	−	++	Adoption
sogba (fertility cult)	−	+	−	++	Adoption
(general cult)	−	+	−	−	Rejection
elo	−	−	−	+ ? (pleasurable novelty)	Adoption
Tsoede idols	−	−	−	++	Adoption

In other words, adoption (of a voluntary kind) occurred when

$$I^{\pm} \ldots SD^{\pm} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{++}$$

and when

$$I^{-} \ldots SD^{-} \ldots C^{-} \ldots SI^{+}.$$

That a strong interest should outweigh the absence of congeniality and render the factor of integration irrelevant is hardly surprising; but it is puzzling that this should be true also where the interest appears to be small and even uncertain (as in the *elo*). Perhaps, then, we have underrated the residual 'need'? If so, it must have sprung from some inadequacy in the pleasures and excitements afforded in the pre-existing situation. Although this

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assumption cannot, for obvious reasons be fully substantiated, it is not altogether unwarranted. Mokwa and the other communities practising the *elo* are in fact poor in ceremonials offering, apart from occasions for worship, also the purely pleasurable stimulations of dancing, singing, and conviviality; for while most Nupe communities have two or three ceremonials of this kind, Mokwa has only one apart from the *elo*—the *gunnu*,—the remaining rituals being sober esoteric sacrifices, unaccompanied by music, dancing, and public 'merry-making'.[1] We mentioned in a previous context that the number of fixed ceremonials is fairly uniform throughout Nupe;[2] we may now add that the proportion of ceremonials of such combined appeal is similarly uniform. This I take to indicate that the Nupe need for regular pleasurable stimulations has as it were found its own level. Which would mean, further, that Mokwa and the other communities were only balancing a psychological deficit when they adopted the *elo*. Certainly, several of the communities which exhibit the normal Nupe level of ceremonial-*cum*-pleasurable occasions had an equal chance of embracing the *elo* or of copying the similar *gugu*, but have not done so. So that the adoption, by a few groups, of the alien ceremonial for no motive other than that of adding another festivity did yet answer an unsatisfied 'need'.

But let us note a final source of error. We have spoken of the 'pre-existing' interests or needs as though they were bound to be constant, the measure of their satisfaction alone being variable. It is conceivable that this assumption is unwarranted, and that the adoption of the new observance reflects, not a pre-existing interest unsatisfied, but an interest strengthened owing to some change in social conditions. As regards the *elo* and *sogba*, there is no evidence to support this alternative hypothesis. It is, however, borne out in the case of the *gani*. This ceremonial, as I put it before, improves upon the traditional Nupe institutions which ritualize adolescence and age-grade life; it dramatizes these events in a specific and detailed manner where the equivalent traditional ceremonial, the *gunnu*, merely deals summarily with the transition from youth to adulthood, embodying it as one aspect among others in its design. Now, though the age grades have undoubtedly always served to mirror the dominant interests of Nupe life, in rank and in promotion in status, the interests themselves must have gained in

[1] The same is true of Rabah, though there Mohammedan influence has today obliterated the *gunnu*. Gbajibo, the third community practising the *elo*, has two other ceremonials which combine religious with generally pleasurable stimulations, the *gunnu* and the *mamma*; but the latter is celebrated in secrecy, by the men alone, and only as a movable ritual.

[2] See above, p. 70.

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importance with the growth of the Fulani Emirate. As the latter gave greater impetus to desires for a political career and imparted greater severity to the competition for rank and status, so the age grades assumed a novel, and more weighty, significance. With this, the fuller and more specific ritual elaboration of adolescence seems entirely consistent. It was not so that the pre-existing desire to give ritual elaboration to important things had been inadequately expressed; rather, things became important in a new way: so that, when the Nupe adopted the *gani* ceremonial, they were seizing upon a chance to express a changed outlook and a desire reoriented.

As we shall see, the more far-reaching conversion to Islam similarly involves such changing interests and newly emerged trends. Are then, perhaps, any trends visible in Nupe today which may in future lead to further adoptions of alien practices? I will hazard this prediction. The pressure of competition and the obsession with promotion in status, grown strongest in the capital, are visibly leading to anxieties and frustrations, and to mental instability. The incidence of neurotic disorders seems to bear out this tendency, though inadequate records forbid a more definite statement.[1] The mass hysteria of the witchcraft trial mentioned before offers clearer evidence. Such increased tensions may well seek relief in some form of self-abandonment: the *bori* possession cult seems to offer precisely this chance, which might one day be seized upon, its 'uncongenial' appeal notwithstanding.

3. THE CHARACTER OF TRIBAL RELIGION

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The preceding discussion referred only to the adoption of isolated practices and items of belief but made no mention of individuals or communities wholly converted to an alien pagan creed. Nor is this unexpected. The religions of pre-literate peoples are not normally of a proselytizing kind. They promise no particular reward to the converted, nor do they place any premium on the conversion of others. Indeed, it seems true to say that this issue never arises, for, as we anticipated, primitive religion is essentially a tribal or national religion, conceived of as inseparable from the particular identity of the group professing it. Expressed differently, primitive religion does not constitute a 'church' which exists in its own right and can be entered (or left) solely by reason of its creed and of the transcendental benefits promised to the believers.[2]

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 402.

[2] Durkheim's famous identification of 'religion' (of any form) with a 'church' seems to me to rest on an arbitrary use of the latter term; for whatever else may be meant by a 'church', it must mean 'a community organized

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No machinery therefore exists to deal with such contingencies—no provision for tuition of the converts-to-be, and no formal procedure of admission or perhaps excommunication. To say it again, that sum-total of beliefs and practices we call Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari religion, is simply the religion of the people who, on other grounds also, call themselves Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari; and though it is possible for single observances or even items of belief (such as the belief in the significance of death by lightning) to be adopted or 'borrowed', the notion that the religion as a whole can be exported or changed for another is inconceivable.

This self-sufficiency of the Nupe faith goes together with a marked detachment and tolerance towards other creeds. The Nupe, as we know, are greatly interested in discussing the religions of others; but they do so dispassionately, and indeed think it possible that the radically different beliefs of their neighbours are justifiable and, in a vague sense, as 'right' as their own. The coexistence of widely varying practices in Nupe itself must have helped in fostering this tolerance towards alien beliefs; certainly, any person showing such tolerance is not for that reason considered an apostate or even a doubter. The Nupe creed simply lays little claim to any exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Yet it is not for that reason less securely held. If the Nupe do not argue that their creed is the best of all possible creeds, neither do they question that, for them, it is simply given, as is their language and all the other features that go with 'being a Nupe'. Their detached tolerance thus seems only the obverse of this self-sufficiency of 'tribal' religions.

The fact that alien observances are sometimes adopted for their apparent utility or some other attraction is not felt to be inconsistent with this notion of a 'given' tribal religion; at least, the inconsistency is corrected by tacitly granting that alien practices could yet 'become Nupe', that is, could be added to those which, at that stage, were indicative of the social identity. The accomplished fact, then, re-establishes the *status quo*; the new religious practice, now regularly executed by a population which by numerous other criteria regards itself as one, as 'the Nupe', becomes itself 'of Nupe'; so that the people can again detachedly view 'alien' observances or beliefs. Let me restate this in more general terms. The conscious identity of Nupe, as of any society, comes from the awareness of a large stable array of modes of behaviour understood to be typical of the society; any single

by officials into an institution which bestows gifts of grace' (on all who seek it), which makes 'the sacred generally 'accessible', and under whose authority members can be 'enrolled' (see Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', *Essays in Sociology*, p. 288).

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change in this array does not alter the continued consciousness of identity, but is subsumed in it.

This is, of course, a familiar situation, which ultimately accounts for the continuity (or continued self-awareness) of societies even when their cultural possessions, or for that matter their populations, change. Much will depend on the gradualness and restricted scope of the change; a sudden change in which new modes of behaviour greatly outweigh the 'array' of pre-existing ones may disrupt the continued identity. But it need not always do so. For the process just outlined may also be reversed: the society facing such far-reaching changes may yet fasten on to some particular cultural possession which remained unchanged, and consider it sufficiently relevant to furnish a criterion or symbol of the continued identity. Often, as we know, a creed or some religious observance preserved amidst the changes will prove to have this relevance.

This process, too, can be observed among the Nupe, among the colony of emigrants in Lagos, who have lost nearly every feature of culture, including language, which would normally sustain that awareness of 'being Nupe' or 'still being Nupe'. But they have preserved one traditional cult, the *gunnu*; and they still regard themselves as Nupe (calling themselves either Nupe or, more often, Takpa or Tapa, by the Yoruba name). The two things go together; in discussions, when the people wish to emphasize their tribal identity, they at once mention the possession of this cult which, to them, seems decisive.

Let me say a few words about the Nupe colony in Lagos. It numbers perhaps 5,000 people, both scattered over the outlying hamlets and villages and occupying a special quarter in the city of Lagos.[1] The Nupe settlement is claimed to be of considerable antiquity, going back to the Portuguese era, and to have attained its present important and honoured position towards the end of the last century, when the self-made head of the Lagos Nupe, a certain Gana and a 'noted warrior', was elevated to high rank by the Yoruba town king. This Gana, who incidentally was taken to England to be presented to Queen Victoria, was the grandfather of the present chief of the Lagos Nupe, a man of about seventy. Gana's rank, *Osode*, is still held by his descendants, and with the rank goes the priestship of the *gunnu*, which Gana had somehow assumed. The Lagos *gunnu* is a combination of three rites all subsumed under the same name, the *gunnu* itself, the *ndakó gboyá*, and the ritual of the Chain of Tsoede, the paraphernalia of the three

[1] The Nupe quarter in Lagos is known to everyone; its main thoroughfares are called *Tapa Street* and *Osode Street*, the latter deriving its name from the title held by the head of the Nupe colony (see below).

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rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *kuso*, 'bush'.

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771 We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without
177 exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good
Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu*
636 and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between
the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults.
167 The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith
belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a
past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a
Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos cere-
[186] monials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

771 The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed
has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Para-
177 doxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their tra-
797 ditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

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of the same territory; political autonomy; and numerous norms of behaviour and types of relationship.

With all this the next chapter will deal. Let me here only explain an apparent omission; if this discussion made no mention of that other religion demanding complete conversion, Christianity, the reason is, simply, the unimportance of Christianity in Nupe life. The number of converts is extremely small and the progress of Christianity insignificant. The Nupe generally are not hostile to those who have become Christians; they do not subject them to special disabilities; nor do they despise them; only mallams will sometimes call Christians, contemptuously, *káfiri*, 'unbelievers'. Here, too, the general attitude is one of tolerance, though it is more pronounced among pagans than among Moslems. The former (including nominal Moslems) quite often send their children to mission schools, and most Nupe keep on friendly terms with missionaries or African evangelists. But this tolerance always goes with the conviction that Christian missionizing will remain ineffectual; friendliness with Christians is unobjectionable only because it is of no consequence. Nor do the Nupe ever commit themselves by their association with Christians. They do not intermarry with Christian converts; they do not ask them to their family feasts; and the converts never come from solid, stable families, but from among unattached individuals—old people without relations, young orphans, or the children of strangers. Even among these, I was told, apostasy often occurs in later life. And here it is not the pagan religion which is the greatest rival of Christianity, but the steadily encroaching Islam.

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discussed elsewhere.[1] Let us, then, turn back to Nupe religion and summarize its character or 'type' on the lines of our list of competences.

2. *Weltbild*: MORALITY

Nupe religion offers practically no cosmological knowledge; what there is of it is conveyed only by the doctrine and not, symbolically, by ritual. There is no interest in any far-flung picture of the universe such as a detailed mythology might present, nor in any closely reasoned account, the 'supplements' of rational knowledge being restricted to positing a remote, vague creator and enumerating a few of his creations. And here speculation stops at the phenomena intimately affecting human life (health and disease, procreation and death, dreams, certain features of inanimate nature). The rest is simply tacitly accepted. Nor are there attempts to interpret the world in anthropomorphous terms and so bring it nearer to human comprehension. The only link between man and this featureless transcendental world, apart from the supernatural controls somehow placed at his command, is vouchsafed by the belief in reincarnation and in an eternally active life principle. The humanly appealing theme of an other-worldly life is left untouched.

The language in which all this is conveyed is the familiar language of everyday life, simple and intentionally clear. Where the vagueness of the subject precludes satisfactory precision, there is recourse either to a simple 'we don't know' or to attempts at exploring linguistic meanings. The former does not imply any suggestion of a relevant mystery behind the visible world, but merely the placid admission of things unknowable. The latter betrays the conviction that the knowledge about the world, such as it is, is meant to be clear and can be clarified if the workaday tool of language is only carefully examined. This aimed-at clarity is further suggested by the predilection for parables and analogies, for juxtaposition or opposition, and by the many enumerations by twos and fours which pervade the doctrine.

This schematicism is essentially abstract, involving no visual or similarly palpable aids, such as an alignment with colours or spatial orientations. Nor are these invested with symbolic meaning save in a few isolated instances (when black stands for secrecy and evilness, red for prosperity, and right and left for male and female respectively). Enumeration again serves only to order things schematically and clearly, the symbolic potentialities of numbers being ignored: thus there are no lucky or unlucky numbers, no numbers in any other way meaningful (save, in a crude form, in divination).

[1] See my *Foundations*, pp. 256–7 *et seq.*

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771 divination). The belief in lucky or unlucky days and months is not really an exception; for the numerical order underlying their selection is neither systematic nor valid apart from this one context.

It is important, however, that the tendency to enumeration and schematic juxtapositions does not characterize the formulated doctrine alone ('There are four things in the world'); it is as typical of the way in which individuals express their own speculative and occasionally unorthodox views, for example—'There are two gods, one in the sky, the other on earth'; 'The female spirits live in the water, male spirits on the land.' Thus there is some interest in speculation, which is often keen and readily engaged in. But it relates only to the given topics of religion, that is, to notions already formulated, and does not attempt to break new ground. In other words, the people are content with a bare and fragmentary *Weltbild*, but feel the desire, though not for wider knowledge, yet for greater clarity in the knowledge they possess. In either case the treatment is schematic rather than syllogistic, and nominalistic in that it leans on the intelligibility of words and on semantic exercises.

771 182 The religious knowledge so framed exhibits close consistency with other sectors of the culture. The non-anthropomorphous and abstract character of religion tallies with the non-realistic art of Nupe, and the emphasis on schematic arrangements in the former, with the geometrical-ornamental accent of the latter. Perhaps, too, there is a logical nexus between the unconcern with deities or humanized features of the universe and the absence of any drama proper (either in art or religion). The tendency to enumerations is visible also in Nupe folklore and in the Nupe calendar (where months are referred to by numbers). The same is true of status differences, political ranks, and age grades, which are always presented in schematic form and precisely numbered, even at the cost of inaccuracy; let me add that in a large number of communities the senior and politically important ranks number four. Nor are dichotomous arrangements less frequent; think only of the common juxtaposition of *Žitsú* ('town king') and *Žigí* ('town priest'). The dualism of the sexes, in particular, is carried to a considerable extent through Nupe language, which assigns a gender, expressed by adding the attribute 'male' or 'female', also to trees and plants. The interest, finally, in analogies and semantic exercises is amply exemplified: in Nupe literature, where whole stories are based on puns or on the ambiguity of words; in attempts at producing persuasive pedigrees for present customs by means of etymological speculations; and in ordinary conversation.

These are all preferred ways of handling and ordering material (of whatever kind); and since they are visible both within and

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without the sphere of religion we may say of the latter that it is an expression (among others) of the basic intellectual orientation of the people. There is one exception, however. In the secular sphere the Nupe are keen historians, always interested in tracing things back to their past. In their religious conceptions this interest is almost entirely absent; so far as it exists, it ceases to be religious, being satisfied with summary references to extraneous, political-historical events, such as the introduction of a cult by Tsoede or the origin of some religious practice in the reign of a particular king. At this point the attitudes towards things sacred and profane diverge; only the latter require a precise time perspective; the former are simply given, or adequately explained by that timeless *ultima causa*, the deity. [814]

To return for a moment to the Nupe bias for dualistic conceptions. Though we have grouped it with the other 'intellectual orientations', with predilection for enumerations, parables, and so forth, it clearly betrays more than this kind of predisposition, serving also to articulate the sharply felt and emotionally weighted antagonism of the sexes, as in witchcraft fantasies and in the belief in the deadly female 'germ' of the 'diseases of God'. And since the awareness of this antagonism springs from unconscious sources, it would seem to be of a different and more fundamental order than the other expressions of the dualistic bias. Shall we, then, hold the two apart? Even so, there remains the uniformly dualistic *Weltbild*, whether it expresses the unconscious sexual anxieties of men or their dispassionate intellectual efforts to order the phenomena of the world. Or shall we assume some play of cause and effect between the two, taking the awareness of sex antagonism to be at the root of the intellectual bias, in the sense that it shaped a predisposition towards finding dichotomies also in all other areas of experience? Clearly, we might equally assume the opposite, that is, that the conception of sex antagonism in witchcraft and elsewhere would not have crystallized had it not been facilitated by a congenial intellectual predisposition. There is, I think, no answer to these questions. The dualistic viewpoint is simply one of the cardinal possibilities upon which the human intellect can seize in structuring the world of experience; and the antagonism of male and female represents once more one of very few possibilities available to societies, or to man in society, in their efforts to structure the universe of human relationships. All we can legitimately say is that the two emerged together, in mutual consistency.

The witchcraft belief simply that other dichotomy, of 'good' and 'evil', as does the belief in spirits and in the character of humans inscrutably fashioned by God. But this dichotomy is formulated only on this cosmic scale, referring to the 'things that are in the

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world', and has no narrower, pragmatic or ethical application. As for the realm of ethics, Nupe doctrine is altogether silent. It upholds no ideal man, nor condemns his antithesis. There is no eschatology, no mythology exemplifying rights and wrongs, crime and retribution, and no promise of reward to the law-abiding. Nor is the formulated doctrine concerned with norms of action of more common currency, the simple rights and wrongs of everyday morality. 'Economic ethics' has its place in ritual; since this turns upon such things as birth, marriage and adolescence, crops and the exigencies of the seasons, prosperity and wealth, that is, upon events and conditions involving practical decisions, the respective courses of action are implicitly upheld as desirable, worthwhile and 'right'. But they are not 'announced' or 'revealed', neither commanded nor yet conspicuously dramatized. Their significance is left to preliminary knowledge, the worshippers knowing at the outset what to expect of the ritual, both as regards its aim and the promises it vouchsafes. And these are again silent on ethical issues. The fortunes anticipated and the misfortunes that may befall you imply neither merit nor punishment: they simply happen, while religion means no more than an aid in attaining or evading them.

Only two explicit ethical commands occur in the whole range of Nupe rituals. They refer to filial obedience (enjoined in the *gunnu*) and to the blessedness of fecundity. But we remember that the relevant episode of the *gunnu* is also the first to fall victim to change, and that other religiously sanctioned aids, the services of the *cigbeci*, are dispensed in disregard of the moral condemnation of childlessness. On balance, then, Nupe religion is amoral. As we anticipated, the crucial issue in most religions, how to reconcile the discrepancy of religious merit and practical rewards, simply does not arise. Nupe religion takes life as it is, offering no 'annunciations and promises' that would redress its iniquities, and hardly even endorsing the equity that should govern it.

This equity is largely left to the care of secular agencies alone. Religion plays a part only indirectly, through sanctioning the persons—kings, chiefs, executioners—who act as guardians of the accepted good. The sanction lies essentially in ritual, that is, in the various ceremonials involved in the assumption of these offices or entrusted to their holders. But let us note that these men guard, not really morality, but only that part of it which has solidified in the form of politically enforced law. Differently expressed, Nupe society knows mainly crimes and few 'sins', and only lawful, not saintly behaviour. On occasion religion abandons even this indirect support for the conventions of morality; for certain rituals deny these conventions, as in the sexual licence of the *gunnu* and *gani* or in the condonation of violence in the *navũ*. At this point, then, the

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logical consistency between religion and the rest of social life ceases to be valid. Morally, the rituals in question have no message; or their message is a circuitous one, exemplifying the rule by the exception. Their 'competence' cannot therefore lie in this topsy-turvy picture of common morality: rather, as we already suggested, does it lie in the offer of explosive relief from normal constraints.

Let me say a little more on the amorality of the Nupe creed. Nupe religion, as we have seen, sanctions only the powers that be, the machinery of political control, and hence the claims of secular society to declare what is right and wrong. Religion by itself vouchsafes no direct and 'higher' assurance of this kind. It does not as it were speak for society, but only stands behind the appointed spokesmen. Needless to say, most religions go beyond this *carte blanche* for secular society. And in doing so they achieve two things: doubts and conflicts arising in mundane ethics can be resolved by the assurance that there are these other, 'higher' or 'eternal', values; and these can in turn serve as ideals which man is called upon to approach, however imperfectly. So that religion can both absorb the iniquities of human existence and give it an impetus towards making the world better than it is. Nupe religion can do neither. Thus conflicts over mundane ethics can be absorbed into religion only in the one province which itself proclaims the inevitability of conflicts, namely, in the hostile fantasies of witchcraft. And offering nothing 'higher' than an endorsement of mundane ethics, religion is emptied of its impetus towards world improvement: it is static, non-progressive, non-messianic, and once more content to take 'life as it is'.

3. RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

There is a certain overlap between this new nexus and the one just discussed. For since any group, of whatever structure, is such only in virtue of the norms of acting enjoined upon its members, the pronouncements of religion upon 'right' and 'wrong' conduct (say, 'thou shalt honour thy father and mother') already serve to uphold the group so constituted (the family, or the society based upon filial piety). Yet there is that special competence of religion to uphold group existence and structure as such, and not only such specific manners of acting as may form the subject of ethical commands. Nor can group existence and group structure be 'commanded': they can only be demonstrated or circuitously affirmed, though occasionally they are explicitly asserted, as in Judaism with its tenet of a 'chosen people', serving a tribal or national God.

Again, Nupe religion lacks such explicit assertions, as it lacks

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also that conspicuous focus of group existence, a tribal god. There is no conception that the deity is concerned with this one people only or that the Nupe people are the sole or chosen possessors of true religion. To be sure, there are the legends explaining how the Nupe acquired *cigbe*, the Chain of Tsoede, and particular rituals; but it is understood that other peoples also have medicines, rituals, and supernatural skills of various kinds. The Nupe tribe lays claim only to the possession of certain *particular* instances, not of the *genera* ritual or medicine. Even so qualified, this claim or title becomes an aspect of group identity and hence one of the supports of the tribe's existence as a group. A similar possession of particular observances and sacred skills also identifies the groups of diverse or lesser inclusiveness: the state (which possesses the 'royal cults'); the village community (which may possess a special *kuti*); and the kin group (which possesses hereditary *cigbe* and ancestral sacrifices.

This possession is adjusted even more finely, so that it comes to affirm, not only the corporate identity of this or that group, but also its internal structure. For as the administration of the village *kuti* is vested in single kin groups but serves the whole community, so it endorses the make-up of a group in all other respects similarly segmented yet co-operative; and as the administration of kinship rituals falls to the senior man in the lineage and descends in that line but is meant to benefit also wives, mothers, daughters- and sisters-in-law, so it endorses the basic kin group, the extended family or 'house'. All of which implications are contained in the Nupe conception of the 'ownership' of cults.

This ownership, though corporate, does not *make* the group in question; it pertains to groups already constituted as such by other criteria, whatever they may be—common language, territorial possession, citizenship, descent, cohabitation, and so forth. The possession of the religious observances is thus a feature of group identity only in combination with all the others and in fact presupposes them. This relationship is reversed only once, in the case of the Nupe emigrants whose title to 'Nupedom' rests solely on the retention of the traditional cults.

The Nupe congregation, in the wider or narrower sense, is such inevitably, mainly by descent, and not by individual choice, as is the case in a 'church' open to all comers. Fundamentally, this is a closed religion, bound up with membership of tribe, nation, village or kin group, and part of the 'estate' of these groups. In a few instances—most (not all) *cigbe*, divination, the unimportant sacrifices to spirits—the benefits of religion are accessible to individuals *qua* individuals, even to strangers from other tribes. In all other respects individuals share in the ministrations of religion only in

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virtue of their membership of the respective groups, and share in them on equal terms. For there are no qualifications which might make one unpredictably a vessel of divine grace, nor degrees of sacredness attainable by personal endeavour. The miraculous birth of the *gunnu* priest comes closest to the former conception; while the technical skills of *cigbe* and the *ndakó gboyá* society with its open recruitment at least enable individuals so inclined to become active agents of the supernatural. Even so, these are not qualifications for religious excellence nor calls for spiritual leadership. The Nupe congregation has equal access to grace and blessings; it knows no spiritual leaders or chosen vessels: it is a 'mass', not a 'virtuoso' religion.

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But consider that secular life, with its ranks and status differences, is governed by precisely these notions of individual effort after excellence and of unequal access to existing benefits. In a sense, then, the ideals of secular and religious life are opposed to one another. Yet if they were not thus opposed, if effort after excellence held good in the religious congregation as much as it does in the mundane society, the diverse achievements might easily clash and lead to divided leadership. As it is, this cannot happen. One of the results is that Nupe religion, unlike other creeds, is incapable of compensating the failures of secular ambition with the promise of spiritual success or exaltation; another, that religion can achieve that other competence, of fully supporting 'mundane ethics'. It need not have been so. The egalitarianism of this 'mass religion' might have meant the promise, and hence that other 'compensation', of equality before God, as against the inequalities of which Nupe life is full. But this potentiality is left unexploited. In so far as Nupe religion deviates from the values governing secular life, it does so with insufficient emphasis to carry such a message of hope; indeed, the message it might have carried would be belied by too many other features of the creed and manner of worship.

We have so far considered the 'congregation' in the wider sense, as a community possessing such-and-such observances and means of communing with the supernatural. Understood as a collection of individuals worshipping together, the congregation again endorses or upholds the relevant groups existing within the society, now through mobilizing them in the act of worship. The tribe is not a congregation in this narrower sense, and the nation becomes one only intermittently and partially; but the presence of these inclusive groups is recalled in the prayer formulæ which mention the ancestor king Tsoede and on occasion call divine blessing upon 'the whole land of Nupe'. The village community is invariably a congregation-in-worship (and is mentioned in the prayer), as is

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also the kin group, in the different kinship ceremonials. As for individuals, they may by themselves solicit the more technical supernatural aids; but there is no true worship by individuals, only worship in groups or, in solitary sacrifices and the like, on behalf of groups.

The congregation-in-worship, over and above mobilizing a particular group, also mobilizes it in such manner that its internal structure is thrown into relief. We recall such features as the 'inner circle' of worshippers, composed of mature men; the roles of officiants, vested in titled elders or family heads; the precedence of rank, observed in the communal meal; the subordinate tasks assigned to adolescents, the obedience demanded of them, and the partial exclusion of women and strangers. The arrangement of the congregation, then, mirrors the status arrangements meant to be valid in mundane society, so that the latter is demonstrated so-so-speak, in model form, dramatized, and endorsed by the sacred context.

We note again that religion has no message of its own, transcending or reversing the secular norms: there is no preaching of, say, 'the first shall be last'. Even the festivals of youth, *gani* and *navũ*, though they grant to the adolescents a freedom and initiative not normally enjoyed, also exemplify in various ways respect for rank and loyalty to political leadership. Nor does religious practice cancel that paramount factor in secular society, wealth: we remember the cost of rituals (communal or kinship) and of supernatural aids privately solicited, which causes the former to vary in scale with available means and may make the latter inaccessible to the poor. This point is important since one feature of ritual procedure may seem to indicate a reversal of the secular ideal. I am referring to the uniform, simple dress obligatory in the pagan rites, which thus excludes the visible tokens of wealth from the circle of worshippers. It was left to the Moslem ceremonials with their chances for display to remove this egalitarian touch. But it is only a touch and no more, representing no effective symbolism; for the people do not derive any message or moral from it but regard it merely as a ritual rule among others, meant to draw the line between sacred and profane occasions.

Let us therefore call Nupe religion conservative, non-revolutionary, and again, non-messianic. Only in one respect does the congregation fail to 'mirror' social reality correctly, in that it upholds a subordinate position of the women which is not true in real life. For the men, religious practice thus expresses an ideal frustrated in every-day experience. But in this one sphere of conflict where religion no longer endorses 'life as it is', it is also incapable of contenting the believers, forcing them to resort to the fantasies

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about female witches and to the vicarious satisfaction of witch-hunting. Nupe religion, we must conclude, cannot hold its own as a messenger of ideals. 771 182

4. ASSURANCE AND STIMULATION

We have already mentioned the circular efficacy linking these two components of religious experience. Yet they can be separated in analysis, as much (or as little) as the mere knowing and learning of religious truths can be held apart from the actual living through acts of devotion. 771 781 182

Concerning the assurances about the world and man's place in it which can be known and learned, there is little to say, and most that can be said is negative. Nupe doctrine does not teach that the universe is benevolent or that the deity is closely concerned with human fate. Though man has skills and ritual procedures to invoke supernatural aid, their outcome will often remain uncertain. Thus these skills and procedures contain only traces of the calculable forcefulness of 'magic'. The strictly technical manipulations of *cigbe* come closest to this conception; yet they, too, are subject to the will of God, or accident, and even the miraculous medicines in which one places absolute confidence involve 'invocations' (not 'spells') and hence an element of submission. In the last resort, man can only appeal and supplicate; if, on balance, Nupe religion is optimistic, this only means that it holds out hopes in the face of a world governed by accident, not that there is an assured or reassuring design behind it.

To turn to the 'stimulations'. We need not stress again that the self-abandonment of the mystic or visionary is utterly foreign to the Nupe. Never does the worshipper face his god in solitude, drawing only upon his inward experience or seeking private illumination. Nor is the mood he seeks in his worship entirely religious, that is, unattainable save through the 'thought of supernatural relations'; for in all the major rites at least, that mood emerges also from the added stimuli of music, dancing, crowd behaviour, and perhaps sexual excitement. Generally, the mood of Nupe worship is restrained and calm, leading to no extremes either of fear and stress or of exultation. The absence of elaborate ritualism precludes the tensions that go with rigidly prescribed gestures or speech; in avoiding nocturnal performances most rituals also avoid the sharp accents of fear and mystery; and the rules of ritual etiquette usually curb abandoned behaviour.

Above all, the mood of Nupe worship lacks development. The ritual prepares and holds a sense of the sacred in various, familiar ways—through rules marking off the ritual occasion from ordinary

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ones; through the subdued, solemn manner of applying oneself to the ritual task; and through the serious import of the supplication. But this mood is merely 'lived through'; it involves no mounting expectancy, pressing for some culminating experience or final fulfilment. In the act of worship proper, embodied in the esoteric phase of any rite, the prayer or the sacrificial meal might play that part. Intellectually, the prayer represents the crucial moment, when the whole purpose of the ritual is made clear and the appeal or hope articulately expressed. In the large-scale ceremonials, too, there is some emotional preparation for that moment, drumming and singing being abruptly silenced when the prayer is about to be uttered. Yet it is uttered too early in the proceedings and uttered too informally to come as a culminating stage. The sacrificial meal stands out in that it concludes the act of worship proper; but just then the solemn mood is also visibly fading.

The movable rites and minor observances; consisting as they do only of prayer and sacrifice, do not progress beyond that short-lived 'sensing of the sacred'. And if the great ceremonials offer further excitements and something akin to a final climax, these no longer grow out of the awareness of transcendental events, but are achieved through the massed stimuli of more common appeal —music, dancing, and so forth. As I suggested in an earlier context, some anticipation of the final stimulations must fuse with the mood of the worship proper; as the congregation in turn retains some sense of the sacred even in the phase of the 'merry-making', though in the absence of elaborate symbols acting as 'reminders' that sense is none too secure. What is important is that the worship as such does not work up to any final 'fulfilment'; rather, the emotional tensions remain diffuse and without climax. They only sensitize the congregation to the 'annunciations and promises' voiced in the ritual but do not prepare the worshippers for revelations.

The bush vigil in the *gunnu* may seem an exception since here certain pronouncements are made to a congregation previously exposed to fear and the thrills of mystery. But again, this is not a true climax of religious experience; this episode is only a prelude to the actual rite (and can in fact be omitted); while the pronouncement is concerned with nothing more momentous than an admonishment of adolescents. Indeed, the very mood of fear and mystery, which would seem so congenial to the expectancy of revelations, must be called exceptional. One other ritual, the *mamma*, is staged in a similar atmosphere; but it occurs only in a few communities and is performed with little excitement or awe; nor does it carry any message or 'annunciation'.

Another exception is more important. In each Nupe community the calm and restrained mood of worship is reversed once, in the

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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

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a sense crude, containing no intellectual insight or gain; nor perhaps is the gain a lasting one. In a cruder form still, much the same change is entailed in any exciting or pleasurable interruption of workaday routine and in the consequent readiness for further work; which effect, too, must be ascribed to the Nupe ceremonials and festivities. But clearly, the fusion of 'stimulation' and 'assurance' can operate also on a higher, that is, more conscious, plane. It is in this sense that theologians think of the access of faith or fortitude entailed in acts of worship and William James speaks of the 'assurance of safety' and the 'new zest which adds itself like a gift to life'.[1]

Undoubtedly, this is true also of Nupe religion, even though its acts of worship are without precise revelations and merely voice hopes impressive only because they are reinforced by diffuse excitements. Yet if we grant this access of faith, we must grant also that it will have to prevail against difficulties, failures and disappointments. Acts of worship, therefore, both build up faith and draw upon it. Somewhat differently expressed, we have made this point in an earlier context; there, too, we suggested that only the fixed rituals, whose aims are fundamentally unspecific and whose design brings into play all the more stirring stimulations, can assume the former role; while the movable rites and all the other contingent observances, being prosaic and meant to be successful in specific needs, apply faith and draw upon it as much as, fortuitously, they may strengthen it.[2] Let me add this observation only. The fixed rituals, though they engender faith, are not meant to be repeated or changed for the sake of greater efficacy. They are prescribed occasions when man can commune with the deity and touch divine power, and through this alone a source of assurance. Also, their number is small, so that Nupe life is not punctuated with occasions creative of faith. Here, then, we meet with something like an economy of faith which seems to have found its own level.

In other religions this economy may work differently. Certainly, it seems to work in Nupe, where it goes together with an unambitious doctrine allowing for the failure of specific appeals and upholding no firm over-all assurance. For by and large, the tenor of Nupe life is optimistic; nor are there any instances of individuals turning cynics or being driven into unbelief by disappointed hopes. Does this mean that the zest and assurance evoked in the acts of worship (but tempered and hence protected by the cautious doctrine) are sufficient to endure and pervade all the efforts of practical life? or only that religious experience is not meant to be enduring and pervasive?

[1] Op cit., pp. 403–4.

[2] See above, pp. 105–6.

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We cannot precisely measure this psychological aftermath of acts of worship. But we can assess it indirectly, from the concern with religious experiences visible in everyday life. And here it is quite clear that our second assumption is the correct one. For the acts of worship do not leave any vivid awareness of the achieved communion with the deity nor any lasting sense of the holy. There is nothing of 'religiosity' in the Nupe character. He knows, of course, at all times, that there is a God and a realm of the supernatural; but ordinarily this is tacit knowledge, of no practical relevance, neither permanently awe-inspiring nor permanently exhilarating. Crudely speaking, the Nupe are religious only on religious occasions; in between, life is an affair of secular values and rules-of-thumb. That even sacred places are 'sacred' only at certain times of the year is part of the same attitude; so is the absence of any conception of personal holiness. Even Islam, with its daily prayers, its Friday service, and its pious scholars, has hardly affected this attitude. For the daily prayers have become unthinking routine, without any touch of the mystic; being a mallam is a profession among others and often combined with them; and the Moslem cult of saints or 'holy men' found no response.

All this means that the spheres of religion and the profane remain clearly separable. Probably few religions merge completely with secular life so that every possible action bears some reference to transcendental notions. Nor, of course, can we conceive of religions which would at no point coincide with mundane interests. But the border zone between the two can be more or less wide and more or less sharply circumscribed. In Nupe, this zone is narrow and sharply outlined. Wherever the 'competences' of religion bear on mundane interests we can readily mark the point where the coincidence ceases. There is no 'carry-over' from one to the other. Thus religion sustains the offices of chiefs, kings, and other exponents of authority and law: but their person is not sacred, and criminals convicted by these holders of supernaturally sanctioned offices are not treated with any show of awe or sacred horror. Religion helps to bind together the kin group through the belief in reincarnation, through ancestral sacrifices, and through the solemnization of marriage and birth: but the Nupe do not, on normal occasions, speak the names of the ancestors with bated breath or constantly worry about placating their spirits. Marriage is in no sense sacred, and children are not holy; even children whose birth is ascribed to the efficacy of sacrifice are not treated in any special way.[1] Nor, finally, are the sick who recover with supernatural aid or the crops that thrive after some rite has been duly

[1] The only rules of this kind are entailed in the *sogba* cult, of alien origin.

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performed subject to special taboos or other rules meant to recall the divine intervention.

Nupe religion, then, has a defined place in the scheme of things. It is not that scheme itself, embracing or giving meaning to all other things with which human life is concerned. If religion engenders assurance and optimism, human life yet relies equally on the assurance and confidence that go with rational skills and mundane experiences. This is hardly unexpected. A religion which provides no *Weltbild*; which keeps aloof from moral judgments; which upholds no messianic ideals; and which rejects the incalculable revelations of mystics, is also a religion content with its own province. That province still 'supplements' or completes all the others and 'transcends' whatever they offer in the way of rational understanding, practical measures, and exhilarating or reassuring experiences. But this careful fit of a province among others, even though it completes their series on a higher, transcendental plane, has something of the rational. It savours of some plan of giving unto religion only what is hers, by some right that can be reasoned out. Perhaps we should say that Nupe religion is as rational as religion can be.

But this is, in religion, not a golden mean. The Nupe case does not prove that a religion thus rationally tempered saves the believers from disturbing doubts or cosmic fears just because its claims and promises are so unambitious. Nupe religion may well aim to be a sort of Plutarchian creed, steering a middle course between unbelief and too much belief, where man neither 'directeth and opposeth all his plaints and lamentations against fortune and casuality', nor yet 'will think and say that every disease and infirmity of his body, all his losses . . . and his repulses and disgraces are so many plagues inflicted upon him by the ire of the gods and the very assaults of divine justice.'[1] But in thinking neither wholly one thing nor wholly the other, the Nupe yet invite one sharp repulse to their mood of optimism: for they know the deep fear of witchcraft. And this is not, in their case, a fear of the consequences of impiety or of 'divine justice'; rather is it born of the awareness that the universe is inadequately controlled, and hence that the province of religion is too narrow.

[1] Plutarch, 'Of Superstition'; *Moralia*, translated by Philemon Holland, 1911 edition, p. 380.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

General

771 The majority of the Nupe are now Moslems and there is at least one small [162] mosque in every village. The 1931 Census gave 235,990 Moslems out of a total of 324,375 for all religions.[1] But in many communities pagan ritual exists side by side with some Moslem observances, the latter being increasingly adopted for reasons of prestige.

Among the pagans there is common belief in a sky god *Sokó*, who is believed to have created the world and then withdrawn himself from communion with man. The Nupe concept of the cosmos is, according to Nadel, fundamentally amoral. God, having created the world, gave men access to certain mystical forces, making them at the same time subject to these and leaving them to make such use of these "powers" and of the material world as they would and could. First among these mystical forces is *kuti*, the compelling power of ritual, believed to be harnessed in varying degrees in a multiplicity of rites belonging to persons, communities, and associations, and conferring both special benefits or protection and increasing general well-being. At the same time, invocation of the ancestors of kinsfolk, of the people at large, and of the ancient rulers, can afford some measure of benefit or protection. This can also be gained through a separate use of "medicines" which are believed variously to combine pseudo-therapeutic and magical properties. Finally, the evil power of witchcraft, which God also put into the world, has to be discovered, punished, and driven out by special rites. Since, moreover, there are these alternatives with reference to both good fortune and bad, divination has a great part to play in determining the rites to be performed in particular situations.[2]

Spirits

776 The Nupe believe that immaterial beings, existing in their own right and with some human attributes, live in the bush or in hills, trees, watercourses, and other natural features. Their Hausa-Arabic name (*aljenúši*, sing. *aljénu*) suggests that some aspects of this belief may be borrowed from Islam. The spirits may be male or female, friendly or hostile, though only two—*Nddduma* (Father Niger) and *Ketsá* (associated with a rock in midstream near Jebba Island)—are thought to possess any considerable powers.[3] Another group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. The least clearly conceived are personal spirits or spirit doubles, which belong to every individual from birth to death and cannot be changed. These may be good or bad.[4]

769 Spirits of the dead (*kuci*) may be reincarnated in their own descendants. Approach to the Supreme Being can be made through ancestral spirits. Special 776 sacrifices are performed either in the house or on the grave of a particular ancestor and the *kuci* are invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death. Otherwise it seems that ancestral sacrifices are performed only sporadically and for a specific reason, such as illness in the family.[5]

776 Tsoéde, who is regarded by all Nupe as their common ancestor, is venerated in an elaborate cycle of myths and rituals surrounding sacred objects—chains and bronze figures—connected with him.[6] He is, however, outside the general framework of Nupe religious beliefs.

[1] Census of Nigeria, vol. II, p. 63. Unfortunately there are no later figures available for comparison.
[2] See below, pp. 47–8.
[3] See below.
[4] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 26–31.
[5] Ibid., pp. 23–5.
[6] Ibid., pp. 31–2.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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NUPE.

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131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
●771 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[01] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
177 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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77/ offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however,
62 losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

197 The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the
634 following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.	8. Bini.	14. Kusopa.
2. Kupa.	9. Dibo.‡	15. Zumbufu.
3. Baedeji.*	10. Duchu.	16. Kutegi.§
4. Kede.	11. Ebe.	17. Enegi.§
5. Bangawa.†	12. Etsu.§	18. Gbachi.§
6. Bata.	13. Kakanda.†	19. Ganagana.‡
7. Batachi.		

634 The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the
[304] name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba
[304] Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in
[41] Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 634
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never
marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do
so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [186]
permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida,
whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [481]
and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, i.e., shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285]
Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771
rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. 782]
The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks[1] consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and 771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees." 775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its [245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

[1] [i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

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In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, 634
who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held 771
and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but 776
is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, 634
having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was 776
founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants 634
from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they 304
have adopted the Nupe language. 197
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[1] [i.e. The Kusopa subtribe.--Analyst]

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

634 is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this
182 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen,
173 concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

634 *Religion.* As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Moham-
771 medans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements
184 you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often
182 pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Ndáduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndáduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndáduma* rituals, the *Ndáduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndáduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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779 thought. He is a man-become-deity (though there is no pantheon where he could find a niche), a national hero turned into an
773 ancestral being (though again, there are no named ancestors to whose ranks he might be added). Tsoede is the ancestor only of a line of kings; but in a wider and vaguer sense all Nupe within the kingdom regard themselves with pride as his 'offspring', in the sense, that is, that they were born in a country he founded and made great and come of stock which, originally, lived under his rule and supernatural protection. This protection, which still endures, bears on certain problems of life which are resolved also by means of other rituals or appeals to *Sokó*, namely, the ubiquitous problems of illness and fertility. But these are only incidental effects of Tsoede's mystic power; its main efficacy used to bear on political interests—the maintenance of the 'king's law', the punishment of criminals, and the protection of the 'King's Highway' on the river Niger.[1] Even the 'incidental effects' of the Tsoede cult are bound up with political interests, being embodied in material objects which are at the same time the paraphernalia of secular power. Let me only mention the 'Chain of Tsoede', which is believed to cure the sterility of women but which was formerly also used to strangle political offenders and to uncover crimes in the manner of an ordeal.

[182] In brief, the Tsoede cult is essentially a State religion superimposed upon a pre-existing creed. The cult ties the people to supernatural benefits granted not simply by God, nor by a God who commands his own rituals, but by a God who listens to kings. And its rituals, no longer 'owned' by communities or kin groups, are aligned with the growth and pride of a nation.

5. THE NUPE COSMOS

779 I spoke before of the supererogatory character of certain Nupe beliefs. In a sense, the greater part of Nupe doctrine has this
772 character. Consider that the Nupe hypothesize a deity who creates the world and then leaves it to itself—uncertain, full of obscurity and accident, and embracing good and evil in entirely fortuitous measure. With such a conception of the relationship between God and the world, the Nupe need not have speculated further about some deeper meaning behind the features of the universe. Anything that exists or happens in it would be sufficiently explained by that key concept of an aloof and non-ethical deity. One might, for example, imagine a religion starting from the same premisses which would leave all further explanations to the crude realism of naïve common sense. Whether so unambitious a theo-

[1] See my article on the 'King's Hangmen' in *Man*, 1935, 143.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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logy is ever likely to arise, I will not venture to discuss. The point is that Nupe theology is more ambitious; the Nupe do speculate further, and reckon with a great many additional (or 'supererogatory') existences and influences. They seem to feel the need to do justice to the particular features of the world by means of particular conceptions, over and above its broad justification in terms of divine creation.

This proliferation of thought is, of course, not peculiar to Nupe religion, though we may note that the Nupe ignore many 'particular' features which other religions feel compelled to acknowledge and elaborate. Thus the Nupe find nothing to explain about the heavenly bodies, do not concern themselves specifically with lightning, thunder, or rain, and speculate only vaguely about animals or natural features. Instead, their attention is focussed upon health and disease, birth and death, fertility, misfortunes, dreams, that is, upon things human. The Nupe elaboration of the universe, we might say, is anthropocentric.

Yet it concentrates on natural man, not on the moral being. Again it neglects all features which might serve this kind of conception, such as an after-life promising reward or retribution, or natural catastrophies that might signify divine anger or warning. Even where the ethical interpretation suggests itself forcibly it is ignored; thus the metamorphosis of the soul stands apart from any ethical design; the powers of good and evil spirits descend on man at random, and the success or failure of supernatural appeals, to ancestors or even to God, do not reflect upon the moral worthiness of the suppliants. There are a few vague notions of divine retribution. Thus it is admitted, but never spontaneously vouchsafed, that incest is punished by barrenness and blindness, and that persons guilty of concealed crimes may be punished by the *kuti* (in an unspecified manner) or killed by lightning (in the case of theft). But these half-hearted concessions do not alter the picture of a creation devoid of moral purpose.

Are, then, all the 'additional influences' which the Nupe read into creation and all their 'further speculations' merely attemps to 'do justice to the particular things in the world', and no more? It may well seem so. There seems to be no other, ulterior, motive behind the readiness to ascribe the contrariness of a tree or the uncanniness of a locality to spirits rather than to nature just-so created; behind the belief that certain ailments betray the machinations of spirits or witches over and above the weakening of the *anima*, and perhaps natural causes; or behind the subdivision of mental afflictions, which are traced to spirits, to the vagaries of the body, and to God. But consider also that these diverse explanations are not kept apart, by some economical parcelling-out of the universe;

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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normal. The actual disease materializes when the two forms happen to be combined in the same person, and the prospects of a cure depend on which 'germ', male or female, is the stronger. Predominantly male leprosy is curable, predominantly female leprosy, fatal. In the case of sleeping sickness everything depends on the treatment, though the prospects are bleak in either case; if a *cigbe* expert succeeds in killing the male 'germ' only, the disease will take its fatal course; in the opposite case death at least will be avoided, though another incurable disease, lunacy, will result.

This is once more a half-hearted vindication of divine providence; all it attempts to prove is that creation is not necessarily evil and that evil things slip into it by chance. Fundamentally, the whole Nupe universe is thus ruled by accident. Such benevolent design as is discernible in it is all too vulnerable and all too easily vitiated by the coexistence of evil. Yet neither are evil and malevolence more securely established. It is true that there is no real struggle between the two, as between opposed wills or destinies, but only the casual share-out of fortunes and misfortunes. Even so there are grounds, if not for an inspiring faith, yet for its cruder version, optimism. And to this, as we shall see, the Nupe firmly cling.

This is not, however, the whole picture. Our view of Nupe religion is still one-sided, based as it is on the doctrine alone, on ideas asserted, taught, and learned as such. Another kind of faith or assurance, less articulate but perhaps more powerful, may spring from the concrete acts of worship, that is, from the psychological stimulations and experiences gained in ritual and other observances. With these the following chapters will deal.

For the moment we need point out only one of the consequences of the Nupe conception of the universe. Clearly, it vouchsafes little certainty or guidance for action. Even the promises of supernatural aid only add to the uncertainties, for as they offer the chance of several trials so they confront the user with the problem of choice, which problem is not always readily solved. But the Nupe universe holds out some promise of certainty and some guidance for action. Both are mechanical and of a case-to-case kind; in other words, they are such as divination can offer. And since this guidance is required both for the problems of everyday life and for the handling of the supernatural tools meant to aid man in these problems, divination becomes a prerequisite, not only of provident action in general, but also of religious actions. It seems logical, therefore, to turn to divination first, and afterwards to ritual, medicine, and to all the other 'supernatural tools'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

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Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'kingmaker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

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[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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both on the same, profane, occasions.[1] More important, Nupe mythology is altogether flimsy and rudimentary. It illustrates only two tenets of the creed, the conception of a supreme deity and the role of 'medicine', while others, for example, the equally basic conception of 'ritual', are given no such expression. Nor does the mythology concern itself more than scantily with cosmological speculations or with the justification of particular ceremonies.

Certain legends meant to account for particular practices or ceremonials will be quoted later, in that context. Let me here illustrate my point by relating the one cosmological myth the Nupe possess. It is, strictly speaking, only 'near-cosmological', being concerned, not with the origin of the world and of all the things and creatures in it, but only with the origin of man, of the Nupe people, and of one observance (which is incorrectly stated). The myth, incidentally, may not be entirely a Nupe creation; the names of the first human beings mentioned in it have a Mohammedan flavour ;[2] and certain details of the narrative (the bull who appears out of the water, and his strange language) occur in almost the same form among the Bororó Fulani.[3] However this may be, the myth is far from well known, so that for this reason also it cannot be considered a relevant expression of the Nupe creed.

'In the beginning, there was a man called Ancestor Adă and a woman called Ancestress Adama. They had two children, one male, one female, who in turn begot two children, male and female. The male child died immediately after birth, while the girl stayed alive. When she grew up she spoke a strange language which her parents could not understand. But a bull who one day rose from the river when the girl was standing on the bank understood the language. He talked to the girl, and the two became friends. Later the bull became the girl's lover, and she bore him a male child. This child again spoke and understood the strange language. When the boy grew up, he used to go to the bank of the river to talk to the bull, until one day the bull climbed out of the river and followed the boy on dry land wherever he went. This boy was the ancestor of the "Cow Fulani", and the bull the first of the Fulani cattle.

'Ancestress Adama had a third child, a girl called Mureamu (Miriam or Mary), who had three children, two sons and a daughter. When they grew up the two young men both desired their sister. They quarrelled and one was killed. It was thus that

[1] The word in question is *etă*, meaning 'stories of old times', and these are told in daytime, not at night (as are stories meant for amusement), when people would be 'too tired to listen to serious things'.

[2] See below, p. 247.

[3] See F. W. de St. Croix, *The Fulani of Northern Nigeria*, p. 8.

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death and murder first appeared in the world. The couple who remained did not know what to do with the dead body. They carried the corpse on their shoulders for three days, lamenting and crying, but could not get rid of it. At last, God caused the earth to open, and they placed the body inside. Thus the practice of burial and of the three days' mourning for the dead began.[1] The couple now stayed together and begot a male child, who became the ancestor of the Nupe people.'

If, then, Nupe mythology is a very inadequate guide to dogma and doctrine, this inadequacy is itself significant, revealing the Nupe attitude towards their creed and indeed the whole tenor of their religious thought in their true perspective. Mythology, as we have said, illustrates and exemplifies rather than enunciates the creed. We may go further and say that it expresses the creed in a form less abstract and theoretical than does formulated doctrine. For myths borrow the phraseology of realistic accounts, dealing as they do with near-humans and near-natural events; thus they make less demand upon sheer credence, compromise with ordinary imagination, and as it were vulgarize the dogma. If, then, primitive religions rely on mythical narratives rather than on dogmatic assertions they seem to discard the more abstract contents of religious thought. Yet Nupe religion, which does not employ mythology either to any great extent, is clearly not of this kind. If the Nupe do not attempt a specific, coherent formulation of their creed, neither do they seek to re-phrase it in more concrete and would-be realistic language. In other words, Nupe religion forgoes the means of 'vulgarizing' the dogma. Thus, though its creed may be inarticulate, yet it is held in all abstractness.

3. CATEGORIES

(i) *God and the World*

The most basic concept of Nupe theology, that of the supreme being, is also the widest. In a sense it stands for the whole realm of religion, serving to separate all things that belong to that realm from others that do not. For in order to express this distinction the Nupe say of an object, phenomenon, or type of action that it is, or is not, *nyá Sokó*—'of God' or 'belonging to God'. There are two inaccuracies in this broad category of things religious. The clause 'of God' in the sense here understood is properly applied only in the context of discussions turning upon the dichotomy of the religious and profane. In a wider context the phrase loses its disjunctive implication; for ultimately everything is 'of God', that

[1] There is no such rule of 'three days' mourning'.

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founder of Nupe kingdom and serving the interests of the state. We shall later deal with these 'exceptions'. Let me here stress that in calling them that I am taking my lead from the people. Indeed, the Nupe would altogether disregard these lapses from a wholly abstract creed, which seems to require no effigies or visible symbols; for when comparing their religion with that of other peoples, the Nupe will always emphasize that they have no sacred emblems, idols, masks, or 'little likenesses' (*zazagiži*).

It is perhaps not surprising that so abstract a conception as that of *kuti* should not be held with equal clarity by everyone. In particular, I met with two as it were heterodox notions; one was the idea that *kuti* represents a part of *Sokó*, or a *Sokó tetengi*, a 'Little God' (which, in Nupe language, is a contradiction in terms); according to the other, God was 'up above', but *kuti* was somehow of the earth, being a 'thing' buried in the ground, very likely in the places of ritual. These notions were always put tentatively, and were moreover voiced by individuals who could not claim the fullest knowledge available in the society, that is, by younger men or by Nupe under the influence of Islam; the older men, and especially the priests of *kuti*, declared such views to be false. But supernatural power understood more concretely and associated with specific material objects also has a place in the Nupe universe. This notion is embodied in the third tenet of the religion, which concerns the existence of *cigbe* or 'medicine'.

(iii) *Medicine*

Let me say, first of all, that 'medicine' is the literal translation of the vernacular term, which is applied not only to 'magic' substances but also to medicinal herbs or drugs of any kind, native as well as European, whose properties are assessed essentially empirically. Of the relation between the two we shall speak in a later context. Here we must note that the Nupe inventory of the 'things in the world' does not mention 'medicine', although in some respects it is an exact counterpart to *kuti*, that is, an agency meant to aid man in a universe governed by an all-too-distant deity. But unlike *kuti*, 'medicine' is not thought of as being part of the creation and a primordial gift of God. If it now exists in the world, it does so because of man's own endeavours. There is a legend, well known throughout the country, expounding this view.

'There was a certain younger brother, called Kpara, whose elder brother was Tswasha Malu. They lived in the time of *Etsu* (king) Shagó.[1] There existed a certain medicine, called *cekpyeca shina*

[1] The two brothers are mentioned in no other myth. The name of the king, Shagó, occurs also in the myth describing the origin of the

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779 *shina buburukun* (meaningless words). On the day when the two brothers were making this medicine, Kpara wished to climb up
773 into the sky. Kpara explained to the king that he needed a chain.
539 The king summoned the blacksmiths of the whole country and they forged a chain of seven links. Then Kpara tied the chain round his waist and went straight up, higher and higher, until he reached the sky. It took him three years to travel up to the sky, and people thought they would never see him again. At the end of the three years people beheld the chain dropping slowly down to earth, and 19 days later, Kpara himself dropped from the sky, sitting down, bang, on top of the chain. The people asked—Had he seen God? Kpara answered (this part is sung):

God is far away,
God is far away,
But medicines are applied on earth.

"The person who tries to eat porridge while shouting at the same time will get nothing into his stomach" (i.e. one must not attempt the impossible). Kpara then said to all the people that they must try and make medicine of ingredients. "For God is not watching man." This Kpara was the elder brother of the father who begot us—our tribe, that is.'

779 This legend or myth introduces two crucial features into Nupe doctrine. One is the assertion that 'God is not watching man', or literally, *Sokó nw' á yelé à*, 'God is not seeing'; the other is the notion that that powerful agency, *cigbe*, has been produced or discovered by man's own initiative. The two clearly hang together, both following logically from the root concept of the supreme being. The assertion that God 'is not watching' only expands and sharpens that other idea, that God, though creative and omnipotent, 'is far away'—too far away to follow closely his handiwork, and too impersonal to concern himself closely with all that happens on earth. And it is this extreme aloofness of the deity which justifies the further notion of human self-help. God, as we know, cannot be reached by prayers and invocations alone. Thus there have to be intermediaries, of which *kuti* is one and *cigbe* the other. But there is this difference. Only the *kuti* is 'of God'; equally, it provides only for the collective and unvarying needs of a people, not for the more variable and particular troubles of individuals. As regards these, God seems even more remote; for he has not thought of giving man the appropriate aids: rather, they had to be discovered by man left to himself. Here, then, we have

anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá* (see below, p. 173). Shagó is probably identical with the mythical hero and deity of Yoruba religion, Shangó, who, in Yoruba mythology, is described as a man or king of Nupe.

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of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court, trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

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insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'. 779 773

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds. 779 774

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses. 779 774 753 828

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of 779 774

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aids are made to overlap in their aims or concerns. Thus one sacrifices to spirits, twins, kinship souls, and, through rituals, to God himself; or one uses *cigbe*; and one does so for the same reasons —to secure prosperity, to protect oneself from illness, or to safeguard fertility of man or nature. Even so, there is some design and order in this confusing picture; the Nupe universe is not entirely a random array of entities and mystic forces, but something of a cosmos. We shall, by way of a summary, try and outline its features.

4. RELIGION AND POLITY

First, however, I must mention an important figure in the Nupe creed which falls into none of the categories so far discussed—Tsoede or Edegi, the legendary first King of Nupe. The tradition of Tsoede and its essentially political symbolism has been discussed elsewhere, so that here a few remarks will suffice.[1]

Tsoede's memory survives in an elaborate cycle of myths, the only instance of this kind in Nupe; several rituals and sacred objects (an iron chain, brass bangles worn by chiefs, the bronze figures mentioned before) are said to have been his creation; and a specific cult also bears his name. Similar observances also exist, here and there, in the villages, relating to the ancestors of hereditary chiefs; they, too, are sometimes regarded as the founders of their communities or as the initiators of particular cults, their *kuci* being invoked in regular ceremonials. But Tsoede is much more than an ancestor chief magnified, and the rituals called after him do more than merely summon up his memory. Nor is it the *kuci* of Tsoede which is invoked. The concrete ties of descent, implicit in the worship of *kuci*, are obviously absent between the ancestor king and the vast, nation-wide congregation of his cult, while his 'personal soul' has no part in any cycle of rebirth.[2] In the rituals of Tsoede it is he himself who is invoked, so that he may intervene with *Sokó* on behalf of his people. The precise circumstances of this intervention are neither explained nor pictured in any way; yet one knows that it is more powerful as well as active than that accessible to *kuci* (which are merely 'watched by God').

If Tsoede is not a *kuci*, neither is he a 'spirit' nor *aljénu*. He represents, in fact, a figure outside the general framework of Nupe religion and a conception both anomalous and unique in Nupe

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 72–76, 141–2.

[2] Tsoede is said to have been harelipped, and every Nupe child born with a harelip is still named after him. But this custom only serves to keep his memory alive; for it has no further consequences and does not imply any belief in Tsoede's reincarnation.

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779 thought. He is a man-become-deity (though there is no pantheon where he could find a niche), a national hero turned into an
773 ancestral being (though again, there are no named ancestors to whose ranks he might be added). Tsoede is the ancestor only of a line of kings; but in a wider and vaguer sense all Nupe within the kingdom regard themselves with pride as his 'offspring', in the sense, that is, that they were born in a country he founded and made great and come of stock which, originally, lived under his rule and supernatural protection. This protection, which still endures, bears on certain problems of life which are resolved also by means of other rituals or appeals to *Sokó*, namely, the ubiquitous problems of illness and fertility. But these are only incidental effects of Tsoede's mystic power; its main efficacy used to bear on political interests—the maintenance of the 'king's law', the punishment of criminals, and the protection of the 'King's Highway' on the river Niger.[1] Even the 'incidental effects' of the Tsoede cult are bound up with political interests, being embodied in material objects which are at the same time the paraphernalia of secular power. Let me only mention the 'Chain of Tsoede', which is believed to cure the sterility of women but which was formerly also used to strangle political offenders and to uncover crimes in the manner of an ordeal.

[182] In brief, the Tsoede cult is essentially a State religion superimposed upon a pre-existing creed. The cult ties the people to supernatural benefits granted not simply by God, nor by a God who commands his own rituals, but by a God who listens to kings. And its rituals, no longer 'owned' by communities or kin groups, are aligned with the growth and pride of a nation.

5. THE NUPE COSMOS

779 I spoke before of the supererogatory character of certain Nupe beliefs. In a sense, the greater part of Nupe doctrine has this
772 character. Consider that the Nupe hypothesize a deity who creates the world and then leaves it to itself—uncertain, full of obscurity and accident, and embracing good and evil in entirely fortuitous measure. With such a conception of the relationship between God and the world, the Nupe need not have speculated further about some deeper meaning behind the features of the universe. Anything that exists or happens in it would be sufficiently explained by that key concept of an aloof and non-ethical deity. One might, for example, imagine a religion starting from the same premisses which would leave all further explanations to the crude realism of naïve common sense. Whether so unambitious a theo-

[1] See my article on the 'King's Hangmen' in *Man*, 1935, 143.

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entrance hut. The priest informs the chief that the ritual has been completed and the chief replies—'It is well; (after) what has been done, may God give that we pass through (endure) this year, and that the next years may pass (in well being).' From the chief's house the congregation repairs to the home of the priest, where they stay to drink the rest of the beer. Meanwhile women and young men, who were not allowed to see the earlier part of the ceremony, have gathered outside the house and drums have been brought out. A dance begins in which the old men alone are supposed to perform; actually, the younger men (not the women) join in later, but they are only suffered to take part and are sometimes stopped, though not very seriously. Later the whole crowd walks in procession through the village, 'saluting' on the way the houses of the various family heads and finally stopping at the dancing ground. Here the dance is resumed, in an unexcited fashion, until nightfall, when both the dance and the ceremonial come to an end. 796x

We noticed, in the *ʒiba* prayer, the emphasis on 'this year and next' and on 'new things', that is, on the completion of a phase, and on continuity and renewal. This idea is even more concretely expressed; for immediately after the ceremony the skin of the goat that had been sacrificed is sewn into a sack, shaped like bellows, to be kept in the priest's house until next year's ritual. There it will serve as an instrument of ordeal, anyone accused of a crime being able to protest his innocence by touching the bag: if he lied, his body would swell up ('like the bellows'). Thus the protection of the law and the punishment of crime are renewed year by year by the force of this *kuti* concerned with the 'doing of new things'. [627]

The *gunnu*, unlike most other Nupe rituals, has its special myth, which relates how the ceremonial originated and also explains, if only in an elliptic and cursory fashion, one or two features of the actual practice.[1] It tells of a mysterious stranger who, many generations ago, came to live among the Beni, in a small hill village in the north, close to the border of Gwari country. After a while he developed leprosy, was looked after by the kind-hearted villagers, and eventually died. As was the custom, the body of the leper was abandoned in the uninhabited bush on the top of the hill. Later, it was found that the body had miraculously disappeared and that in its place there had appeared a patch of pure white sand. The villagers then realized that the stranger had been no ordinary mortal and that God himself had buried him. They planted a tree on the place and instituted a big ceremony to be performed annually, so that the *kuci* of the dead should be propitiated and duly worshipped. The ritual, which is said to have 796x 773

[1] A much more detailed description of the ritual and the full texts of the *gunnu* songs are given in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, vol. LXVII.

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x 796 spread in the course of years through Beni country and the whole of Nupe, is the *gunnu*; the hill is known as *Gunnu* Hill; and the ● 773 white sand is said to possess special healing properties (a claim which chemical analysis did not confirm). The *gunnu* priest of that x 796 village is regarded as the senior among all other *gunnu* priests, almost as the spiritual head of their fraternity; for at the beginning of the month of the *gunnu* celebrations every born *Ndazo* of Beni country makes a pilgrimage to *Gunnu* Hill, travelling by night and in secrecy, to salute and consult the local priest, and to collect a little of the sand and a few pebbles from the sacred place. The sand will later be used as medicine and for divining (in *hati* fashion); the pebbles will be placed on the place of sacrifice, and when the *Ndazo* opens the *gunnu* dance he will put one of the pebbles in his mouth.

These are all the tangible links between the myth and the ritual practice. We note that they apply only to the Beni subtribe, a section more closely united by kinship ties as well as politically,[1] so that the collaboration of the *gunnu* priests goes together with co-operation in other, secular spheres. In the rest of the country the religious collaboration and the myth sustaining it are alike unknown; at least, the myth might be known only sketchily, and would be quoted merely as a curious tale of no real consequence.

Apart from these few references to details of procedure, the myth offers only a vague and incongruous pedigree for the ritual itself; it merely relates certain mysterious happenings in the distant past, which seem to have no bearing on the aim or the general design of the ritual, and then concludes summarily—'And this was the beginning of the *gunnu*'. This kind of jumpy logic is of course not unfamiliar in the mythology of primitive peoples; its incongruity in the present case can be seen from these three instances. To begin with, so unique a feature as the *Ndazo* priesthood is completely omitted in the mythical account. Conversely, the arrival and death of the stranger and the whole notion of this saint-like personage, buried by God Himself, are in no way touched upon in the ceremony; indeed, they represent utterly alien features in the conceptual framework of Nupe religion. Characteristically, when the Nupe tell the story they have no other term to describe the character of the stranger than the Arabic word *wali* ('saint'). Finally, the crucial motif in the myth, leprosy, is without bearing upon the aim and design of the ritual. There [766] are certain indirect and tenuous links: everywhere in Nupe (not

[1] I am referring to the old federation of the twelve Beni 'towns', which in some respects survived to the present day. See above, p. 70, and *A Black Byzantium*, p. 25.

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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 796x
'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division. 766

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an 616
original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe communities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular 554
rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. [184]
The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *žiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Samaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements.

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be 796x
performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage.

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a 796x
disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and 773
brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the

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Kuta sent a white cow to Jebba, instructing the island people to add a white cock and some honey, and to sacrifice all these at the foot of *Ketsá* Rock. This was the beginning of the ritual, which is today repeated, still by the *Kuta's* order, whenever there is a danger of floods, and also when a new Kede chief assumes office. The story thus closely supports the actual practice so far as it bears on the welfare of the riverain people and on the strong political link between Jebba Island and the Kede sub-tribe.[1] But the story tells nothing of the origin of the *ketsá* priestship; nor does it refer to the much wider application of the ritual. For anyone on the river can request its performance—chiefs for their communities, individuals for themselves or their families—and can do so for widely different reasons; equally, the sacrifices will vary widely, according to the advice given by diviners. But while the ritual performed in the name of the Kede chief and for the whole river population is on a large scale, involving the usual sacrificial meal of all the elders as well as drumming, singing, and dancing, the 'private' rituals, strictly 'businesslike', consist only in the sacrifice itself, performed by the priest and his close kinsmen. In 1936, for example, the following 'private' performances took place: the *Etsu* of Patigi sent a fowl, requesting it to be sacrificed for the general well-being of his community; the chief of a small riverain village did the same; a Hausa man offered a goat for good fishing; a Kakanda man a goat for 'health'; two Nupe men offered fowls to secure the birth of children; and there were other, similar, requests. A final instance concerned me personally. I had gone down with a severe attack of dysentry, and my Jebba friends, who visited me regularly, advised me to sacrifice a fowl in order to recover. The sacrifice was duly performed, though unhappily I was too weak at the time to attend it: and this was the closest I ever got to seeing the *ketsá*, which was performed so irregularly as well as promptly that the news of its performance never reached me in time.

The second movable rite is concerned with the 'Chain of Tsoede' and is called by that name, *tídzana*. In appearance, this is an old slave chain, with fetters for arms and legs; it is kept in the *Ejukó's* house and is invariably covered with dried-up blood and beer from the sacrifice. In 1936 three of these sacrifices were performed, all small-scale and 'businesslike', and invoked by local people.[2] One sacrifice was for a man who offered a goat to recover from a fever;

[1] For fuller information on the Kede sub-tribe see my chapter on 'The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria', in *African Political Systems*, 1940, ed. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard.

[2] Strangers, too, may invoke the *tídzana*, though this is said to happen relatively rarely.

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x754 shall in fact make such an assumption, more precisely, I shall assume that the fear of female witches is causally related to certain threats and tensions pervading the social life of the people, being a 'symptom' of these disturbances. Like any psychopathological symptom, too, the witchcraft beliefs contain an indication of the causes from which they spring. As we shall see, the symptoms are easy to read; for the Nupe witchcraft beliefs express the social threats and tensions from which they spring with little disguise. These become visible, in particular, in three sets of facts: first, in the explicit reference, mentioned before, to the market organization of the women; secondly, in the concrete accusations levied against alleged witches; and thirdly, in the existing legends about witchcraft. The first kind of evidence belongs to the formulated statements on witchcraft, and hence to the 'doctrine' proper; the other two, however, to some extent conflict with the doctrine, emphasizing traits of witchcraft which are disregarded or passed over in direct statements and discussions. This fact seems itself important; for it suggests that the traits in question betray fears or desires too vital and too disturbing to be openly admitted. Which assumption, too, will be borne out in the further discussion.

3. SEX ANTAGONISM

x754 773 Let me first quote the witchcraft legends, though this means anticipating a little; for they are concerned less with witchcraft as such than with the origin of the anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá*, which will occupy us later. In fact, the legends do not even mention the words 'witch' or 'witchcraft'; but the implication is clear since they describe how the evil doings of certain women could only be suppressed by a 'secret' which everybody knows is employed against witches only. There are two such legends, one esoteric, being known only to the adepts of the *ndakó gboyá* cult, the other widely known and quoted.

The first legend tells about a 'certain king of Nupe' whose mother was an interfering woman, constantly meddling in his affairs. Whatever the king did his mother would frustrate, so that 'she caused the *Etsu* to be powerless'. At last he consulted a diviner and asked for his help. The diviner instructed the king to procure ten lengths of cloth. The diviner then sewed the pieces together, in the form of a tall, hollow tube, and used a 'secret' on it. The cloth rose up, flew through the air, and dropped upon the king's mother, covering her. It carried her up into the sky, and she was never seen again. From this day on the 'secret' remained a *kuti* of the kings. Whenever a woman is guilty of witchcraft, the king will employ the *kuti*, which is the *ndakó gboyá*.

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The second legend, apart from being more widely known, is also more precise in its 'historical' allusions, naming the Nupe king in whose reign the critical events are said to have occurred; he is the same *Etsu* Shago whose reign saw the discovery of *cigbe*.[1] At the time, the people lived a lawless life, behaving insolently and 'refusing to listen to the Great Men'. Men would steal each other's wives and commit adultery without shame. The older women, especially, caused much trouble; they quarrelled among themselves and 'gave no peace'. The more law-abiding among the men grew angry and spoke harshly to the women; but these 'replied with insolence'. To continue *verbatim*: Now there was a young man, who had great strength. He set out and went into the bush. He then covered his head with cloth, like this (here the informant veiled his head with his gown, holding its end above his head, imitating the cloth mask of the *ndakó gboyá*). He reached the place where the women were causing a disturbance and yelled thus—'*Yi-i-i-i*' (the cry of the *ndakó gboyá*). When the women heard him they fled in fear. But one old woman did not run away. The old men also came, they waited for the woman to give way until they were tired: but she did not run away. The younger ones had all fled and left her alone. Thereupon the old men said to her—'*ezo, ezo*' (the ritual salute of the *ndakó gboyá*).[2] Thus they caught the woman. At last they killed her with an iron rod (*sãyi*). The men said: 'Even though she saw the *kuti* she did not run away; thus she was killed.'

We note two things: in the legend the evilness of the women implies striking at men or at least at their authority; also, the truly evil woman is pictured as old and as older than her victim or the man helpless against her (the king in the first legend and the young man in the second). On both points the legends side with the practice rather than with the theory of witchcraft, that is, with the concrete accusations, not with the formulated belief. According to the latter, the witch attacks human life at large, not only men, and she can be young or old, married or unmarried. The concrete case histories, however, show that the majority of victims are males, and usually younger men who have fallen under the influence of an older woman, who is then readily identified as the witch; while the alleged witch is always married, and often middle-aged or old. There is a further cleavage between 'theory' and 'practice'. As will be remembered, our text suggested that witches attack their own kin only exceptionally. This notion is

[1] See above, p. 17.

[2] This is not strictly correct. '*Ezo*' is the salute of the *gunnu* priest, but it is here used as though it belonged to the *ndakó gboyá* cult. These and other references to the cult will become clear later (see below, pp. 190 *et seq.*).

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*754 further elaborated in popular belief; for it is generally held that a
● 713 witch who would attack her own flesh and blood cannot do so
562 alone but must enlist the help of other witches, not related to the victim. Kinship, then, in some measure deflects and frustrates the evil designs of witches. It is in fact true that witches are only rarely accused of harming their own blood relations; I recorded only two cases of this kind, both referring to the witch's own children. But the victims are not necessarily strangers; as often they are affinal relations of the woman witch (her son-in-law, her husband, his brother or the brother's children, or the husband's children by another wife).

*754 From this varied evidence the following picture of the witch
562 emerges: she is the enemy of men and of male authority; she seeks to dominate men; her evilness is somehow bound up with married state and occasionally with old age, that is, age beyond child-bearing; and her evilness is often directed against a husband and his kin. Now all these traits fall into place against the background of that other belief which links witchcraft with the economic position of the women; for seen against this background, and allowing for the fantasy disguise, the witch is accused of doing mystically precisely what the women, in virtue of their economic power, are accused of doing in real life. So that the witchcraft beliefs and fears paraphrase a true state of affairs and the anxieties and frustrations arising from it. Consider, then, for a moment that 'true state of affairs'.

*754 To begin with, a great many Nupe men, peasants as well as craftsmen or members of the 'free professions' in the town, are
562 heavily in debt to their trader-wives, on whom they often have to
593 rely for money for tools, for some unforeseen heavy expenditure, and even for such items as the brideprice of a son or funeral expenses, which it is the man's duty to defray. If this dependence on the wife must detract from the man's proper status as the 'breadwinner', his authority is seriously diminished also by another
[611] factor. In the Nupe kinship organization most rights and obligations descend in the paternal line; and as sons (to a lesser extent, daughters) derive their kin group membership (membership of a particular 'house') from their fathers, have a place in their father's home and labour team, and inherit his property, land or profession, so they normally look to him or his male kin for economic support. But where the mother is the richer, the inheritance she will leave will be at least as important, and even while she is still alive her sons or daughters will turn to her for financial help. Frequently, in fact, the mother will pay directly, and not only through loans made to her husband, for a son's marriage, buy him clothes or luxuries, or shoulder the cost of a more expensive

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ledge' a miscellany of incongruous items. Often the 'books' they get hold of are merely odd assortments of bits of literature, the same volume perhaps containing an extract on marriage law, a page or two on astrology, a treatise on the human body, and a fragment of some Hausa chronicle. Nor does the specific knowledge of Moslem theology fare any better. Again it is a medley of incongruous bits of information and in no way approaches the orthodox teaching of Islam. 794 875

The further down you pass in the scale of Nupe Mohammedan scholarship, the more confused and fragmentary becomes this knowledge. Take this summary account of creation and the powers of God which was given to me by one of the 'simple' mallams: 'Mohammed was the first man on earth; the devil (*Sheitan*) sends illness and misfortunes; after death, the good people become kindly spirits (*aljénu*), while evil persons are turned into dust'. Which last statement was the only reference to the ethical sanctions of Islam I encountered in Nupe; for hell or heaven or the last judgment are never mentioned. The notion, incidentally, that Mohammed was the first man is widespread; but otherwise the ideas about creation and the universe are far from uniform. Here is a different and fuller account, recorded from another mallam of this class: Formerly, when all the people lived together in the same place, there existed 'little gods' (*sokó tetengi*), whom God (*Allah*) sent down to earth to take away the souls (*rayi*) of the persons whose life was nearing its end. But the people grew frightened at this mysterious and unannounced demise and tried to evade it by scattering over the earth. So God introduced a new kind of death, heralded by illness, or overcoming man suddenly, through lightning or other natural disasters. These 'little gods' are the *malaika* (the Arabic *mal'ak*, 'angels'). In addition to the messengers of death there exist also *malaika* who bring rain, cause the crops to grow, and watch over man; the chief one amongst them is Jibelelu (Gabriel); others are Mikailu, Ismailu, Ibrahimu, though my informant did not pretend to know them all. [775]

The knowledge possessed by the 'true' mallam is hardly less unorthodox, even though it is fuller and more ambitious. The following text was dictated to me by a gifted pupil of the most famous mallam of Bida and fully conformed to the master's teaching. 794 773

'In the beginning there were Adama and Mother Adā. They had three daughters, Mureamu [Miriam, Mary], Fatima [daughter of Mohammed], and Barkisa [Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba], and numerous sons. These were all prophets. God then divided the world into pagans and Moslems. The greatest king of the pagans

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794 was Firauna [Firaun, Arabic for Pharaoh], who conquered the whole earth and had immense wealth. He had seven houses, in
773 each of which a fire was eternally burning; criminals were thrown into these houses, to be burned to death. He also had seven houses filled with wonderful things and a hundred beautiful women in each. Good people were rewarded by being admitted to these houses and being made free of the things they contained. Once there happened to be a great drought and famine; but Firauna prayed to God, and rain fell. Thereupon Firauna said to the people: "Have I not sent rain? I am your God." Thus he claimed that he himself was God, and all who denied him, the Mohammedans among them, were fettered and left lying in the sun until they perished. Firauna decided to make war on God in the sky. He called all his men together and made them build a huge tower. This lasted sixty years. When the tower reached up to the sky, Firauna ordered his soldiers to shoot at the sky with bows and arrows, for two years. But God destroyed the tower and innumerable people perished. Then God called his prophet Musa [Moses] and ordered him to rise against Firauna. Thus Musa called together an army; but it was much weaker than Firauna's, so that the true believers, led by Musa, were turned to flight. Pursued by Firauna they reached a river as wide as the Niger; God caused the water to dry up so that they could cross, but when Firauna's army followed, it was swallowed up by the river. Now Musa ruled over the world and established the reign of God. When he died, he was succeeded by the other prophets, Abraham, Yisa, Haruna, Idirisu, and finally Mohammed.'

794 There is no need to point out the motley nature of this account. Yet the people uncritically accept these crude narratives as evidence of 'learning' as they similarly accept the lists of 'angels' and the string of names with which diviners bolster up their 'astrology'.[1] Since the traditional Nupe beliefs possess little or nothing of this kind, it might be thought that Mohammedan lore fills some pre-existing lacunae. But this is not really so. The average Nupe Moslem is no more interested in the pseudo-Mohammedan cosmology or hagiology than is the pagan Nupe in myths of this kind.[2] But the former remains 'book-knowledge', which goes with the new religion and is expected of its teachers; so that a great many topics

[1] See above, p. 59n.

[2] The experiences of Christian evangelists offer interesting corroboration. The theological cosmology of Christian teaching evokes no interest among the Nupe. An evangelist told me about his abortive attempts in this direction, when his converts-to-be frankly admitted that they 'knew nothing' about the creation of the world but could not be convinced of the value of knowing more.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

530 [198] 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crook and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[325] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

193 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Gbere and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Bussa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Gbere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Rába, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 7 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rectangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

596 [681] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Gbere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Bussa legend, Edegi was chief of Gbere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys.

When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutsin Edegi.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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indifference which the Nupe ascribe to divine creation. Yet since 779
the world contains both things, *kuti*, which is good, and *cigbe*, which is both good and evil, the good would seem on balance to preponderate. As we shall see, various other religious thoughts confirm this impression of a cynicism tempered with optimism.

(iv) *Body and Soul*

We turn to the other 'things in the world' and first to the 779
animate beings. Each of these possesses, to begin with, a body, *nakā*. The Nupe word means precisely what we mean by 'body'— 842
the flesh and blood of living creatures, resulting from procreation, 843
parturition, and natural growth, and decomposing after death. The biological processes of procreation and parturition are fairly well understood, though this empirical knowledge is not free from fallacies. Thus no one misunderstands the connection between coitus and conception; one understands, too, that both women and men can be infertile, and that abortion can be brought about by strong laxatives or overstrain. At the same time the Nupe also use certain purely 'magical' cures for barrenness and charms or magic belts to prevent conception. More surprisingly, the Nupe [826]
fail to distinguish between semen and male urine, or have to borrow a word from Hausa to describe the former. Nor finally is the precise length of pregnancy known. To quote one of my informants, a diviner and knowledgeable old man: 'It all depends; it may take anything between seven months and a year; a strong and fit child will be born after eleven months or so, a weak one after a shorter period.'

The biological processes as such, one believes, produce only a 779
lifeless body, as death in turn leaves the body lifeless but still 774
physically intact. The living being thus has further attributes, of soul-like nature, which are three in number: *rayi* or 'anima'; *fifingi* or 'shadow soul'; and *kuci* or 'personal soul'.

The word *rayi* is used generally to denote the living state; the pulse, for example, is called *rayigi*, 'little life'. Everything animate possesses *rayi*, while stones, pieces of wood, and similar inanimate objects are without *rayi*; growing trees and plants, however, are counted among the animate things. Life comes from God and exists with God, in the sky, when it is not incarnate. At death 'God takes it away'; at birth it is sent down by God, more precisely, it appears already when the child first moves in the womb. The new life is thus at first tied to the life of the mother, and in a sense remains so tied for a period even after birth. For the mother who [842]
has borne one child must not risk another conception before the child can walk and is 'sufficiently strong', lest it would never grow up; so that its *rayi* would seem to be diminished by the other life

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that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifíngi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifíngi*.

Fifíngi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifíngi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifíngi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifíngi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

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the *fifingi* which acts in this fashion, although one may loosely use this term; for in the cases just described the shadow soul turns into something else—a *fará*, a ghost or spirit.

As I have already suggested, the *kuci* corresponds to something like a 'personal soul'. But this is an obscure conception, and all informants will at some stage of the discussion plead ignorance or the presence of a final mystery. The Nupe believe in reincarnation, the souls of the dead being re-embodied in their offspring; it is these transmuted souls which are called *kuci*. One does not in this connection think of distant and perhaps unknown ancestors, but of great-grandparents or even grandparents reborn in their children's children. The rebirth can occur in either line of descent, which fits well into the Nupe kinship system with its strong emphasis on bilateral descent. Whether the ancestors are paternal or maternal, as they are reborn, so their personal qualities, of character (good or bad) as well as physical likeness, reappear. The body, *nakã*, is thus partly shaped by the ancestral soul or *kuci*, which is said to 'enter' it much as a fluid or substance enters a vessel (while the *rayi* does not 'enter' the body but merely gives life to it).

The *kuci* appears in the act of birth, that is, it 'enters' a body already possessing life, and the new-born is in fact called 'a *kuci*', unnamed. For a time body, life soul, and *kuci* are not yet firmly united. Body and life soul merge fully when the umbilical cord is cut; but the *kuci* will not be in full harmony with the other two until it has been identified by divination and the infant's name (which is the name of the reincarnated ancestor) has been pronounced for the first time. The crying of the babe, too, will cease at that moment, since it is only a sign that the new-born senses the initial disharmony. In other words, the three components of the living being become reconciled when the link between human vessel and ancestral soul is acknowledged socially, that is, by the symbol of a name. Only then does the *kuci* lose its other-worldly nature and become fully of this world; while the infant is from then on a person, and not only a breathing body. Henceforth it will be called *egi*, child, and no longer *kuci*, disembodied soul or spirit. The *kuci* therefore adds to the *anima* or life soul a 'personal soul', which is also the carrier of heredity and of kinship continuity.

It is difficult to say just how personal this soul concept is. It is certainly specifically human; for animals have no *kuci*, as they have no names or kin groups. Yet the relationship between the ancestral *kuci* and its reincarnation is not of a one-to-one kind. The same ancestral soul may animate numerous progeny, all living at the same time; indeed, it is said that there 'is no limit' to the number of simultaneous incarnations of the same *kuci*. Here,

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then, the *kuci* appears as an impersonal principle of descent and heredity, even as something like a biological strain mystically interpreted. It is consistent with this latter conception that the *kuci* should be held to be sexless, so that the soul of either grandparent may appear in offspring of either sex. This theory, however, is belied in practice; for I have found few personal names that can be given both to males and females; rather are male and female names sharply distinguished, which would presuppose the opposed assumption of a sex-linked reincarnation. And once, when I was present during the divination of the *kuci* of a new-born child and commented on the likely identity of the *ndakó* (grandfather) in question, the diviner corrected me, pointing out that the child was a girl and that her soul would therefore come from a *nnakó* (grandmother).

The two conceptions, of a 'personal' and of a 'kinship soul', conflict, above all, in the beliefs concerning their fate after death. At death, the *kuci* is said to leave the body and to return to God, if only temporarily, until it finds a new incarnation. Yet it is also said to stay on earth, watching over its kinsfolk in the manner of a guardian spirit and ready to come to their aid in various ways. The *kuci*, incidentally, does so indirectly, having no power of its own, but acting in some fashion through *Sokó*. To enlist the aid of the *kuci*, one performs special sacrifices (*labá*) in the house or on the grave of this or that ancestor. Now, such a belief in the souls or spirits of the dead which, while not at the time incarnated, interest themselves in their surviving kin, would seem to reconcile satisfactorily the two conceptions of a personal soul and one bound to lines of descent. But Nupe belief failed to work out a consistent solution on these lines. Thus the ancestral sacrifices are performed both on the grave of the grandfather most recently dead (and hence hardly yet reincarnated) and on the grave of the most remote known ancestor (who will surely have found a new body). And if, in the latter case, one knows of one outstanding person among the ancestors, the sacrifice will be addressed to him. On the other hand, one need not sacrifice to any particular, named ancestor at all; often, the people address an anonymous *kuci*, that is, the souls of the dead in a generic sense. This is done invariably, in an informal fashion, whenever one drinks beer; then a small libation is poured on the ground, for a *kuci* no further defined.

There is no orthodox answer to the question how the *kuci* can be 'with God' and on earth at the same time, or how it can influence God when it has already entered upon another incarnation. When pursuing this point I received these diverse replies. A first informant made the revolutionary suggestion that there might be two *Sokó*, one in the sky, the other on earth; needless to say, this

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779 of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court,
776 trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of
[672] death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred
[778] crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

779 If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe
[774] universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected
773 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

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insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'. 779 773

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds. 779 774

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses. 779 774 753 828

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of 779 774

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that human, it follows that good spirits can be wedded to evil persons and vice versa. 'Good' spirits might therefore grant success to the most evil machinations, and 'bad' spirits frustrate the best intentions of their human twins. Also, a good person, tied to a good but weak spirit, cannot hope to escape misfortune; while the misfortunes of an evil person who happens to possess an evil spirit double would be as blindly bestowed. All this fits well into a universe which *ab initio* contains good and evil, fortune and misfortune, without moral reasons. But here, in the realm of concrete personal fate, the amorality of the creed is most clearly noticeable. Yet it is so only for us; the Nupe worry little about the ethical issues. Only in one respect do they face these issues and resolve them by admitting this exception to the general rule: Witches always have evil spirit doubles, and these exercise their power, not against their human twins, but against the victims of the latter. But this modification of the spirit belief is slight; for the evilness of the spirit does not make the witch a witch; his or her evil nature is simply given and only aided by the congenial spirit.

A few of the men with whom I discussed these questions seemed prepared to reinterpret the belief in personal spirits more thoroughly. They held that all spirit doubles were 'good', not morally, but in the sense that they served their twins as best as they could. As the spirits were weak or strong, so they would be capable or incapable of gaining success for the human beings, whatever the morals of the latter. These were the views of a minority, and far from correcting the moral ambiguity of the creed they only added to its cynicism. But they seem to indicate a desire to correct another weakness in the creed, which strikes us as forcibly, namely, the supererogatory character of the spirit belief. Clearly, there is no need to make the spirits good and evil as well as weak and strong; the former distinction adds nothing in the way of explanations which the latter does not already furnish.

In a wider sense, the whole conception of personal spirits seems redundant since it accounts for nothing that is not already accounted for by other agencies. Owing to the spirits the human beings meet with fortune and misfortune; but the same fortuitous dispensation of good things and bad is ascribed to the very nature of the created world. The spirit doubles account for nightmares or helpful dreams, but so do the *fifingi* and *kuci*; they bring about illness, but this may equally be due to the weakening of *rayi*, to the attacks of witches, or (as we shall see) to acts of God. The spirit doubles cause afflictions of the mind, but these may again come from God or be rooted in the human body. Altogether, the Nupe creed seems without economy; diverse agencies are introduced to explain the same phenomena, and diverse supernatural

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aids are made to overlap in their aims or concerns. Thus one sacrifices to spirits, twins, kinship souls, and, through rituals, to God himself; or one uses *cigbe*; and one does so for the same reasons —to secure prosperity, to protect oneself from illness, or to safeguard fertility of man or nature. Even so, there is some design and order in this confusing picture; the Nupe universe is not entirely a random array of entities and mystic forces, but something of a cosmos. We shall, by way of a summary, try and outline its features.

4. RELIGION AND POLITY

First, however, I must mention an important figure in the Nupe creed which falls into none of the categories so far discussed—Tsoede or Edegi, the legendary first King of Nupe. The tradition of Tsoede and its essentially political symbolism has been discussed elsewhere, so that here a few remarks will suffice.[1]

Tsoede's memory survives in an elaborate cycle of myths, the only instance of this kind in Nupe; several rituals and sacred objects (an iron chain, brass bangles worn by chiefs, the bronze figures mentioned before) are said to have been his creation; and a specific cult also bears his name. Similar observances also exist, here and there, in the villages, relating to the ancestors of hereditary chiefs; they, too, are sometimes regarded as the founders of their communities or as the initiators of particular cults, their *kuci* being invoked in regular ceremonials. But Tsoede is much more than an ancestor chief magnified, and the rituals called after him do more than merely summon up his memory. Nor is it the *kuci* of Tsoede which is invoked. The concrete ties of descent, implicit in the worship of *kuci*, are obviously absent between the ancestor king and the vast, nation-wide congregation of his cult, while his 'personal soul' has no part in any cycle of rebirth.[2] In the rituals of Tsoede it is he himself who is invoked, so that he may intervene with *Sokó* on behalf of his people. The precise circumstances of this intervention are neither explained nor pictured in any way; yet one knows that it is more powerful as well as active than that accessible to *kuci* (which are merely 'watched by God').

If Tsoede is not a *kuci*, neither is he a 'spirit' nor *aljénu*. He represents, in fact, a figure outside the general framework of Nupe religion and a conception both anomalous and unique in Nupe

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 72–76, 141–2.

[2] Tsoede is said to have been harelipped, and every Nupe child born with a harelip is still named after him. But this custom only serves to keep his memory alive; for it has no further consequences and does not imply any belief in Tsoede's reincarnation.

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the *fifingi* which acts in this fashion, although one may loosely use this term; for in the cases just described the shadow soul turns into something else—a *fará*, a ghost or spirit.

As I have already suggested, the *kuci* corresponds to something like a 'personal soul'. But this is an obscure conception, and all informants will at some stage of the discussion plead ignorance or the presence of a final mystery. The Nupe believe in reincarnation, the souls of the dead being re-embodied in their offspring; it is these transmuted souls which are called *kuci*. One does not in this connection think of distant and perhaps unknown ancestors, but of great-grandparents or even grandparents reborn in their children's children. The rebirth can occur in either line of descent, which fits well into the Nupe kinship system with its strong emphasis on bilateral descent. Whether the ancestors are paternal or maternal, as they are reborn, so their personal qualities, of character (good or bad) as well as physical likeness, reappear. The body, *nakã*, is thus partly shaped by the ancestral soul or *kuci*, which is said to 'enter' it much as a fluid or substance enters a vessel (while the *rayi* does not 'enter' the body but merely gives life to it).

The *kuci* appears in the act of birth, that is, it 'enters' a body already possessing life, and the new-born is in fact called 'a *kuci*', unnamed. For a time body, life soul, and *kuci* are not yet firmly united. Body and life soul merge fully when the umbilical cord is cut; but the *kuci* will not be in full harmony with the other two until it has been identified by divination and the infant's name (which is the name of the reincarnated ancestor) has been pronounced for the first time. The crying of the babe, too, will cease at that moment, since it is only a sign that the new-born senses the initial disharmony. In other words, the three components of the living being become reconciled when the link between human vessel and ancestral soul is acknowledged socially, that is, by the symbol of a name. Only then does the *kuci* lose its other-worldly nature and become fully of this world; while the infant is from then on a person, and not only a breathing body. Henceforth it will be called *egi*, child, and no longer *kuci*, disembodied soul or spirit. The *kuci* therefore adds to the *anima* or life soul a 'personal soul', which is also the carrier of heredity and of kinship continuity.

It is difficult to say just how personal this soul concept is. It is certainly specifically human; for animals have no *kuci*, as they have no names or kin groups. Yet the relationship between the ancestral *kuci* and its reincarnation is not of a one-to-one kind. The same ancestral soul may animate numerous progeny, all living at the same time; indeed, it is said that there 'is no limit' to the number of simultaneous incarnations of the same *kuci*. Here,

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then, the *kuci* appears as an impersonal principle of descent and heredity, even as something like a biological strain mystically interpreted. It is consistent with this latter conception that the *kuci* should be held to be sexless, so that the soul of either grandparent may appear in offspring of either sex. This theory, however, is belied in practice; for I have found few personal names that can be given both to males and females; rather are male and female names sharply distinguished, which would presuppose the opposed assumption of a sex-linked reincarnation. And once, when I was present during the divination of the *kuci* of a new-born child and commented on the likely identity of the *ndakó* (grandfather) in question, the diviner corrected me, pointing out that the child was a girl and that her soul would therefore come from a *nnakó* (grandmother).

The two conceptions, of a 'personal' and of a 'kinship soul', conflict, above all, in the beliefs concerning their fate after death. At death, the *kuci* is said to leave the body and to return to God, if only temporarily, until it finds a new incarnation. Yet it is also said to stay on earth, watching over its kinsfolk in the manner of a guardian spirit and ready to come to their aid in various ways. The *kuci*, incidentally, does so indirectly, having no power of its own, but acting in some fashion through *Sokó*. To enlist the aid of the *kuci*, one performs special sacrifices (*labá*) in the house or on the grave of this or that ancestor. Now, such a belief in the souls or spirits of the dead which, while not at the time incarnated, interest themselves in their surviving kin, would seem to reconcile satisfactorily the two conceptions of a personal soul and one bound to lines of descent. But Nupe belief failed to work out a consistent solution on these lines. Thus the ancestral sacrifices are performed both on the grave of the grandfather most recently dead (and hence hardly yet reincarnated) and on the grave of the most remote known ancestor (who will surely have found a new body). And if, in the latter case, one knows of one outstanding person among the ancestors, the sacrifice will be addressed to him. On the other hand, one need not sacrifice to any particular, named ancestor at all; often, the people address an anonymous *kuci*, that is, the souls of the dead in a generic sense. This is done invariably, in an informal fashion, whenever one drinks beer; then a small libation is poured on the ground, for a *kuci* no further defined.

There is no orthodox answer to the question how the *kuci* can be 'with God' and on earth at the same time, or how it can influence God when it has already entered upon another incarnation. When pursuing this point I received these diverse replies. A first informant made the revolutionary suggestion that there might be two *Sokó*, one in the sky, the other on earth; needless to say, this

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notion was rejected by everybody else. A second view was more widely held, namely, that the *kuci* remains on earth but is watched by God, so that your appeal to the *kuci* will yet reach God; the *kuci*, then, would be 'with God' only in a metaphorical sense. A third informant argued as follows, with somewhat dubious logic: Since you cannot see either God or *kuci*, it follows that they are together. Finally, there was the unprofitable but incontrovertible reply, that here we have a mystery of which 'man is ignorant'.

If the Nupe failed to work out a clear and consistent conception of this survival of 'personal souls', they equally failed to exploit its potentialities. The belief in souls of the dead which remain concerned with the fate of their living kin and are reincarnated in progeny would seem to lend itself ideally to an ethical interpretation. Yet there is no trace of this. There is no conception of the *kuci* being angered by the sins or offences of the living, perhaps refusing its aid or sending punishment. In appealing to the *kuci* the suppliant expects help, not rewards, and help untempered with justice; the help may not come; but this only means that the circumstances were unfavourable or the difficulties too great. Nor is the fate of the soul after death affected by the deeds or character of the living person. It is the same for good men and evil, and the idea that the two might fare differently in the beyond is simply not understood. 'When a person dies, we no longer see him', is all the Nupe find to say on this topic. Which is another facet of that ethical indifference we noted before.

The *kuci* is invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding the crucial events of kinship life—birth, marriage, death. Apart from this, *kuci* worship has no special domain, nor is it subject to any regular routine. The sacrifices to ancestors represent casual appeals, performed *ad hoc*, for a variety of reasons, and nearly always on the advice of diviners. Of ten informants one had performed the sacrifice three times in the last four years, because of his ill-health; one had sacrificed twice, first because his horse was sick, and then because his child had smallpox; six informants had sacrificed once during that period—three because of illness, two because of a drought, and one for no particular reason and without consulting a diviner. One informant had performed no *kuci* sacrifice for seven years, and another had sacrificed regularly every year; but he was a village chief, and in his case the sacrifice, addressed to the ancestor who was also the founder of the village, had merged with a *kuti* 'belonging' to the community.

This fusion of *kuci* worship with another type of observance is not an isolated case. As we shall see, it is also entailed in the possession of certain 'great', hereditary medicines, which similarly

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on the list to another, while the list as a whole remains unchanged. Sometimes, however, the lists themselves differ; though these differences are few, they bear relevantly on the social background of the diviner and the interests current in his setting. Thus the diviners in the villages interpret shell pattern 3 as meaning, on occasion, a 'good hunt', which interpretation does not occur at all in the list of the diviners in or near Bida town, where there is no hunting. Again, in the villages shell pattern 8 is sometimes taken to mean 'a council in the house of the chief'; the connection with the 'important people' mentioned in our version is clear; but in that version, coming as it does from the capital where there are no councils of elders or chiefs, the reference to a 'council in the house of the chief' would clearly be out of place. Conversely, shell pattern 1 reversed has in Bida a meaning which hardly affects the life in villages remote from the political difficulties and tensions of the capital; characteristically, in the villages the same pattern reads 'rain will fall', a prophecy which in turn has less importance for the townspeople. In one instance at least—the transposed pattern 2 in 'house' 1—the diviner's key allows for both these interests. I need not point out especially that it allows also for modern conditions and problems of a thoroughly topical kind. 787

Let me finally quote two examples of complete divinations. The first was performed for a canoe-man who was about to set out on a trip up the river. The cords fell as follows: 787

Cords	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Shell patterns	6	2 rev.	4	7	3	4	2 rev.	1
Prophecies	The people will fore-gather	Refers to evening	A pleas-ant trip	Good trad-ing	The women will pick quarrels	The men will be pleas-ant	Gifts for the chief	The *huti* is friendly

The advice to the client was to be of good cheer: he should start out in the evening, take along gifts for the chief, and be careful in his dealings with women; he would return, after a successful trip, in four or five days (which last prophecy was nowhere indicated in the cords). The second divination was concerned with identifying the *kuci* of a boy just born to the client (a man). Here the diviner was interested only in the first two 'houses', the first referring to 'God', the second to 'House', that is, to the client's position of a family head. After several throws the diviner obtained this combination: 775 787 852

Cords	1	2
Shell patterns	4	6

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775 whereupon he announced: 'The grandfather who begot your
father—his name is that of the child.' The diviner would not ex-
787 plain his reasoning more precisely beyond saying that pattern 4
in 'house' 1, meaning 'many deaths', must relate to a *kuci* five
852 'deaths', i.e. generations, removed, while pattern 2 in 'house' 6
indicated the male sex of the *kuci*. Since the Nupe usually regard
a great-grandfather as the most remote ancestor likely to be
reincarnated, the diviner's reference to an additional generation
would seem to be a plausible interpretation of a throw meaning
'many deaths'.

4. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

787 The names of the 'houses' and the meanings attached to the
various throws, even in the simple key series, clearly illustrate
the close connection between divination and social life. Among
the names and meanings we find represented, not only the univer-
sal problems of men and communities (death, birth, rain, illness)
or particular religious notions (*Sokó*, *kuti*, performance of sacri-
fices), but also the mundane interests typical of Nupe society.
Events on the high roads and travel and trade; the ever-present
social issue of 'greatness', that is, of success in the struggle for
rank and status; and the equally ubiquitous interest in matters
politic, chieftainship, councils of elders, the actions of the ruling
class—all these have their place in the scheme of divining and
partly even in its basic vocabulary. Similarly, each relevant social
grouping is explicitly referred to: the 'house', that is, the large
extended family under a family head (*emi*); the 'town' or village
(*eži*); the 'whole country', that is, the kingdom of Nupe; and the
class of the 'great men' and nobility. As we have seen, the diverse
social settings of the capital and of the villages are reflected in
certain variants in the rules of divination. These affect the indi-
vidual case as well; for a diviner would interpret the prophecies
referring to 'gifts' or 'greatness' differently when dealing with a
talaka (a commoner or peasant) than when dealing with a member
of the aristocracy. In the former case 'gifts' mean bowls of food
and 'greatness' the favours of a nobleman; in the latter case the
gifts turn into more valuable presents, and 'greatness' bears on
promotion in rank and title. We have seen, too, that the rules of
787 divination are far from static, having been successfully adapted
177 even to recent conditions and to political problems only some
forty years old. We can even point to a typical, transitional phase
in this process; for the choice mentioned before, of interpreting
the same throw as meaning either 'rain' or 'friendly relations with
the White Man', means nothing else.

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ledge' a miscellany of incongruous items. Often the 'books' they get hold of are merely odd assortments of bits of literature, the same volume perhaps containing an extract on marriage law, a page or two on astrology, a treatise on the human body, and a fragment of some Hausa chronicle. Nor does the specific knowledge of Moslem theology fare any better. Again it is a medley of incongruous bits of information and in no way approaches the orthodox teaching of Islam. 794 875

The further down you pass in the scale of Nupe Mohammedan scholarship, the more confused and fragmentary becomes this knowledge. Take this summary account of creation and the powers of God which was given to me by one of the 'simple' mallams: 'Mohammed was the first man on earth; the devil (*Sheitan*) sends illness and misfortunes; after death, the good people become kindly spirits (*aljénu*), while evil persons are turned into dust'. Which last statement was the only reference to the ethical sanctions of Islam I encountered in Nupe; for hell or heaven or the last judgment are never mentioned. The notion, incidentally, that Mohammed was the first man is widespread; but otherwise the ideas about creation and the universe are far from uniform. Here is a different and fuller account, recorded from another mallam of this class: Formerly, when all the people lived together in the same place, there existed 'little gods' (*sokô tetengi*), whom God (*Allah*) sent down to earth to take away the souls (*rayi*) of the persons whose life was nearing its end. But the people grew frightened at this mysterious and unannounced demise and tried to evade it by scattering over the earth. So God introduced a new kind of death, heralded by illness, or overcoming man suddenly, through lightning or other natural disasters. These 'little gods' are the *malaika* (the Arabic *mal'ak*, 'angels'). In addition to the messengers of death there exist also *malaika* who bring rain, cause the crops to grow, and watch over man; the chief one amongst them is Jibelelu (Gabriel); others are Mikailu, Ismailu, Ibrahimu, though my informant did not pretend to know them all. [775]

The knowledge possessed by the 'true' mallam is hardly less unorthodox, even though it is fuller and more ambitious. The following text was dictated to me by a gifted pupil of the most famous mallam of Bida and fully conformed to the master's teaching. 794 773

'In the beginning there were Adama and Mother Adā. They had three daughters, Mureamu [Miriam, Mary], Fatima [daughter of Mohammed], and Barkisa [Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba], and numerous sons. These were all prophets. God then divided the world into pagans and Moslems. The greatest king of the pagans

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks[1] consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and 771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees." 775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its [245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

[1] [i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

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771 death and murder first appeared in the world. The couple who
remained did not know what to do with the dead body. They
773 carried the corpse on their shoulders for three days, lamenting and
539 crying, but could not get rid of it. At last, God caused the earth to open, and they placed the body inside. Thus the practice of burial and of the three days' mourning for the dead began.[1] The couple now stayed together and begot a male child, who became the ancestor of the Nupe people.'

771 If, then, Nupe mythology is a very inadequate guide to dogma and doctrine, this inadequacy is itself significant, revealing the Nupe attitude towards their creed and indeed the whole tenor of their religious thought in their true perspective. Mythology, as we have said, illustrates and exemplifies rather than enunciates the creed. We may go further and say that it expresses the creed in a form less abstract and theoretical than does formulated doctrine. For myths borrow the phraseology of realistic accounts, dealing as they do with near-humans and near-natural events; thus they make less demand upon sheer credence, compromise with ordinary imagination, and as it were vulgarize the dogma. If, then, primitive religions rely on mythical narratives rather than on dogmatic assertions they seem to discard the more abstract contents of religious thought. Yet Nupe religion, which does not employ mythology either to any great extent, is clearly not of this kind. If the Nupe do not attempt a specific, coherent formulation of their creed, neither do they seek to re-phrase it in more concrete and would-be realistic language. In other words, Nupe religion forgoes the means of 'vulgarizing' the dogma. Thus, though its creed may be inarticulate, yet it is held in all abstractness.

3. CATEGORIES

(i) *God and the World*

779 The most basic concept of Nupe theology, that of the supreme
being, is also the widest. In a sense it stands for the whole realm
776 of religion, serving to separate all things that belong to that realm from others that do not. For in order to express this distinction the Nupe say of an object, phenomenon, or type of action that it is, or is not, *nyá Sokó*—'of God' or 'belonging to God'. There are two inaccuracies in this broad category of things religious. The clause 'of God' in the sense here understood is properly applied only in the context of discussions turning upon the dichotomy of the religious and profane. In a wider context the phrase loses its disjunctive implication; for ultimately everything is 'of God', that

[1] There is no such rule of 'three days' mourning'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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is, is his creation. But the relationship between God and the created world is once more viewed as a dichotomy. And in this final context only the forms of religious action which bear on the living, active powers of the deity are 'of God', while all others, having become part of his completed creation, are classed with the 'things in the world'. 779 776

We shall later exemplify this somewhat sophisticated point in Nupe theology. As regards the dualism of God and the World, it is aligned with yet another, of more concrete character, of the sky and the earth. Together, these four concepts describe the Nupe universe; for it contains no other cosmic entities, for example, no underworld or some yonder inhabited by the spirits of the dead; nor have the Nupe anything to say about the stars, the sun, or the moon. In all relevant respects the created world (*yiže*) is identical with the earth (*kin*); while the Creator is identified with the sky. Though the supreme being is also addressed or referred to as *tsóci*, 'Our Lord',[1] his proper name is *Sokó*, which is best translated as God-the-Sky, the same word also denoting the sky in the visible, physical sense.[2]

As God is identified with the sky, so he is also said to dwell in the sky. But this belief is vague and contradicted by other statements, as are most assertions on the nature of the supreme deity. In fact, nothing very definite can be said or is known about God. He is not on earth, and the most common and most strongly emphasized comment on the nature of the deity is *Sokó lokpá*, 'God is far away'. Yet in a different, more mystic sense he is present, always and everywhere; thus in a song I recorded it is said—

God is in front,
He is in the back.

God has clearly awareness, intellect, and some of the sensitiveness of man; for he is addressed and appealed to in everyday language. But he is hidden and cannot be seen; nor is he personified more concretely; indeed, no one knows if he is or is not like man.[3]

[1] The suffix *-ci* means 'our'; the word *tsó* occurs normally as a suffix of other words, denoting 'owner of' or 'master of', e.g. *kin-tsó*, Owner of the Land, *emi-tsó*, Family Head.

[2] There exists another word for 'sky', *sama*, which is of Hausa-Arabic origin and is used, at least today, when referring to the sky and firmament in the material sense, e.g. 'the sky is black', 'the sky is clear', etc. The word *Sokó*, incidentally, also indicates something big or great, the suffix *-kó* having that implication.

[3] Strictly speaking, therefore, there is no justification for calling the supreme deity 'he'. In Nupe language this issue does not arise since the personal pronouns have no gender and do not distinguish between animate and inanimate objects. For purely practical reasons, however, I shall continue to employ the personal pronoun in the masculine. [193]

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Characteristically, any thought of gaining more precise knowledge of the deity is regarded as absurd and may well be ridiculed, as in this somewhat slangy proverb: 'The thing that conceals God, go and buy it.'

Only these facts are positively and universally known and are often argued when the Nupe wish to compare their beliefs with those of other peoples: God is all-powerful, as he is all-knowing; there is only one God, and no other deities exist; God was in the beginning, before the appearance of man and the creation of nature, being himself the creator of all things. And here we must note that the phrase 'all things' is meant to include things good as well as evil, which article of creed appears, circuitously phrased, in various secular songs. Thus one song contains this phrase—'A being which God did not create, neither did the world create it'; and another runs thus—'Should you do anything that is beautiful, God has caused it to be beautiful; should you do anything evil, God has caused it to be evil.'

The Nupe deity, then, is something like the *causa causans* of mediæval philosophy, though the crucial problem of that philosophy, how to reconcile an omnipotent deity with the presence of evil in the world, is not really seen as a problem. Good and evil are both laid into the same creation, as are the various sources of evil —malevolent spirits, disease, witchcraft. Without further speculations about a Free Will, or the weakness of mind and matter, or Satan, the deficiencies of the world are taken for granted. The only problem in Nupe theology is the actual power of evil, not its origin. And this power is justified, once more without moral speculations, by accepting, simply, the aloofness of the deity. In other words, one does not wonder why God did not create a better world; but one attempts to answer the question—Why does God not better protect man, who has to live in this world? The answer, as we shall see, is that divine concern with the world is limited.

Here a slight correction is necessary. The Nupe do mention Satan or the Devil; but they only just mention him and no more. He is called *Abilí* or *Jibilílu*, and sometimes *Sheitán*. The last name is, of course, Arabic and a loan-word in Nupe. So is *Jibilílu*, which is the Nupe version of the Arabic *Jibríl*, an angel of the Qoran having been changed into an African Devil. Whether *Abilí* is an original word or a further corruption of *Jibríl*, it is difficult to say; the Nupe use of the word in ordinary conversation seems to suggest the former. It is commonly employed to denote some unexpected evil turn of events, for example, a quarrel between friends or the discovery that an otherwise truthful person has been guilty of a lie. On occasions like these the people would exclaim—'Ah, the devil is at work' or, literally, '*Abilí* is present'. But though the

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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Nupe firmly hold that the devil exists, that he is behind many (though not all) evil things, and that there is only one devil (while there are many evil spirits), their knowledge of Satan carries no further; nor does he play any part in religious observances. Only diviners might refer to *Sheitán* or *Abilí* in connection with a particularly sinister prophecy. Above all, the Nupe hold that God has created the devil, so that Satan, far from being a counterpart of the deity, is only one of his ambiguous creatures.

There is no doubt in the minds of the Nupe that God, as he created the world, so he can also control it and intervene in its course. Everyday speech is full of phrases such as 'with God's help', 'may God give this or that', or 'may God cause such-and-such to happen'. To describe, incidentally, this divine intervention one uses the ordinary causative mode and the same verbs that are applied to human actions. One also swears by God and lends weight to any assertion by adding *be Sokó nyi*—'by God'. But these allusions imply little certainty that God will in fact intervene; for 'God is far', aloof, outside the world; which tenet overrules all other notions.

This belief has an important consequence: one cannot approach God directly. Although every ritual act is accompanied by some phrase or blessing invoking *Sokó*, there are no prayers specifically addressed to God and capable of being employed freely and independently of the appointed ceremonial occasions. Rather, the approach to the deity is circuitous, that is, through the given ceremonials or rituals. If we call the belief in God-the-Creator the first article of the Nupe creed, the second would be this conception of ritual as an intermediary between God and man.

(ii) *Ritual Force*

The condition that God is approached implicitly in every ceremonial and solely in this manner is regarded, not as fortuitous, but as having been willed by God and embodied in his creation. Equally, it is regarded as peculiar to the Nupe form of worship. To quote a typical comment: The Mohammedans can pray to God directly; but *Sokó* is 'so very far from men' that he gave them the ritual as an intermediary—a 'thing-in-between'. The ritual is thus a gift of God or 'of God'—*nyá Sokó*; but being an intermediary, the ritual is also of this world. Now, the Nupe will readily quote an inventory of the world, thus: 'In the world there are these things—*zawangíži*, human beings; *ena gontáži*, animals; *aljenúži*, spirits; and *kuti*, ritual.' With one exception, this list fully accounts for the Nupe picture of creation, though the nature of animate beings is itself composite and requires a further list of attributes. For the moment we are concerned only with the last item on the list and

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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779 absorb the appeals to ancestors. This is only another aspect of their lack of a special 'domain'. And even where *kuci* worship does not 769 lose its independence so completely, it yet has little autonomy; for the kind of supernatural aid it promises can equally be procured by other forms of worship or sacrifice. But of this, too, we shall speak later.

769 Let me conclude the present account with the brief mention of a further ambiguous practice, a form of sacrifice which stands half- 777 way between an appeal to *Sokó* and the appeal to *kuci*. It is per- 779 formed by families in which there are or have been twins and is known by that name, *bakomba*. Such houses will possess a special 845 shrine, consisting of a number of small earthenware pots built into the outside wall of a hut, which the women will regularly fill with beer and porridge. Once a year, on the birthday of the twins, the family head will bring a sacrifice of beer and blood of fowl. Now, twins are lucky and a sign of divine benevolence; equally, they represent a special incarnation, a concentration as it were of the 'kinship soul'. In this sacrifice, then, one addresses *Sokó* as well as (an anonymous) *kuci*; and the people who have such a twin shrine will perform all their sacrifices to *kuci* there, and not over the grave of an individual ancestor.

(v) *Spirit Beings*

● 776 In the preceding discussion we touched upon certain beliefs in spirits—in 'ancestral spirits', which are an aspect of the personal 779 soul, and in 'ghosts', which are transmutations of the shadow soul. But when the Nupe mention 'spirits' among the things that make up the world they do not mean either of these; they mean immaterial beings which exist in their own right and are not derived from humans, although they have some quasi-human attributes and inhabit the same earth. It is possible that this belief is not an original tenet of Nupe creed; for the Nupe call these spirit beings by a Hausa–Arabic name, *aljénu* (pl. *aljenúži*), and may well have borrowed certain of their aspects from Islam. However this may be, the Nupe do not regard this belief as in any way alien or 'borrowed'. And whether the name for spirits is Nupe or Arabic, it is a name, sharply distinguishing this class of beings from all others.

Though circumstantial and readily expressed, the spirit beliefs are fluid and far from uniform. The most varied opinions will not be thought unorthodox, but will be taken as evidence for the multifariousness of the spirit world. A first group of spirits, vaguely anthropomorphous but without distinct individualities, is said to inhabit the inanimate parts of nature, hills, trees, watercourses, the bush, and so forth. These spirits have sex, and according to

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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some informants the female variety lives in the water while the males prefer the land. The sex of the spirits does not influence their character, which may be either friendly or hostile. The people know where 'good' spirits dwell as well as the places haunted by 'evil ones', and may perform sacrifices to keep their friendship or to ward off their malevolence. Small gifts to the spirits (called *efu*), consisting of a little food, honey, a few kolanuts or cowrie shells, are often left on the roadside, placed beside a spring, or dropped in the river. The behaviour of the good spirits is nondescript and consists in not doing evil or mischief rather than in doing anything positively beneficial. The hostile spirits act erratically and unpredictably, their actions ranging from meaningless pranks (such as throwing stones or making frightening noises) to the infliction of serious harm (causing lunacy or fever, or making pregnant women bear a deformed child). Any locality showing unusual or unnatural features, such as an unexpected clearing in the bush or a grassless patch in a meadow, is likely to be the dwelling place of a spirit; so is any uncommonly large tree in the bush. A woodcutter who is unable to fell a tree, a fisherman who loses his nets in the river for no apparent reason, would equally suspect the presence of an *aljénu*. At midnight, when there is 'no noise and sound', the spirits are likely to be abroad. But on the whole one pays little attention to these 'nature spirits', which can easily be foiled by simply avoiding the haunted locality and against which sacrifices are ample protection.

Only in the Niger valley have I recorded nature spirits ascribed more momentous power as well as names and individualities and worshipped in proper, full-scale rituals. We shall in due course speak of two of them, the spirit *Ketsá*, inhabiting the steep rock of that name which rises in mid-stream near Jebba Island, and the spirit suggestively called *Nddduma*, 'Father Niger'.

A second group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. I recorded only two isolated instances of fully-fledged beliefs in animal spirits. The first concerns a spirit called *Bukpe* which lives, in the shape of a crocodile, in a stream near Mokwa. It is supposed to be a male spirit, 'black' or evil, causing disease and drought. Yet its malevolence can be controlled by means of an annual ritual, known by the same name, and by means of a pact concluded between the people of Mokwa and the crocodile spirit. It is part of the pact that the people of Mokwa must never kill or annoy this or any other crocodile, while they in turn will not be harmed by any member of the species. This belief, however, is not willingly put to a test; when I visited *Bukpe* in his lair, my Nupe companions were very careful not to come too close. Some time after my visit the crocodile in fact killed a child; whereupon the people

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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779 of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court, trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of 776 death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over [612] Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less [778] faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

779 If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe [774] universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected 773 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

General

771 The majority of the Nupe are now Moslems and there is at least one small [162] mosque in every village. The 1931 Census gave 235,990 Moslems out of a total of 324,375 for all religions.[1] But in many communities pagan ritual exists side by side with some Moslem observances, the latter being increasingly adopted for reasons of prestige.

Among the pagans there is common belief in a sky god *Sokó*, who is believed to have created the world and then withdrawn himself from communion with man. The Nupe concept of the cosmos is, according to Nadel, fundamentally amoral. God, having created the world, gave men access to certain mystical forces, making them at the same time subject to these and leaving them to make such use of these "powers" and of the material world as they would and could. First among these mystical forces is *kuti*, the compelling power of ritual, believed to be harnessed in varying degrees in a multiplicity of rites belonging to persons, communities, and associations, and conferring both special benefits or protection and increasing general well-being. At the same time, invocation of the ancestors of kinsfolk, of the people at large, and of the ancient rulers, can afford some measure of benefit or protection. This can also be gained through a separate use of "medicines" which are believed variously to combine pseudo-therapeutic and magical properties. Finally, the evil power of witchcraft, which God also put into the world, has to be discovered, punished, and driven out by special rites. Since, moreover, there are these alternatives with reference to both good fortune and bad, divination has a great part to play in determining the rites to be performed in particular situations.[2]

Spirits

●776 The Nupe believe that immaterial beings, existing in their own right and with some human attributes, live in the bush or in hills, trees, watercourses, and other natural features. Their Hausa-Arabic name (*aljenúši*, sing. *aljénu*) suggests that some aspects of this belief may be borrowed from Islam. The spirits may be male or female, friendly or hostile, though only two—*Ndáduma* (Father Niger) and *Ketsá* (associated with a rock in midstream near Jebba Island)—are thought to possess any considerable powers.[3] Another group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. The least clearly conceived are personal spirits or spirit doubles, which belong to every individual from birth to death and cannot be changed. These may be good or bad.[4]

769 Spirits of the dead (*kuci*) may be reincarnated in their own descendants. Approach to the Supreme Being can be made through ancestral spirits. Special 776 sacrifices are performed either in the house or on the grave of a particular ancestor and the *kuci* are invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death. Otherwise it seems that ancestral sacrifices are performed only sporadically and for a specific reason, such as illness in the family.[5]

776 Tsoede, who is regarded by all Nupe as their common ancestor, is venerated in an elaborate cycle of myths and rituals surrounding sacred objects—chains and bronze figures—connected with him.[6] He is, however, outside the general framework of Nupe religious beliefs.

[1] Census of Nigeria, vol. II, p. 63. Unfortunately there are no later figures available for comparison.
[2] See below, pp. 47–8.
[3] See below.
[4] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 26–31.
[5] Ibid., pp. 22–5.
[6] Ibid., pp. 31–2.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child 348 428
inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 261
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, 634
who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held 771
and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but 776
is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, 634
having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was 776
founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants 634
from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they 304
have adopted the Nupe language. 197
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[1] [i.e. The Kusopa subtribe.--Analyst]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

absorb the appeals to ancestors. This is only another aspect of their lack of a special 'domain'. And even where *kuci* worship does not lose its independence so completely, it yet has little autonomy; for the kind of supernatural aid it promises can equally be procured by other forms of worship or sacrifice. But of this, too, we shall speak later.

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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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fessional divination in some measure duplicate one another. If this means that the diviner has no monopoly of prophecy, it equally means that one need not be very seriously concerned over one's dreams, since the message they might hold would also transpire in some other way. Normally, in fact, the people are not inclined to take their dreams very seriously, even in the localities where there are experts versed in that lore. I used to record all the dreams of the Nupe men with whom I was in daily contact; though they were quite often puzzled about their dreams, they performed sacrifices and so forth only when their dreams referred to dead relatives. Dream interpretation, then, represents another 'supererogatory' element in Nupe religious thought, another 'additional' notion about the meaning of the things in the world, and now one conspicuously treated as such.

Let me add that in other respects, too, the diviner holds no monopoly of prophecy. If he pronounces upon lucky or unlucky days, some knowledge of this kind is common throughout Nupe. Thus two months, the seventh and thirteenth, are held to be unlucky, and people will avoid travelling or having wedding feasts and other celebrations at these times. In all other months certain days are specially lucky—the second, seventh, twelfth, seventeenth and eighteenth day; so is the time of full moon, while moonless days are unlucky and dangerous for all tasks.[1]

If divination and the interpretation of dreams represent supernatural aids which overlap in their efficacy but are of different ease of access, this is true also of the knowledge, shared by everybody, of propitious and unpropitious dates. In other words, for much the same kind of guidance you can rely on your own knowledge, on what you or your friends know about dreams, and on the professional advice of diviners. Once more we note the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought and that tendency to multiply the mystic tools, that is, to have 'several strings to one's bow.'

[1] It is usual in Nupe to refer to months and days in this way, by numbers rather than names. The interval of five between the lucky days, incidentally, plays no further part in Nupe thought or religious observances.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796 x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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361 negative evidence to show that with the pacification of the country the reverse process has set in: Jima, once a capital of Nupe kingdom, 621 a huge town to judge from the ruins of its town walls, is reduced to-day to a tiny village; most of its people have moved outside, and the eight former town-wards, still known by their old typical *efu*-names, are to-day scattered outposts, village 'colonies'—*tunga*.

621 The origin of the *tunga* settlements of Jima represents an unusual development. Normally the *tunga* reflects the expansion rather than the breaking up of the 'mother-town'. But the term *tunga* is not unequivocal. It refers to three different types of settlement. The first, the release of small groups for the foundation of 'daughter-settlements', is a direct consequence of the concentration of a large population in a single town. A growing population in the village, the need of new land, may lead to small groups moving into the uninhabited bush, to occupy virgin land and to found new settlements. A small section of one family at first, a few young men with their wives and children, the *tunga* may grow to a small hamlet embracing two or three large family groups. Or immigrants from another part of the country may choose to settle on the land which belongs to a certain village, and under its political protection: this settlement, too, will then be called *tunga*. Finally, the big landlords of Bida have settled their slaves and dependants on the land all round the capital, in small hamlets, called again *tunga*. But these settlements are in a different category, they represent not colonies of villages or towns but private property, farm settlements of individual landlords. A *tunga* is thus easily identified, for it is always referred to as a *tunga*, a 'colony', *of* a certain village or, in the case of private settlements, *of* a certain landlord. *Tunga* settlements seldom grow beyond three family groups. Should the population expand further, the *tunga* would again release some of its members who would leave the old settlement and found a new colony near-by. But it seems to have happened very rarely that a *tunga* grew into a 'town' proper—Gbangba, a prosperous village north of Bida and to-day the seat of a District Head, is the only example I can quote. Gbangba, however, was not a village colony but a *tunga* founded by people from Bida. On the other hand, I have seen several cases of *tunga* settlements which have grown out of each other, dependencies of dependencies. The *tunga* is itself a much more mobile settlement than the village proper. A *tunga* is often abandoned, and the people move to a new place, if there have been two or three bad harvests, or repeated cases of illness.

We understand the mobility of the *tunga* when we realize that these small farm settlements, founded by younger branches of families, can have none of the spiritual bonds—religious and ancestral—that would tie the 'real' village more permanently to the locality.[1] The same factor

I will not examine here. I may say that I have found two other typical instances; one I have described in *Man*, 1938, 85. There may be many more, of which the traces have become much more obliterated.

[1] An exception is provided by certain cults which are linked with individual families and not with the village as such; a sacred shrine of this kind may thus be carried to a *tunga*. The *tunga* Shebe Woro, for example, harbours the sacred chain and the shrine of Tsoede—two paraphernalia of the *ndakó gbeyá* cult.

[778]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

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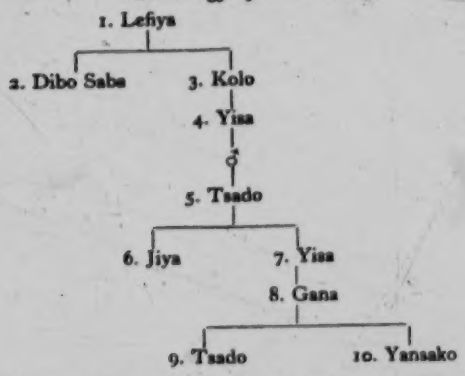
Genealogy of Doko Chiefs



Father of the Town, and who stands somewhat apart from the other village ranks. He plays the part of the chief 'elector' or 'king-maker'; he is never himself a candidate for chieftainship, but is entrusted with the rule of the village during the interregnum. We shall hear more of him presently. The Nupe dislike a long interregnum: as a rule only a few weeks, filled out with discussions and the consultation of diviners, elapse before the appointment of a new chief.[1] This appointment will eventually need the confirmation of the *Etsu* Nupe and, to-day, of the Administrative Officer. This last rule, however, applies only to those chiefs who are recognized as official Village Heads under the modern Native Administration. In the reorganization of the Emirate under British rule only the larger villages have been created seats of official Village Heads. Their number does not comprise all the places which are 'villages' or 'towns' in traditional native conception.[2] A significant terminological dualism has been the result: the people speak of *Žitsu*, 'town-king', when referring to their traditional, officially unrecognized, chief, and call the officially appointed Village Head *Etsu Nyenkpa*, 'Money Chief' (i.e. tax chief).

I can offer no explanation for the coexistence of these two different systems of chieftainship, of hereditary and promotion type. There is no evidence of either having developed from the other. Nor can local conditions, economic factors, or the factors of size and population be made responsible. But I could discover the sociologically interesting correlation between the system of succession and the religious elements which surround Nupe chieftainship. In the villages where chieftainship is hereditary we find that vague mythology of origin which tells of the first occupation of the land, and of the foundation of the village by the

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[1] I have been told that formerly unanimity between the various diviners of the village was considered necessary. In Mokwa my informants stated that the normal duration of the 'interregnum' is ten days.

[2] In connexion with a scheme to raise the salary of Village Heads the number of Village Headships in Bida Emirate has recently been further reduced.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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ancestor of the present chief. A certain special magic and sacred insignia are linked with the house in which chieftainship is vested. Thus the chiefs of various Beni villages and of Sakpe possess the brass bangles of Tsoede; chiefs in Dibo country an iron staff; chiefs in the riverain area the sacred chain of Tsoede. The magic ritual which is associated with chieftainship varies as widely: in Doko it is a harvest rite, the 'eating of the bulrush-millet'; in other villages it appears as magic against barrenness, as a rain sacrifice, an ordeal, or as a general rite to secure health and prosperity of the community. But invariably the chief's ritual, whatever its more specific aim, will be performed as funeral rite and ceremony of installation of chiefs, and also whenever certain great calamities befall the community—a drought, famine, or epidemic. The chief is not himself the priest of this magic, and often has not the insignia in his own possession. Insignia and magic are entrusted to another member of the chief's family. The office of the *Žigi*, the village priest, is kept in the junior branch of the chieftain house, and *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, Town-king and Town-priest, appear in the genealogies as elder and younger brother (in the classificatory sense).[1]

In the communities, on the other hand, where the chief is elected from the senior rank-holders, his house 'owns' no special magic or insignia, and there is no mythology of a founder of the village, but tradition speaks of the village as having 'always been there'. The religious duties fall, instead, to the *nūsa* who acts as chief 'elector' and who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum. This man's office will be hereditary and sacred, he will own insignia or a special powerful magic, which is, again, invoked at the death and the appointment of chiefs or in the case of great calamities. A supernatural agency, a mystic safeguard, is thus always assumed behind the chief's authority. But Nupe village organization has evolved two different solutions, in accordance with the two different systems of chieftain succession: one makes the chief or his family the agents of the supernatural power which supports the claim to chieftainship; the other separates the political rule from the mystic safeguard and, instead of a hereditary king, brings into being a hereditary 'king-maker'. (See chart II, p. 55).

This division of religious and secular office seems to eliminate effectively conflicts between chief and priest. The priests of the village cults, experts in religious matters only, have no influence in political affairs; they are, as we saw, not even granted the general prerogative of their age: a seat on the council of elders. The priest of the chief's cult, if of the chief's family, is classed as a 'younger brother' and thus equally barred from the position of an influential elder. Only the priest-king-maker (where he exists) could gain the position of a rival power and interfere with secular affairs. However, by his office the main 'elector' of the chief, he should be a supporter and ally of the chief, whose office reflects to some extent his own authority, rather than his adversary or rival. He may prefer a puppet at the head of the village—I saw an instance

[1] See the genealogy given in chart II, p. 55.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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173 and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked [551] almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still 732] holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds [643] and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were [778] entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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779 problems of survival which face, not this or that individual, but the collectivity, such as droughts, epidemics, the fertility of the land, and the fertility of the population. The close association of *kuti* with the well-being of the whole community is convincingly expressed in the concluding formula of every ritual, whatever its occasion—*Sokó lá eži u ge*: 'May God grant that the village (or town) prospers.'

Let me make it clear that the efficacy of the ritual lies in the whole of the procedure and not in any of its elements, not even in the language employed on such occasions. Though invocations and prayer-like formulae play their part in ritual, they are not peculiar to it; like the act of *labá* they also occur, in much the same form, in other observances and are by themselves without any power. Significantly, they are often couched in language which is nondescript or takes the form of riddles and parables representing comments upon the ritual rather than crucial stages in the procedure. Also, the language can be varied without affecting the efficacy of the rite; thus I could record songs in one ritual which were borrowed from another, the people's comments being that 'it made no difference'. Nor yet are there material objects, effigies and the like, which might be said to contain the supernatural power. Most rituals have their customary places, and some of the sacred songs speak of the 'initiates entering the house' of the *kuti*; but this is a [778] mere metaphor, for no Nupe ritual has a 'house' or 'temple', or indeed a locality which is on all occasions 'sacred', barred to the uninitiate, or avoided by the people. On occasion, the localities are changed without further ado, for example, when a village grows and encroaches upon the grounds hitherto reserved for the ritual. The cult objects, if they exist at all, are usually things of no sacred association—boughs or leaves carried in the dances, unimportant animals killed in the sacrifice, and pots and dishes used for cooking and eating.

778 779 There are exceptions. In a few places I found rituals associated with stones, either ordinary rocks in the ground or (in two instances only) round stone balls supported on carved wooden posts. Sometimes the rituals are even named accordingly, for example, *fitákuŋ*, 'The Stone drinks' (a ceremonial from Doko and Pichi), or *takúŋžiko*, 'Black Stone' (a ritual from Katcha). Other cult objects seem to be of alien origin, such as the masks of the *elo* ritual of Mokwa, which betrays Yoruba influence, and the 'thunderbolts' used in a fertility cult known to come from Gwari. The most elaborate cult objects in Nupe, certain bronze figures in human shape, occur only in the Niger valley, in the two villages Jebba and Tada, and are again said to be of alien origin; they also belong to a very special series of rites, associated with the mythical

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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founder of Nupe kingdom and serving the interests of the state. We shall later deal with these 'exceptions'. Let me here stress that in calling them that I am taking my lead from the people. Indeed, the Nupe would altogether disregard these lapses from a wholly abstract creed, which seems to require no effigies or visible symbols; for when comparing their religion with that of other peoples, the Nupe will always emphasize that they have no sacred emblems, idols, masks, or 'little likenesses' (*zazagízi*).

It is perhaps not surprising that so abstract a conception as that of *kuti* should not be held with equal clarity by everyone. In particular, I met with two as it were heterodox notions; one was the idea that *kuti* represents a part of *Sokó*, or a *Sokó tetengi*, a 'Little God' (which, in Nupe language, is a contradiction in terms); according to the other, God was 'up above', but *kuti* was somehow of the earth, being a 'thing' buried in the ground, very likely in the places of ritual. These notions were always put tentatively, and were moreover voiced by individuals who could not claim the fullest knowledge available in the society, that is, by younger men or by Nupe under the influence of Islam; the older men, and especially the priests of *kuti*, declared such views to be false. But supernatural power understood more concretely and associated with specific material objects also has a place in the Nupe universe. This notion is embodied in the third tenet of the religion, which concerns the existence of *cigbe* or 'medicine'.

(iii) *Medicine*

Let me say, first of all, that 'medicine' is the literal translation of the vernacular term, which is applied not only to 'magic' substances but also to medicinal herbs or drugs of any kind, native as well as European, whose properties are assessed essentially empirically. Of the relation between the two we shall speak in a later context. Here we must note that the Nupe inventory of the 'things in the world' does not mention 'medicine', although in some respects it is an exact counterpart to *kuti*, that is, an agency meant to aid man in a universe governed by an all-too-distant deity. But unlike *kuti*, 'medicine' is not thought of as being part of the creation and a primordial gift of God. If it now exists in the world, it does so because of man's own endeavours. There is a legend, well known throughout the country, expounding this view.

'There was a certain younger brother, called Kpara, whose elder brother was Tswasha Malu. They lived in the time of *Etsu* (king) Shagó.[1] There existed a certain medicine, called *cekpyeca shina*

[1] The two brothers are mentioned in no other myth. The name of the king, Shagó, occurs also in the myth describing the origin of the

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1. Sacrifice before twin shrine

778

2. The sacred crocodile of Mokwa

[p. 22(A)]

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of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court, trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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*796 766 the *ndakó gboyá*. As mentioned before, the practice was abandoned apparently in the early twenties. But it was since revived once, in 1931, at the death of the village chief, when even the *ndakó gboyá* society played its part (in spite of the official ban).

4. RITUAL AND CULTURE CHANGE

*796' 177 This seems an opportune place to consider the impact of changed conditions upon Nupe ritual, at least in its negative, disruptive aspects. The changes undergone by the Jebba rituals do not of course stand alone; in the last generation or two numerous pagan rituals all over Nupe country have been disappearing or have suffered more or less radical modifications. But the conditions in Jebba are in some respects unique and hence capable of illuminating factors and processes obscured elsewhere.

Let me, to begin with, say a few words about one of the abandoned Jebba rituals, the *sokokó*, whose name suggests a ceremonial of uncommon importance. It belonged to the cycle of rites performed in the 9th month; it was concerned with fertility, health, and prosperity in general and centred upon a sacrifice performed on the top of a hill overlooking the river valley. It is said to have been discontinued in 1914, when the residence of the Governor was built on the site of the sacrifice.

Now, similar reasons, similarly fortuitous, are also quoted in connection with certain other changes of ritual practice. In each case, my informants maintained, the disappearance of the *bà žiko*, the 'black' or 'secret place', led to the disappearance of the respective ceremonial or at least to some radical change in the observance. It is true that the place formerly chosen for the esoteric part of the *dzakó*, which used to lie on an uninhabited bank of the river, is today occupied by a riverside camp of Hausa fishermen; the old *gunnu* grove and the place in the bush where the *mamma* masks used to dress in secrecy have similarly lost their former seclusion, being now close to crowded thoroughfares. Yet it is equally true that suitable adjustments could be made: the *dzakó* is still regularly performed, with a programme only slightly changed; the *mamma*, though performed irregularly, has suffered this change for different reasons, and the masked dancers can still dress in secrecy, now in the privacy of an elder's house. Only the observance of the *gunnu* has been altered in a more far-reaching manner. These facts bear out a point made previously, that sacred [778] places and the like are of relatively little importance in Nupe religion. If, then, a ritual is abandoned altogether or radically modified, this must be due to factors other than the loss of the customary locality and seclusion, inconvenient though the loss might be.

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown 462 wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

[252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

411 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 232; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Mitregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

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SAME AS FIG. 4 IN "MAN," 1931, 201.

FIG. 4. (A). REAR VIEW.

FIG. 15. DARK BRONZE FIGURE OF ELEPHANT

SAME AS FIG. 6 IN "MAN," 1931, 201.

GABI FIGURES FROM JEBBA AND TADA, MIDDLE NIGER

Photographs by Mr. S. W. Walker.

[Facing page 169]

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

MAN

A MONTHLY RECORD OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

XXXIV, 160-[illegible] NOVEMBER, 1934

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Nigeria. With Plate L. Walker.

Gabi Figures and Edagi, First King of the Nupé. *By S. W. Walker, District Officer, Ilorin Emirate, Nigeria.*

198 532 193 [113]

In MAN, 1931, 261, Sir H. R. Palmer published an account of certain "representations of deities cast in metal . . . in the region round Jebba and Rába on the Middle Niger." I have recently had an opportunity of seeing these figures, and a fuller account of them may be of interest. For ease of reference the same numbers will be used as in Sir H. R. Palmer's article.

2. The two Jebba figures (Plate M 1, 2, 3) are well known and stand almost unprotected in the midst of the village on Jebba island, close by a dilapidated hut, alleged to be consecrated to their worship. The photographs accompanying the above-mentioned article are clear, and no further description is here necessary other than certain observations which a comparison with the other figures evokes.

3. The other photographs (Plate M 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) show four of seven figures at Tada, a small Nupé fishing village on the high bank of a backwater of the Niger, some 25 miles east of Jebba and some five north of Shonga. They are kept in a round hut and, unlike the Jebba figures, are carefully tended. They are taken out and scoured every Friday, and the floor is thickly spread with clean white river sand.

4. The most noticeable figure is one of dark bronze, 3 feet 8 inches high, bearing a general resemblance to the male figure at Jebba, both in technique, decorative treatment and conventional form. Its head dress consists of what appears to be a tight-fitting helmet, from which hang five coils reaching to the waist. To the front and rear of the helmet are attached medallions which bear the device illustrated in fig. 9, consisting of a horned and mustachioed face, surrounded by an interlacing design. Each medallion is surmounted by a crest behind which are models of birds as in fig. 10. The close-fitting gown reaches below the knees and is richly decorated with designs in low relief as in figs. 11 and 12. Round the neck hang a tasselled stole, a necklace and a chain bearing another medallion as in fig. 13. The design on the latter consists of a ramlike head surrounded by three birds which suggest the lesser hornbill.

5. Though the similarity of this figure to the male figure at Jebba is obvious, the differences are interesting. The quilted attire of the Jebba figure, with its dagger in front and quiver slung at the back, indicates a warrior in the act of drawing a bow, while the rich and perhaps magic ornamentation of the Tada figure may conceivably suggest a king, priest or civil official. The helmet of the former, like that of the latter, bears a medallion, but smaller, and decorated with the figure of a long-beaked bird similar to fig. 11. The top of the helmet is covered by what is now a tangled mass of bronze wire or 'shavings,' which, like the coils of the Tada figure, might be thought representations of hair, were it not for the fact that they appear attached to the cap or helmet.

6. Another of the dark bronze figures is of an elephant of somewhat slender body and long legs. It has a ridge along the back and is 2 feet high (Plate L, fig. 15).

7. The two remaining figures of dark bronze (Plate M 5) are of ostriches, 4 feet 4 inches and 3 feet 6 inches high respectively. Each has a curious plate on the back suggestive of a tortoise shell, only flatter.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

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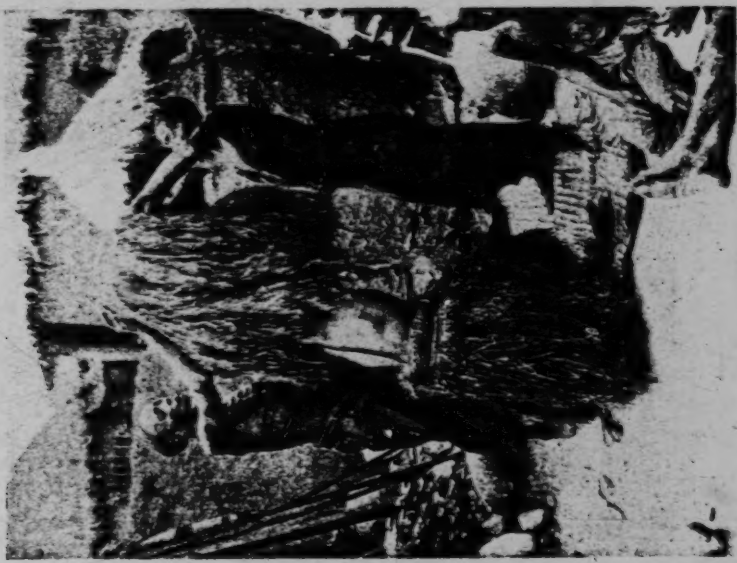
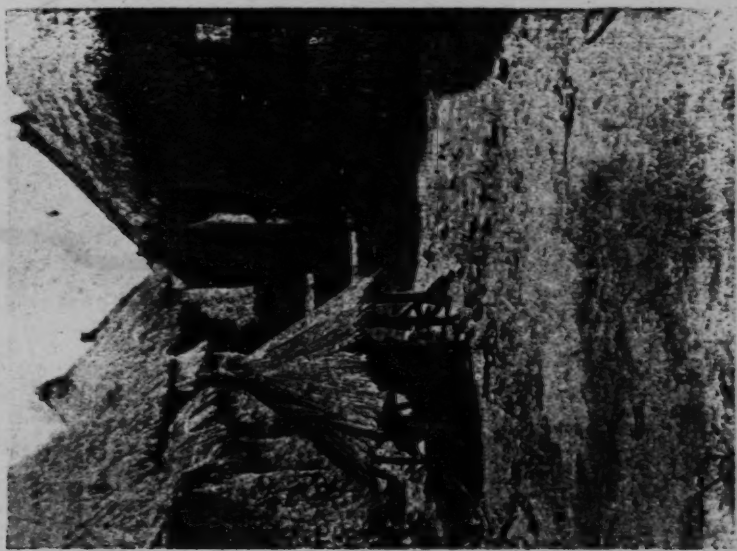


11. Dressing the *mamma* masks

[778]



10. The *zumdcib* medicine shrine in Jebba

[p. 70(B)]

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

530 [118] 8. Then, there are two figures which in appearance seem to be cast out of pure copper. One is 1 foot 10 inches high, and represents a man standing with clasped hands. A small pigtail adorns the head, the eyes are very bulging, and the feet very big. The other (Plate M 6) is a remarkably realistic bit of modelling, and is as noticeable for this quality as No. 4 is for its formal decorative treatment.

9. There remains one small figure (Plate M 7, 8), 1 foot 4 inches high, apparently of pure brass. It is of a male figure of ungainly proportions and coarse features, holding a crock and wearing an apron. In addition, a small cotton cloth is tied round its loins.

10. No. 4 is very heavy, due probably to the fact that the clay core is still within the figure. The others are light and hollow. All are or have at one time been on shallow rectangular bases.

[305] 11. The first thing that strikes one about the figures as a whole is the difference in the material of which they are cast. All of them appear to be made by the *cire perdue* process. But, as has been indicated above, four are of dark bronze, two appear to be of pure copper, and one of brass. Only the three last-named are kept scoured. Another striking feature is the divergence of technique. It is impossible to think that there are less than three sources for these figures, not because of the difference in metal used but on account of the wide difference in treatment—unless, of course, they are copies of originals. However this may be, the designs on Plate M 2, 3, 4 are so distinctive and conventionalized that they must have had antecedents, and it is to be hoped that this article may have given sufficient data by which their origin can be traced.

793 12. The Village Head of Tada tells the following legend. The Chief of Atagara had a son called Shode who was a successful hunter but could not find a market for his meat. At that time the chief of a certain town called Wanta had a girl in his household whom he gave to Shode to cook the meat of the animals he killed. After a time she became with child by Shode. When he was about to return to his home, he brought her a charm and a loin cloth and told her to give them to her son when he was born, for a son it would be. Shortly after he had returned home, his father, the chief of Atagara, died and he succeeded to the chiefdom. Now, in those times when a new chief was installed, each town brought slaves, and it happened that this child Edegi, which the girl bore to Shode, was amongst them on this occasion. When the chief, Shode, saw Edegi, he recognized him by the charm and loin cloth, promoted him to honour and showed him much affection. Shortly before his death he called Edegi and told him that after his death he should gather all his property together and leave the country. At this the townspeople rose up in jealousy, but Edegi escaped and travelled up the Niger with his loaded canoes till he came to the neighbourhood of Bida. There he abandoned chains because of their weight and passed on to Tafa in Bida territory, then to Tada, Gbede and Jebba, at each of which places he left either chains or ornamental figures. He got as far as Kwatashi in Busa, and then returned or was driven back. His boat and poles were of bronze. They lie in the Ega river close to Muregi. Edegi sank himself and the boat because he could not elude his enemies. He was the first chief of the Nupé.[1]

13. The information given in this account suggested further inquiry at Gbere, 15 miles east of Jebba, opposite Réba, the only one of the above-mentioned places that is situated in Ilorin Province. Owing to the phenomenal floods it was not possible to reach the village itself, but the chains were brought to Tada for inspection. There are five of them, measuring 33 feet 6 inches, 20 feet, 23 feet, 8 feet 8 inches and 7 feet 2 inches respectively, and all are much corroded. The links vary from 3 inches to 6 inches in length and are rectangular in shape. At the end of one chain is a circular link. The weight of all the chains is about 20 lbs.

796 [631] 14. The Ndeji and the Wangwa of Gbere say that the chains were used in pre-British days for strangling criminals. Executions were carried out in the bush by the Cheche assisted by three youths. The present Cheche who looks after the chains has not seen an execution, but the Ndeji

[1] *Note.*—According to the Busa legend, Edegi was chief of Gbere. He came up the river as far as Kwatashi, and encamped on the east bank of the Niger. Sarkin Wawa sent to warn him that he was not destined to become ruler of this region and if he stayed death would be his portion. It was then low water, and Edegi walked out to a large rock to receive the Wawa envoys.

When he heard their message he laid a curse upon the rock that any canoe that came near it would sink and any man that touched it would die. Edegi then departed down stream, but the rock remains and is still called Dutsin Edegi.

9: Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

MAN

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XXXV, 145-160 SEPTEMBER, 1935

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa : West. With Plate I-J. Nadel.

131 **The King's Hangman: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

143

Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggã in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sãlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ẹgbã Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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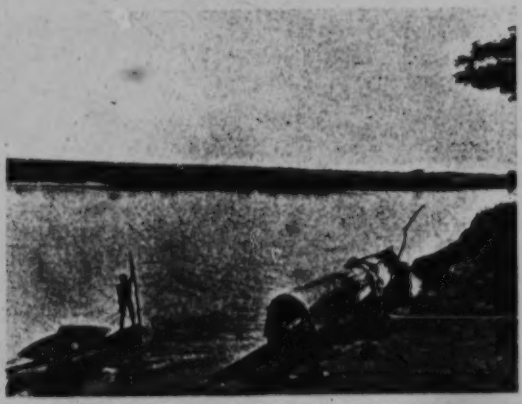

FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GBERE, ONE OF THE LEDU VILLAGES.

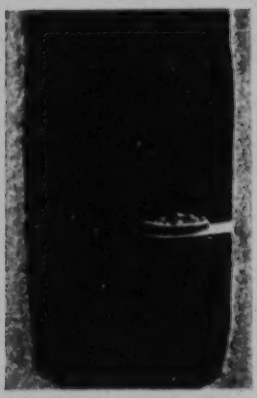

FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TROZIS."

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FIG. 3. THE SACRED BRONZE FIGURES AT JEBBA.

FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH *ledi* MASK.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

[Facing page 129]

9: Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

● 778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'ti dzana*,
696 the 'head of Dzana,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own maternal uncle, Dzana, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leifi nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndace*, the 'father of the shooting,' *i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this; whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic, I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[2] A few words only about the possible historical
[174] basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also MAN, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tsie-cigbeci*, lit. the executioner-medicinoman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

771 death and murder first appeared in the world. The couple who
773 remained did not know what to do with the dead body. They
539 carried the corpse on their shoulders for three days, lamenting and crying, but could not get rid of it. At last, God caused the earth to open, and they placed the body inside. Thus the practice of burial and of the three days' mourning for the dead began.[1] The couple now stayed together and begot a male child, who became the ancestor of the Nupe people.'

771 If, then, Nupe mythology is a very inadequate guide to dogma and doctrine, this inadequacy is itself significant, revealing the Nupe attitude towards their creed and indeed the whole tenor of their religious thought in their true perspective. Mythology, as we have said, illustrates and exemplifies rather than enunciates the creed. We may go further and say that it expresses the creed in a form less abstract and theoretical than does formulated doctrine. For myths borrow the phraseology of realistic accounts, dealing as they do with near-humans and near-natural events; thus they make less demand upon sheer credence, compromise with ordinary imagination, and as it were vulgarize the dogma. If, then, primitive religions rely on mythical narratives rather than on dogmatic assertions they seem to discard the more abstract contents of religious thought. Yet Nupe religion, which does not employ mythology either to any great extent, is clearly not of this kind. If the Nupe do not attempt a specific, coherent formulation of their creed, neither do they seek to re-phrase it in more concrete and would-be realistic language. In other words, Nupe religion forgoes the means of 'vulgarizing' the dogma. Thus, though its creed may be inarticulate, yet it is held in all abstractness.

3. CATEGORIES

(i) *God and the World*

779 The most basic concept of Nupe theology, that of the supreme
776 being, is also the widest. In a sense it stands for the whole realm of religion, serving to separate all things that belong to that realm from others that do not. For in order to express this distinction the Nupe say of an object, phenomenon, or type of action that it is, or is not, *nyá Sokó*—'of God' or 'belonging to God'. There are two inaccuracies in this broad category of things religious. The clause 'of God' in the sense here understood is properly applied only in the context of discussions turning upon the dichotomy of the religious and profane. In a wider context the phrase loses its disjunctive implication; for ultimately everything is 'of God', that

[1] There is no such rule of 'three days' mourning'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

is, is his creation. But the relationship between God and the created world is once more viewed as a dichotomy. And in this final context only the forms of religious action which bear on the living, active powers of the deity are 'of God', while all others, having become part of his completed creation, are classed with the 'things in the world'. 779 776

We shall later exemplify this somewhat sophisticated point in Nupe theology. As regards the dualism of God and the World, it is aligned with yet another, of more concrete character, of the sky and the earth. Together, these four concepts describe the Nupe universe; for it contains no other cosmic entities, for example, no underworld or some yonder inhabited by the spirits of the dead; nor have the Nupe anything to say about the stars, the sun, or the moon. In all relevant respects the created world (*yiže*) is identical with the earth (*kin*); while the Creator is identified with the sky. Though the supreme being is also addressed or referred to as *tsóci*, 'Our Lord',[1] his proper name is *Sokó*, which is best translated as God-the-Sky, the same word also denoting the sky in the visible, physical sense.[2]

As God is identified with the sky, so he is also said to dwell in the sky. But this belief is vague and contradicted by other statements, as are most assertions on the nature of the supreme deity. In fact, nothing very definite can be said or is known about God. He is not on earth, and the most common and most strongly emphasized comment on the nature of the deity is *Sokó lokpá*, 'God is far away'. Yet in a different, more mystic sense he is present, always and everywhere; thus in a song I recorded it is said—

God is in front,
He is in the back.

God has clearly awareness, intellect, and some of the sensitiveness of man; for he is addressed and appealed to in everyday language. But he is hidden and cannot be seen; nor is he personified more concretely; indeed, no one knows if he is or is not like man.[3]

[1] The suffix *-ci* means 'our'; the word *tsó* occurs normally as a suffix of other words, denoting 'owner of' or 'master of', e.g. *kin-tsó*, Owner of the Land, *emi-tsó*, Family Head.

[2] There exists another word for 'sky', *sama*, which is of Hausa-Arabic origin and is used, at least today, when referring to the sky and firmament in the material sense, e.g. 'the sky is black', 'the sky is clear', etc. The word *Sokó*, incidentally, also indicates something big or great, the suffix *-kó* having that implication.

[3] Strictly speaking, therefore, there is no justification for calling the supreme deity 'he'. In Nupe language this issue does not arise since the personal pronouns have no gender and do not distinguish between animate and inanimate objects. For purely practical reasons, however, I shall continue to employ the personal pronoun in the masculine. [193]

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779 776 Characteristically, any thought of gaining more precise knowledge of the deity is regarded as absurd and may well be ridiculed, as in this somewhat slangy proverb: 'The thing that conceals God, go and buy it.'

Only these facts are positively and universally known and are often argued when the Nupe wish to compare their beliefs with those of other peoples: God is all-powerful, as he is all-knowing; there is only one God, and no other deities exist; God was in the beginning, before the appearance of man and the creation of nature, being himself the creator of all things. And here we must note that the phrase 'all things' is meant to include things good as well as evil, which article of creed appears, circuitously phrased, in various secular songs. Thus one song contains this phrase—'A being which God did not create, neither did the world create it'; and another runs thus—'Should you do anything that is beautiful, God has caused it to be beautiful; should you do anything evil, God has caused it to be evil.'

The Nupe deity, then, is something like the *causa causans* of mediæval philosophy, though the crucial problem of that philosophy, how to reconcile an omnipotent deity with the presence of evil in the world, is not really seen as a problem. Good and evil are both laid into the same creation, as are the various sources of evil —malevolent spirits, disease, witchcraft. Without further speculations about a Free Will, or the weakness of mind and matter, or Satan, the deficiencies of the world are taken for granted. The only problem in Nupe theology is the actual power of evil, not its origin. And this power is justified, once more without moral speculations, by accepting, simply, the aloofness of the deity. In other words, one does not wonder why God did not create a better world; but one attempts to answer the question—Why does God not better protect man, who has to live in this world? The answer, as we shall see, is that divine concern with the world is limited.

Here a slight correction is necessary. The Nupe do mention Satan or the Devil; but they only just mention him and no more. He is called *Abilí* or *Jibilílu*, and sometimes *Sheitán*. The last name is, of course, Arabic and a loan-word in Nupe. So is *Jibilílu*, which is the Nupe version of the Arabic *Jibríl*, an angel of the Qoran having been changed into an African Devil. Whether *Abilí* is an original word or a further corruption of *Jibríl*, it is difficult to say; the Nupe use of the word in ordinary conversation seems to suggest the former. It is commonly employed to denote some unexpected evil turn of events, for example, a quarrel between friends or the discovery that an otherwise truthful person has been guilty of a lie. On occasions like these the people would exclaim—'Ah, the devil is at work' or, literally, '*Abilí* is present'. But though the

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Nupe firmly hold that the devil exists, that he is behind many (though not all) evil things, and that there is only one devil (while there are many evil spirits), their knowledge of Satan carries no further; nor does he play any part in religious observances. Only diviners might refer to *Sheitán* or *Abilí* in connection with a particularly sinister prophecy. Above all, the Nupe hold that God has created the devil, so that Satan, far from being a counterpart of the deity, is only one of his ambiguous creatures.

There is no doubt in the minds of the Nupe that God, as he created the world, so he can also control it and intervene in its course. Everyday speech is full of phrases such as 'with God's help', 'may God give this or that', or 'may God cause such-and-such to happen'. To describe, incidentally, this divine intervention one uses the ordinary causative mode and the same verbs that are applied to human actions. One also swears by God and lends weight to any assertion by adding *be Sokó nyi*—'by God'. But these allusions imply little certainty that God will in fact intervene; for 'God is far', aloof, outside the world; which tenet overrules all other notions.

This belief has an important consequence: one cannot approach God directly. Although every ritual act is accompanied by some phrase or blessing invoking *Sokó*, there are no prayers specifically addressed to God and capable of being employed freely and independently of the appointed ceremonial occasions. Rather, the approach to the deity is circuitous, that is, through the given ceremonials or rituals. If we call the belief in God-the-Creator the first article of the Nupe creed, the second would be this conception of ritual as an intermediary between God and man.

(ii) *Ritual Force*

The condition that God is approached implicitly in every ceremonial and solely in this manner is regarded, not as fortuitous, but as having been willed by God and embodied in his creation. Equally, it is regarded as peculiar to the Nupe form of worship. To quote a typical comment: The Mohammedans can pray to God directly; but *Sokó* is 'so very far from men' that he gave them the ritual as an intermediary—a 'thing-in-between'. The ritual is thus a gift of God or 'of God'—*nyá Sokó*; but being an intermediary, the ritual is also of this world. Now, the Nupe will readily quote an inventory of the world, thus: 'In the world there are these things—*zawanglli*, human beings; *ena gonáli*, animals; *aljenúli*, spirits; and *buti*, ritual.' With one exception, this list fully accounts for the Nupe picture of creation, though the nature of animate beings is itself composite and requires a further list of attributes. For the moment we are concerned only with the last item on the list and

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with its twofold citizenship, among the 'things of God' and the 'things of the world'.

In translating *kuti* as 'ritual' we are not conveying the full import of the conception. We shall later speak of other acts of worship—invocation of ancestors, sacrifices to twins or medicine shrines, offerings to spirits; all these are ritual actions as we understand the word, and the Nupe too acknowledge the underlying identity by calling the crucial act, the sacrifice, offering or libation, by the same name—*labá*. But *kuti* means more, even though it always includes the phase of *labá* and in one form does not go beyond it. For the people the external procedure of *kuti*, the things you can see and hear and easily describe, stands for something more obscure and intangible, even unknowable. Nor is the nature of *kuti* exhausted by saying that it is a means of communicating with the deity. For there are many *kuti*, each with an identity and power of its own; each also has its individual name, and some are 'stronger' than others, and more or less dangerous. The *kuti* is called a 'thing', *enya*; it is also something that you 'make' or 'do'; equally it is said to know its priests and congregation, as though it were an intelligent being. The Nupe do not deny these contradictions and obscurities; they would simply hold that they are beyond human understanding. There is the Nupe saying—'Such-and-such *kuti*: a speech (explaining it) does not come first'; which means, you may learn the names and procedures of *kuti*; but as for the rest, no explanation must be expected. Ultimately, no one can see, hear, or know the *kuti*; to wit, these verses from the song cycle connected with the most important ritual of Nupe, *gunnu*—

> Do you know the *gunnu*?
> You do not know it.
> For can you hear it?

Yet though the nature of *kuti* cannot be fully grasped, the external procedures are known and can be learned. There are rules about performing a particular *kuti*, guarding it, keeping away from it or protecting it from illicit knowledge; and by means of these procedures, which are both delicate and on occasion dangerous, humans are enabled to tap some mysterious but in essence divine force. Also, the procedures belong to humans, much as material possessions belong to their owners. Thus it is considered a general and important characteristic of the Nupe people, which gives them a distinct position in *rebus sacris*, that they collectively 'own' the ritual called *gunnu*, while different sections of the tribe possess other rituals besides, and different tribes rituals of other kinds. Mostly, however, this 'ownership' is understood more narrowly,

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being ascribed to single village communities; and as these 'own' such-and-such *kuti*, so they can exercise a certain mastery over the universe on given occasions and for given aims. Generically, *kuti* is a portion of cosmic power, which is in itself unspecific but is capable of being harnessed and canalized into specific efficacy in particular rituals; or more briefly, *kuti* is the Force-that-is-in-ritual.

We have noted the twofold nature of *kuti* as a thing-in-between God and man. In one sense, it plays the part of a gesture or utterance whereby man brings his wishes to the attention of the deity; but in another it is also a thing-in-between man and the power which, we must presume, God normally wields when he makes or remakes the world. Let me argue this point from the Nupe point of view. Men, they would hold, cannot hope to move the remote and aloof deity by prayers alone; but they possess, in *kuti*, a means of drawing directly upon the power that is God's. There is this saying: 'The human being, he makes *kuti*; God, he causes it to come', that is, to have the desired power or efficacy. In a way, it is as simple as that—a matter almost of pressing a button. But the fact that human beings can thus simply summon divine action, is itself due to an act of divine providence. Paradoxically speaking, the Nupe deity, concerned over the limits set to his concern with the fate of men, bestowed upon them, not the efficacy of prayer (which might not reach him), but a portion of his own force. In this sense, then, the ritual is a shortcut as well as an intermediary and has the greater effectiveness of such a direct access to the causes that move the world. This notion too has been formulated, if more elliptically, in these verses from the *gunnu* cycle of songs—

(*If someone said:*) 'Give me for the sake of God',
I should give him nothing.
(*If someone said:*) 'Give me for the sake of the *gunnu*,'
There it is—I give him.

Which means, in simple language: While it is of little avail to invoke God, the performance of the *gunnu* (or any other *kuti*) is always effective.

This, incidentally, is a somewhat optimistic view, as we shall discover later, when discussing the occasions for ritual and the precise expectations that go with them. We may anticipate this, however. As *kuti* are vested in, or 'owned' by, communities, so the aims and occasions of their performance essentially bear on the problems of community life.[1] These are the ubiquitous and perennial

[1] This is true of the 'fixed' rituals, which have their firm place in the Nupe calendar. Certain of the 'movable' *kuti* can on occasion be performed for the sake of individuals, though their performance is still in the hands of the community priest (see below, p. 87).

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779 problems of survival which face, not this or that individual, but the collectivity, such as droughts, epidemics, the fertility of the land, and the fertility of the population. The close association of *kuti* with the well-being of the whole community is convincingly expressed in the concluding formula of every ritual, whatever its occasion—*Sokó lá ežì u ge*: 'May God grant that the village (or town) prospers.'

Let me make it clear that the efficacy of the ritual lies in the whole of the procedure and not in any of its elements, not even in the language employed on such occasions. Though invocations and prayer-like formulae play their part in ritual, they are not peculiar to it; like the act of *labá* they also occur, in much the same form, in other observances and are by themselves without any power. Significantly, they are often couched in language which is nondescript or takes the form of riddles and parables representing comments upon the ritual rather than crucial stages in the procedure. Also, the language can be varied without affecting the efficacy of the rite; thus I could record songs in one ritual which were borrowed from another, the people's comments being that 'it made no difference'. Nor yet are there material objects, effigies and the like, which might be said to contain the supernatural power. Most rituals have their customary places, and some of the sacred songs speak of the 'initiates entering the house' of the *kuti*; but this is a mere metaphor, for no Nupe ritual has a 'house' or 'temple', or indeed a locality which is on all occasions 'sacred', barred to the uninitiate, or avoided by the people. On occasion, the localities are changed without further ado, for example, when a village grows and encroaches upon the grounds hitherto reserved for the ritual. The cult objects, if they exist at all, are usually things of no sacred association—boughs or leaves carried in the dances, unimportant animals killed in the sacrifice, and pots and dishes used for cooking and eating.

778 779 There are exceptions. In a few places I found rituals associated with stones, either ordinary rocks in the ground or (in two instances only) round stone balls supported on carved wooden posts. Sometimes the rituals are even named accordingly, for example, *fītákuŋ*, 'The Stone drinks' (a ceremonial from Doko and Pichi), or *takúŋžiko*, 'Black Stone' (a ritual from Katcha). Other cult objects seem to be of alien origin, such as the masks of the *elo* ritual of Mokwa, which betrays Yoruba influence, and the 'thunderbolts' used in a fertility cult known to come from Gwari. The most elaborate cult objects in Nupe, certain bronze figures in human shape, occur only in the Niger valley, in the two villages Jebba and Tada, and are again said to be of alien origin; they also belong to a very special series of rites, associated with the mythical

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founder of Nupe kingdom and serving the interests of the state. We shall later deal with these 'exceptions'. Let me here stress that in calling them that I am taking my lead from the people. Indeed, the Nupe would altogether disregard these lapses from a wholly abstract creed, which seems to require no effigies or visible symbols; for when comparing their religion with that of other peoples, the Nupe will always emphasize that they have no sacred emblems, idols, masks, or 'little likenesses' (*zazagízi*).

It is perhaps not surprising that so abstract a conception as that of *kuti* should not be held with equal clarity by everyone. In particular, I met with two as it were heterodox notions; one was the idea that *kuti* represents a part of *Sokó*, or a *Sokó tetengi*, a 'Little God' (which, in Nupe language, is a contradiction in terms); according to the other, God was 'up above', but *kuti* was somehow of the earth, being a 'thing' buried in the ground, very likely in the places of ritual. These notions were always put tentatively, and were moreover voiced by individuals who could not claim the fullest knowledge available in the society, that is, by younger men or by Nupe under the influence of Islam; the older men, and especially the priests of *kuti*, declared such views to be false. But supernatural power understood more concretely and associated with specific material objects also has a place in the Nupe universe. This notion is embodied in the third tenet of the religion, which concerns the existence of *cigbe* or 'medicine'.

(iii) *Medicine*

Let me say, first of all, that 'medicine' is the literal translation of the vernacular term, which is applied not only to 'magic' substances but also to medicinal herbs or drugs of any kind, native as well as European, whose properties are assessed essentially empirically. Of the relation between the two we shall speak in a later context. Here we must note that the Nupe inventory of the 'things in the world' does not mention 'medicine', although in some respects it is an exact counterpart to *kuti*, that is, an agency meant to aid man in a universe governed by an all-too-distant deity. But unlike *kuti*, 'medicine' is not thought of as being part of the creation and a primordial gift of God. If it now exists in the world, it does so because of man's own endeavours. There is a legend, well known throughout the country, expounding this view.

'There was a certain younger brother, called Kpara, whose elder brother was Tswasha Malu. They lived in the time of *Etsu* (king) Shagó.[1] There existed a certain medicine, called *cekpyeca shina*

[1] The two brothers are mentioned in no other myth. The name of the king, Shagó, occurs also in the myth describing the origin of the

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779 *shina buburukun* (meaningless words). On the day when the two brothers were making this medicine, Kpara wished to climb up 773 into the sky. Kpara explained to the king that he needed a chain. 539 The king summoned the blacksmiths of the whole country and they forged a chain of seven links. Then Kpara tied the chain round his waist and went straight up, higher and higher, until he reached the sky. It took him three years to travel up to the sky, and people thought they would never see him again. At the end of the three years people beheld the chain dropping slowly down to earth, and 19 days later, Kpara himself dropped from the sky, sitting down, bang, on top of the chain. The people asked—Had he seen God? Kpara answered (this part is sung):

God is far away,
God is far away,
But medicines are applied on earth.

"The person who tries to eat porridge while shouting at the same time will get nothing into his stomach" (i.e. one must not attempt the impossible). Kpara then said to all the people that they must try and make medicine of ingredients. "For God is not watching man." This Kpara was the elder brother of the father who begot us—our tribe, that is.'

779 This legend or myth introduces two crucial features into Nupe doctrine. One is the assertion that 'God is not watching man', or literally, *Sokó nw' ã yelé à*, 'God is not seeing'; the other is the notion that that powerful agency, *cigbe*, has been produced or discovered by man's own initiative. The two clearly hang together, both following logically from the root concept of the supreme being. The assertion that God 'is not watching' only expands and sharpens that other idea, that God, though creative and omnipotent, 'is far away'—too far away to follow closely his handiwork, and too impersonal to concern himself closely with all that happens on earth. And it is this extreme aloofness of the deity which justifies the further notion of human self-help. God, as we know, cannot be reached by prayers and invocations alone. Thus there have to be intermediaries, of which *kuti* is one and *cigbe* the other. But there is this difference. Only the *kuti* is 'of God'; equally, it provides only for the collective and unvarying needs of a people, not for the more variable and particular troubles of individuals. As regards these, God seems even more remote; for he has not thought of giving man the appropriate aids: rather, they had to be discovered by man left to himself. Here, then, we have

anti-witchcraft cult *ndakó gboyá* (see below, p. 173). Shagó is probably identical with the mythical hero and deity of Yoruba religion, Shangó, who, in Yoruba mythology, is described as a man or king of Nupe.

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something like a Free Will, though crudely conceived and devoid of ethical implications. All the Nupe concept implies is that man can attempt to correct creation, and is compelled to do so by his knowledge (as the myth has it) that 'you cannot have everything' —live on earth and have the full protection of God. 779

This is a naïve and, if you like, cynical philosophy. Within its frame of reference, however, everything falls into place and *kuti* and *cigbe* appear complementary in many ways. We said before that the *kuti* is understood both as a means of reaching the attention of the deity and as a means of drawing more directly upon the divine (or cosmic) force, as an 'intermediary' as well as a 'shortcut'. Now *cigbe* is a shortcut much more than it is a medium of appeal. If in *kuti* the invocation of the deity and the harnessing of a cosmic force are made to merge, in 'medicine' that force is more independently effective and works in the manner almost of a machine. In preparing or administering 'medicine' the name of *Sokó* is often mentioned; but now it occurs, not in the context of a prayer-like appeal, but in a *spell*, every word and phrase of which is important and unchangeable. At the same time the mastery of *cigbe* is strictly technical; the Nupe say that it is *kpeyé*, 'knowledge', and nothing else. This knowledge no longer refers to total procedures embracing prayers, localities hallowed by the occasion, the occasions themselves, songs, dances, and all the phases of the ritual performance; rather does it refer to highly specialized *skills*, primarily to the skill of *gbá gbèrè*, 'using ingredients', that is, to a skill in manipulating and manufacturing material things. For the *cigbe* is always material, some object or substance whose efficacy is communicated by physical contact or therapeutic administration. We note the ambiguous role of medicine, which is opposed to ritual both as another (more 'machine-like') form of supernatural control and as an altogether different kind of mastery, through technical-empirical knowledge. For the Nupe, the latter alignment counts more heavily: if they were to use our phraseology they would say that the practice of medicine is less 'religious' (or 'supernatural') than ritual, and in many instances entirely non-religious.

Again, the conception of ownership differs fundamentally in the case of *kuti* and *cigbe*. The former is 'owned' corporately by groups, and the question of acquisition does not arise (save in mythical speculations). Though the ritual procedures can be learned, and are learned by every new generation, this is a secondary feature, incidental to the right or title to the ritual knowledge; which title is vested, inalienably, in the tribe or village community. It makes no sense, in Nupe, to ask whether strangers can learn and put themselves in possession of a *kuti*. If they are adopted into the

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community, they will also learn about the ritual and share in its possession; otherwise they remain without the crucial title, even though they may conceivably come to know all about the technical procedure. In *cigbe*, the latter is everything: who learns, possesses, and the learning is open to any individual who can find a teacher. Admittedly, certain medicines are today owned by families and passed on from generation to generation; but with few exceptions this vested ownership is only of the kind that applies to trade secrets, and everyone understands that, originally, the knowledge of such family *cigbe* had again been taught and learned, perhaps even bought. Medicines of all kinds can still be purchased, regularly and openly, from their makers; you might also purchase the knowledge of how to prepare them, though this would be done only occasionally and in secrecy. Finally, both the medicine and the recipe may be brought in from another country. Now, it would once more be nonsensical to think of a *kuti* that can be bought; and though a few rituals are said to have been introduced from abroad, this was the work either of immigrant groups, which 'owned' the *kuti* by right and are still called its 'owners', or of mythical figures and heroes. In brief, the *kuti* is part of the traditional estate of communities; the *cigbe* is individual property, fortuitously acquired and held. With the different title of possession goes the corresponding conception of the benefits conferred by the possession, which are once more collective in the case of ritual and individual in the case of medicine. This contrast is thrown into relief in the invocations accompanying the two practices; for the prayer formula invariably voiced in all Nupe rituals, 'May God grant that the village prospers', is as invariably absent in the *cigbe* spells.

Here we are touching upon a final difference between *kuti* and *cigbe*, which goes deep into the ethical foundations of the Nupe creed. The *kuti* is, *ex definitione*, good; it always serves to secure benefits—prosperity, health, success—and to combat evils or ills—disease, drought, barrenness. Many 'medicines' do the same; but some may also serve evil purposes, that is, they may be meant to further the egoistic aims of individuals while harming the rest of the people. *Cigbe*, then, is potentially 'anti-social'; and, logically, the force of evil *par excellence*, witchcraft, is by many attributed to the efficacy of *cigbe*. Now, as God is the indifferent creator of things both good and evil, *kuti* and *cigbe* represent the two sides of his nature. Not all that is evil or ill in the world is due to *cigbe* or witchcraft; indeed, various evils and ills may be diminished by the agency of *cigbe*. But 'medicine' remains a supernatural agency which men might wield for disaster and harm. Thus the conception of 'medicine' reflects, on a smaller scale, the ethical

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indifference which the Nupe ascribe to divine creation. Yet since the world contains both things, *kuti*, which is good, and *cigbe*, which is both good and evil, the good would seem on balance to preponderate. As we shall see, various other religious thoughts confirm this impression of a cynicism tempered with optimism.

(iv) *Body and Soul*

We turn to the other 'things in the world' and first to the animate beings. Each of these possesses, to begin with, a body, *nakã*. The Nupe word means precisely what we mean by 'body'—the flesh and blood of living creatures, resulting from procreation, parturition, and natural growth, and decomposing after death. The biological processes of procreation and parturition are fairly well understood, though this empirical knowledge is not free from fallacies. Thus no one misunderstands the connection between coitus and conception; one understands, too, that both women and men can be infertile, and that abortion can be brought about by strong laxatives or overstrain. At the same time the Nupe also use certain purely 'magical' cures for barrenness and charms or magic belts to prevent conception. More surprisingly, the Nupe fail to distinguish between semen and male urine, or have to borrow a word from Hausa to describe the former. Nor finally is the precise length of pregnancy known. To quote one of my informants, a diviner and knowledgeable old man: 'It all depends; it may take anything between seven months and a year; a strong and fit child will be born after eleven months or so, a weak one after a shorter period.'

The biological processes as such, one believes, produce only a lifeless body, as death in turn leaves the body lifeless but still physically intact. The living being thus has further attributes, of soul-like nature, which are three in number: *rayi* or 'anima'; *fifingi* or 'shadow soul', and *kuri* or 'personal soul'.

The word *rayi* is used generally to denote the living state; the pulse, for example, is called *rayigi*, 'little life'. Everything animate possesses *rayi*, while stones, pieces of wood, and similar inanimate objects are without *rayi*; growing trees and plants, however, are counted among the animate things. Life comes from God and exists with God, in the sky, when it is not incarnate. At death 'God takes it away'; at birth it is sent down by God, more precisely, it appears already when the child first moves in the womb. The new life is thus at first tied to the life of the mother, and in a sense remains so tied for a period even after birth. For the mother who has borne one child must not risk another conception before the child can walk and is 'sufficiently strong', lest it would never grow up; so that its *rayi* would seem to be diminished by the other life

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that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifingi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifingi*.

Fifingi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifingi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifingi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifingi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

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the *fifingi* which acts in this fashion, although one may loosely use this term; for in the cases just described the shadow soul turns into something else—a *fará*, a ghost or spirit.

As I have already suggested, the *kuci* corresponds to something like a 'personal soul'. But this is an obscure conception, and all informants will at some stage of the discussion plead ignorance or the presence of a final mystery. The Nupe believe in reincarnation, the souls of the dead being re-embodied in their offspring; it is these transmuted souls which are called *kuci*. One does not in this connection think of distant and perhaps unknown ancestors, but of great-grandparents or even grandparents reborn in their children's children. The rebirth can occur in either line of descent, which fits well into the Nupe kinship system with its strong emphasis on bilateral descent. Whether the ancestors are paternal or maternal, as they are reborn, so their personal qualities, of character (good or bad) as well as physical likeness, reappear. The body, *nakã*, is thus partly shaped by the ancestral soul or *kuci*, which is said to 'enter' it much as a fluid or substance enters a vessel (while the *rayi* does not 'enter' the body, but merely gives life to it).

The *kuci* appears in the act of birth, that is, it 'enters' a body already possessing life, and the new-born is in fact called 'a *kuci*', unnamed. For a time body, life soul, and *kuci* are not yet firmly united. Body and life soul merge fully when the umbilical cord is cut; but the *kuci* will not be in full harmony with the other two until it has been identified by divination and the infant's name (which is the name of the reincarnated ancestor) has been pronounced for the first time. The crying of the babe, too, will cease at that moment, since it is only a sign that the new-born senses the initial disharmony. In other words, the three components of the living being become reconciled when the link between human vessel and ancestral soul is acknowledged socially, that is, by the symbol of a name. Only then does the *kuci* lose its other-worldly nature and become fully of this world; while the infant is from then on a person, and not only a breathing body. Henceforth it will be called *egi*, child, and no longer *kuci*, disembodied soul or spirit. The *kuci* therefore adds to the *anima* or life soul a 'personal soul', which is also the carrier of heredity and of kinship continuity.

It is difficult to say just how personal this soul concept is. It is certainly specifically human; for animals have no *kuci*, as they have no names or kin groups. Yet the relationship between the ancestral *kuci* and its reincarnation is not of a one-to-one kind. The same ancestral soul may animate numerous progeny, all living at the same time; indeed, it is said that there 'is no limit' to the number of simultaneous incarnations of the same *kuci*. Here,

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then, the *kuci* appears as an impersonal principle of descent and heredity, even as something like a biological strain mystically interpreted. It is consistent with this latter conception that the *kuci* should be held to be sexless, so that the soul of either grandparent may appear in offspring of either sex. This theory, however, is belied in practice; for I have found few personal names that can be given both to males and females; rather are male and female names sharply distinguished, which would presuppose the opposed assumption of a sex-linked reincarnation. And once, when I was present during the divination of the *kuci* of a new-born child and commented on the likely identity of the *ndakó* (grandfather) in question, the diviner corrected me, pointing out that the child was a girl and that her soul would therefore come from a *nnakó* (grandmother).

The two conceptions, of a 'personal' and of a 'kinship soul', conflict, above all, in the beliefs concerning their fate after death. At death, the *kuci* is said to leave the body and to return to God, if only temporarily, until it finds a new incarnation. Yet it is also said to stay on earth, watching over its kinsfolk in the manner of a guardian spirit and ready to come to their aid in various ways. The *kuci*, incidentally, does so indirectly, having no power of its own, but acting in some fashion through *Sokó*. To enlist the aid of the *kuci*, one performs special sacrifices (*labá*) in the house or on the grave of this or that ancestor. Now, such a belief in the souls or spirits of the dead which, while not at the time incarnated, interest themselves in their surviving kin, would seem to reconcile satisfactorily the two conceptions of a personal soul and one bound to lines of descent. But Nupe belief failed to work out a consistent solution on these lines. Thus the ancestral sacrifices are performed both on the grave of the grandfather most recently dead (and hence hardly yet reincarnated) and on the grave of the most remote known ancestor (who will surely have found a new body). And if, in the latter case, one knows of one outstanding person among the ancestors, the sacrifice will be addressed to him. On the other hand, one need not sacrifice to any particular, named ancestor at all; often, the people address an anonymous *kuci*, that is, the souls of the dead in a generic sense. This is done invariably, in an informal fashion, whenever one drinks beer; then a small libation is poured on the ground, for a *kuci* no further defined.

There is no orthodox answer to the question how the *kuci* can be 'with God' and on earth at the same time, or how it can influence God when it has already entered upon another incarnation. When pursuing this point I received these diverse replies. A first informant made the revolutionary suggestion that there might be two *Sokó*, one in the sky, the other on earth; needless to say, this

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notion was rejected by everybody else. A second view was more widely held, namely, that the *kuci* remains on earth but is watched by God, so that your appeal to the *kuci* will yet reach God; the *kuci*, then, would be 'with God' only in a metaphorical sense. A third informant argued as follows, with somewhat dubious logic: Since you cannot see either God or *kuci*, it follows that they are together. Finally, there was the unprofitable but incontrovertible reply, that here we have a mystery of which 'man is ignorant'.

If the Nupe failed to work out a clear and consistent conception of this survival of 'personal souls', they equally failed to exploit its potentialities. The belief in souls of the dead which remain concerned with the fate of their living kin and are reincarnated in progeny would seem to lend itself ideally to an ethical interpretation. Yet there is no trace of this. There is no conception of the *kuci* being angered by the sins or offences of the living, perhaps refusing its aid or sending punishment. In appealing to the *kuci* the suppliant expects help, not rewards, and help untempered with justice; the help may not come; but this only means that the circumstances were unfavourable or the difficulties too great. Nor is the fate of the soul after death affected by the deeds or character of the living person. It is the same for good men and evil, and the idea that the two might fare differently in the beyond is simply not understood. 'When a person dies, we no longer see him', is all the Nupe find to say on this topic. Which is another facet of that ethical indifference we noted before.

The *kuci* is invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding the crucial events of kinship life—birth, marriage, death. Apart from this, *kuci* worship has no special domain, nor is it subject to any regular routine. The sacrifices to ancestors represent casual appeals, performed *ad hoc*, for a variety of reasons, and nearly always on the advice of diviners. Of ten informants one had performed the sacrifice three times in the last four years, because of his ill-health; one had sacrificed twice, first because his horse was sick, and then because his child had smallpox; six informants had sacrificed once during that period—three because of illness, two because of a drought, and one for no particular reason and without consulting a diviner. One informant had performed no *kuci* sacrifice for seven years, and another had sacrificed regularly every year; but he was a village chief, and in his case the sacrifice, addressed to the ancestor who was also the founder of the village, had merged with a *kuti* 'belonging' to the community.

This fusion of *kuci* worship with another type of observance is not an isolated case. As we shall see, it is also entailed in the possession of certain 'great', hereditary medicines, which similarly

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absorb the appeals to ancestors. This is only another aspect of their lack of a special 'domain'. And even where *kuci* worship does not lose its independence so completely, it yet has little autonomy; for the kind of supernatural aid it promises can equally be procured by other forms of worship or sacrifice. But of this, too, we shall speak later.

Let me conclude the present account with the brief mention of a further ambiguous practice, a form of sacrifice which stands half-way between an appeal to *Sokó* and the appeal to *kuci*. It is performed by families in which there are or have been twins and is known by that name, *bakomba*. Such houses will possess a special shrine, consisting of a number of small earthenware pots built into the outside wall of a hut, which the women will regularly fill with beer and porridge. Once a year, on the birthday of the twins, the family head will bring a sacrifice of beer and blood of fowl. Now, twins are lucky and a sign of divine benevolence; equally, they represent a special incarnation, a concentration as it were of the 'kinship soul'. In this sacrifice, then, one addresses *Sokó* as well as (an anonymous) *kuci*; and the people who have such a twin shrine will perform all their sacrifices to *kuci* there, and not over the grave of an individual ancestor.

(v) *Spirit Beings*

In the preceding discussion we touched upon certain beliefs in spirits—in 'ancestral spirits', which are an aspect of the personal soul, and in 'ghosts', which are transmutations of the shadow soul. But when the Nupe mention 'spirits' among the things that make up the world they do not mean either of these; they mean immaterial beings which exist in their own right and are not derived from humans, although they have some quasi-human attributes and inhabit the same earth. It is possible that this belief is not an original tenet of Nupe creed; for the Nupe call these spirit beings by a Hausa–Arabic name, *aljénu* (pl. *aljenúži*), and may well have borrowed certain of their aspects from Islam. However this may be, the Nupe do not regard this belief as in any way alien or 'borrowed'. And whether the name for spirits is Nupe or Arabic, it is a name, sharply distinguishing this class of beings from all others.

Though circumstantial and readily expressed, the spirit beliefs are fluid and far from uniform. The most varied opinions will not be thought unorthodox, but will be taken as evidence for the multifariousness of the spirit world. A first group of spirits, vaguely anthropomorphous but without distinct individualities, is said to inhabit the inanimate parts of nature, hills, trees, watercourses, the bush, and so forth. These spirits have sex, and according to

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some informants the female variety lives in the water while the males prefer the land. The sex of the spirits does not influence their character, which may be either friendly or hostile. The people know where 'good' spirits dwell as well as the places haunted by 'evil ones', and may perform sacrifices to keep their friendship or to ward off their malevolence. Small gifts to the spirits (called *efu*), consisting of a little food, honey, a few kolanuts or cowrie shells, are often left on the roadside, placed beside a spring, or dropped in the river. The behaviour of the good spirits is nondescript and consists in not doing evil or mischief rather than in doing anything positively beneficial. The hostile spirits act erratically and unpredictably, their actions ranging from meaningless pranks (such as throwing stones or making frightening noises) to the infliction of serious harm (causing lunacy or fever, or making pregnant women bear a deformed child). Any locality showing unusual or unnatural features, such as an unexpected clearing in the bush or a grassless patch in a meadow, is likely to be the dwelling place of a spirit; so is any uncommonly large tree in the bush. A woodcutter who is unable to fell a tree, a fisherman who loses his nets in the river for no apparent reason, would equally suspect the presence of an *aljénu*. At midnight, when there is 'no noise and sound', the spirits are likely to be abroad. But on the whole one pays little attention to these 'nature spirits', which can easily be foiled by simply avoiding the haunted locality and against which sacrifices are ample protection.

Only in the Niger valley have I recorded nature spirits ascribed more momentous power as well as names and individualities and worshipped in proper, full-scale rituals. We shall in due course speak of two of them, the spirit *Ketsá*, inhabiting the steep rock of that name which rises in mid-stream near Jebba Island, and the spirit suggestively called *Ndáduma*, 'Father Niger'.

A second group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. I recorded only two isolated instances of fully-fledged beliefs in animal spirits. The first concerns a spirit called *Bukpe* which lives, in the shape of a crocodile, in a stream near Mokwa. It is supposed to be a male spirit, 'black' or evil, causing disease and drought. Yet its malevolence can be controlled by means of an annual ritual, known by the same name, and by means of a pact concluded between the people of Mokwa and the crocodile spirit. It is part of the pact that the people of Mokwa must never kill or annoy this or any other crocodile, while they in turn will not be harmed by any member of the species. This belief, however, is not willingly put to a test; when I visited *Bukpe* in his lair, my Nupe companions were very careful not to come too close. Some time after my visit the crocodile in fact killed a child; whereupon the people

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of Mokwa, true to the fiction of the 'pact', held a formal court, trying the animal for breaking the pact and passing sentence of death.[1] The power of Mokwa over crocodiles is well known all over Nupe country and, today at least, unrivalled. The village of Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, apparently had a 'sacred crocodile' in the past; but the charm had failed to work and, less faithful to their cult (or less optimistic) than the people of Mokwa, the people of Katcha abandoned the practice.

My second instance comes from Pichi, a small village near Bida, and concerns a spirit said to be embodied in the leopards of that locality. Surprisingly, it is identified with one of the early chiefs of Pichi, many generations back, and known by his name, *Ndakó Yisa*, Grandfather Yisa; but since all Nupe invariably refer to leopards in this circuitous and respectful manner, and since Yisa is an extremely common name, I am inclined to regard this quasi-totemic interpretation as apocryphal. Nor is the belief very positively stated or accompanied by special rituals. The people believe, however, that no leopard will attack a person of Pichi, and in turn refrain from molesting the animal, even if it kills their dogs or goats.

If animals ever played a more momentous role in the Nupe universe, there is little evidence of it today. Some disconnected 'superstitions' and a few suggestions in folklore are the only instances of this kind. Thus the Nupe believe that animals, like men, have 'spirit doubles' (of which more presently) and that certain animals are also possessed of quasi-human or superhuman faculties. The attitude towards leopards is a case in point. Most villagers are convinced that if the respectful, indirect reference to 'Grandfather Yisa' were omitted, the leopards in the neighbourhood would be annoyed by this 'lack of courtesy' and would surely attack the village (though strict observance of the rule would not make them more amenable or friendly); but no attempt is made to explain the belief or to relate it to some other, more fundamental, tenet of the creed. Much the same applies to 'Father Tortoise', *Ndakpa*, who is the hero of numerous tales, in which he plays the part of a would-be clever fellow who runs into various adventures, either amusing or containing a moral. A small red beetle which appears at the beginning of the rains is called *Sokó*, which odd nomenclature elicits only this comment: 'Since the

[1] The people told me afterwards that the crocodile had in fact died; when I pointed out that I had since seen it in the stream, I was assured that it was 'a different one'. The people of Jebba Island, incidentally, claimed that the river ritual *ketsá* similarly protected all riverain people from crocodiles; which claim was ridiculed by the proud owners of the crocodile cult in Mokwa, who at once recalled that three years previously a Kede man from the river had been killed by a crocodile.

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insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'.

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds.

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses.

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of

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that human, it follows that good spirits can be wedded to evil persons and vice versa. 'Good' spirits might therefore grant success to the most evil machinations, and 'bad' spirits frustrate the best intentions of their human twins. Also, a good person, tied to a good but weak spirit, cannot hope to escape misfortune; while the misfortunes of an evil person who happens to possess an evil spirit double would be as blindly bestowed. All this fits well into a universe which *ab initio* contains good and evil, fortune and misfortune, without moral reasons. But here, in the realm of concrete personal fate, the amorality of the creed is most clearly noticeable. Yet it is so only for us; the Nupe worry little about the ethical issues. Only in one respect do they face these issues and resolve them by admitting this exception to the general rule: Witches always have evil spirit doubles, and these exercise their power, not against their human twins, but against the victims of the latter. But this modification of the spirit belief is slight; for the evilness of the spirit does not make the witch a witch; his or her evil nature is simply given and only aided by the congenial spirit.

A few of the men with whom I discussed these questions seemed prepared to reinterpret the belief in personal spirits more thoroughly. They held that all spirit doubles were 'good', not morally, but in the sense that they served their twins as best as they could. As the spirits were weak or strong, so they would be capable or incapable of gaining success for the human beings, whatever the morals of the latter. These were the views of a minority, and far from correcting the moral ambiguity of the creed they only added to its cynicism. But they seem to indicate a desire to correct another weakness in the creed, which strikes us as forcibly, namely, the supererogatory character of the spirit belief. Clearly, there is no need to make the spirits good and evil as well as weak and strong; the former distinction adds nothing in the way of explanations which the latter does not already furnish.

In a wider sense, the whole conception of personal spirits seems redundant since it accounts for nothing that is not already accounted for by other agencies. Owing to the spirits the human beings meet with fortune and misfortune; but the same fortuitous dispensation of good things and bad is ascribed to the very nature of the created world. The spirit doubles account for nightmares or helpful dreams, but so do the *fifingi* and *kuci*; they bring about illness, but this may equally be due to the weakening of *rayi*, to the attacks of witches, or (as we shall see) to acts of God. The spirit doubles cause afflictions of the mind, but these may again come from God or be rooted in the human body. Altogether, the Nupe creed seems without economy; diverse agencies are introduced to explain the same phenomena, and diverse supernatural

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aids are made to overlap in their aims or concerns. Thus one sacrifices to spirits, twins, kinship souls, and, through rituals, to God himself; or one uses *cigbe*; and one does so for the same reasons —to secure prosperity, to protect oneself from illness, or to safeguard fertility of man or nature. Even so, there is some design and order in this confusing picture; the Nupe universe is not entirely a random array of entities and mystic forces, but something of a cosmos. We shall, by way of a summary, try and outline its features.

4. RELIGION AND POLITY

First, however, I must mention an important figure in the Nupe creed which falls into none of the categories so far discussed—Tsoede or Edegi, the legendary first King of Nupe. The tradition of Tsoede and its essentially political symbolism has been discussed elsewhere, so that here a few remarks will suffice.[1]

Tsoede's memory survives in an elaborate cycle of myths, the only instance of this kind in Nupe; several rituals and sacred objects (an iron chain, brass bangles worn by chiefs, the bronze figures mentioned before) are said to have been his creation; and a specific cult also bears his name. Similar observances also exist, here and there, in the villages, relating to the ancestors of hereditary chiefs; they, too, are sometimes regarded as the founders of their communities or as the initiators of particular cults, their *kuci* being invoked in regular ceremonials. But Tsoede is much more than an ancestor chief magnified, and the rituals called after him do more than merely summon up his memory. Nor is it the *kuci* of Tsoede which is invoked. The concrete ties of descent, implicit in the worship of *kuci*, are obviously absent between the ancestor king and the vast, nation-wide congregation of his cult, while his 'personal soul' has no part in any cycle of rebirth.[2] In the rituals of Tsoede it is he himself who is invoked, so that he may intervene with *Sokó* on behalf of his people. The precise circumstances of this intervention are neither explained nor pictured in any way; yet one knows that it is more powerful as well as active than that accessible to *kuci* (which are merely 'watched by God').

If Tsoede is not a *kuci*, neither is he a 'spirit' nor *aljénu*. He represents, in fact, a figure outside the general framework of Nupe religion and a conception both anomalous and unique in Nupe

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 72–76, 141–2.

[2] Tsoede is said to have been harelipped, and every Nupe child born with a harelip is still named after him. But this custom only serves to keep his memory alive; for it has no further consequences and does not imply any belief in Tsoede's reincarnation.

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779 773 thought. He is a man-become-deity (though there is no pantheon where he could find a niche), a national hero turned into an ancestral being (though again, there are no named ancestors to whose ranks he might be added). Tsoede is the ancestor only of a line of kings; but in a wider and vaguer sense all Nupe within the kingdom regard themselves with pride as his 'offspring', in the sense, that is, that they were born in a country he founded and made great and come of stock which, originally, lived under his rule and supernatural protection. This protection, which still endures, bears on certain problems of life which are resolved also by means of other rituals or appeals to *Sokó*, namely, the ubiquitous problems of illness and fertility. But these are only incidental effects of Tsoede's mystic power; its main efficacy used to bear on political interests—the maintenance of the 'king's law', the punishment of criminals, and the protection of the 'King's Highway' on the river Niger.[1] Even the 'incidental effects' of the Tsoede cult are bound up with political interests, being embodied in material objects which are at the same time the paraphernalia of secular power. Let me only mention the 'Chain of Tsoede', which is believed to cure the sterility of women but which was formerly also used to strangle political offenders and to uncover crimes in the manner of an ordeal.

[182] In brief, the Tsoede cult is essentially a State religion superimposed upon a pre-existing creed. The cult ties the people to supernatural benefits granted not simply by God, nor by a God who commands his own rituals, but by a God who listens to kings. And its rituals, no longer 'owned' by communities or kin groups, are aligned with the growth and pride of a nation.

5. THE NUPE COSMOS

779 772 I spoke before of the supererogatory character of certain Nupe beliefs. In a sense, the greater part of Nupe doctrine has this character. Consider that the Nupe hypothesize a deity who creates the world and then leaves it to itself—uncertain, full of obscurity and accident, and embracing good and evil in entirely fortuitous measure. With such a conception of the relationship between God and the world, the Nupe need not have speculated further about some deeper meaning behind the features of the universe. Anything that exists or happens in it would be sufficiently explained by that key concept of an aloof and non-ethical deity. One might, for example, imagine a religion starting from the same premisses which would leave all further explanations to the crude realism of naïve common sense. Whether so unambitious a theo-

[1] See my article on the 'King's Hangmen' in *Man*, 1935, 143.

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logy is ever likely to arise, I will not venture to discuss. The point is that Nupe theology is more ambitious; the Nupe do speculate further, and reckon with a great many additional (or 'supererogatory') existences and influences. They seem to feel the need to do justice to the particular features of the world by means of particular conceptions, over and above its broad justification in terms of divine creation. 779 ● 772

This proliferation of thought is, of course, not peculiar to Nupe religion, though we may note that the Nupe ignore many 'particular' features which other religions feel compelled to acknowledge and elaborate. Thus the Nupe find nothing to explain about the heavenly bodies, do not concern themselves specifically with lightning, thunder, or rain, and speculate only vaguely about animals or natural features. Instead, their attention is focussed upon health and disease, birth and death, fertility, misfortunes, dreams, that is, upon things human. The Nupe elaboration of the universe, we might say, is anthropocentric. 779

Yet it concentrates on natural man, not on the moral being. Again it neglects all features which might serve this kind of conception, such as an after-life promising reward or retribution, or natural catastrophies that might signify divine anger or warning. Even where the ethical interpretation suggests itself forcibly it is ignored; thus the metamorphosis of the soul stands apart from any ethical design; the powers of good and evil spirits descend on man at random, and the success or failure of supernatural appeals, to ancestors or even to God, do not reflect upon the moral worthiness of the suppliants. There are a few vague notions of divine retribution. Thus it is admitted, but never spontaneously vouchsafed, that incest is punished by barrenness and blindness, and that persons guilty of concealed crimes may be punished by the *kuti* (in an unspecified manner) or killed by lightning (in the case of theft). But these half-hearted concessions do not alter the picture of a creation devoid of moral purpose. [681]

Are, then, all the 'additional influences' which the Nupe read into creation and all their 'further speculations' merely attemps to 'do justice to the particular things in the world', and no more? It may well seem so. There seems to be no other, ulterior, motive behind the readiness to ascribe the contrariness of a tree or the uncanniness of a locality to spirits rather than to nature just-so created; behind the belief that certain ailments betray the machinations of spirits or witches over and above the weakening of the *anima*, and perhaps natural causes; or behind the subdivision of mental afflictions, which are traced to spirits, to the vagaries of the body, and to God. But consider also that these diverse explanations are not kept apart, by some economical parcelling-out of the universe:

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779 rather, they mostly represent alternatives and overlap for the same phenomena. And since each explanatory conception entails a different notion as to the controls or remedies applicable to the phenomenon in question, the multiplication of the former means also a multiplication of the latter. In other words, you have several strings to your bow. Indeed, this is doubly true. For as we know, the overlap in explanatory conceptions is matched by the overlap in the supernatural aids themselves; like the appeal to the *kuci*, which has 'no domain', ritual and even certain forms of medicine have a wide and multifarious efficacy. The lack of economy of thought thus means first, that the map of the universe is drawn in greater detail, and second, that in coping with its forces one has the chance of several trials.

779 Now, the 'details' in the universe are not multiplied at random. Rather are they ordered in the sense of two principles. The first 829 reflects the organization of human society as the Nupe see it. Thus there is the sphere of the fate of communities, governed by influences irreducible beyond the givenness of creation and anonymous beyond their ultimate origin in God, which influences are controllable by the collective efforts of *kuti*. Then there is the sphere of individual fate, governed by the specifically named agencies of life soul, shadow soul, witchcraft, and spirits (personal or otherwise), and controllable by *cigbe* and individual sacrifices. There is, further, the sphere of kinship fate, governed by the agency of *kuci* and controlled by sacrifices to ancestors and twins. And there is, finally, the sphere of the kingdom and political fate, with its special rituals of Tsoede. Admittedly, these various spheres are not as neatly separated, the social appropriateness of supernatural aids like the social import of supernatural influences overlapping at many points. Certain nature spirits also affect the fate of communities and hence call for the effort of ritual, while a drought, though it threatens the community, can also be dealt with by an invocation of *kuci*. Certain medicines are owned by kin groups, and certain *kuti* can be invoked by individuals; the twin sacrifices are addressed to God, like the *kuti*; witchcraft, though it attacks individuals, may be treated as a threat to the community or state; and the 'royal' cults of Tsoede also serve to meet the needs of individuals. If there were no such overlap, the chance of 'several trials' would not be as great as it is. But neither is it unlimited, being subject to that hierarchy of social appropriateness, which is only a little blurred by these ambiguities.

779 The second principle is purely theological and integrates the speculations about the 'details' of the universe with the basic dichotomy of God and the World; for this is carried even into the realm of things found in the world. Thus certain things come

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directly from God, such as the power of *kuti* or the life principle, while others indicate his presence only indirectly or ultimately, in that they are part of creation or happen in it. This is true of *cigbe*, of the nature spirits, and of various diseases and misfortunes. We might say that God willed certain things, while he permits or suffers others to exist. In other religions, a similar dualism might follow from the assumption of divine omnipotence, serving to vindicate the latter in the face of the evils in the world. In Nupe, it follows from the belief in a single act of creation, performed by an aloof creator disinterested in the progress and day-to-day fate of his work. For the two things which are most conspicuously 'willed' by God are also exceptions to this tenet; that is, they vindicate, though not the goodness of the deity, at least his continued concern with the world he called into being.

First, there is the conception of *kuti*, by means of which man can break through the aloofness of the deity. That this is so, is part of God's willed creation; but through investing man with this supernatural tool, God is committed to further acts upon the world he already fashioned once and for all. These renewed acts are only intermittent and in a sense casual, being contingent upon the human appeals; furthermore, man is also competent, and permitted, to fashion similar tools for himself. Thus the created world has some independence and some development of its own, as its human creatures have some inventiveness and will of their own. The second exception goes much farther, implying the continuous creative activity of God. The renewal of life on earth, more precisely, the bestowal of *rayi* upon animate beings, is conceived of in this fashion. This was made clear to me by means of a parable meant to elucidate the relationship of *rayi* and *kuci*. On the surface, the two seem alike, both leaving the human body at death and 'returning to God'. But in one case it is like throwing an object skywards which will soon afterwards drop down again by itself; in the other, you must imagine someone up above who would catch the object, so that it stays in his hands; so the *kuci* goes up to God and returns to find a new incarnation, while the *rayi* goes up and is 'held by God'. The life soul, then, returns to God in the sense that it is re-absorbed in the process of creation; every time it appears on earth, it is a new, separate manifestation of the divine will. The personal or kinship soul, which returns to God only for a while, is independent of this continuous creation; it is as it were continuous in its own right, having its own cycles or chains of existence, which essentially correspond to the empirical cycles or chains of generations. So that it stands, once more, for the world 'left to itself'.

Yet let me admit that in all other respects the dualism of God

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779 and the world is less sharply conceived than we have phrased it. It is blurred, above all, by the ambiguity of that crucial phrase 'of God'.[1] We can now define it more sharply: The Nupe will generally assert that only certain things in the world are *nya Sokó*, and that others are not; but, when pressed, they will admit that even these 'independent' entities are yet known to God and must in some sense be by his will. Nupe theology, in other words, has not refined its conceptual tools sufficiently to carry this dualism to its logical conclusion. The contrasted concepts which we employed, of things 'willed' by God as against those he only 'suffers' to exist, is beyond its capacity or intentions. Yet the Nupe do express something of the kind in a different way, by default as it were rather than in positive statements, for they leave the share of God in the creation of these 'independent' things of the world unemphasized, like matters that are unimportant and of no consequence. Thus it is important and always stressed that God gave life and ritual to man; and it is unimportant and not normally mentioned that in some fashion divine creation also includes *cígbe*, illness, the shadow soul, evil spirits, lunacy, and witchraft.

I would read a further meaning into this unequal emphasis of the divine share in creation. It suggests, it seems to me, an attempt to gloss over the philosophical difficulties entailed in this conception of a creation which is imperfect and neutral with regard to good and evil. These difficulties might have been resolved in a more sophisticated theology by some pseudo-Thomist doctrine, equating the divine design of the world with perfection and making the world 'left to itself' the source of all imperfections and evils. Yet though Nupe doctrine fails to furnish any such vindication of divine providence, the failure can at least be concealed by the manner in which the doctrine is handled, through emphasis here and 'glossing over' there. These attempts are never more than crude and half-hearted; but the motives behind them are, I think, unmistakable. Indeed, in one instance they even intrude upon the formulated doctrine; and this relates, significantly, to the one form of evil which is specifically and unreservedly ascribed to the deity.

779 The two most dreaded diseases are in this sense 'of God'—sleeping sickness (*kpatsũgi*) and leprosy (even called *Sokó 'gũ* or *sokogũci*—the 'Illness of God'). Now, God did not pre-ordain them in their deadly form; he created only their possibility, while the actual evils are a consequence of the 'world left to itself', that is, of accident and unpredictable circumstances. When creating man, God placed leprosy and sleeping sickness into every human organism, but he created the two diseases both in male and female form, and an organism possessing one form only remains healthy and

[1] See above, p. 10.

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normal. The actual disease materializes when the two forms happen to be combined in the same person, and the prospects of a cure depend on which 'germ', male or female, is the stronger. Predominantly male leprosy is curable, predominantly female leprosy, fatal. In the case of sleeping sickness everything depends on the treatment, though the prospects are bleak in either case; if a *cigbe* expert succeeds in killing the male 'germ' only, the disease will take its fatal course; in the opposite case death at least will be avoided, though another incurable disease, lunacy, will result.

This is once more a half-hearted vindication of divine providence; all it attempts to prove is that creation is not necessarily evil and that evil things slip into it by chance. Fundamentally, the whole Nupe universe is thus ruled by accident. Such benevolent design as is discernible in it is all too vulnerable and all too easily vitiated by the coexistence of evil. Yet neither are evil and malevolence more securely established. It is true that there is no real struggle between the two, as between opposed wills or destinies, but only the casual share-out of fortunes and misfortunes. Even so there are grounds, if not for an inspiring faith, yet for its cruder version, optimism. And to this, as we shall see, the Nupe firmly cling.

This is not, however, the whole picture. Our view of Nupe religion is still one-sided, based as it is on the doctrine alone, on ideas asserted, taught, and learned as such. Another kind of faith or assurance, less articulate but perhaps more powerful, may spring from the concrete acts of worship, that is, from the psychological stimulations and experiences gained in ritual and other observances. With these the following chapters will deal.

For the moment we need point out only one of the consequences of the Nupe conception of the universe. Clearly, it vouchsafes little certainty or guidance for action. Even the promises of supernatural aid only add to the uncertainties, for as they offer the chance of several trials so they confront the user with the problem of choice, which problem is not always readily solved. But the Nupe universe holds out some promise of certainty and some guidance for action. Both are mechanical and of a case-to-case kind; in other words, they are such as divination can offer. And since this guidance is required both for the problems of everyday life and for the handling of the supernatural tools meant to aid man in these problems, divination becomes a prerequisite, not only of provident action in general, but also of religious actions. It seems logical, therefore, to turn to divination first, and afterwards to ritual, medicine, and to all the other 'supernatural tools'.

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the servants, as though listening to the mask and translating its wishes, would order the drummers to change the rhythm; or the mask, silent until then, would stop and talk some gibberish in a falsetto voice, which meant another 'message' or salute, duly translated by the interpreters. Or finally, the mask would set out on a sudden excursion, breaking through the circle, run down a side-street and temporarily disappear. 794

The mood of the gathering grew more and more excited until, about noon, just when it seemed that the excitement would reach fever pitch, there was a sudden hush. The drumming paused, as did the dancing and singing. The mask stood still, flanked by the 'servants', and a number of old women walked up to it and, on their knees, with bent head, saluted the mask. They handed small gifts of money to the 'servants', which were meant to buy the 'protection of the *ndakó gboyá*'. (This, I was told, was only a token payment: formerly heavy sums were paid in the same fashion.) Soon afterwards the mask disappeared, now without returning, and the pause turned into a midday break, when everyone went home. At about 3 o'clock the mask reappeared on the market place, which soon filled with people, and the proceedings of the morning were resumed. The drumming and dancing went on into the night, to the light of torches and hurricane lamps, uninterrupted even by a gathering thunderstorm. At about 9 o'clock the mask danced out of the circle and disappeared in the dark, not to return. 'You see', a bystander pointed out, 'how it is swallowed up by the ground'.

The crowd of onlookers included not only every soul in Kutigi, among them all the local notables and the Fulani District Head (a 'royal prince' from Bida), the contingent from Shebe, but also many strangers who had learned of the forthcoming performance. The attitude of the crowd was an odd mixture of enjoyment and fear. Of the former there could be no doubt; for a long time afterwards people were talking about the 'nice' and 'beautiful' performance as though they were commenting on an ordinary festivity, and the 'servants' of the mask several times pressed me to say whether the '*ndakó gboyá* had pleased me'. But there was no question either of the fear. It was clearly voiced already in the women's songs; for unlike many ceremonial songs of Nupe, those sung at the *ndakó gboyá* are far from nondescript or ambiguous. 794 781 794 539 781

(1)

One does not call him friend
When he comes to stay in the bush:
A friend (he) is when he leaves.

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(2)

794 We are saying—'A stranger has come (in the night)'
539 He is greater than the chief.
781 We are saying—'being greater than the chief,
May he go away when day comes.'

(3)

We are desiring the cloth (mask)
Which covers the Great One.
God is in front,
He is in the back (i.e. being everywhere and all-powerful, God will protect us).

794 The attitude towards the *ndakó gboyá* could not be better
781 expressed: he is a 'friend' only when he leaves, a powerful 'stranger' whom one wishes to see gone; and while one must invoke the secret of the 'cloth', it is yet so terrifying that the thought of God alone gives comfort. But let me stress that this is not merely the unthinking expression of conventional sentiments; the fear and awe referred to in the songs were clearly visible even in this ceremonial, devoid though it was of the more sinister implications of witch-hunting and punishment. When the old women presented their gifts of a few pennies to the mask, they were acting genuinely and in all humbleness; and any person whom the mask approached, man or woman, was as genuinely terrified. Men whom I knew to be sophisticated and 'enlightened', such as the local dispenser and one of my servants, ran and hid behind a hedge when the mask suddenly towered over them.

794 Nor can there be any doubt but that the people believe in the magic effects of the ceremonial. Even after the mild version I happened to see I heard the remark that the village was now clear of witchcraft. This attitude does not really conflict with the well-known extortions practised by the *ndakó gboyá* society; the admission of the abuses is one thing, and the belief in the anti-witchcraft cult quite another. Thus the Government's ban of the *ndakó gboyá* was thought regrettable if indeed not disastrous; everywhere the people spoke with envy of their cousins in Patigi who had kept their *ndakó gboyá* and hence preserved 'the only sure protection against witchcraft'. Often have I been told that in the rest of Nupe there was now no means of fighting witches, and no protection 'save God', who, as we know, is inscrutable, idle, 'far away'.

To be sure, even the *ndakó gboyá* is not a full protection. Though it may frighten witches and temporarily 'cleanse' a community, it cannot exterminate witchcraft. For not only must the cere-

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about female witches and to the vicarious satisfaction of witch-hunting. Nupe religion, we must conclude, cannot hold its own as a messenger of ideals.

4. ASSURANCE AND STIMULATION

We have already mentioned the circular efficacy linking these two components of religious experience. Yet they can be separated in analysis, as much (or as little) as the mere knowing and learning of religious truths can be held apart from the actual living through acts of devotion.

Concerning the assurances about the world and man's place in it which can be known and learned, there is little to say, and most that can be said is negative. Nupe doctrine does not teach that the universe is benevolent or that the deity is closely concerned with human fate. Though man has skills and ritual procedures to invoke supernatural aid, their outcome will often remain uncertain. Thus these skills and procedures contain only traces of the calculable forcefulness of 'magic'. The strictly technical manipulations of *cigbe* come closest to this conception; yet they, too, are subject to the will of God, or accident, and even the miraculous medicines in which one places absolute confidence involve 'invocations' (not 'spells') and hence an element of submission. In the last resort, man can only appeal and supplicate; if, on balance, Nupe religion is optimistic, this only means that it holds out hopes in the face of a world governed by accident, not that there is an assured or reassuring design behind it.

To turn to the 'stimulations'. We need not stress again that the self-abandonment of the mystic or visionary is utterly foreign to the Nupe. Never does the worshipper face his god in solitude, drawing only upon his inward experience or seeking private illumination. Nor is the mood he seeks in his worship entirely religious, that is, unattainable save through the 'thought of supernatural relations'; for in all the major rites at least, that mood emerges also from the added stimuli of music, dancing, crowd behaviour, and perhaps sexual excitement. Generally, the mood of Nupe worship is restrained and calm, leading to no extremes either of fear and stress or of exultation. The absence of elaborate ritualism precludes the tensions that go with rigidly prescribed gestures or speech; in avoiding nocturnal performances most rituals also avoid the sharp accents of fear and mystery; and the rules of ritual etiquette usually curb abandoned behaviour.

Above all, the mood of Nupe worship lacks development. The ritual prepares and holds a sense of the sacred in various, familiar ways—through rules marking off the ritual occasion from ordinary

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ones; through the subdued, solemn manner of applying oneself to the ritual task; and through the serious import of the supplication. But this mood is merely 'lived through'; it involves no mounting expectancy, pressing for some culminating experience or final fulfilment. In the act of worship proper, embodied in the esoteric phase of any rite, the prayer or the sacrificial meal might play that part. Intellectually, the prayer represents the crucial moment, when the whole purpose of the ritual is made clear and the appeal or hope articulately expressed. In the large-scale ceremonials, too, there is some emotional preparation for that moment, drumming and singing being abruptly silenced when the prayer is about to be uttered. Yet it is uttered too early in the proceedings and uttered too informally to come as a culminating stage. The sacrificial meal stands out in that it concludes the act of worship proper; but just then the solemn mood is also visibly fading.

The movable rites and minor observances; consisting as they do only of prayer and sacrifice, do not progress beyond that short-lived 'sensing of the sacred'. And if the great ceremonials offer further excitements and something akin to a final climax, these no longer grow out of the awareness of transcendental events, but are achieved through the massed stimuli of more common appeal —music, dancing, and so forth. As I suggested in an earlier context, some anticipation of the final stimulations must fuse with the mood of the worship proper; as the congregation in turn retains some sense of the sacred even in the phase of the 'merry-making', though in the absence of elaborate symbols acting as 'reminders' that sense is none too secure. What is important is that the worship as such does not work up to any final 'fulfilment'; rather, the emotional tensions remain diffuse and without climax. They only sensitize the congregation to the 'annunciations and promises' voiced in the ritual but do not prepare the worshippers for revelations.

The bush vigil in the *gunnu* may seem an exception since here certain pronouncements are made to a congregation previously exposed to fear and the thrills of mystery. But again, this is not a true climax of religious experience; this episode is only a prelude to the actual rite (and can in fact be omitted); while the pronouncement is concerned with nothing more momentous than an admonishment of adolescents. Indeed, the very mood of fear and mystery, which would seem so congenial to the expectancy of revelations, must be called exceptional. One other ritual, the *mamma*, is staged in a similar atmosphere; but it occurs only in a few communities and is performed with little excitement or awe; nor does it carry any message or 'annunciation'.

Another exception is more important. In each Nupe community the calm and restrained mood of worship is reversed once, in the

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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

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We cannot precisely measure this psychological aftermath of acts of worship. But we can assess it indirectly, from the concern with religious experiences visible in everyday life. And here it is quite clear that our second assumption is the correct one. For the acts of worship do not leave any vivid awareness of the achieved communion with the deity nor any lasting sense of the holy. There is nothing of 'religiosity' in the Nupe character. He knows, of course, at all times, that there is a God and a realm of the supernatural; but ordinarily this is tacit knowledge, of no practical relevance, neither permanently awe-inspiring nor permanently exhilarating. Crudely speaking, the Nupe are religious only on religious occasions; in between, life is an affair of secular values and rules-of-thumb. That even sacred places are 'sacred' only at certain times of the year is part of the same attitude; so is the absence of any conception of personal holiness. Even Islam, with its daily prayers, its Friday service, and its pious scholars, has hardly affected this attitude. For the daily prayers have become unthinking routine, without any touch of the mystic; being a mallam is a profession among others and often combined with them; and the Moslem cult of saints or 'holy men' found no response.

All this means that the spheres of religion and the profane remain clearly separable. Probably few religions merge completely with secular life so that every possible action bears some reference to transcendental notions. Nor, of course, can we conceive of religions which would at no point coincide with mundane interests. But the border zone between the two can be more or less wide and more or less sharply circumscribed. In Nupe, this zone is narrow and sharply outlined. Wherever the 'competences' of religion bear on mundane interests we can readily mark the point where the coincidence ceases. There is no 'carry-over' from one to the other. Thus religion sustains the offices of chiefs, kings, and other exponents of authority and law: but their person is not sacred, and criminals convicted by these holders of supernaturally sanctioned offices are not treated with any show of awe or sacred horror. Religion helps to bind together the kin group through the belief in reincarnation, through ancestral sacrifices, and through the solemnization of marriage and birth: but the Nupe do not, on normal occasions, speak the names of the ancestors with bated breath or constantly worry about placating their spirits. Marriage is in no sense sacred, and children are not holy; even children whose birth is ascribed to the efficacy of sacrifice are not treated in any special way.[1] Nor, finally, are the sick who recover with supernatural aid or the crops that thrive after some rite has been duly

[1] The only rules of this kind are entailed in the *sogba* cult, of alien origin.

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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
652 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
661 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
652 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold
655 Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over
661 Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help [782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual 567] with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

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235 438 There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most [782] important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as house-hold-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most [267] desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make [842] men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

231 492 About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number 231 554 of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

231 471 433 Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

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245 539 up.' She went and told the men of the house. They all came and looked. They cleared the ground around the young plants; they had two kola-nut trees then. After three years the trees bore fruit. The men picked the fruits and took them home. They broke the nuts open and ate them. They picked out the kernel, took it into the bush and planted it. When the kola-nut trees bore fruit again the men picked the fruits and took them to the king. This was the beginning of the kola-nut in Nupe. When they had taken the fruits to the king, he said: 'They are very nice indeed.' But the following year the trees did not bear fruit. So the men went to see the soothsayers. They said that the trees would not bear fruit again unless they sacrificed a human being. So the men went and told the king, and said: 'If we do not sacrifice a human being our trees will never bear fruit again.' Therefore the king gave them permission to take a human being and sacrifice it. They did so, and the trees bore fruit again. This was the beginning of human sacrifices in Nupe, with the permission of the king.

245 As the legend explains the origin of kola plantation in the country of the Kusopa, certain magic rites which are practised by that group—and by that group only—emphasize the unique position of the kola-nut planters. Only with the knowledge of that special magic can the success of the difficult and precarious cultivation be assured. The Laboži people practise two kinds of this professional magic. At the time when the kola trees are in bloom every planter will collect the dead leaves on his plantation, place them in a mortar, and pound and then burn them on the plantation. There is no spell or special ritual linked with this act, but by it, as by a magic act, the planter believes he will ensure a rich harvest. The second magic connected with kola-nut planting is performed for the whole group by the *Maji Tsuba*, the Master of Threshing (in the legend the first kola-nuts were growing from the threshing-ground), the village priest of Laboži. Annually, about two months before the picking of the kola-nuts, he performs a sacrifice in front of the hut in which, as the legend has it, the woman lies buried to whom the Kusopa owe the knowledge of kola-nut planting. To-day a white ram and cock are sacrificed, the blood together with some beer is poured on the threshold of the hut, and *Sokó*, God, is invoked that he may let the kola trees thrive. Formerly this sacrifice is said to have demanded a human victim. (See p. 90, n. 2.)

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This connexion between planting technique and mythical and magic ideas, common all the world over, needs no special explanation. But in the case of the kola-nut planters it gains an additional significance. The special nature of the rite, its infrequent occurrence, correspond to the special monopolized technique. In the eyes of the people who, not kola-nut planters themselves, accept the existence of these special rites, it confirms and endorses the exceptional position of the Kusopa as the masters of a unique craft. About fifteen years ago the Administration planned to introduce the cultivation of kola-nuts into the other districts of Nupe. A few expert planters from Laboži were sent round to teach the farmers in places where the soil looked promising the almost secret art of kola planting. These efforts met with but meagre success. Local conditions were to a large extent responsible: the soil in the other districts seemed capable of producing only the inferior kind of kola, and

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1. Sacrifice before twin shrine

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2. The sacred crocodile of Mokwa

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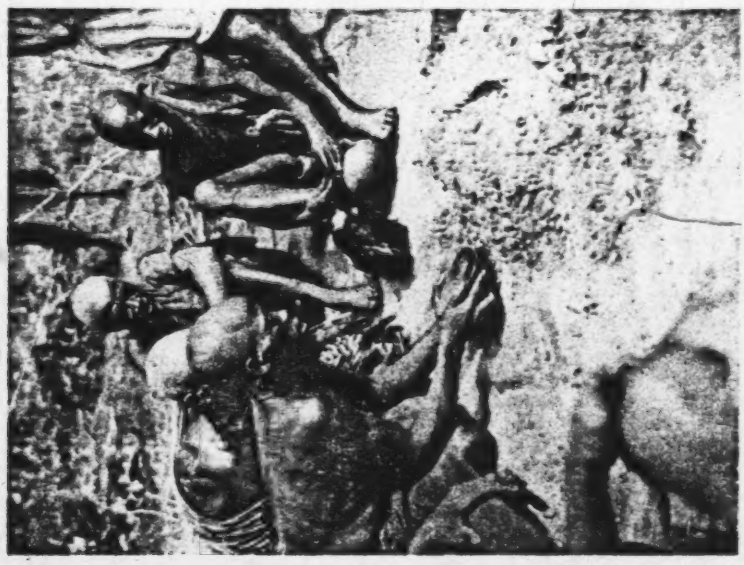
7. *Nddùma* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]



6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(B)]

796 X
795
782

8. Scene from *gunnu* dance in Jebba

[415]

9. *Dzakó* sacrifice
[p. 70 (A)]

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the freshly cut grain eaten in certain sacrifices points to subsistence and the continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to secure. The meaning of all these symbols is fairly obvious and in a sense 'natural', being based on a commonly known nexus between the sign and the thing signified. Symbols of a more artificial kind, resting on some specific and perhaps esoteric convention, are rare in Nupe ritual. The only clear instance is the symbolism of right and left in the *dzakó*, which, as I have said, has no parallel in any other Nupe cult. The sacrifice of fish in one version of the *gunnu* is a more doubtful case; for though fish are associated with fertility (in dream interpretation) and welcome gifts (in divining), that knowledge is far from general. The use of tortoise shells in the same ceremonial reminds the congregation of the Father Tortoise stories, but does no more. The rule that the *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round his waist' evokes no association, say, with constraint inimical to growth and fertility. And though it may be tempting to speculate on the rule of calling the sacrificial beer 'water', that is, by the name of the fluid which (as rain or semen) is linked with the fertility of nature and man, the Nupe attach no ulterior meaning to this metaphor.

Whether these and other details of the ritual procedure do not perhaps involve symbolisms of a more subtle and unconscious nature, I will not discuss. In my view uncomprehended 'symbols have no part in social enquiry; their social effectiveness lies in their capacity to indicate, and if they indicate nothing to the actors, they are, from our point of view, irrelevant and indeed no longer symbols (whatever their significance for the psychologist or psycho-analyst). But let us note that certain modes of acting may be significant for the actors without constituting symbols, merely because they represent a rule, a formalism of acting, that is, a *ritual*, and not accidental or random behaviour. This is true, for example, of the choice of the sacrificial animals. To begin with, they are in every case 'ordinary' animals, without sacred associations and neither rare nor avoided in workaday life. Though most rituals prescribe the sex of the sacrificial beast, males and females are chosen in random manner, suggestive of no symbolic link with the purpose of the ritual. The *ketsá* is perhaps the clearest example; the legend, as we remember, mentions the sacrifice of a cow; yet the actual ritual, when performed at the request of the Kede chief, requires the killing of a bull. In other rituals the sex as well as the species of the animal simply depend on the outcome of divination. It might seem that at least the specification of white or black animals, which is fairly common, must have a symbolic significance since black colour is generally associated with secrecy and evil things, and white colour with prosperity.

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prosperity. But again, both kinds are irregularly employed; all that can be said is that the sex, colour or species of the animals is *laid down*, and hence stands for a rule significant as such. 796x 182

A few words must here be said about the whole conception of the Nupe sacrifice. It seems anomalous that a non-personified deity or an abstract 'cosmic force' should be offered food and drink. But the prayer formula accompanying the offering speaks concretely of 'giving' these to God or *kuti*, just as the name of at least one ritual implies that the *kuti* (or the stone representing it) 'drinks' the fluid offered. The name for sacrifice, *labá*, offers no further clue; denoting the actual offering as well as the prayer accompanying it, it does not separate the former from the general act of worship. The offering is thus a gesture among others: like the prayer formula, meant to break through the aloofness of the deity, the sacrificial gift serves to attract and hold his attention. In either case the gesture used is borrowed from everyday life, the prayer employing ordinary language, the sacrifice items normally offered by clients to patrons. And this conception of a 'normal' gift is once more consistent with the notion that the various *kuti*, precisely like persons of rank and standing, command their special 'greetings'. If the offerings are anomalous, they share this character with all the other forms of addressing God and *kuti* and indeed with the very conceptions of the deity and of the Force-that-is-in-ritual. 782

Let me note briefly that the same anomaly also holds in the case of sacrifices made to ancestors or over the vessels of 'great' medicines. The former, as we remember, are brought to the disembodied souls which are 'with God'; mostly, too, they are accompanied by invocations addressed at once to God and *kuci*. The sacrifices to medicines again involve the invocation of God; and though they consist in offerings of beer, morsels of food, and the blood of the sacrificial animal, they are, as we shall see, also understood to strengthen the impersonal force that is imputed to the substance of medicine. Nor are the offerings to spirits, de-humanized beings that they are, any less anomalous; indeed, in a different context I recorded the positive assertion that 'spirits do not eat'. 796x 182 782 769

The first two observances may, like ritual proper, include the sacrificial meal of the congregation; the sacrifice to ancestors does so in most cases, the sacrifice to 'great' medicines only where it has fused with a *kuti* or with *kuci* worship. Invariably, however, the inclusion of the communal meal, even where it means merely a sharing-out of beer, entails the invocation of God, and not only of ancestors or of the 'force' of medicine. Yet the sacrificial meal has in no way the significance of a sacrament. The meal undoubtedly represents a sacred occasion, although it may show

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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*796 little trace of awe or emotional thrill.[1] But there is no conception
182 of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing
782 bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial
769 meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations' between deity and congregation. Much the same point was made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties'.[2]

*796 Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of
182 the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of
183 very general social import and established by means of a relevant parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal, efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence. The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and afterwards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition, rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dance', and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis, and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, however, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols. They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

[1] This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *biki* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

[2] *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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H
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26. A *bori* dancer in a cataleptic fit

N
G
782

27. *Sogba* sacrifice of the Gwari

[p. 214 (B)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the same lack of congeniality also characterizes the practices which have been rejected. Or shall we assume that, for the adoption to occur, the pre-existing interest must have outweighed the uncongenial character, while in the case of rejected practices the balance was the other way? There is evidence for this. The *gani*, with all its alien elements, clearly answers powerful pre-existing interests, and indeed improves upon the respective traditional institutions; the *gugu*, conversely, has nothing of the kind to offer: it is only another fixed ritual, duplicating the aims of the traditional rites, so that, apart from being uncongenial in form, it also appears redundant in content. The *borí* could answer at least a weak pre-existing need, since it offers a cure for lunacy of which the Nupe are deficient; yet it also clashes utterly with their religious beliefs and, above all, with the psychological tenor of their religious life. The *sogba* cult seems to exemplify this balance between interest and congeniality even more clearly. For the Nupe adopted only that aspect of it which corresponds to a strongly pronounced and in a sense inexhaustible interest (in fecundity), while rejecting both the annual ceremonial, whose aims seem redundant, and the *sogba* ordeal, which was altogether alien to the pre-existing aims or interests. Much the same is true of the bronze figures of Tsoede, which were embodied in Nupe ritual only as emblems of kingship, without any of the features normally implicit in the worship of 'idols'.

Let us be clear that this assessment of a balance between interests and congeniality holds only with two provisos. First, it is largely based on *ex post facto* arguments. The *gani*, for example, fits a 'pre-existing need' only in the form in which it exists today. If we judge this affinity of interest to be sufficiently great to have outweighed the uncongenial features we do so because in the event the latter proved no insuperable obstacle; but we cannot be certain how much remodelling, of content and purpose as well as of form, has gone into the acceptance. Nor can we say that the *borí* or *gugu* would have proved incapable of such remodelling. All we can really say is that no such attempts have been made. Have they not been made because there was no sufficiently strong interest to make the effort worthwhile? Again we can only answer—perhaps; for the *elo* would seem to contradict this argument. There, an uncongenial practice has been fitted into Nupe life for no apparent 'need' at all, unless we are prepared to consider the addition of a pleasurable (and novel) occasion a felt 'need'. And if we do so, the mummery of the *gugu* and the unusual dance of the *borí* would seem similarly acceptable.

Secondly, our arguments hold only if other factors in the situation can safely be neglected; and of one of these, the relationship

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between the potential donors and recipients, this cannot be assumed *ab initio*. Rather, this factor must be added as a likely third determinant of adoption or rejection. Surveying our data from this new angle we meet with a wide variety of situations. The *elo*, the Tsoede 'idols', and the *sogba* cult were adopted strictly from outside, without any corresponding fusion or integration of the 'owners' with the recipient groups. But here a further distinction must be drawn: while the Tsoede idols and the *elo* were taken over from fully distinct and in fact unknown donors, the *sogba* was found among neighbours and was 'taken over' only in the sense in which people turn to some promising, if otherwise unfamiliar, place of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the 'owners' of the *sogba* cult, viewed with Nupe eyes, occupied the inferior position of a conquered 'slave' population. Perhaps, then, the barrier of status was readily overcome only in the case of the fertility ritual, with its strong affinity of interest, while in the case of the other aspects of the cult it added to the 'counter-pulls' which made for their rejection.

The *gani*, *gugu*, and *bori* represent observances adopted or rejected in circumstances which involved the fusion or integration of donor and recipient groups. But again, the conditions differ in relevant respects. The Bornu and Yoruba immigrants arrived *en bloc*, maintained themselves as compact groups, and were thus integrated, as segments, in the host communities; the Hausa colony in the cosmopolitan city grew haphazardly, as the result of the irregular immigration of individuals of all classes and occupations, and never achieved internal cohesion; it only fused amorphously with the host community, but was not integrated in it. The kind of adoption, therefore, which turned the *gani* into a 'sectional task' was neither feasible nor called for in the case of the *bori*. It might, on the other hand, conceivably have worked in the case of the Yoruba ritual, even though this cult answers no 'residual' need. But here we must consider that the Yoruba came to Nupe, not as immigrants claiming equal status (as did the Benu), nor yet as free immigrants, but as prisoners of war freed and settled by royal command. Whatever the effect of the other 'pulls' in this rank-conscious society, the barrier of status must have weighed heavily on the side of rejection. Admittedly, it did so effectively only as regards the cult as such; minor features, such as the dress of the dancers which reappears in the *elo*, were adopted across the barrier, for their aesthetic attraction and novelty. Yet the barrier has at least prevented this 'borrowing' being acknowledged.

In brief, the acceptance or rejection of the alien observances involves the efficacy of several conditions and results from their

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794 The daily prayers (*salla*) spoken in Arabic (which few understand) and the weekly service in the mosque (*aduwa*) have become fully part of Nupe life, and if they lack the stimulus of pressing needs or the thrill that goes with rare occasions, this is not felt or ever commented upon. But the Moslem observances have also been remodelled, partly in a revolutionary fashion. As they exist today, they afford expression to the same pressing anxieties which animate the pagan rites, and do so with the same persuasiveness of a direct, articulate appeal to the deity. Over and above the stereotyped prayers, the Nupe have others which ask for special benefits and are meant to take care of such contingencies as a drought or the threat of an epidemic. These prayers may be said both privately, by any family head for his household, and publicly, in the mosque, by the *Liman* on behalf of the whole community. The special prayers are always said after the regular ones and, most important of all, are spoken in Nupe, not in Arabic. In addition, any household or kin group which faces some deep anxiety or threat will arrange a *walima*, that is, a ceremonial meal at which a fowl is killed and a mallam, specially invited, utters a brief prayer; again, an invocation in Nupe follows the Arabic formula, so that this observance differs only in minor details from the communal meal of the pagan ceremonial.[1]

794 Let me here quote four Nupe-Mohammedan prayers, concerned with harvest and rain. They have been recorded in two different 782 places, Bida and Lemu, and show the familiar looseness and variability of phrasing, which no orthodox Moslem prayer ever permits; above all, they invoke *Sokó*, not *Allah*, and thus wholly recapture the content and style of the pagan invocations.

Prayer at Harvest time (*Bida*).

Lord God (*Tsoci*), protect the house from the dangers of the harvest season, such as fire, such as falling ill with fever, such as drought. Give us health, *Amin*.

The same (*Lemu*).

The harvest is cleared: *Sokó*, protect us from fire; *Sokó*, protect us from smallpox; *Sokó* protect us from the heat that dries up everything.

Prayer at the Beginning of the Rains (*Bida*).

Sokó, may he give rain in plenty. May he give food that thrives beautifully. The grain, may it thrive beautifully. *Sokó*, send us

[1] The Nupe would in fact say that *walima* is only the 'Mohammedan name' for the ceremonial which the 'pagans' know as *biki* (See above, p. 110.)

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water which falls down upon man. And the man who is in a canoe on the water, and the water in the bush, protect them also for all of us. 794 782

The same (*Lemu*).

Lord God, protect us from the danger which is in the rain, and the storms, and also the lightning. Protect the house from it. Give us health, *Amin*.

3. CEREMONIALS

We turn to the big religious feasts of Islam which, in their annual recurrence at least, should come closest to, or rival most fully, the fixed pagan ceremonials. Of the seven orthodox Moslem festivals, the Nupe celebrate only three: the Mohammedan New Year, *Muharram*, and the two feasts known in Arabic countries as *Id el Fitr* and *Id el Azha*, the former concluding the month of *Ramadhan*, the latter falling in the 'month of pilgrimage', at the end of the Mohammedan year.[1] The Nupe call the Moslem New Year's feast *navũ* or 'Torches', and name the first month of the year after it; the month of *Ramadhan* is called *etswa azũ*, 'Month of the Fast', and the feast which succeeds it *sallagi* or 'Little Feast' (lit. 'prayer'); the *Id el Azha*, also known in Arabic as *Id el Kibir*, Great Feast, is called *sallakó*, which has the same meaning. The months in which these two feasts fall, the 10th and 12th, respectively, are known by their names.[2] Let us note that in embracing only three of the festivities of Islam the Nupe have retained that 'normal level' of regular ceremonials which we could discern in their traditional religious life.[3] 794 796x

In all Moslem countries the purely festive aspects of the *Id* tend to outshine the strictly religious ones. These are represented in a religious service held in the open, attended by vast crowds and led by the *Imam*; in the generous giving of alms; and (on the 'Great Feast') in the sacrifice of an 'unblemished animal . . . to commemorate the name of God over the brute beasts which He has

[1] A third, the Birthday of the Prophet, is identified by the Nupe with the *gani* ceremonial, as we have seen, on very little evidence. (See above, p. 217).

[2] These dates correspond to general Moslem practice. But the correspondence is purely nominal since the Nupe calendar operates with the intercalation of a 13th month while the Moslem calendar keeps strictly to the lunar year. In consequence the Nupe feasts always fall roughly in the same season while the orthodox Moslem celebrations correspond in no way to a seasonal calendar.

[3] See pp. 70, 225. This applies only to communities fully Islamized; in a first phase, one of the Mohammedan feasts, the *navũ*, may simply be added to the pagan cycle of rites (see below, p. 244).

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.

692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the "new" law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, "big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a "chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
●782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

CULTS[7]

Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

794 The Ebe have a *ɛikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the
782 ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konú of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *ndáduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsá* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[8]

794 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility,
crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in
793 times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnukó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[9]

278 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the
789 power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–5; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–5; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[8] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[9] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–62 and *passim*.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 768
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child [348 428]
inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 361
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives 634
by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never
marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do
so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was [186]
permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida,
whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, [481]
and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their [285]
Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their [771]
rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. [782]
The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out There are two sub-sections,

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, 634 the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, 771 a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which 184 rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans 182 as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first 634 two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to 771 some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself 182 responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of 782 these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndáduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndáduma* rituals, the *Ndáduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndáduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa : West. With Plate I-J. Nadel.

131 **The King's Hangmen: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

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Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggā in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sūlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *ígbā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Edc*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796 x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

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561 sub-tribe of Kutigi, Enagi, and Dabbã, the *gani* even dramatizes the age-
796 grade structure itself, its system of ranks, and the promotion from grade to grade. The *gani* assigns different ceremonial duties to the different grades, and involves certain symbolic tests of manhood of progressive severity which the different age-grades, one after the other, must undergo. The ceremony can, in fact, be regarded as a ritual of age-grade initiation. However, I must leave the description of this ceremony, closely associated though it is with the conception of age-grades, for a future occasion.

Let us turn to the Mohammedan religious ceremonies. At the celebration of the *Sallah* the age-grade associations play a much less specific role. They arrange a small festivity in the house of their group captains on the eve of the *Sallah*, at which—as in all houses of Bida and Mohammedan Nupe on that evening—a ram is killed and eaten. On the following morning the various *ena* of the town meet in the market to join the thousands of people who will follow the royal procession to the mosque and round the town walls, and gather later in front of the Emir's house, listening to drummers and musicians, and watching the display of the horsemen and the coming and going of the royal guests.

The celebration of the Mohammedan New Year, on the other hand, called *navũ* in Nupe (lit. torches), represents the climax of the public appearances of the Bida *ena*. The *navũ* is essentially a festival of youth. Its ritual acts, which appear to express, symbolically, the death and renewal of the year, are carried out by the young folk of Bida. On the eve of the New Year, at sunset, all the age-grade associations meet in the houses of their captains, and then march to the market of their town quarter, where all the associations of the *ekpã* forgather. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands, and are clad in simple, scanty garments. Three long processions, one in each *ekpã*, move slowly through the streets of Bida, down to the arm of the river flowing through that part of the town. The boys sing and dance while they walk, and throw their torches high up in the air, catching them as they fall. Arrived at the river, they take off their garments, and, clad only in a loincloth, wade into the water. There is no atmosphere of ritual or ceremony about it; they splash and play in the water, dance, wrestle, sing, and laugh at the clumsiness of those who drop and extinguish their torches. All the time the torch-play goes on; they play with the torches like balls, throwing and catching them. It is a dangerous game: I saw many lucky escapes, and quite a few incidents not so lucky.

561 Girls and young women, too, go to the river to bathe on the *navũ*,
796 and the sexual attraction adds its stimulus to the general excitement. The *navũ* is, in fact, the only occasion on which I have seen the Nupe indulge in open, undisguised, sexual play. Torches are thrown into the
● 786 water to light up the spot where girls are bathing almost naked; boys
519 accost girls in the water, and couples disappear in the dark of the river-banks. But the *navũ* is in more than one respect a period of licence. Indeed, more important than this amorous play is the licence which was extended till about fifteen years ago to all acts of violence and assault that might occur on *navũ* night. And such liberty of action was not

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the 561
torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably 786
led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the 796
three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one
ena would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight 579
would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navū* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navū* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navū*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navū* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navū* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navū*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age- 561
grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the in- 602
dividual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events
with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All 574
members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which 561

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x 796 The dance frequently rises to feverish excitement, when the youths
881 will suddenly resume using their whips, violently and against anyone. The flogging now has a purpose: when directed against male adolescents it is thought to promote growth and maturity; when directed against women, fertility. But there are also phases of calm as well as humorous episodes, acclaimed by general laughter. One episode, in particular, may be mentioned: now and again, the young men will imitate, with comic exaggeration, a typical women's dance or caricature the walk and gestures of women.

I will not describe the dance further: it fills the rest of the *gunnu* festivities, being interrupted only for a brief night's rest, and ends when all the beer is exhausted and everyone too tired to carry on. I will only note these important and partly unique features. Some
x 796 time during the dance the young men form themselves into a
842 procession led by the *Ndazo* and march and dance through the
881 village, still singing the *gunnu* songs, to give the 'salute' in front of the houses of high-ranking elders. On the way they also visit the childless women of the village; for these are strictly forbidden to watch the *gunnu* dance and must hide in their huts until the ceremonial is over. These women may be unhappily barren; or they may be suspected of avoiding childbearing and family duties so that they might lead the immoral life of female traders and prostitutes (which, in Nupe, means one and the same thing). In either case the *Ndazo* will enter their house and encourage or admonish them, as the case may be; the woman, kneeling before him, will receive two lashes with the *gunnu* whip, administered by one of the young men, which is both a punishment and a promise of fertility. Women who have no taste for either will have to leave the village or hide in some other house during the critical period, as indeed quite a few are doing.

[535] Again, few other Nupe rituals include a mixed dance of the sexes; in the *gunnu*, this is not only permitted but considered a
x 796 relevant part of the celebration, as is the whole excited and aban-
881 doned tone of the dance. Always, when describing the *gunnu*, the Nupe will use some such phrase—'we make merry, we drink, we dance, men and women together without order, until we talk without sense'. This excitement is in no small measure sexual; not only is the attention of the young men constantly drawn to the other sex (even by the fact that they wear an item of women's dress), but the week preceding the *gunnu* and the whole period of the
834 celebration are also marked by a severe prohibition of all sexual
786 intercourse, lest death visit the community. Only when the dance
x 796 is ended and everyone has bathed, the men in a nearby stream,
881 the women at home, is the rule of chastity lifted; the same night men and women will again sleep together, matrimonially or promiscuously – No one cares.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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771 the king'. Thus led, the age grades walk in procession through the
177 village to salute the chief and all the other notables of the com-
561 munity, join in the dancing, engage in wrestling matches, and meet one another in a realistic 'battle', to be described presently. The esoteric rite of the *gani*, the 'burial service' mentioned before, is performed by the leaders alone, in a secret place away from the scene of the public festivities. The younger boys are all dressed up as girls and imitate, in exaggerated and ridiculous fashion, the walk and dance steps of the women. This masquerade, though highly elaborate and considered a most relevant aspect of the celebration, is not further explained; but the context makes it clear that it carries the same meaning of a change of roles which underlies the similar mummery of the *gunnu*.[1] For this meaning is again expressed, now by means of a conspicuous symbolism which everyone understands, in certain other episodes of the *gani*, meant to dramatize the admission of the novices and the various promotions from grade to grade. There is the 'death and burial', loudly mourned by the crowd, of a 'little girl', indicating the abandonment of infancy by the young boys about to enter the first grade. In a preceding phase a 'little boy' is similarly buried and mourned, that is, shown to abandon boyhood for adolescence. Lastly, the youths of the most senior grade appear dressed up as 'warriors' and 'horsemen', meeting their juniors in a mock battle which seems to symbolize the final stage of adolescence, when youth must hold its own against adults, compete and struggle with them, and break into their ranks. All these things actually happen in the 'battle', whose very realism seems symbolic of the severe competition for position and power which characterizes Nupe life. In brief, the *gani* ceremonial is a typical *rite de passage*, dramatizing the crucial phases of male adolescence and adoption into manhood. Seen against this background, an ususual feature of the *gani*, too, falls into place. Obscene sexual jokes and allusions, normally never used, appear in the *gani* songs and are freely bandied about during the festivities, both by old and young: we may conclude that they serve to throw into relief a final aspect of adolescence, sexual maturity.

771 The ceremonial lasts three days, and each day concludes with a
177 hectic dance in which the sexes meet in utterly unrestrained
786 fashion. Nor does this unrestraint end with the dance; for during the three nights all the normal rules of sex morality are in abey-
561 ance. This temporary abandonment of moral restraint, which applies to every person in the community, implies, of course, more than merely a symbolic reference to adolescence and sexual maturity. It represents one of those periodical concessions to moral

[1] See above, p. 113.

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or sexual licence which are familiar from many societies, primitive and advanced. We know that they occur also in the traditional annual celebration of the *gunnu*. And here it seems significant that the people of Kutigi and the other communities now performing the *gani* have abandoned the *gunnu* in this fixed, annual form.[1] Whatever other reasons have contributed to the abandonment of the annual *gunnu*, the fact that it shared with the *gani* this one feature may well have been decisive; for it would seem to be in the very nature of this concession to unrestraint that it must not be duplicated.

There is evidence to show that the sexual licence belonged to the *gani* already in its original form in which it reached Nupe country. This original *gani* equally included some connection, apparently broad and unspecific, with age-grade life and male adolescence.[2] To some extent, then, the Nupe found in the *gani* a cult fortuitously congenial to their own interests and ideas. But let us note that the *gani* expresses them with unaccustomed sharpness: the masquerade of boys as girls, sketchily treated in the *gunnu*, is fully exploited in the *gani*; and nowhere else is age-grade life dramatized with such effect.

Other 'Nupeisms' in the *gani* are clearly the result of adaptation and remodelling. Thus, though the ceremonial retained its original name, its songs and prayers are in Nupe; the latter, spoken at the secret 'burial service', conclude with the typical Nupe formula—'May the whole town have health'; the musical instruments, the music itself, the dance steps, and the whole design of the ceremonial, with an esoteric part preceding the public 'merry-making'—all these are taken from the traditional practice. Yet equally, the *gani* contains conspicuously novel and 'un-Nupe' features. The very notion of a ceremonial having a proper plot and being staged as a drama with consecutive scenes has no parallel in Nupe. The same is true of the precise symbolism of the *gani* and of the masquerade of warriors and horsemen: the latter, incidentally, appear as riders of hobby-horses, which mummery is equally unknown in the rest of Nupe. So are the standards with which the age grades parade during the ceremonial, some of which are combined with crude symbols of the sexes. The open eroticism of the *gani*, finally, contrasts strikingly with the normal mood of Nupe ceremonials.

[1] See above, p. 83. It will be remembered that the performance of the *gunnu* as a movable rite (which is still practised in Kutigi) does not include the 'mixed' dance and the period of erotic licence.

[2] The evidence in question is based on accounts of the *gani* celebrations in its country of origin and among the nomadic Fulani. See *Africa*, vol. XIX, 1949, p. 177, n. 2.

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that the all-too-broad unity of Islam is (as I put it before) narrowed down to the scope of a national church. 794

The *navũ* is to some extent a smaller replica of the *salla*, including, again, the state procession to the mosque, with all its display of royal splendour and evoking the same festive mood of a large city bent on enjoyment. But the royal display occupies only a brief phase, on the morning of New Year's Day; and the enjoyment has a new emphasis, on youth, and on moral licence. 796x

On the eve of New Year, at nightfall, the young people of Bida, both youths and girls, forgather at the three streams that cross the town. The girls come in little groups, while the boys and young men are formed into companies, each composed of an age-grade association under its leader. They sing and dance on the way, and the youths all carry torches, which they swing or throw high up in the air, and sometimes brandish at one another in playful attacks. Arrived at the river the youths remove their gowns and the girls their upper garments, and thus stripped to the waist wade into the water. They splash about, with much shrieking and laughing, try dance steps, jumps and somersaults, and the boys engage in brief wrestling bouts, invariably terminated by a ducking. Now and again this clowning gives way to a mock battle, when the boys will thrust and throw the torches at one another, age-group fighting age-group, not seriously, but keenly and with marked excitement. It needs skill to catch the wildly flying firebrands or to parry those aimed at you. Nor are narrow escapes uncommon, and first-aid treatments for burns are a regular aftermath of the *navũ*. The excitement of the fight, moreover, is matched by the openly erotic excitement provoked by the occasion. This is indeed unique; at no other time will Nupe girls disrobe in the presence of men or show themselves with bare breasts. The girls will keep to the dark side of the river; but the youths throw torches in their direction to surprise a girl while she is undressing or bathing. There is cruder horseplay, too, the boys trying to seize the girls or to bump into them as though unwittingly; while in the shadows and under the bridge couples pursue their amorous play unseen. But though there is plenty of teasing and joking, the language is never obscene. About midnight the bathing breaks up and the young people return to their homes. 786 794 796x 883

This prelude to the *navũ* was not always so tame. Until fairly recently the mock battle of torches was meant quite seriously.[1] The three different bathing places are chosen in accordance with the threefold dynastic division of the city, and are visited by the age-grade associations in the respective local division. The diverse

[1] The word 'battle' has been chosen advisedly. All informants describing the usage emphasized that it was 'like a war'.

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786 loyalties which govern the town hold their sway over youth as well as adults; and on the occasion of the *navũ* the factional jealousies, 794 never fully submerged, were allowed to come into the open. Thus x796 the torch processions invariably led to organized and heated fights between the three groups; on the way back from the river, especi- 883 ally, one would ambush the other or try to invade the rival territory. The battle is said to have lasted the whole night, being fought with torches, sticks, stones, and any handy weapons. Injuries (some say, even death) inflicted in the course of the *navũ* went unpunished; for on this one night the law of the land was suspended. Eventually, in 1920 or thereabouts, the excesses of this all-too realistic play forced the Government to intervene and to forbid this phase of the *navũ*.

In spite of its realism, however, the mock battle not only legitimized factional hostility but also diverted it into relatively harmless channels. For though the boys and youths would give vent to sentiments commonly felt, they themselves were still outside serious politics and not yet genuinely caught up in factional strife. They would still be play-acting, however realistically, much as their whole age-grade life, with its imitation of adult ranks and ambitions, is play-acting and a make-believe copy of 'real life'. For the population of the city, whose sons and brothers took part in the 'battle of youth', this was in the nature of a vicarious and controlled catharsis of tensions grown over the year; for the young fighters, it was the climax of age-grade life and a seal set to this 'education for citizenship'. Needless to say, the practice is still vividly remembered. And it is not only the older people who talk nostalgically about their more exciting youth; the young people today have preserved at least the idea of the thing. Small boys with whom I talked before the *navũ* explained to me with great glee all that they and their age mates were going to do to their 'enemies'. In the end, of course, they did nothing; so that today the 'battle of youth' has moved a further stage towards mere make-believe.[1]

794 The licensed aggression of the torch festival reappears on the next day in a new context, that of kinship. For the *navũ* is also 602 an occasion for *ma dzo*, for 'joking', that is, for the licensed liberties x796 commonly referred to as 'joking relationship'. Though much less formalized than in other African societies, the institution of joking relationship plays a clearly defined part in Nupe social life. The individuals standing in this relationship are called *dzomanci*, 'playmates', the relationship itself being derived mainly from kinship position. Thus the joking relationship obtains between grandparents and grandchildren of the opposite sex; between cross

[1] See also *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 396–7.

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hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaka*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katũ*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe.

The Mallams are, above all, teachers. They teach both children and adults, the former the Koran and the latter 'knowledge'. Every Mallam may, besides, be called in to perform a marriage ceremony or to officiate at a funeral—services for which they are remunerated according to their status and reputation. A few are well-to-do and own land, which is worked by their sons and pupils or, in some cases, by wage-labour. But most Mallams practise, in addition to teaching, some other occupation, which may or may not be associated with their scholarly profession, to supplement the meagre income of a Koran teacher. Some write out and illuminate pages of the Koran, or copy Arabic manuscripts, for sale. You can buy a sheet of this sort, very beautifully illuminated, for 5*d*. on the Bida market; more ambitious scribes would sell a whole copy of the Koran and receive for it—the work of five months—£1. Students of 'knowledge' eagerly buy these copies and use them in their studies. Other Mallams, again, embroider gowns, make straw hats or saddle-cloths, or do tailoring.

The size and standard of the Koran schools varies as widely as the status and standard of learning of the Mallams. You find 'schools' with two little boys for pupils, and these close relations of the teacher; and you find others—the schools of famous Bida scholars—the classrooms of which (as a rule the *katamba* in the Mallam's house) are crowded with pupils. The teachers are very jealous of the reputation of their school. When I was a regular visitor to Bida Koran schools the Mallam of one which I had not yet visited came to me complaining that I had left out his school, and quoted as reference a Bida Mallam of very high standing who was a special friend of mine. In the large Koran schools the Mallam himself teaches only the adult students of 'knowledge', while the elementary teaching is carried out by his sons or certain advanced pupils.

[1] Bida learning has a great reputation even outside Nupe; Mallams from Bida have been given important posts in other countries, and several Bida Koran teachers have established flourishing schools in Ilorin.

[2] One aspect of this spiritual advice is divining, which, as we have seen, plays an important part even in such political activities as the election of a high officer of state or the preparation for war.

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II

DIVINATION

787 WE shall deal with two methods of divination, both of which are known throughout the country and applied on all occasions, trivial as well as serious. The first, called *eba*, consists in throwing strings of shells and resembles in technique the *ifa* divination of Yoruba; the second, *hati*, is of Mohammedan origin and involves drawing mystic patterns in the sand.[1] The two methods appeal to a somewhat different public, the former being practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts, the latter in the sophisticated capital, Bida. The division, however, is far from rigid; also, as we shall see, the two methods share certain essential features in spite of the difference in technique and religious background.

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Two other types of divination, which are used infrequently and mainly on minor matters, and which are known only in the river area, may be disregarded. One, called *evo* ('cowrie shells'), is a simplified version of the method of *eba*. The other, called *kpápagi* ('tortoise'), employs the dried, hollowed-out body of a tortoise, which is made to slide down a taut string. This is a crude oracle, permitting only three answers—'yes' (if the tortoise glides down quickly), 'no' (if it does not glide down at all), and 'doubtful' (if it glides down slowly).

I. THE MECHANICS OF EBA

787 791 The method of *eba* is far from uniform. Although the divining apparatus itself and the principles of interpretation are the same everywhere, the 'key' used by the diviner, his invocations, and his minor paraphernalia may differ from locality to locality, even from one person to the other. This scope for variety does not extend to the attitude assumed in the act of divining. The eight men I observed all went through their act in a serious and tense mood, their gestures and utterances from time to time rising to an excitement which lent to the proceedings a thoroughly dramatic atmo-

[1] The Nupe term *hati* appears to be a corruption of the Arabic *hatim*, 'seal', 'magic square'; cf. the corresponding Hausa term *hatimi*.

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sphere. One diviner, indeed, behaved in an almost hysterical manner. The clients in turn were shy, spoke little, and behaved in the presence of the diviner with the same visible restraint and, occasionally, awe which the Nupe bring to the esoteric part of a religious ceremony. 787 791

The diviner's apparatus includes two sets of objects, the divining strings themselves, and a series of marked slabs which serve as the 'key' for interpreting the throws. The former consist of eight cords of hemp, each strung through four perforated, hollow half-shells, placed equidistantly along the cord, about three inches from one another. The cords end in four strands, covered with small rings made of hollowed-out berries and cowrie shells; these cord-ends have no importance in the actual divining, being merely ornamental tassels, though it seems significant that they are again four (or eight) in number. The divination fastens upon the four half-shells, which are called *kpyekpya* and are made either of the shell of sheanut or of the kernel of the dompalm; in either case the bundle of eight cords is referred to as *vúnkpara*, 'white shell' (of sheanut). The diviner starts the proceedings by placing the eight cords on the ground, in parallel rows and pointing away from him, all shells being turned open side down. He then picks them up at the middle, two at a time, holding one in each hand, and throws them down again, once more in parallel rows. When this has been repeated four times, that is, when all the cords have been picked up and thrown, the diviner will interpret the pattern of shells as they happened to fall, open side up or closed side up. The procedure is called *sa 'ba*, 'to cast the *eba*', or for short, *esa*, 'the casting'. The diviner himself is known, accordingly, as *ebásaci*, 'One who casts the *eba*'.[1] The interpretation of the pattern thrown does not, however, consist merely in counting up the shells, but involves a more complicated calculation which requires certain aids to memory and a definite 'key'. 787

These are provided in the second set of objects, which is included in the generic name for the whole divining apparatus, *eba*. It consists of eight small, roughly square slabs cut from gourds, each of which bears a different series of point-like marks. The point-designs are known as *emi* or *kata*, that is, 'house', which nomenclature will become clear presently. The diviners employ two further paraphernalia, which play no part in the actual interpretation of the *eba*, a hippopotamus tooth, and a round or wedge-shaped stone about the size of a fist. Throughout the proceedings the diviner will poke the tooth or stone at the divining cords as though he wished to prod them into activity or to aid some process that

[1] The diviner is also called, by the Hausa name, *boka* or (the Nupe-ized version) *boci*.

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is going on in them. This act is in fact intended to 'bring out the truth' and to help the shell cords to 'give speech'. The hippopotamus tooth is sometimes replaced by the tooth of a warthog, but no reason can be quoted why it should be one or the other; nor have these two animals any mystic or mythical connotation. The stone, on the other hand, is known as *sokógba* ('stone of God' or 'thunderbolt') and is always claimed to have 'fallen from the sky'; when pressed, however, the diviner will usually admit that he either simply found the stone or obtained it from a friend. Its round shape and smooth surface seem to be the main reasons for the choice, the nature of the stone being unimportant. Several diviners of my acquaintance used ordinary pebbles; one had a piece of quartz, another a piece of iron ore which, I discovered, came from disused iron ore workings in the neighbourhood. The diviner is also free to add to these paraphernalia at his own discretion; one of my diviner friends who had been working, in the conventional manner, with a hippo tooth and stone, had added a chameleon to his apparatus when I visited him after an interval of a few months. He had found the animal in the bush, which meant that it 'must be a gift from *Sokó*', claimed that it understood what he said, and employed it by throwing it from time to time at the divining cords. Judging from the behaviour of the onlookers, he had indeed acquired an impressive and uncanny tool.

The sketch opposite shows four different sets of *eba* slabs used by Nupe diviners. They are numbered from right to left, and are shown in the order and position in which the diviner places them on the ground, with the lower edge towards him. Series (*a*) and (*b*) are used in Bida and the surrounding district, including the Beni village of Doko; series (*d*) comes from another Beni village, Pichi; series (*c*) from Jebba Island.

The fourth slab in each series is sometimes placed face down on the ground, since it indicates misfortunes which the diviner wishes to ignore if not to spirit away. Although the markings differ widely in the four series they are supposed to be merely different versions of the same thing. One diviner used both set (*a*) and (*b*), considering that the latter set was simpler to read', since it showed only the marks that 'counted' and omitted those which had no significance.[1] Equally, the diviners will insist that there is a close correspondence between the markings on the slabs and the patterns of open or closed shells thrown in the strings, and will go to great length to prove it. They would argue, for example, that each pair of holes on the slabs corresponds to one shell thrown open

[1] The same diviner also taught me the art of *eba*. He first used set (*a*) but later brought along the second set, since he 'could see that I found the other too difficult'.

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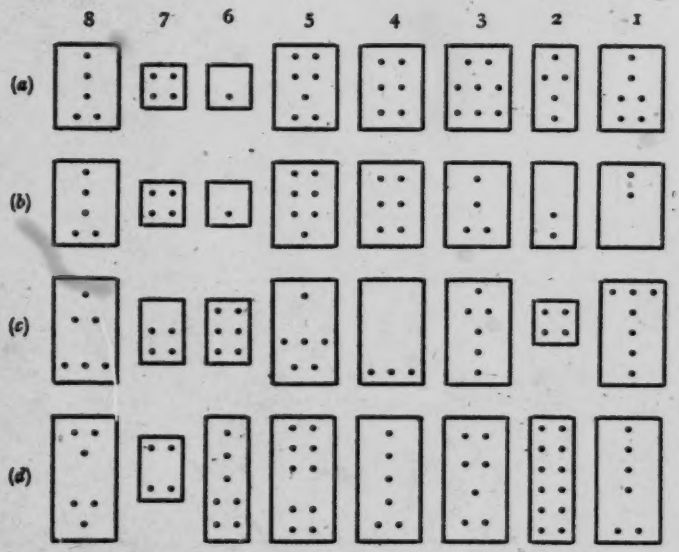
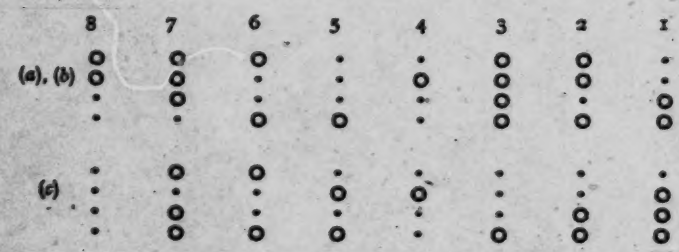
side up, and each single hole to a closed shell; or that only the upper (or lower) halves of the slabs count in this calculation. None of these explanations, however, proves correct; in reality, the markings are entirely irrelevant and cannot even by a *tour de force* be harmonized with the varying combination of open and closed shells. What counts is not the markings on the slab, but the order



of the latter and the significance attached to each of the eight positions in it; for it is this position which is linked (quite arbitrarily) with the various possible 'throws' and gives the 'key' to their meaning. This connection is illustrated, for series (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*), in the diagram below; the position in the series of eight is indicated by the respective numbers; shells falling with the open side up are shown as rings, shells falling with the closed side up, as dots.



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2. NOMENCLATURE AND INCANTATIONS

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Though the markings on the slabs and the corresponding patterns of open and closed shells vary so widely, the significance attributed to their numerical order and the names given to them in that order are largely identical in all forms of *eba* divinations. To begin with, the shell patterns are called, generically, *etsuži* (sing. *etsu*), that is, 'kings' and are usually referred to by their number in the series, for example, '*etsu* three is a good *etsu*' (i.e. propitious), and so forth. Then there is a name for each 'house', that is, for the position which the slabs or shell patterns occupy in the series of eight. Two names, finally, refer to the slab markings themselves and to the corresponding patterns of open and closed shells. These last two names represent a sort of code, indicating the meaning attributed to the markings and shell patterns. One refers to the upper half of the slab and to the respective shell pattern lying 'straight' (i.e. as shown in our diagram); the other, to the lower half of the slab and to the shell pattern turned upside-down. Normally, only the first 'code' name is quoted; and when any shell pattern appears in reverse it usually changes not only its name but also its meaning, sometimes assuming, by a simple symbolism, the opposite significance.

The eight combinations of open and closed shells shown in our diagram are those the diviner would first demonstrate when explaining the system, the 'standard positions' as it were. But since for each string of four shells there are sixteen different throws, the eight standard positions represent only half the number of possible throws; that number, then, is completed by allowing for the reversal of the 'standard position'. By the same means the diviner can also double the range of his interpretations.

Even so, certain additional rules and provisos must be brought in. Certain slabs, for example, have symmetrical markings, so that their 'upper' and 'lower' halves coincide; in this case the second name, which corresponds to the reversed throw, refers to the (blank) back of the slab. Again, two strings in their standard position—Nos. 6 and 3 in (*a*) and (*b*), and Nos. 8 and 6 in (*c*)—show the same shell pattern when reversed; here the 'reversed pattern' is obtained by counting open shells as closed and *vice versa*. Furthermore, series (*a*) contains among its standard positions two throws (Nos. 1 and 8) which are the reverse of one another; they also have roughly opposite meanings, prophesying good fortune and disaster respectively. Since here one particular combination and its reverse are both included among the eight standard positions, another possible combination of shells must obviously be missing; if this missing combination occurs in a throw

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it remains meaningless in this series. Let me note finally, that not every shell pattern in reverse has a special meaning; in other words, the range of interpretations utilized by the diviner lags behind the mathematical possibilities of his system.

We need not point out specially that one series includes among its standard positions throws which do not occur in the other or occur there only in reversed position. It will be agreed, I think, that there is a great deal of arbitrariness and even haphazardness in this system of divination. The cause may well lie in the manner in which the rules of divination have been transmitted from generation to generation or spread from one community to another; this arbitrariness would thus reflect errors in the learning and memory of individuals and perhaps unwitting variations which crept into the practice. As we shall see, the system of divination is in fact taught, learned, and handed on in a purely practical and often fortuitous fashion, with none of the sacred or ritual sanctions which would make for strict adherence to given rules. However this may be, in the following discussion I propose to ignore the different variants and exemplify the method of divination on one series, that marked (*a*) in our list.

These are the names of the eight 'houses' and the 'code names' for the markings and throws, both in 'standard' and 'reversed' position:

	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Name of 'House'	*Kuti*	Road	Man	Woman	House of Diviner	Town	House	*Sokó*
Code name stand. pos.	Crowd	Arab	Wretch	Hole	Offerings	Monkey	Witchcraft	Divination
Code name rev. pos.	Hiding	Wound	Receiving (gifts)	Needle	Danger	Begging	*rusu*	Rain

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The translation of the 'code names' entails considerable difficulties since the words are often given an unusual or cryptic meaning; nor can the diviners themselves always state it in more than tentative fashion. The code name for No. 8 in reversed position, for example, is *shikã*, which means normally 'dirt'; but the diviner suggested that in this context the word represents a contraction of two verbs, *shi*, meaning 'to be dark', and *'kã*, to 'hide from sight'. Again, the name for No. 4 in standard position is *nyikã*, 'fish'; but here it is taken to refer, not to the zoological species, but to the ritual offerings of fish. The name *rusu* for No. 2 is altogether untranslatable, though the diviner held (without any etymological evidence) that it meant 'foreknowledge of evil things'. I suspect that much of this is pure speculation, put forth to disprove the apparent arbitrariness of the names. The diviners are certainly convinced that there is a definite logical connection between the names for the 'houses', the code names for throws and markings, and the prophecies based on both, and in order to demonstrate it they will resort to the most far-fetched and circuitous explanations. Here is one such glossary, alleged to prove the connections underlying the threefold terminology.

No. 1: Both divination and rain come from *Sokó*.

No. 2: A house (*emi*) has a family head (*emitsó*), who wields 'power'; witchcraft equally gives power; and people also have foreknowledge of witchcraft (through dreams).

No. 3: The monkey is an animal, that is, one of many; in the 'town' there are many human beings, some of them beggars.

No. 4: The diviner often receives gifts of fish, while his craft entails certain mystic dangers.

No. 5: The 'hole', like the eye of a 'needle', stands for the vagina and hence for 'woman'.

No. 6: The 'man' consulting the diviner is often 'wretched', that is, worried over his possessions; while the prophecy connected with this 'house' bears on personal possessions (i.e. on what one 'receives').

No. 7: 'Arabs' are mostly traders and thus travel on the roads; on the roads, there are also robbers who may attack and wound travellers; thus the prophecies connected with this 'house' bear on trade and highway robbers.

No. 8: At the *kuti* there are 'crowds', and the *kuti* is also 'hidden'.

From the nomenclature we may briefly turn to the incantations which accompany the art of divining. 'Incantation' is not quite the right word; the Nupe speak of *emisa*, which is the term for the set and often elaborate forms of address required by Nupe etiquette.

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Similarly each pattern of shells has its appropriate 'greeting', which the diviner utters when it appears among his 'throws'. Mostly he mumbles it as though speaking to himself, and the listeners cannot possibly catch what he says. Nor could they make much of it even if they were interested (which they are not); for the meaning of these phrases is no less obscure than that of *eba* nomenclature. But now the diviner himself will admit this difficulty. Even my most knowledgeable informants, when trying to explain the *emisa*, gave up after a few attempts, saying that these were 'just greetings', and hence meaningless. Interspersed with meaningless words, however, one usually discovers decipherable phrases, which take the form of proverb-like sayings of nondescript character and of no striking appropriateness. Few of these sayings, incidentally, are today in common use or widely known. Their connection with the names for 'houses' or divining strings, if it exists at all, is vague, often purely verbal, and sometimes quite haphazard; the impression of haphazardness is further strengthened by the considerable diversity that occurs between the sets of *emisa* used by different diviners. A few examples will illustrate the character of these 'incantations'.

Throw No. 1, standard position: 'Fire of witchcraft, though red, will not burn the house'. This 'greeting' would seem to fit throw No. 2 much better; in another series it is replaced by the altogether cryptic allusion 'The devil is hungry.'

Throw No. 2, standard position: 'Dampness quietly causes the house to collapse.'

Throw No. 5, standard position: 'A burglar will not fall into a hole, though he may stumble on a slippery place.'

Throw No. 8, standard position: 'A large boat that would go into a narrow creek, you cannot build it: a crowd cannot go into a narrow place.' Replaced in another series by—'When the knees bend, the mouth should not joke' (i.e. you cannot work and play at the same time).

Throw No. 1, reversed position: 'The gown of a poor man will not (by itself) catch indigo; if he pays money, people will dye the gown for him. The poor man who becomes a grave-digger must hang his hoe on his back and walk from house to house' (i.e. even as a grave-digger, a poor devil will have to beg for custom).

Throw No. 2, reversed position: 'The leader who quarrels while pretending he wishes to prevent quarrel (is as bad as) a man who stabs you in the back.'

Throw No. 5, reversed position: 'He can sew but not wear (what he has sewn); when war eats a horse, the vulture is pleased' (which means, 'evil deeds find you out).

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787 Throw No. 8, reversed position: 'A bushfowl breaks away from the birdlime; the only thing for it to do is to run fast' (and hide).

3. INTERPRETATION

We have, so far, been dealing only with the preliminaries of divination; this obviously consists in more than reciting the names for the 'houses' and divining strings or in knowing the appropriate formulæ of address. Nor is the diviner's skill exhausted when he is able to interpret the shell patterns in their fixed numerical order, rather is this only the first step. This order (illustrated in our diagram) shows each possible shell pattern in its appropriate place or, as the Nupe would say, 'each king in his own house'. It represents a model or 'key' series, on the basis of which the diviner must compute the meaning of the actual throws. These, of course, may fall anyhow, so that any one of the eight cords may show any one of the sixteen possible shell patterns; in other words, a particular shell pattern may appear in a 'house' other than its 'own'. The main problem of the diviner, therefore, is to interpret these irregular, transposed, throws, and it is here that the series of slabs acts as an aid to memory; for having the slabs before him in their fixed numerical order the diviner is kept aware of his 'key'. To quote one diviner: To know the names and 'greetings' and to interpret the throws 'in their own house' is easy—only a matter of 'remembering'; what is difficult and demands a 'good head' is 'to know the speech of the cords when they fall in a strange house'.

I have called this part of divining a computation; for such in essence it is. The diviner knows the meaning of the various places in the series of eight; he also knows the meaning of each possible shell pattern in the key series. In divining any actual throw he considers the juxtaposition of place and shell pattern, and arrives at an interpretation combining in some reasonable fashion the two meanings. If, for example, shell pattern No. 3, which, in the key series, means 'fortune', occurred in the seventh cord (or 'house'), which has the meaning 'road', then the diviner would argue that the actual throw must mean 'fortune acquired on the road', that is, in travel or trade. It is not easy to say how far the diviner reasons anew in this fashion every time he interprets an actual throw, or merely follows some remembered rule governing this and all other possible permutations. It is most unlikely, however, that he relies on remembered rules alone, since these would have to be far too numerous.[1] When demonstrating the system of divination for my benefit the diviners did in fact cite a number of

[1] To cover all possible permutations, there would have to be 112 such rules, ignoring the 16 rules for interpreting the key series.

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possible permutations with striking readiness, which suggested that they were relying on well-memorized rules. But in the concrete case, when divining for clients, they sometimes arrived at different interpretations for identical throws. Sometimes, too, the diviner would repeat certain throws twice or three times before he seemed satisfied. The reasons for doing so were explained to me by this analogy: 'When you are told something important once only, do you believe it? No—you would wish to hear it twice or three times before you are satisfied that it is the truth. Similarly you must consult the cords several times.' But I suspect that by means of this repetition the diviner merely tries to obtain an arrangement he can more readily interpret. I would conclude, therefore, that the diviner relies on a number of remembered rules, covering certain set permutations, and interprets all others by *ad hoc* reasoning. In either case, he would also be guided by the questions put to him by his clients and by such knowledge as he happens to have of his clients, their interests, and the like.

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To some extent, this kind of guidance is fully admitted; for in actual divining the different 'houses' and shell patterns vary in relevance according to the nature of the questions put by the client and the interests he is likely to have. When dealing with a trader, for example, the 'house' called 'road' will be the most important; in the case of a person concerned about the birth of a child 'house' No. 5 ('women') and shell pattern No. 2 (referring to fortunes or misfortunes befalling a family head) will be the most significant. Furthermore, the timing of the prophecies differs for the different shell patterns. The first three shell patterns have unlimited validity, bearing on the near as well as distant future; the prophecy of shell pattern No. 4 includes only the actual day of the divination, shell pattern No. 5, the next two days, shell pattern No. 6, an indefinite future, and shell patterns Nos. 7 and 8, the near future. The interest of the diviner in all the possible throws is thus narrowed down, and he will in fact acclaim the appearance of the relevant throws with much aplomb, while lightly passing over all others.

I have listed below all the interpretations referring to throws in the 'key' position and a number of interpretations of 'transposed' throws. The list is based on 'key' series (*a*), which I recorded in Bida.

Key position

Shell pattern 1—A great man, someone well known in the town, will die. Reversed—The nobility will be angry with the White Man.

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787 Shell pattern 2—Some misfortune will befall the family head. Reversed—The family head will acquire greatness.

Shell pattern 3—Smallpox will visit the town in the rainy season, but there will be no deaths.

Shell pattern 4—The diviner will receive gifts. Reversed—Misfortune will threaten everyone, in the whole country.

Shell pattern 5—The women will quarrel. Reversed—Everyone in the country will enjoy good business; the women will have children.

Shell pattern 6—All the men (not the women) of the town will have grounds for distress, for example, because of the death indicated in shell pattern 1.

Shell pattern 7—Trouble on the highway.

Shell pattern 8—All the important people in the town will be happy.

Transposed position

Pattern 1 in house 2—Happy relations between the nobility and the White Man.

Pattern 1 in house 3—Many deaths.

Pattern 1 in house 5—Refers to menstruation.

Pattern 1 in house 7—There will be fights on the road, possibly death or murder.

Pattern 2 in house 1—Rain will fall; or—Happy relations between the nobility and the White Man.

Pattern 2 in house 4—Many deaths.

Pattern 2 in house 7—Pregnancy.

Pattern 3 in house 4—The diviner will receive a gift of a goat or sheep.

Pattern 3 in house 5—The women will quarrel among themselves.

Pattern 3 in house 6—Highway robbery.

Pattern 3 in house 7—War.

Pattern 4 in house 1—Many deaths.

Pattern 7 in any house other than 5—A guest will arrive.

Pattern 7 reversed in any house—A case of death.

Pattern 7 in house 5—Pregnancy.

Pattern 8 in house 1—There will be greetings and gifts for the nobility.

Pattern 8 in house 2—The client should stay at home and not travel.

Pattern 8 in house 3—Success in trade.

184 787 Let me note that different diviners, using a different key series, will also interpret it somewhat differently. Mostly, this merely means that the interpretations are moved about, from one place

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on the list to another, while the list as a whole remains unchanged. Sometimes, however, the lists themselves differ; though these differences are few, they bear relevantly on the social background of the diviner and the interests current in his setting. Thus the diviners in the villages interpret shell pattern 3 as meaning, on occasion, a 'good hunt', which interpretation does not occur at all in the list of the diviners in or near Bida town, where there is no hunting. Again, in the villages shell pattern 8 is sometimes taken to mean 'a council in the house of the chief'; the connection with the 'important people' mentioned in our version is clear; but in that version, coming as it does from the capital where there are no councils of elders or chiefs, the reference to a 'council in the house of the chief' would clearly be out of place. Conversely, shell pattern 1 reversed has in Bida a meaning which hardly affects the life in villages remote from the political difficulties and tensions of the capital; characteristically, in the villages the same pattern reads 'rain will fall', a prophecy which in turn has less importance for the townspeople. In one instance at least—the transposed pattern 2 in 'house' 1—the diviner's key allows for both these interests. I need not point out especially that it allows also for modern conditions and problems of a thoroughly topical kind. 787

Let me finally quote two examples of complete divinations. The first was performed for a canoe-man who was about to set out on a trip up the river. The cords fell as follows: 787

Cords . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Shell patterns	6	2 rev.	4	7	3	4	2 rev.	1
Prophecies .	The people will fore-gather	Refers to evening	A pleas-ant trip	Good trad-ing	The women will pick quarrels	The men will be pleas-ant	Gifts for the chief	The *huti* is friendly

The advice to the client was to be of good cheer: he should start out in the evening, take along gifts for the chief, and be careful in his dealings with women; he would return, after a successful trip, in four or five days (which last prophecy was nowhere indicated in the cords). The second divination was concerned with identifying the *kuci* of a boy just born to the client (a man). Here the diviner was interested only in the first two 'houses', the first referring to 'God', the second to 'House', that is, to the client's position of a family head. After several throws the diviner obtained this combination: 775 787 852

Cords	1	2
Shell patterns	4	6

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775 whereupon he announced: 'The grandfather who begot your father—his name is that of the child.' The diviner would not ex-
787 plain his reasoning more precisely beyond saying that pattern 4 in 'house' 1, meaning 'many deaths', must relate to a *kuci* five
852 'deaths', i.e. generations, removed, while pattern 2 in 'house' 6 indicated the male sex of the *kuci*. Since the Nupe usually regard a great-grandfather as the most remote ancestor likely to be reincarnated, the diviner's reference to an additional generation would seem to be a plausible interpretation of a throw meaning 'many deaths'.

4. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

787 The names of the 'houses' and the meanings attached to the various throws, even in the simple key series, clearly illustrate the close connection between divination and social life. Among the names and meanings we find represented, not only the universal problems of men and communities (death, birth, rain, illness) or particular religious notions (*Sokó*, *kuti*, performance of sacrifices), but also the mundane interests typical of Nupe society. Events on the high roads and travel and trade; the ever-present social issue of 'greatness', that is, of success in the struggle for rank and status; and the equally ubiquitous interest in matters politic, chieftainship, councils of elders, the actions of the ruling class—all these have their place in the scheme of divining and partly even in its basic vocabulary. Similarly, each relevant social grouping is explicitly referred to: the 'house', that is, the large extended family under a family head (*emi*); the 'town' or village (*ežì*); the 'whole country', that is, the kingdom of Nupe; and the class of the 'great men' and nobility. As we have seen, the diverse social settings of the capital and of the villages are reflected in certain variants in the rules of divination. These affect the individual case as well; for a diviner would interpret the prophecies referring to 'gifts' or 'greatness' differently when dealing with a *talaka* (a commoner or peasant) than when dealing with a member of the aristocracy. In the former case 'gifts' mean bowls of food and 'greatness' the favours of a nobleman; in the latter case the gifts turn into more valuable presents, and 'greatness' bears on promotion in rank and title. We have seen, too, that the rules of
787 divination are far from static, having been successfully adapted
177 even to recent conditions and to political problems only some forty years old. We can even point to a typical, transitional phase in this process; for the choice mentioned before, of interpreting the same throw as meaning either 'rain' or 'friendly relations with the White Man', means nothing else.

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It is easy enough for the diviner to guess the status and background of his clients, and hence their likely interests, even if they are strangers to him. For dress and general behaviour reveal a good deal in Nupe; and the questions put to a diviner are usually sufficiently specific to give him such clues as he may need. Well-known personages, incidentally, such as members of the high nobility, never consult a diviner in person; they send messengers who are not supposed to divulge the names of their employers. But these messengers are usually servants or retainers of the nobleman in question, and as well known as he. 787

Generally speaking, the Nupe diviner tends to be optimistic; if some trouble is forecast, the suggestion of a ready remedy or some warning easily observed would accompany the prophecy. I have, in fact, not met with any prophecy which was outright disastrous. Nor is the Nupe diviner given to cryptic statements; ambiguous though his technical vocabulary may be, his communications to clients are clear and straightforward. Occasionally he makes use of symbolic allusions, which are, however, readily understood; thus the mention of 'dark' or 'black' things means that the prospect is bleak or frightening; 'white' means luck and good prospects, while 'red' indicates wealth, ampleness, prosperity. [822]

In order to gain a clear picture of the variety of problems on which diviners are usually consulted, I employed a crude statistical technique. I supplied four diviners with sheets of paper on which I drew rough pictures representing certain expected topics and instructed them to mark, underneath, their visitors, day by day for one month—a stroke for a man and a circle for a woman. Cross-strokes were meant to indicate repeated visits, while space was left for additional topics. It must be noted that all four men had a high reputation in their locality so that the size of their clientele, which proved to differ widely, did not reflect their unequal renown. Rather surprisingly, the largest and most regular clientele was that of a diviner in Bida, where I should have expected the competition of sand-divining to have spoiled the market for the pagan variety. The next best clientele was that of a diviner in Saci, a small hamlet near Bida, while the custom of two diviners in the heart of the country, in Kutigi and Jebba, was markedly smaller. The season of the year, incidentally, did not seem to affect the diviner's business.

The Bida diviner had thirty-seven male and twelve female visitors in a month (in March); of these five men had come twice, and one man three times. The diviner knew personally only one of his clients, who was his brother-in-law and came from Doko. The diviner in Saci was consulted twenty-eight times by men and twice by women (in January); three men had come twice, four men

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four times, and one woman twice. Again, he knew few of his clients personally, though he knew that they came in about equal proportion from Bida and from the hamlets nearby. The diviner on Jebba Island had six male and five female clients (in June), one of the women coming twice. Though Jebba Island is a small village it lies close to an important river port with a considerable floating population of traders, canoe-men, and other strangers. It is understandable, therefore, that, with two exceptions, the diviner's clients were all strangers. The diviner in Kutigi, finally, had four male and two female clients (in March): all were local people and well known to him.

The reasons for which the diviners were consulted varied characteristically with local conditions. In Bida, consultations about prospects of trade came first (in the case of both men and women); only a little less important were enquiries about projected journeys—when to set out, whether to travel at all, and so forth—and about the well-being of distant relatives whom the client thought of visiting; there were a few cases of men who consulted the diviner about marriages they had in mind, of men and women who desired children, and of others who wished to divine the name of a new-born child; very few consultations were about illness, and even fewer about favours which men of high status were anxious to obtain from the king. Excepting the last topic, the diviner in Saci had to deal with almost exactly the same set of problems. In Jebba, the order of topics was as follows—journeys and distant relatives; childbirth and naming of a new-born; trade; illness and enquiries as to the appropriate 'medicine' or sacrifice; and some unspecific requests for fortune-telling. In Kutigi much the same topics occurred, with the exception of enquiries about trade, which were absent in this predominantly rural community; enquiries about projected journeys and distant relatives were at the bottom of the list, which tallies with the geographically much more limited range of Kutigi marriages and movements in general. We note the absence of enquiries about projected marriages both in Jebba and Kutigi; the reason seems to be that in the villages marriage is much more rigidly laid down by custom and more firmly controlled by the kin group; the restriction of individual choice, then, obviates the need for the diviner's services.

A final reason for consulting the diviner, on matters of communal ritual, does not appear in our lists, mainly because they are based on random periods and hence apt to miss these relatively infrequent occasions. Consultations of this kind are the responsibility of the village chief or the *kuti* priest. They take place, less often on the occasion of the fixed, seasonal *kuti*, than at times when an unexpected misfortune threatens the community; in the

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former case, too, it is sometimes considered advisable to make sure of a propitious day; but in the latter case divination may be the only means for discovering the appropriate religious remedy. Let me mention in passing the widespread conviction that even the Emir of Nupe consults diviners (of the Mohammedan variety), in large numbers and 'for whole weeks at a time', to aid him in his multifarious problems: which belief, in spite of its circumstantial nature, is unsupported by such evidence as I could muster.[1] 787

One more word about the frequency of the visits one pays the diviner. For the townspeople no rule can be laid down; persons who seek advice on trade, travels, promotion in rank or other specific questions will obviously consult the diviner *ad hoc*, whenever the need happens to arise. It is somewhat different in the villages, where people also go to the diviner simply to have their fortunes told. Here individuals would pay fairly regular visits, once or twice a month, or at least once in two or three months. I have, however, spoken to villagers who had not been to the diviner for as much as five or six months.

The diviner is paid a small fee every time he is consulted. The fee is neither rigidly laid down nor claimed in advance. In Bida, the diviner is usually paid in money, though a bowl of rice or a few kolanuts may be thrown in, the client paying according to his ability, between a penny and sixpence. In the village one mostly pays in food or kolanuts. The diviners themselves regard the payments as 'gifts', and would strongly deny that they are divining 'for money'. No diviner could in fact live on what his skill earns him; nor does a diviner's reputation add in any way to his status in this rank-conscious society. Divining is merely an additional vocation, prized for the mystic wisdom and power it implies rather than for material or social gains. 791 [555]

This brings me to the last point, the social position of the diviner himself. Divination is essentially 'learning'—a skill that can be acquired by anyone having a 'good head'; if it is hereditary in a family it is so only incidentally. A great many diviners learned the art, in their youth, from another expert, paying for the tuition. One Bida diviner, for example, a man of about sixty-five, had learned divination when he was fifteen, studying for ten months, 'every day as in school'. Another had learned the craft from a stranger he met on his wanderings when a young man. Two diviners made an exceptional and unorthodox claim; while admitting that they had to acquire the skill, they maintained that they had 'learned it from God', by inspiration as it were. The majority of the diviners I met were also farmers; one was a barber by

[1] According to tradition, the old kings of Nupe had numerous official diviners among their retinue; this practice has certainly disappeared.

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people are unlikely to pass. These two rules, then, and the 'consecration' of the diviner's tools with its reference to the presence of God, demonstrate the mystic power that attaches to divining and to those who handle it, and the sacred provenance of the skill. As we have seen, however, this evidence of sacredness does not content every individual; so that some will also claim that their whole knowledge is divinely inspired or that their paraphernalia are gifts of God. 791

Whatever status the diviner will claim for himself, for his art he will always claim the perfection of a well thought-out system, governed by rigorous, consistent rules, even though he must resort to far-fetched arguments to prove his case. Let us consider this point for a moment. The diviners clearly represent a selected group of individuals, not a random sample; for only those with particular leanings and aptitudes—those with a 'good head'—will choose this profession. Now, comparing the manner in which the Nupe generally are apt to discuss religious topics with the attitude shown by the diviners in their field, we find that one of the variants of the former constitutes the norm of the latter. The layman discussing religion may or may not be inclined to embark upon speculation: the diviner discussing divination does so as a matter of course if by this means he can force his facts into a more convincing order. Equally, in the act of divining, he is capable of a tense and dramatic mood. The first attitude only satisfies the diviner's own leanings; for his public takes no interest in these speculative refinements and cannot appreciate them. But his public does expect the diviner to be tense and excited, and is visibly impressed by his excursions into drama. In either case, we may conclude, the diviner's role offers a congenial niche to individuals of that religious bias or, more generally, of that temperament and intellectual predisposition.

5. THE MECHANICS OF HATI

Although we are not at the moment concerned with the influence of Islam on Nupe religion, it is convenient to discuss the Mohammedan variant of divination in this context. For in the main it is only the technique which is novel in this system of divining, while its topics, interpretation, and social aspects coincide with those typical of the pagan system. Partly, too, the two techniques share various points of resemblance, such as the designs of the 'key' figures or the use of series of eight, so that it would seem that the new, Mohammedan, practice has been assimilated to the older, indigenous method. 787

Hati or sand divination is even more fully a learned skill than

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is the system of *eba*. Its performance is prosaic, without any show of excitement or drama. Even its links with things sacred are reduced to the level of strictly occupational accomplishments since *hati* is one of the skills which 'mallams' alone can acquire, that is, men who have studied the Qoran and acquired at least the rudiments of Moslem learning. Most of these mallams-cum-diviners are found in Bida. They include men of widely varying status, learning, and reputation. Two of my diviner friends will illustrate the extremes. One was a highly educated scholar, who could read and write Arabic, possessed a number of books, and had some knowledge of Islamic doctrine. The other could read a little, though without much understanding; he could not write more than the cryptic cypher the diviners put on the sand table before starting to divine; and he neither knew the Qoran nor possessed any knowledge of Islamic doctrine. The first case, however, was an exception; for the true Islamic scholars (by Nupe standards) do not normally engage in divining; while the diviners are not infrequently men who had been unsuccessful in the scholarly profession. Thus one diviner had studied the Qoran but, earning too little as a mallam, later became a beadworker, supplementing his earnings by divination and the sale of charms. Another diviner was at the same time a trader in a small way, a third a hatmaker. Some of the sand diviners (including the scholarly mallam) seemed to be doing very well, having one to three clients a day. Less successful ones would still have two or three a week. Only one of the five diviners I knew had had no customers for a month, though he claimed that this was exceptional.

Like the *eba* system sand-divination has its 'key' and key series, though these are not embodied in a separate set of objects but are carried entirely in the diviner's head. A more substantial 'key' does in fact exist; it is contained in a book on divination, written in Arabic and amply illustrated with diagrams, the relevant pages of which are in the possession of most diviners; while actually divining, however, this book of rules is never consulted. The diviner's apparatus is simple, consisting only of sand, flattened out on the ground so that it forms a square, smooth surface, on which the various signs are impressed with the tips of the fingers. Before he begins, the diviner draws a cypher in the sand, which looks vaguely like an Arabic sign but which I was unable to identify; it is said to be the 'sign of the king', but fits neither 'king' nor 'Allah', nor any other word I could think of in this connection. To the right and left of the cypher certain of the 'key' signs are impressed, varying with the day of the week. On Friday, for example, the diviner puts sign 14 on the left and sign 7 on the right; on Sunday he draws signs 15 and 9; on Monday, signs 4 and

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5, and so forth. Saturday alone has more than two signs, namely, the four signs 6, 8, 10, and 13. No reason is quoted why this arrangement rather than any other should be chosen. Having completed this preparatory task, the diviner wipes the surface clean again and starts with the real divining.

He impresses small dots into the square of sand, one beside the other, starting from the left bottom edge and describing an arc up and down again to the right side of the square. He produces sixteen such dotted arcs, one underneath the other, which are considered to fall into four sets of four arcs. Having completed this fourfold set, the diviner wipes out every second dot in each arc, now starting from the right, down to the left bottom edge; where the last dot to be wiped out would be the last dot of the arc, that dot is left intact, so that in this case a double dot remains. As a result, the diviner obtains four patterns of dots lying along the left bottom edge and consisting each of four single or double dots.[1] These four patterns, as will be seen, are obtained entirely by chance. Once they are obtained, however, chance ceases to play a part; for the subsequent procedure is purely mechanical and rests on computations and manipulations all ultimately based on the four initial dot patterns. First, the sand table is once more wiped clean. Then the diviner draws the four patterns into the right upper space, the pattern which was originally farthest to the left being placed farthest to the right, and so forth in that order. In this new position the four patterns are drawn upright and symmetrically, and now represent the proper 'signs' of *hati*. From this first group of four signs the diviner derives a similar second group, which he draws into the left upper space; he does this by converting each horizontal line of dots in the first group into a corresponding upright column in the second, thus:

Underneath this row of eight signs a second and then a third row are drawn, now numbering four signs each. The lower rows are obtained by coupling adjacent signs in the next higher row and reducing each such pair of signs to a single sign in the row below. In the case of the top row each sign is coupled once only, that is, in accordance with this schema—*ab*, *cd*, *ef*, *gh* (if *a*–*h* are the eight

[1] Sometimes the diviner draws only eight arcs at a time, in which case the process just described has to be repeated.

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signs). In the second row each of the four signs is coupled both ways with its neighbour, so that again four pairs result, thus—*ab*, *cd*, *ad*, *bc*. In reducing a pair of signs to one, the diviner adds up the dots which appear horizontally, on the same level, in the two given signs and considers whether the total for each level is two, three or four; if the total is two or four, the resulting sign in the next lower row will have a double dot on the corresponding level, if the total is three, a single dot. For example:

upper row	•	•	— level 1
	•	• •	— level 2
	• •	•	— level 3
	• •	• •	— level 4
lower row	• •		— level 1
	•		— level 2
	•		— level 3
	• •		— level 4

Having thus obtained sixteen signs in three rows, the diviner performs a further calculation. He adds up the total number of dots appearing on the top level of each of the three rows and deducts twelve from the total or, if the difference exceeds sixteen, twice twelve. The balance gives him the key series number of a particular dot pattern, which he must then locate in his sand drawing and use as a starting point for the interpretation. The proviso, that the difference must not be more than sixteen, is explained by the fact that the key series itself consists of sixteen signs, so that a number larger than this would be useless. It is possible, however, that the number so obtained might be that of a sign which happens to be missing in the sand drawing; if so, the diviner will look instead for one of the six 'kindred' signs, which will be discussed presently.

The diagram opposite illustrates the key series of *hati* divining; with two exceptions its general design is also that of the actual sand drawing. The first exception is of a minor order and refers to the lay-out of the third row which, in the key series, is broken up into three-plus-one signs. The second exception refers to the principle upon which the key series is constructed. This bears no relation to the procedure just discussed, whereby the diviner derives his whole drawing from an initial group of four signs; rather, the key series seems to be put together almost at random, though we may note (a point strongly emphasized by all diviners) that the total number of dots in each group of four signs is always twenty-four. As we shall see, this discrepancy in the construction of the two designs does not prevent the diviners from explaining both by an identical analogy.

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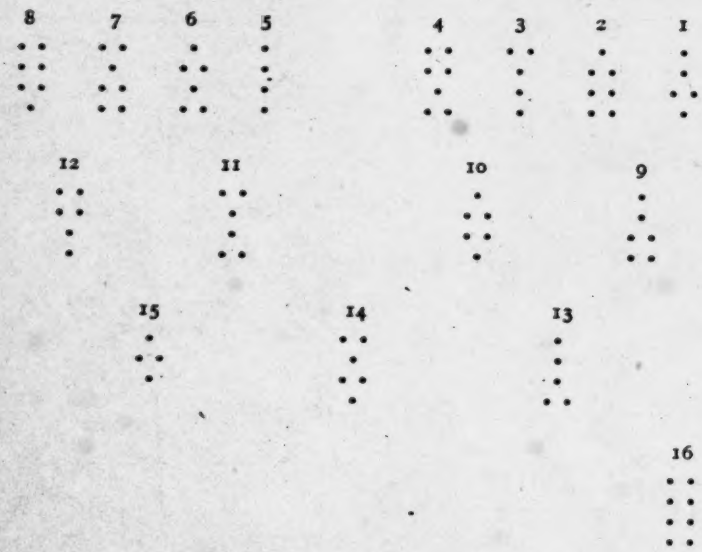
We note the resemblance between the dot patterns and certain of the markings on the *eba* slabs. In the case of *hati*, however, the key series is complete, its sixteen signs including every possible combination of single and double dots grouped in this manner. Let me mention some other similarities. The correct name for the signs in their key position is 'stars', which is consistent with the vaguely astrological background of sand-divining; in spite of this, the diviner will usually refer to them as 'houses', that is, in the phraseology of *eba* divination. A single dot in any sign is called



'open' and a double dot 'closed', as though the diviner were again dealing with shells falling face-up or face-down. The actual divination, finally, rests once more upon considering the varying positions (or 'houses') in which any one sign may appear and upon combining the meanings of place and pattern.

This procedure, however, is backed by a different theory and a much more elaborate set of rules. To begin with there is the astrological background of sand-divining. The signs in their key position (the 'stars') have long, Arabic-sounding names, said to be the names of constellations.[1] In each sign the four levels of single or

[1] These are too complicated for regular quotation, so that the diviner uses the key-series number instead. I could identify only a few of these names, which would seem to refer, not to constellations, but to diverse Islamic concepts. *Almayika*, the name for pattern 2, is probably *Mala'ikah*, 'Angels', which is also the name of the 35th *Surah* of the Qoran. *Atariki*, pattern 5,

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787 double dots (counting from top to bottom) represent the four elements—Fire, Air, Water, Earth. Equally, the key series as a whole is taken to symbolize the four elements; these are so distributed over the sixteen signs that the three groups of four in the first and second row each contain three of the elements, one of them twice, while the group of four in the bottom row includes all four elements in their proper order (reading from right to left), thus:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
E	A	W	W	W	A	F	F
12		11		10		9	
E		A		E		F	
	15		14		13		16
	E		W		A		F

The analogy with the four elements plays no further part in the interpretation of the key series. Here their spatial arrangement alone is important and its meaning is explained with the help of a different analogy, with procreation and kinship. The first group of four signs (1–4) is called the 'mother-group'; the next group (5–8), the 'children' (there being no corresponding 'father' group); the four signs in the second row (9–12) are called 'grandchildren', and the three signs in the bottom row (13–15), 'great-grandchildren'. Sign 16, which contains the largest possible number of dots and stands apart in the design, also has an independent meaning in this pseudo-genealogy: it represents the 'mother' of all the other signs, and in the divination bears a prophecy concerning the diviner himself. The four 'mother' signs in the first group are said to 'give birth' to the 'children' signs, these to the 'grandchildren' signs, and so forth. The latter analogy is once more applied to the drawing of the design in actual divination; for when the diviner derives the second group of signs from the first, and similarly the lower rows from those above, this procedure is again described as signs 'giving birth' to signs. The same procedure also establishes other, more specific links of 'kinship' between the signs; for all those signs which, by means of this procedure, would produce the same resultant sign (or 'give birth' to it) are regarded as that sign's 'kin'. In demonstrating this connection repetitions and signs appearing in reverse are ignored, so that each sign has

seems to be *Tariq*, 'Way' (of belief) and the name of the 86th *Surah*. *Nasuralharaja*, pattern 9, and *Nasuraldahili*, pattern 12, may mean *Nasr al kharaj* and *Nasr al dakhl*—'Luck on leaving' and 'Luck on Entering' (?). The name for the last and fullest pattern (No. 16), *Jim'a*, is Arabic for 'assembly', 'congregation'. *Almanhu*, the name for pattern 8, seems to be the Nupe word *Mankó* arabicized, meaning 'Great Scholar'.

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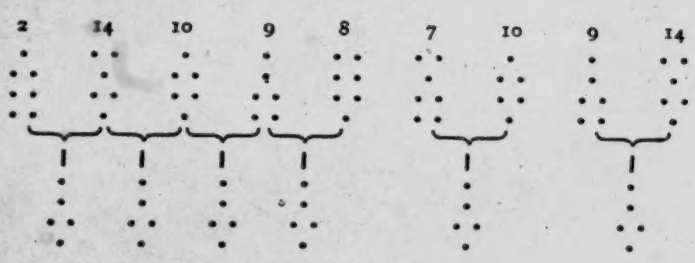
six 'relatives'.[1] The diagram below illustrates this for the first sign in the key series. The example also shows, incidentally, that the 'kinship' so derived conflicts with that other, genealogical, schema, since now a sign of the 'mother' group is assumed to be 'born' of signs belonging to the offspring generations. The logical conflict, however, has no further consequences; only the 'kinship' between signs is made use of in the practice of divining, while the genealogical schema remains pure 'theory'. 787



6. INTERPRETATION

Let me now list the meanings attributed to the various signs in the key series and hence to any sign in its own 'house'. Each position in the key series has a brief name, this time quoted in Nupe not in Arabic, which corresponds to the 'code' names of *eba* divining and similarly alludes to the respective prophecy.

No. 1. Good health; the client will have a son. Code name 'Life and War'; the latter allusion is, as it were, per contra, war being the destroyer of life and sons.

No. 2. Some day the client will be rich ('Wealth').

No. 3. The client will some day have a large family and receive many gifts ('Kinship').

No. 4. The client's wife, or a female client, will become pregnant ('Father and Mother').

No. 5. As No. 1 ('Child').

No. 6. Recovery after illness ('Illness').

No. 7. The client will find a good wife or husband ('Marriage').

No. 8. The whole town will be thrown into strife and upheaval ('Uproar', 'Commotion').

[1] The 'mother' sign 16, which consists wholly of double dots, is equally ignored. Bearing in mind the rules for reducing two signs to one, it will readily be seen that sign 16 cannot be derived from any other pair of signs. In this sense it is rightly placed apart from the rest of the design. There is a further kind of 'kinship', which is however unimportant. It links each sign with the one showing the same pattern in reverse, and sign 1 (which is entirely 'open') with its opposite, sign 16 (which is entirely 'closed').

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787 No. 9. A successful journey ('Voyage').

No. 10. All the leaders of the town will meet in consultation, but will arrive at bad decisions ('Nobility', 'Office Holders').

No. 11. God will listen to all prayers and cause all 'medicines' to work successfully ('Doubts').

No. 12. Success in love against rivals ('Enemy').

No. 13. Success in every enterprise ('Writing', 'Prayer').

No. 14. Financial success ('Trade' and 'Money').

No. 15. Fear and worries will disappear ('Barbers'; the allusion is to the many barbers who are also doctors and thus make illness 'disappear').

No. 16. The diviner will find many clients ('Mallam').

In the actual divination not every sign is located, identified, and interpreted in accordance with its varying position; this would clearly be immensely complicated, and the diviner does not even pretend to do it. Rather does he greatly simplify the procedure by various means. Thus he assesses and interprets the combination of place and sign only in the case of the one sign which serves as his starting point. Assuming, for example, that this happens to be sign 12 in the key series, meaning 'wealth', and that in the actual design it appears in 'house' No. 2, which in turn means 'enemy'; the diviner would then conclude that 'people are jealous of the client's wealth' or that the client 'will rival the wealth of others', according to which divination seems more plausible in the case of a particular person. The diviner's next step consists in tracing the six 'kindred' signs; and now he no longer considers the precise position of the signs but only their relative order, that is, whether they occur in a place with a higher or lower number. The sign occurring in the place with the higher number (that is, further to the left or in a lower row) is said to 'eat up' the 'kindred' sign in the place or places with the next lower number; which means that the prophecy of the former will overrule the prophecy of the latter. For example, sign 13 ('Prayer') occurring to the left of the 'kindred' sign 8 ('Uproar') is taken to indicate that 'prayer will eventually overcome the strife'.

Furthermore, the sixteen signs are allocated to four series on the grounds of their allegedly similar meaning. The first series includes all signs referring to wealth, success, health and high social position, (signs 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16); the second series includes all signs referring to poverty, misfortune, ill health, and other worries of the moment (signs 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15); the third series is said to concern men—(signs 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16), the last series women (signs 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15). The main merit of this arrangement, which incidentally does not quite tally with the interpretations listed before, seems to be that it operates with two

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pairs of broadly contrasted categories of wide applicability and with four series of eight, which are relatively easy to remember. In interpreting these series, the diviner will always take into account whether his client is a man or a woman. Thus, if the sign to be interpreted belongs to series 1 (meaning 'success') and series 4 ('concerning women'), and occurs in the consultation of a man, the diviner will conclude that his client will be successful in finding a wife. If the same combination occurs in the case of a female client, it will probably mean that she will be prosperous in business. If the sign belongs to series 1 and 3 ('concerning men'), and occurs in the case of a male client, the latter will 'gain reputation and rank'. If the sign belongs to series 2 (meaning 'misfortune') and 4 ('concerning women') and occurs in the case of a female client, it might mean that she will have a difficult pregnancy, and so forth.

It is clear that in this flexible system of divination the diviner will be guided by the particular case of his client much more fully than is his pagan colleague; in fact, the system of divination itself acknowledges the importance at least of the sex of the client. Also, the diviner has several methods of calculation at his disposal and is free to choose the less complicated one provided it still offers a plausible prophecy. This is borne out by the existence of an optional, final rule which reduces the whole system of divination to a simple mechanical procedure. This rule lays down that all signs which have a single dot at the top and a double dot at the base, so that they 'point away' from the diviner, bear an adverse prophecy; while all signs of the opposite design, 'pointing inward', are propitious. If the diviner uses this simplified method exclusively he will consider only the 'houses' that bear on the client's question and phrase his reply accordingly. In a consultation I watched the diviner was asked if the client would recover some goods that had been stolen. The diviner looked at 'house' 2, meaning 'wealth', at 'house' 9, meaning 'voyage' (since the goods had been 'carried away'), at 'house' 12, 'enemy', and at 'houses' 13 and 14, implying 'success'. The signs at 2 and 13 were inconclusive; the signs at 9 and 12 pointed outward; only the sign at 14 had a propitious meaning. The answer was, quite plausibly, that it was no good looking for the thieves; the client might be successful if he could follow them; but this was difficult since they had by then left the town with their loot.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nupe sand-divining is the contrast between its pretentious theoretical framework and its primitive and slipshod application in practice. In some respects the 'theory' simply evaporates in the 'practice', as in the high-sounding Arabic nomenclature which gives way to common Nupe

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787 expressions or in the astrological notions of which no use is ever made. The practice is clearly meant to cope with the relevant 182 problems and interests of Nupe social life; and these, let us note, 178 are now typical, not only of a Mohammedan community, but also of a highly urbanized one. There is no longer any mention of rain, of the prospects of hunting, or of the influence of *kuti*; instead, we find references to 'writing and prayer', to mallams and barber-doctors, to 'the whole town in strife', and the strong emphasis on travel and trade, including travel and trade 'concerning women'.

The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of *hati* and its practical application suggests once more an attempt to assimilate the Mohammedan system to local conditions. The attempt is crude and unambitious, stopping far short of anything like a true synthesis; rather, any feature which cannot readily be assimilated is left on one side and only nominally acknowledged. Occasionally even this bare acknowledgement is discarded, as is shown in this example. One diviner, able to read his Arabic book on divination, discovered in it a new rule which distinguished between 'fixed' and 'movable' stars and operated with series of seven and the corresponding permutations. The diviner frankly admitted that he did not fully understand the rule: consequently he simply ignored it, not even borrowing the new nomenclature.

7. CONCLUSIONS: DREAM INTERPRETATION

787 I have called the guidance offered by divination mechanical and of a case-to-case kind. The preceding discussion will have borne out this description. Nupe divination is concerned less with foreknowledge in its own right than with resolving the problems and obscurities of the moment. The diviner can discover and disentangle some of the hidden influences which are at work always and everywhere, and can to that extent predict—piecemeal, and illuminating only the immediate future: he cannot uncover any more embracing design. Indeed, as we know, there is no such design in this non-committal and fundamentally amoral religion. Yet within the limits set to it divination has a part to play, providing some of the certainty and guidance required for provident action. We may call Nupe divination a concession or compromise; for as its scope is so restricted by the logic of Nupe religious thought, the fact that it exists at all, is a concession exacted by the practical needs of human life.

Let us note that religion itself adds to these needs. We spoke of the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought which crowds the universe with supernatural agencies overlapping in their effects and multiplies the supernatural aids, so that their appropriateness

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can only be discovered by trial and error. Once more divination is needed to reduce the uncertainties which must arise; it is thus that it becomes a 'prerequisite' of religious no less than of practical action.[1] And here, I think, we find the explanation for a somewhat puzzling point of Nupe doctrine. Although Nupe divination is marked off as being 'of God', it is not numbered among the other, similar 'things of the world', that is, of creation. Nor are there any legends explaining its origin or appearance on earth. This ambiguity seems in keeping with the peculiar role of divination in Nupe religious practice. Divination is clearly one of the tools bestowed by God upon man so that he may be better fitted to cope with the practical problems of life on earth; but these include also the problem of handling successfully all the other transcendental tools. And just because divination is such a twofold 'prerequisite' and so basically indispensable, its presence is simply taken for granted.

The role of divination in Nupe life, however, must not be exaggerated. It is far from all-important; the Nupe, for example, do not practise divination as regularly or consistently as do many other primitive societies. When I asked my informants if they consulted diviners daily or perhaps weekly, they simply laughed. In a great many walks of life one can carry on without this mystic advice; for daily life has its own routine and its own practical rules, on which one can safely rely. Medicine, too, has its routine side. So has religious life: the seasonal rituals, fixed by the calendar of the country, are performed largely without the aid of diviners. Only when the routine of everyday life breaks down and when its rules prove inadequate in the face of choice, that is, when anxieties and uncertainties arise, divination comes into its own.

Among the topics handled by the Nupe diviner we should perhaps expect to find also dreams, especially since they offer so important clues to witchcraft and to the activities of spirits and *fifingi*. Yet this is not so. Certain rules for interpreting dreams exist, but their knowledge does not appear to be widespread, being altogether absent in certain parts of the country. Even where it exists, it is shared by diviners and laymen alike and is never made the subject of divining proper. The Nupe do puzzle about their dreams and suspect that a curious dream may have a message or purport something important; in this case the dreamer might discuss his experience with others, and together they would speculate about the likely meaning. Or, where there are individuals knowledgeable about dreams, the dreamer would look for one of them among his friends or fellow villagers, the 'expert' claiming neither payment nor special status.

[1] See above, p. 37.

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●787 Generally speaking, there are three kinds of dreams. If your dream is accompanied by pains and nightmares, then it betrays the presence of an evil *aljénu*, which must be dealt with by the appropriate gifts to spirits. If you dream that some other person is about to kill you, then this is evidence of witchcraft. In neither event is it necessary to consult any book of rules since this kind of dream is obvious to everyone. If, however, your dream is merely unusual or odd, then it requires interpretation according to the rules, which would usually also suggest certain observances meant to secure the promise of the dream or to ward off its veiled threats.

Thus, when you dream of herds of wild animals, it means that witches threaten you; when you dream of herds of cows, you may expect wealth and success, though you should make a gift of milk to a mallam. A man who dreams of women or girls in the water will marry well, provided he presents some honey and millet to the unmarried young men of his acquaintance and some fish to the married men; the same applies (suitably adapted) to the corresponding dreams of women, though in their case omission of the gifts would bring on severe and painful menstruation. A man dreaming of a black snake will prosper in his enterprise provided he sacrifices a white cock to the *kuci*; in the case of a woman the dream means pregnancy. If you weep in your dream, you will be successful; if you laugh, you will die, and no sacrifice and the like will help you. A fish freshly caught means the birth of a child; a dried fish, the death of an acquaintance or relative. The latter meaning is also attributed to dreams about digging out yams, since this suggests the digging of a grave. Both fire and water indicate witches, and such dreams must be followed by sacrifices to *kuci* or by alms to the poor. Excrements mean sickness; so does blood in a man's dreams; in a woman's dreams it may mean childbirth (if it is 'good' blood, that is, from menstruation) or abortion (if it is 'bad' blood, from a wound). No dreams, incidentally, tell a woman anything about her prospective child: this is simply 'God's will'. Finally, if you dream about a person being killed, then this is the truth, and you will warn that person, who must in turn consult a diviner.

In these dream interpretations Mohammedan ideas (alms, gifts to mallams) and pagan ones (sacrifices to the *kuci*) are employed quite indiscriminately. So are diverse principles of interpretation; some, as we saw, fasten upon contrasts, others upon analogies more or less close or suggestive. Certainly, we find no consistent symbolism, nor yet any of the 'universal' symbols cited by psychoanalysts. More important, the prophecies attributed to dreams are much the same as those dispensed by the diviner, so that the interpretation of dreams (which one can do for oneself) and pro-

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fessional divination in some measure duplicate one another. If this means that the diviner has no monopoly of prophecy, it equally means that one need not be very seriously concerned over one's dreams, since the message they might hold would also transpire in some other way. Normally, in fact, the people are not inclined to take their dreams very seriously, even in the localities where there are experts versed in that lore. I used to record all the dreams of the Nupe men with whom I was in daily contact; though they were quite often puzzled about their dreams, they performed sacrifices and so forth only when their dreams referred to dead relatives. Dream interpretation, then, represents another 'supererogatory' element in Nupe religious thought, another 'additional' notion about the meaning of the things in the world, and now one conspicuously treated as such.

Let me add that in other respects, too, the diviner holds no monopoly of prophecy. If he pronounces upon lucky or unlucky days, some knowledge of this kind is common throughout Nupe. Thus two months, the seventh and thirteenth, are held to be unlucky, and people will avoid travelling or having wedding feasts and other celebrations at these times. In all other months certain days are specially lucky—the second, seventh, twelfth, seventeenth and eighteenth day; so is the time of full moon, while moonless days are unlucky and dangerous for all tasks.[1]

If divination and the interpretation of dreams represent supernatural aids which overlap in their efficacy but are of different ease of access, this is true also of the knowledge, shared by everybody, of propitious and unpropitious dates. In other words, for much the same kind of guidance you can rely on your own knowledge, on what you or your friends know about dreams, and on the professional advice of diviners. Once more we note the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought and that tendency to multiply the mystic tools, that is, to have 'several strings to one's bow.'

[1] It is usual in Nupe to refer to months and days in this way, by numbers rather than names. The interval of five between the lucky days, incidentally, plays no further part in Nupe thought or religious observances.

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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

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278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciži*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciži*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the
789 barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciži* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciži* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

Divination[11]

●787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 38–67.

●787 widespread in West Africa, based on the patterns made by strings of shells when they are thrown, and a form of Arabic sand pattern divining performed only by Moslem "teachers."

Shell divination (*eba*) is similar in technique to Yoruba *ifa*, and is practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts. The diviner's apparatus consists of the divining strings themselves and a series of marked slabs which serve as a key for interpreting the throws. He receives a small fee—money, rice, or kola-nuts—each time he is consulted, but these payments are regarded as "gifts," and diviners cannot live on what they earn in this way. Most of them are also farmers and some are medicine experts at the same time. The skill is only incidentally hereditary in a family and is generally learned from an expert, payment being made for tuition.

Sand divination (*hati*) is an even more thoroughly learned skill than *eba*, though its performance is less dramatic. The craft can only be acquired by mallams, i.e., men who have at least some rudiments of Moslem learning. The various signs are drawn with the finger-tips on sand smoothed out on the ground. The "key" is carried in the diviner's head, though there is a book on divination written in Arabic which some diviners possess but which they do not consult when actually divining. *Hati* diviners are of widely differing status and learning, but in general the more scholarly mallams do not engage in divination and diviners are often men who have been unsuccessful as mallams.

Witchcraft

754 The Nupe conceive of witchcraft (*ega*) as a supernatural power by which people can be possessed; they then use it for evil and anti-social purposes. It is believed to be practised mainly by women; male witches are said to be "good" people, who would curb the evil desires of the female witches, though the killing of the victim is thought to be the work of both sexes in "partnership."

A witch (*gaci*) is thought to belong to an organization (*ena gaciži*) whose head is known as *lelu*. This title used to be officially bestowed by the Nupe chiefs on a woman who was believed to be the most powerful witch in the village. Her secret knowledge could then be used for the benefit of the community. The equivalent title to-day is that of *sagi*,[12] although a change in the significance of the rank has taken place and the *sagi* is now concerned with more prosaic business.

The powers of a witch are not hereditary but a witch may pass them on to her child by feeding it on witchcraft *cigbe*. A person desiring to become a witch may also approach anyone known to be one and thus gain entry into the circle of witches, or may buy a witchcraft medicine.

Witchcraft is believed capable of making its possessor invisible and of enabling her to recognize other witches; a witch is thought to be fully conscious of her secret powers and does not act against her will. Witches attack people at night when they are asleep and feed on the life force (*rayi*) causing them to fall ill and waste away. Only rarely are they thought to spirit away the body itself.[13]

There are two methods of combating witchcraft. One, applied to individual cases and when a definite person is suspected, consists of an ordeal or other test of guilt, whereupon the witch is heavily fined and expelled from the village. The other is effected through the activities of the *ndakó gboyá*, a "secret" but officially recognized anti-witchcraft society which is applied only when a large-scale outbreak of witchcraft is believed to have occurred. The head of the society (*Maŋŋ Dodo*) comes from a particular lineage of Kusogi Danci, a small riverain village. Initiations take place here, the training lasting five years. Initiates are said to be able to make spirits materialize and to exercise control over witches. Paraphernalia associated with the society include a medicine for ritual washing, a white cloth mask on a pole, and magical objects for producing rain, etc., including the chain of

[12] See above, p. 41.
[13] Nadel, 1935c; 1942, pp. 148–9; 1954a, pp. 163–87.

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[843] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

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He may go out to war himself, but more often puts the 701
operations under the War-Chief, Sarkin Yaki, who is himself 562
advised by the Wari-Yaki, a man chosen by the Mallamai for this purpose, and often of so humble a position that the warriors do not know who he is. The Sarkin Yaki, however, obeys him invariably, and indeed it is the Mallamai who direct when and where an attack should be delivered or a retreat made. If the 726
Sarkin Yaki should be killed in war, the army retires to await 562
another appointment by the Emir. It was the custom for the two eldest daughters of the Sarkin Nupe to go to war, each arrayed in two thick rigas, a cummerbund, and carrying a sword and spear. They had large followings, for they gave a big proportion of the spoils to their retinue, but they followed the direction of the Sarkin Yaki. No woman was allowed to accompany them into battle, but many of the sex were discontented with the restriction, and, in consequence, the practice became unpopular amongst the Nupe men. The general feeling became so strong that on the death of the Chief, Umoru Majigi, in 1884, these ladies were no longer allowed to go out to war. Their names were Atiba and Wodiko, names invariably given to the Chief's two eldest daughters. In other respects they lived ordinarily, and were married, but their husbands would never fight in the same war with their wives. Each Chieftain brings his following, and there are bodies of horsemen and footmen, the former armed with spears, the latter with bows and arrows. A war-camp is formed some seven to ten miles from where hostilities are expected to take place, and here the stores and women are left. The Mallamai and a large number of civilian hangers-on advance to the verge of the fight, and wait till success is attained, when they dash in to secure a share of the spoil, the Mallamai giving the word when it is safe to do so. Needless to say their presence is often resented. Envoys may be sent from one army to another in perfect safety, protected by the waving of a white flag, or of green branches; they generally dress in white for additional surety.

Before any campaign is undertaken the Emir consults a [721]
Mallam gifted with the power of prophecy, and he says whether the 875
results would be good or bad. A hundred years ago the advent 787
of a fair race from the west was foretold by the prophets in a MS. still extant, and the resistance to their arms was forbidden. That was why the present Emir of Bida and his family, together with all the Mallamai, refused to come out against the British. There are some prophets who are above worldly interest and desire, and others who give advice for 1,000 cowries, or perhaps sixpence. It is a special art in which they receive instruction as youths, and there are books on the subject. The Mallams are consulted on such questions as marriage, trade ventures, and sickness. They look on the ground for about ten minutes and

875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[557] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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643 Although the present-day political system of Nupe appears to represent in many respects only a copy and continuation of the pre-Fulani system, the characteristic features of ancient Nupe kingship—the former rule of inheritance, the ritual taboos, and the sacred emblems and form of magic linked with kingship—have disappeared under the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs. But already a new background of religion and myth is forming behind the modern kingship. The memory of the ancestor of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, Mallam Dendo, has become sanctified. The stories of his life and exploits, emphasizing his supernatural faculties, have the flavour of myths. And his tomb at Rabá, over [188] which a mosque has been built, became a place of worship and pilgrimage. At the time of the election of the present Emir, when a number of important political posts were due to change hands, the *Rani*, a Fulani prince anxious to obtain one of these posts, went to Rabá, fasted for seven days, sacrificed in the grave-mosque, and prayed to his ancestor for help.

The disappearance of ancient Nupe kingship reflects the far-reaching historical changes which Nupe kingdom had undergone in the Fulani conquest. In pre-Fulani Nupe the link with magic and myth, ritual rules and taboos, and possibly even the law of succession, separated the king from the rest of the people, even from the members of his own house. Fulani rule, only recently established by undisguised conquest, and dependent upon the co-operation of a band of war-chiefs and faction-leaders, turned semi-sacred kingship into rulership of the strongest. The king becomes a *primus inter pares*, the highest rank-holder in a royal nobility ruled by precedence and promotion. The exclusiveness of primogeniture gave way to a system of succession that allowed for balance of power and could satisfy rival claims. This final balance was not achieved at once. Of the seven sons of Mallam Dendo three only were destined to found royal houses, two directly, Usman Zaki and Masaba, and one in the second generation, Majigi, through his son Umaru. Having once concentrated military and political power in their own hands, these three families eliminated the other sons and grandsons from the succession, paying them off with political offices the importance of which decreased from generation to generation. This resulted in three dynasties which succeed to the throne in strict rotation. In the genealogy given in Appendix II this development is clearly visible. This historical explanation of the present system of kingship is borne out by the views of the people themselves. One of my most enlightened informants, a very learned man and himself a member of the royal nobility, defended the present form of succession against the old primogeniture on these grounds: the old system could work in ancient Nupe, when there was a powerful *kuti* (magic) behind the *Etsu*'s authority. For the Fulani dynasty, which came to power as a large group, composed of jealous relatives and partisans, a divided succession was the only solution. The country too, he added, could only benefit from such balance of power.

643 We may mention here another change from pre-Fulani to Fulani kingship which concerns the political status of the Nupe state. While the 648 Nupe kings were absolute masters in their own country, the Fulani

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We cannot precisely measure this psychological aftermath of acts of worship. But we can assess it indirectly, from the concern with religious experiences visible in everyday life. And here it is quite clear that our second assumption is the correct one. For the acts of worship do not leave any vivid awareness of the achieved communion with the deity nor any lasting sense of the holy. There is nothing of 'religiosity' in the Nupe character. He knows, of course, at all times, that there is a God and a realm of the supernatural; but ordinarily this is tacit knowledge, of no practical relevance, neither permanently awe-inspiring nor permanently exhilarating. Crudely speaking, the Nupe are religious only on religious occasions; in between, life is an affair of secular values and rules-of-thumb. That even sacred places are 'sacred' only at certain times of the year is part of the same attitude; so is the absence of any conception of personal holiness. Even Islam, with its daily prayers, its Friday service, and its pious scholars, has hardly affected this attitude. For the daily prayers have become unthinking routine, without any touch of the mystic; being a mallam is a profession among others and often combined with them; and the Moslem cult of saints or 'holy men' found no response.

All this means that the spheres of religion and the profane remain clearly separable. Probably few religions merge completely with secular life so that every possible action bears some reference to transcendental notions. Nor, of course, can we conceive of religions which would at no point coincide with mundane interests. But the border zone between the two can be more or less wide and more or less sharply circumscribed. In Nupe, this zone is narrow and sharply outlined. Wherever the 'competences' of religion bear on mundane interests we can readily mark the point where the coincidence ceases. There is no 'carry-over' from one to the other. Thus religion sustains the offices of chiefs, kings, and other exponents of authority and law: but their person is not sacred, and criminals convicted by these holders of supernaturally sanctioned offices are not treated with any show of awe or sacred horror. Religion helps to bind together the kin group through the belief in reincarnation, through ancestral sacrifices, and through the solemnization of marriage and birth: but the Nupe do not, on normal occasions, speak the names of the ancestors with bated breath or constantly worry about placating their spirits. Marriage is in no sense sacred, and children are not holy; even children whose birth is ascribed to the efficacy of sacrifice are not treated in any special way.[1] Nor, finally, are the sick who recover with supernatural aid or the crops that thrive after some rite has been duly

[1] The only rules of this kind are entailed in the *sogba* cult, of alien origin.

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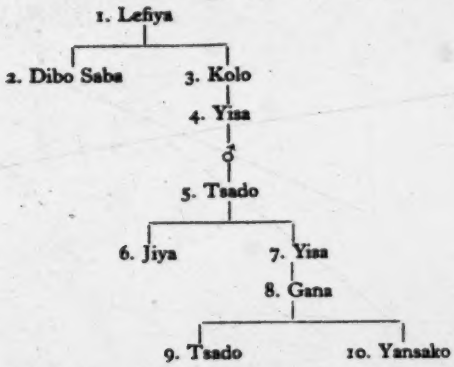
Genealogy of Doko Chiefs



Father of the Town, and who stands somewhat apart from the other village ranks. He plays the part of the chief 'elector' or 'king-maker'; he is never himself a candidate for chieftainship, but is entrusted with the rule of the village during the interregnum. We shall hear more of him presently. The Nupe dislike a long interregnum: as a rule only a few weeks, filled out with discussions and the consultation of diviners, elapse before the appointment of a new chief.[1] This appointment will eventually need the confirmation of the *Etsu* Nupe and, to-day, of the Administrative Officer. This last rule, however, applies only to those chiefs who are recognized as official Village Heads under the modern Native Administration. In the reorganization of the Emirate under British rule only the larger villages have been created seats of official Village Heads. Their number does not comprise all the places which are 'villages' or 'towns' in traditional native conception.[2] A significant terminological dualism has been the result: the people speak of *Žitsu*, 'town-king', when referring to their traditional, officially unrecognized, chief, and call the officially appointed Village Head *Etsu Nyenkpa*, 'Money Chief' (i.e. tax chief).

I can offer no explanation for the coexistence of these two different systems of chieftainship, of hereditary and promotion type. There is no evidence of either having developed from the other. Nor can local conditions, economic factors, or the factors of size and population be made responsible. But I could discover the sociologically interesting correlation between the system of succession and the religious elements which surround Nupe chieftainship. In the villages where chieftainship is hereditary we find that vague mythology of origin which tells of the first occupation of the land, and of the foundation of the village by the

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[1] I have been told that formerly unanimity between the various diviners of the village was considered necessary. In Mokwa my informants stated that the normal duration of the 'interregnum' is ten days.

[2] In connexion with a scheme to raise the salary of Village Heads the number of Village Headships in Bida Emirate has recently been further reduced.

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ancestor of the present chief. A certain special magic and sacred insignia are linked with the house in which chieftainship is vested. Thus the chiefs of various Beni villages and of Sakpe possess the brass bangles of Tsoede; chiefs in Dibo country an iron staff; chiefs in the riverain area the sacred chain of Tsoede. The magic ritual which is associated with chieftainship varies as widely: in Doko it is a harvest rite, the 'eating of the bulrush-millet'; in other villages it appears as magic against barrenness, as a rain sacrifice, an ordeal, or as a general rite to secure health and prosperity of the community. But invariably the chief's ritual, whatever its more specific aim, will be performed as funeral rite and ceremony of installation of chiefs, and also whenever certain great calamities befall the community—a drought, famine, or epidemic. The chief is not himself the priest of this magic, and often has not the insignia in his own possession. Insignia and magic are entrusted to another member of the chief's family. The office of the *Žigi*, the village priest, is kept in the junior branch of the chieftain house, and *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, Town-king and Town-priest, appear in the genealogies as elder and younger brother (in the classificatory sense).[1]

In the communities, on the other hand, where the chief is elected from the senior rank-holders, his house 'owns' no special magic or insignia, and there is no mythology of a founder of the village, but tradition speaks of the village as having 'always been there'. The religious duties fall, instead, to the *nũsa* who acts as chief 'elector' and who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum. This man's office will be hereditary and sacred, he will own insignia or a special powerful magic, which is, again, invoked at the death and the appointment of chiefs or in the case of great calamities. A supernatural agency, a mystic safeguard, is thus always assumed behind the chief's authority. But Nupe village organization has evolved two different solutions, in accordance with the two different systems of chieftain succession: one makes the chief or his family the agents of the supernatural power which supports the claim to chieftainship; the other separates the political rule from the mystic safeguard and, instead of a hereditary king, brings into being a hereditary 'king-maker'. (See chart II, p. 55).

This division of religious and secular office seems to eliminate effectively conflicts between chief and priest. The priests of the village cults, experts in religious matters only, have no influence in political affairs; they are, as we saw, not even granted the general prerogative of their age: a seat on the council of elders. The priest of the chief's cult, if of the chief's family, is classed as a 'younger brother' and thus equally barred from the position of an influential elder. Only the priest-king-maker (where he exists) could gain the position of a rival power and interfere with secular affairs. However, by his office the main 'elector' of the chief, he should be a supporter and ally of the chief, whose office reflects to some extent his own authority, rather than his adversary or rival. He may prefer a puppet at the head of the village—I saw an instance

[1] See the genealogy given in chart II, p. 55.

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d.* and 6*d.*). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s.*, which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s.* and 6*s.*[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s.*, and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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182 The integrative tendencies in the *ena* are expressed in every one
369 of the typical age-grade activities. In the village they revolve round
the three centres of social life: work, recreation, religion. In the Bida
561 *ena* the first is reduced to insignificant dimensions; the second is
raised to almost paramount importance; the third remains on the whole
unchanged, being only transferred to a different plane—Mohammedan
religion.

I have already spoken of the role which the *ena* plays in organizing
561 collective farm-work in the village. We need only add that these activities
concern the higher age-grades more than the junior groups, the
members of which are not yet skilled farmers. It is commonly agreed
that every young man who has gone through the three grades leaves the
ena a fully trained farmer. Not everyone can become a *Sode*; but the
success of the team counts for much. Here the *Ndakotsu* will prove his
capability as organizer. He will put his pride into making his team the
most efficient—all means being counted as fair. An old man, still known
[789] as *Ndakotsu*, told me how he used to help his group of workers to defeat
all the other teams by means of a charm which 'made their hoes go twice
as fast'.

Under recreational aims we must understand both recreation in the
561 narrow sense—age-grade feasts and 'parties'—and the conventional
574 festivities with which the Nupe celebrate kinship events: naming cere-
monies, weddings, and funerals. The recreational activities in the
narrow sense concern the individual association; in the celebration of
kinship events to which all young men who are related to the family are
invited, members of different grades frequently join. The *Ndakotsu*,
Etsu, and also the members of higher rank are expected to entertain the
group in their houses at fairly regular intervals. There will be food,
drinks, kola-nuts, and often drummers and dancers. In Bida the mem-
bers of the *ena* meet at least once a month at such parties. Smaller
festivities are attended only by the *ena* members themselves; to the
larger meetings, especially those which mark the beginning and end
of the *ena* term, friends and relations of both sexes are also invited.
At one of the festivities with which the inauguration of the new
age-grade term was celebrated in Kutigi I counted well over a hundred
guests.

Let me take you to such an age-grade feast in Bida. It is held in the
561 courtyard of the house. It starts in the afternoon or evening and lasts
574 far into the night. The guests sit and squat in a closely packed circle,
leaving a small space in the centre for drummers and dancers. On one
535 side the host is sitting together with *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*; as a rule they
554 only sit and watch the performance; but the guests are ready at every
moment to exchange the role of spectators for that of performers.
369 There exist special *ena gbarúfuši* dances, performed at these occasions:
they consist of a slow, graceful forward-and-backward movement of a
row of dancers, five or six young men, who dance side by side, the arms
stretched out and the body bent slightly forward, setting their feet in
small, measured, steps. Group follows group in the dancing arena.
Individual dancers leap into the 'arena', and perform a short solo or

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X796 sacrifice previously described; again, there is a big tree in the middle, this time adorned with a strip of white cloth, which is renewed at each ceremonial; if the village has a 'born' *Ndazo*, he will wear the new cloth round his waist while officiating, and put it back on the tree afterwards. Also tied to the tree are two tortoise shells, which will serve as drinking vessels during the sacrifice and afterwards as musical instruments, being beaten with small sticks. The other musical instruments used in the *gunnu* are as [634] unusual and are employed on no other occasion; they consist in two large and two small pot drums (of Gwari manufacture), and a raft-zither made of reed. During the year they are stored in the house of the *Žigi*, who has, however, no other function in the *gunnu*.

X796 On the day of the *gunnu*, before dawn, the *gunnu* drums begin to play. This is the signal for the boys and young men to leave 881 their homes and to go to some secret place in the bush, led by the *Ndazo* and the *Ndakotsu* (the appointed leader of their age grades). Arrived in the bush, where they may only talk in whispers, they remove their caps and everyday clothes and dress in *gunnu* fashion, that is, in a loincloth of striped cloth such as the women wear round the waist. They break off twigs of the *nūbeci* tree, which will later serve as the 'whips of the *gunnu*'.[1] Then the novices are taught the deportment required of them at the ceremonial—to keep their heads bent, eyes on the ground, as one does in the presence of superiors; equally they are taught the *gunnu* salute, which consists in a fierce yell, accompanied by the throwing-up of both arms and a rhythmical stamping on the ground. During these proceedings the novices at least are visibly frightened, while the older boys try to show their unconcern. Finally, they leave the bush, walking in single file, the tallest first, to the place of the sacrifice; throughout the ceremonial the young men will move thus, in a long file, 'whips' in hand, led or sometimes driven by the priest and the *Ndakotsu*.

At the *gunnu* place they join the older men who have meanwhile assembled. The musicians sit under the tree and have started drumming and singing. Everyone is stripped to the waist and sits on leaves or branches, since it is sacrilege to sit on the bare ground of the *gunnu 'ba*. The older men form a circle round the place of the sacrifice; the youths sit some distance apart, though they will from time to time jump up to 'salute' late-comers or to drive away strangers who might trespass on the secret site. Soon the sacrifice follows, which varies from year to year, according to the advice of

[1] This tree has no further ceremonial significance, though its twigs are sometimes stuck into the ground outside a house as a charm against thieves. [789]

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Among the non-therapeutic medicines we meet again with the substance which makes invisible, and with another which enables you to see witches and also protects you from them. The latter consists of various rare roots and four cowrie shells, sewn into a leather bag dyed black and red, which you must keep under your pillow while asleep. Before handing the charm to the customer it is buried for one night together with a live chameleon, which contact communicates to the charm the peculiar powers of the animal (which is said to 'see in the dark'). The invisibility potion is concocted from the head, blood, and claws of a completely black fowl, a creeper torn off a tree while one's eyes are covered by a black cloth, and a mudfish. The emphasis on black accords with this notion of a substance whose effect resembles that of darkness and which is in fact known as *badúfu*, a mixed Nupe–Hausa word meaning 'dark place'.[1] The symbolism of covering your eyes is obvious, as is that of the mudfish, which buries itself in the river-bed. The same substance, in powder form, may also be carried in a black leather bag on the body, though in this case a piece of human skin must be added.[2]

There are several other non-therapeutic *cigbe* of less gruesome nature. The following examples all come from the same source, old Ndakotsu of Bida, a descendant of the old Beni chiefs and a noted diviner and 'wise man'. His medicines were as secret as they were fantastic; yet though they were not for sale, they were freely given to friends and acquaintances or to the young men over whose age grades Ndakotsu presided. Neither the application nor the preparation of these medicines involves invocations, sacrifices and the like; but their professedly mystical character is usually clear from the peculiar nature of their efficacy, which is attributed to the power of *fifíngi* of animals or plants and hence presupposes explicitly religious conceptions. All medicines also imply more or less clearly, the principle 'like causes like'. One example, mentioned before, is the powder applied to hoes which causes them to 'double' their output; its effect rests on one particular ingredient, leaves from a palm-tree split in two by lightning, the 'doubling' of the tree being responsible for the doubled efficiency of the tool. Another farming 'medicine', meant to secure a rich yam harvest, is made up of the head and left leg of a bush rodent and some grass torn out by the roots, and must be buried annually in the farmland in a new, covered pot; the explanation is that the *fifíngi* of the rodent, which is known to feed on yams, will 'steal' all the yams

[1] For a different meaning of this term see below, p. 159.

[2] I was offered this useful *cigbe*, but the deal broke down since I was unable to supply the human skin, to the great surprise of the expert, who thought that I could easily obtain it from the local hospital.

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789 (that is, their *fifíngi*) from the surrounding farmlands and carry them to yours. A rich grain harvest can be obtained by taking the head of an ass or donkey, its saddle cloth, and the excreta of a person who dies of smallpox, tying the three 'ingredients' into a bundle hung from a palm-tree on the farm: the grain will then grow as high as a person, since the *fifíngi* of the donkey, used to carrying loads on its back, will endeavour to 'pull up' the grain 'like a load'. Farmers can finally prepare a potent drink made of a black monkey's left leg, some leaves driven into a heap by a whirlwind, and beer: they will then work 'as fast as the whirlwind' and as 'tirelessly as a monkey'. Ndakotsu's father is reported to have owned also one of those protective *cigbe* which punish evil-wishers; it is said to have been particularly vicious, inflicting body-ache on any person who so much as stared at you. Nothing further, however, is known about this medicine, which has since been lost.

755 The picture changes again when we turn to the medicines hereditary in families or 'houses' or belonging to communities. Let me quote these examples. In Jebba Island I recorded an hereditary *cigbe* called *fúnagba*, which cures headache, pains in the body, and barrenness, and can either be drunk or used externally. Its composition is complicated, including seven ingredients, six of which are roots of specific trees and the seventh the root of any tree growing across a footpath (such roots being particularly 'strong'); these ingredients must be mixed with beer, blood of fowl (that is, the common materials for sacrifices), and some Niger water fetched by a young girl. Apart from its therapeutic effect, this medicine also protects the house from thieves and evil-minded intruders. In another village on the Niger I found a medicine called *atafá*, which has only the latter effect; it could, in fact, never be renewed if it were actually dispensed since its composition is unknown. In several villages I met with a medicine called *wasa* or *gába*, compounded of ten ingredients, one of which is the boiled head of a [752] poisonous snake, severed before it released the poison; this medicine operates as an antidote against snake-bite, as a cure for stomach-ache, and sometimes also as a potion applied in ordeals; while its presence in the house affords protection from thieves and evil-doers. A medicine called *égbo*, from Shari, is used to treat headache and stomach-ache, and is also taken by the devotees of the *ndahó gboyá* before they put on the masks that go with the cult. Then there is the Jebba medicine *zumácikā*, which belongs to the village and is believed to protect the community from smallpox; as we remember, its composition is unknown and it acts through merely being present.[1]

[1] See above, p. 91.

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755 lest it lose its power. And here, it seems to me, we have the re-
828 quired loophole; for 'utter secrecy' I take to mean that the medicine may only be used at night, when you cannot be seen, or among strangers, when at least you cannot be recognized, that is, in situations when no one can prove anything. My informants refused to commit themselves on this point. But exactly this kind of argument was brought up in connection with another, similar, medicine not previously mentioned, namely, a *cigbe* said to enable a man to feign death and to arise from the grave unharmed and invisible; thus magically equipped he can disappear from his village unbeknown to all, to reappear, now in visible shape, in foreign parts. This seems to be the only advantage offered by this *cigbe*. Now this advantage, my informants assured me, was past, thanks to railways and motor-cars of all things; for nowadays the person using the *cigbe* could reach the strange place no more quickly than would others, using the modern means of transport. But it is not merely the utility of the *cigbe* which has disappeared, but its virtue. Since other people, travelling non-magically, might well arrive together with and run into the person who did so magically, the secrecy of the proceedings has been lost, and with it the efficacy of a *cigbe*. If this argument seems less compelling to us than to the Nupe, it yet confirms the point made before, that this notion of miraculous medicines protects itself from proof or disproof.

755 Let us return to the *emisa* which accompany various *cigbe* pro-
789 cedures. Clearly, they must have some share in fostering or confirming the faith which the people put in their mystical medicines. I have so far treated these formulæ mainly as evidence for 'mystical intent'; but they would seem to define a particular species of this intent and one particularly reassuring. For the *emisa* comes closest to a magic spell, having the same rigidity and being similarly indispensable for the desired effects; if so, it would turn the whole *cigbe* practice into a strictly magical procedure, that is; a procedure resting on the mechanical manipulation of substances and words rather than on appeals to some transcendental intelligence.

Neither conclusion, however, is quite correct. The names and addresses of *cigbe*, the Nupe insist, carry no power in themselves; this lies in the 'ingredients' alone. If the *emisa* is indispensable it is so only in the sense in which the titles and formal greetings of men of rank are indispensable, being meant to acknowledge or indicate the power that lies in the rank but adding nothing to it. Furthermore, the *emisa* of medicines is meant to acknowledge also the ultimate source of their power, that is, the presence and will of God. If the wording of the *cigbe* greetings hardly reveals that

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exalted function, the Nupe would point out that other, ordinary 755
'greetings' are similarly nondescript and uninformative. We re- 789
call, further, that on certain occasions the practice of *cigbe* also includes sacrifices and invocations proper, addressed to God or *kuci*.

We may conclude, then, that even the mechanical manipulations of *cigbe* carry some of that awareness of a transcendental intelligence which turns an otherwise 'magical' act into a religious appeal; and though the faith in this manipulation of 'ingredients' is partly a belief in their mechanical efficacy, this is yet understood to reflect, however indirectly, divine intervention. The *emisa* itself is neither fully a spell nor yet fully a prayer; it is an expression, couched in a conventionalized code, for the varieties of power mobilized in the *cigbe* procedure. Those who know the appropriate expressions also know the entities to which they refer and hence can manipulate them: for in the Nupe way of thinking as in ours there is no true and workable knowledge of anything unless that thing can also be named. Thus, though the *emisa* has no share in the powers it identifies and names, the very fact that it does so makes it an integral part of the mystically powerful operation. Finally, since these 'code' expressions are respectful ones, they stand, not for a simple command, but for a command tinged with submission, for a mastery which is half supplication. in brief, for 'invocations'.

4. THE PERSONNEL

The organization of the Nupe barber-doctors has been described 759
elsewhere, and I need here summarize only the main facts.[1] The barbers are grouped in three guilds, centred in Bida, one in each of the three sectors into which the town is divided. They travel a good deal; a number have also settled in the larger villages in the country, and quite a few in towns outside Nupe. Each guild has its own titled head, elected by the guild and confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe, who is also the most experienced and most highly reputed member of the profession; which standing is measured, simply, by the number of treatments known to him. In all my discussions with barber-doctors it was always the guild-head who proved the best informed and to whom all others turned when in doubt or at a loss. The profession is loosely hereditary, some usually following in their fathers' footsteps; but men of other families may join the profession through being apprenticed to an established barber-doctor for about five years, during which period they pay for the tuition by surrendering the larger part of their earnings.

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 289–301.

CULTS[7]

Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

794 The Ebe have a *kikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the
782 ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konu of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *ndáduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsá* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[8]

794 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility,
crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in
793 times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnukó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[9]

278 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the
●789 power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–5; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–5; Notes on Kede District, 1930.

[8] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[9] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–62 and *passim*.

278 either with or without specified actions and utterances. Their avowed purposes are
789 frequently therapeutic, but also include defences against theft, witchcraft, and devices to render one invisible. Nupe leech-lore includes both rational empirical cures and mystical rites which can produce no result beyond increasing the confidence of the user. Nor is there any distinction in Nupe vocabulary, for the term *cigbe* is used for all medicines. Medicines may be distinguished as those which are practically effective or may be easily taken as being effective by practitioners, and those whose objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. The latter class may include devices for rendering a man invisible, medicines for killing thieves and fending off witchcraft, and for making hoes do their work in half the normal time.

791 There are four main types of practitioners of medicine: the guild of Moslem
759 barber-doctors, the pagan order of *cigbeciši*, and two kinds of individual practitioners.

306 The barber-doctors' guild is recognized by the *Etsu* Nupe but is confined almost entirely to the towns. The guild head occupies an important position at court. They are entirely concerned with therapeutic medicines, but are regarded with contempt in the country districts where people feel that a barber cannot know about such things.

791 The *cigbeciši*, formerly recognized by the *Etsu*, but since replaced by the
789 barber-doctors, are much more loosely organized than the guild. Whereas the latter keep their knowledge mainly within their lineages, the *cigbeciši* crafts can be bought by anyone. There is little corporate activity beyond occasional gatherings at the local head's house to discuss practice. The head is traditionally responsible for all new medicines. Offerings are made to the spirits of the order and through them to *Sokó*, the ultimate source of *cigbe*, whenever a new medicine is discovered. The names of spirits may also be introduced in the application of medicines, but there appears to be no invocation. With this mystical approach there is a greater sense of the implications of "medicine" for good and for evil. While Moslem barbers, though not concerned with the more "dangerous" medicines, sell without scruple medicines for immoral purposes, such as those to induce barrenness in women, *cigbeciši* claim to be very particular as to whom they sell the more powerful *cigbe*. The powers of witchcraft are often said to require medicines, while the conflict between witchcraft and anti-witchcraft is sometimes represented as a struggle between good and bad *cigbe*.

Individual practitioners are of two kinds: those who provide cures for petty ailments, and Moslem mallams and scholars who write a passage from the Koran which is washed off and drunk by the patient. They also provide amulets containing Koran texts, as elsewhere in Islamic West Africa.

Some medicines, the ingredients of which are not known, belong to descent groups and are kept in vessels into which libations of beer and offerings of blood are poured to the ancestors.

754 The neophyte to the order of witches as imagined by the Nupe must, it is
751 believed, bathe himself in certain medicines and observe certain taboos, and the masked dancer who impersonates and is possessed by the spirit of the anti-witchcraft society[10] uses certain medicines while others are placed on the mask to give it and its dancer their unique character. There are in addition individual medicines used as defences against magic, and ordeal medicines which will kill the witch who drinks, but leave the innocent unharmed.

DIVINATION[11]

787 Divination plays an important part in Nupe life and is used not only to determine the rites to be performed in particular situations but to decide such matters as the election of a high officer of state. The two methods used are the old system,

[10] See below.
[11] Nadel, 1942, p. 379; 1954a, pp. 36–67.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpã* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciši* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciši* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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II

DIVINATION

787 We shall deal with two methods of divination, both of which are known throughout the country and applied on all occasions, trivial as well as serious. The first, called *eba*, consists in throwing strings of shells and resembles in technique the *ifa* divination of Yoruba; the second, *hatí*, is of Mohammedan origin and involves drawing mystic patterns in the sand.[1] The two methods appeal to a somewhat different public, the former being practised mainly in the villages and pagan districts, the latter in the sophisticated capital, Bida. The division, however, is far from rigid; also, as we shall see, the two methods share certain essential features in spite of the difference in technique and religious background.

[177]

Two other types of divination, which are used infrequently and mainly on minor matters, and which are known only in the river area, may be disregarded. One, called *evo* ('cowrie shells'), is a simplified version of the method of *eba*. The other, called *kpápagi* ('tortoise'), employs the dried, hollowed-out body of a tortoise, which is made to slide down a taut string. This is a crude oracle, permitting only three answers—'yes' (if the tortoise glides down quickly), 'no' (if it does not glide down at all), and 'doubtful' (if it glides down slowly).

I. THE MECHANICS OF EBA

787 791 The method of *eba* is far from uniform. Although the divining apparatus itself and the principles of interpretation are the same everywhere, the 'key' used by the diviner, his invocations, and his minor paraphernalia may differ from locality to locality, even from one person to the other. This scope for variety does not extend to the attitude assumed in the act of divining. The eight men I observed all went through their act in a serious and tense mood, their gestures and utterances from time to time rising to an excitement which lent to the proceedings a thoroughly dramatic atmo-

[1] The Nupe term *hatí* appears to be a corruption of the Arabic *hatim*, 'seal', 'magic square'; cf. the corresponding Hausa term *hatimi*.

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5. *Hati* diviner

4. *Eha* diviner

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sphere. One diviner, indeed, behaved in an almost hysterical 787
manner. The clients in turn were shy, spoke little, and behaved 791
in the presence of the diviner with the same visible restraint and, occasionally, awe which the Nupe bring to the esoteric part of a religious ceremony.

The diviner's apparatus includes two sets of objects, the divining 787
strings themselves, and a series of marked slabs which serve as the 'key' for interpreting the throws. The former consist of eight cords of hemp, each strung through four perforated, hollow half-shells, placed equidistantly along the cord, about three inches from one another. The cords end in four strands, covered with small rings made of hollowed-out berries and cowrie shells; these cord-ends have no importance in the actual divining, being merely ornamental tassels, though it seems significant that they are again four (or eight) in number. The divination fastens upon the four half-shells, which are called *kpyekpya* and are made either of the shell of sheanut or of the kernel of the dompalm; in either case the bundle of eight cords is referred to as *vúnkpara*, 'white shell' (of sheanut). The diviner starts the proceedings by placing the eight cords on the ground, in parallel rows and pointing away from him, all shells being turned open side down. He then picks them up at the middle, two at a time, holding one in each hand, and throws them down again, once more in parallel rows. When this has been repeated four times, that is, when all the cords have been picked up and thrown, the diviner will interpret the pattern of shells as they happened to fall, open side up or closed side up. The procedure is called *sa 'ba*, 'to cast the *eba*', or for short, *esa*, 'the casting'. The diviner himself is known, accordingly, as *ebásaci*, 'One who casts the *eba*'.[1] The interpretation of the pattern thrown does not, however, consist merely in counting up the shells, but involves a more complicated calculation which requires certain aids to memory and a definite 'key'.

These are provided in the second set of objects, which is included in the generic name for the whole divining apparatus, *eba*. It consists of eight small, roughly square slabs cut from gourds, each of which bears a different series of point-like marks. The point-designs are known as *emi* or *kata*, that is, 'house', which nomenclature will become clear presently. The diviners employ two further paraphernalia, which play no part in the actual interpretation of the *eba*, a hippopotamus tooth, and a round or wedge-shaped stone about the size of a fist. Throughout the proceedings the diviner will poke the tooth or stone at the divining cords as though he wished to prod them into activity or to aid some process that

[1] The diviner is also called, by the Hausa name, *boka* or (the Nupe-ized version) *bocí*.

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former case, too, it is sometimes considered advisable to make sure of a propitious day; but in the latter case divination may be the only means for discovering the appropriate religious remedy. Let me mention in passing the widespread conviction that even the Emir of Nupe consults diviners (of the Mohammedan variety), in large numbers and 'for whole weeks at a time', to aid him in his multifarious problems: which belief, in spite of its circumstantial nature, is unsupported by such evidence as I could muster.[1] 787

One more word about the frequency of the visits one pays the diviner. For the townspeople no rule can be laid down; persons who seek advice on trade, travels, promotion in rank or other specific questions will obviously consult the diviner *ad hoc*, whenever the need happens to arise. It is somewhat different in the villages, where people also go to the diviner simply to have their fortunes told. Here individuals would pay fairly regular visits, once or twice a month, or at least once in two or three months. I have, however, spoken to villagers who had not been to the diviner for as much as five or six months.

The diviner is paid a small fee every time he is consulted. The fee is neither rigidly laid down nor claimed in advance. In Bida, the diviner is usually paid in money, though a bowl of rice or a few kolanuts may be thrown in, the client paying according to his ability, between a penny and sixpence. In the village one mostly pays in food or kolanuts. The diviners themselves regard the payments as 'gifts', and would strongly deny that they are divining 'for money'. No diviner could in fact live on what his skill earns him; nor does a diviner's reputation add in any way to his status in this rank-conscious society. Divining is merely an additional vocation, prized for the mystic wisdom and power it implies rather than for material or social gains. 791 [555]

This brings me to the last point, the social position of the diviner himself. Divination is essentially 'learning'—a skill that can be acquired by anyone having a 'good head'; if it is hereditary in a family it is so only incidentally. A great many diviners learned the art, in their youth, from another expert, paying for the tuition. One Bida diviner, for example, a man of about sixty-five, had learned divination when he was fifteen, studying for ten months, 'every day as in school'. Another had learned the craft from a stranger he met on his wanderings when a young man. Two diviners made an exceptional and unorthodox claim; while admitting that they had to acquire the skill, they maintained that they had 'learned it from God', by inspiration as it were. The majority of the diviners I met were also farmers; one was a barber by

[1] According to tradition, the old kings of Nupe had numerous official diviners among their retinue; this practice has certainly disappeared.

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profession; the diviner in Kutigi was the head of the small group of 'hunters' in that community; while the diviner in Jebba held a high rank among the village elders and the priestship of an important *kuti*. Several diviners are medicine experts at the same time, so that they can treat as well as diagnose illness; those who are not must send their clients to a 'doctor' for the appropriate *cigbe*, unless of course their diagnosis reveals the kind of illness which only sacrifices and similar observances can cure.

Being a learned 'skill', divination is irregularly distributed. Bida, not unnaturally, has a great many diviners (though the majority are Moslem sand-diviners), both in the town itself and in the farming settlements outside. Doko, a moderately large village, has three diviners; Kutigi, a much larger place, and Jebba, a busy thoroughfare on the river, have only one each. Some villages have no resident expert; here the people would go to diviners in the neighbourhood, the diviners themselves being apparently unwilling to go 'on tour'.

Every diviner, apart from advising clients, also divines for himself and his family, either when confronted with some particular problem or on regular days (for example, every Friday in Kutigi). Furthermore, before his first divination of the day, the diviner must go through a particular procedure which in a sense consecrates his tools. Without at first using the marked slabs, he will throw the cords as often as is necessary to obtain the full key series. As each shell pattern appears in its proper place he puts the corresponding slab on the ground. In due course, the *sokógba* is placed between the 4th and 5th slab, that is, beside the slab referring to the diviner's own 'house'. While proceeding with his throws, the diviner mutters a kind of running commentary, thus—'Figures of the *eba*, join each other. Are your words (or signs) sufficient? They are not sufficient. There are three *etsu*, now there are four *etsu* . . . I have not yet extracted *etsu* (number) three . . .' So it goes on until the series is complete. At this stage the diviner says—'*To, Sokó da bo*', 'Good, God is there', turns all cords with the open shell face down, and is ready to begin the real divining.

In no other way does the diviner stand under special rules, restrictions or observances, with two exceptions. If he happens to refresh himself with beer while divining, as he often does, he would pour a little on his slabs, saying that this is 'for God', while the normal practice is to pour a little beer on the ground for the *kuci* or 'grandfather'. Again, while the *efu* gifts to spirits made by ordinary people are harmless, the diviner's gift harbours great danger for any person who would first catch sight of it after it had been placed on the wayside. To avoid this danger, the diviner would place his *efu* underneath some large tree in the bush where

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people are unlikely to pass. These two rules, then, and the 'consecration' of the diviner's tools with its reference to the presence of God, demonstrate the mystic power that attaches to divining and to those who handle it, and the sacred provenance of the skill. As we have seen, however, this evidence of sacredness does not content every individual; so that some will also claim that their whole knowledge is divinely inspired or that their paraphernalia are gifts of God. 791

Whatever status the diviner will claim for himself, for his art he will always claim the perfection of a well thought-out system, governed by rigorous, consistent rules, even though he must resort to far-fetched arguments to prove his case. Let us consider this point for a moment. The diviners clearly represent a selected group of individuals, not a random sample; for only those with particular leanings and aptitudes—those with a 'good head'—will choose this profession. Now, comparing the manner in which the Nupe generally are apt to discuss religious topics with the attitude shown by the diviners in their field, we find that one of the variants of the former constitutes the norm of the latter. The layman discussing religion may or may not be inclined to embark upon speculation: the diviner discussing divination does so as a matter of course if by this means he can force his facts into a more convincing order. Equally, in the act of divining, he is capable of a tense and dramatic mood. The first attitude only satisfies the diviner's own leanings; for his public takes no interest in these speculative refinements and cannot appreciate them. But his public does expect the diviner to be tense and excited, and is visibly impressed by his excursions into drama. In either case, we may conclude, the diviner's role offers a congenial niche to individuals of that religious bias or, more generally, of that temperament and intellectual predisposition.

5. THE MECHANICS OF HATI

Although we are not at the moment concerned with the influence of Islam on Nupe religion, it is convenient to discuss the Mohammedan variant of divination in this context. For in the main it is only the technique which is novel in this system of divining, while its topics, interpretation, and social aspects coincide with those typical of the pagan system. Partly, too, the two techniques share various points of resemblance, such as the designs of the 'key' figures or the use of series of eight, so that it would seem that the new, Mohammedan, practice has been assimilated to the older, indigenous method. 787

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi tradition has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed chieftainship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nũsaẽi* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiẽi*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nũsaẽi* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nũsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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ancestor of the present chief. A certain special magic and sacred insignia are linked with the house in which chieftainship is vested. Thus the chiefs of various Beni villages and of Sakpe possess the brass bangles of Tsoede; chiefs in Dibo country an iron staff; chiefs in the riverain area the sacred chain of Tsoede. The magic ritual which is associated with chieftainship varies as widely: in Doko it is a harvest rite, the 'eating of the bulrush-millet'; in other villages it appears as magic against barrenness, as a rain sacrifice, an ordeal, or as a general rite to secure health and prosperity of the community. But invariably the chief's ritual, whatever its more specific aim, will be performed as funeral rite and ceremony of installation of chiefs, and also whenever certain great calamities befall the community—a drought, famine, or epidemic. The chief is not himself the priest of this magic, and often has not the insignia in his own possession. Insignia and magic are entrusted to another member of the chief's family. The office of the *Žigi*, the village priest, is kept in the junior branch of the chieftain house, and *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, Town-king and Town-priest, appear in the genealogies as elder and younger brother (in the classificatory sense).[1]

In the communities, on the other hand, where the chief is elected from the senior rank-holders, his house 'owns' no special magic or insignia, and there is no mythology of a founder of the village, but tradition speaks of the village as having 'always been there'. The religious duties fall, instead, to the *nũsa* who acts as chief 'elector' and who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum. This man's office will be hereditary and sacred, he will own insignia or a special powerful magic, which is, again, invoked at the death and the appointment of chiefs or in the case of great calamities. A supernatural agency, a mystic safeguard, is thus always assumed behind the chief's authority. But Nupe village organization has evolved two different solutions, in accordance with the two different systems of chieftain succession: one makes the chief or his family the agents of the supernatural power which supports the claim to chieftainship; the other separates the political rule from the mystic safeguard and, instead of a hereditary king, brings into being a hereditary 'king-maker'. (See chart II, p. 55).

This division of religious and secular office seems to eliminate effectively conflicts between chief and priest. The priests of the village cults, experts in religious matters only, have no influence in political affairs; they are, as we saw, not even granted the general prerogative of their age: a seat on the council of elders. The priest of the chief's cult, if of the chief's family, is classed as a 'younger brother' and thus equally barred from the position of an influential elder. Only the priest-king-maker (where he exists) could gain the position of a rival power and interfere with secular affairs. However, by his office the main 'elector' of the chief, he should be a supporter and ally of the chief, whose office reflects to some extent his own authority, rather than his adversary or rival. He may prefer a puppet at the head of the village—I saw an instance

[1] See the genealogy given in chart II, p. 55.

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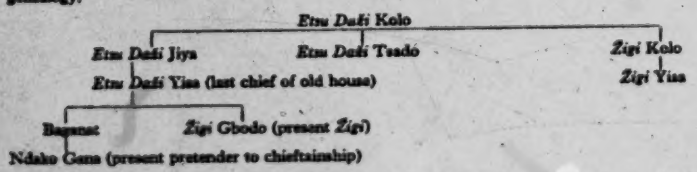
II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('efu')*	*Succession*	*Insigma, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Ètsu Dafi*	Chief	Dafi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Žigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dafi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotii*	..	"	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Mahii*	..	"	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dzoko*	..	Takogi	"	..	..
8	*Boke*	..	Kpacinefu	"	..	..
9	*Shabaefi*	..	Ndadofu	"	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dafi	"	..	..
11	*Žitsu Bebi*	..	Edokó	"	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	"	"	..	..
13	*Maji Eghe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	"	"	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences.

It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon

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622 against the ruling chief whom he regarded as an usurper. He refused
793 the chief the use of the sacred insignia—the bangles of Tsoede—without
578 which the annual chief's ritual cannot be performed. Finally, in 1934, he asked me to intervene for him so that he should be given official authority to keep in his possession the invaluable insignia, which the chief was demanding back not so much for religious reasons (for some of his brothers and sons were already posing as Mohammedans), as in order to deprive the rival family of this convincing evidence of their claim to the rule of Dokó. The case remained undecided, and the rivalry between the two men unrelieved, till in 1936 the chief offered the 'pretender' official recognition of a sort, namely, the title *Makū*. The highest rank next to the chief's, *Shaba*, had just fallen vacant, and a reshuffle of titles had taken place. Ndakó Gana, however, rejected the title *Makū*—a new title, introduced *ad hoc* (copied from the dynastic ranks in Bida)—as a meaningless, makeshift sort of rank and demanded instead the rank of *Shaba* itself. The deadlock was finally overcome by an appeal of both parties to the *Etsu*; he managed to persuade the young man to accept the offered rank, at least as an earnest, and as more fitting to his age.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

622 The tasks of government which fall to the village chief are these:

1. He appoints the village elders from the ranks of the family heads and is thus bound, as by a constitution in the modern sense, to accept their co-operation and advice in all matters of village government.
2. He controls the land resources of the community and in this capacity apportions farm-land, trees, fishing rights, and levies certain tributes and land dues from the families holding village land. With this aspect of village government we shall deal later on in detail, in the chapter on land-tenure.
3. He is not, as we have seen, the religious head of the community. But he organizes, directly or indirectly, and partly finances, certain religious rites linked with chieftainship.
4. He arbitrates in litigation and wields (though now only on a limited scale) a certain informal judicial power.
5. He organizes all large-scale co-operation and concerted action of the village community.

We have already spoken of the composition of the village council and the co-operation between chief and elders. Let me add some concrete data to illustrate the working of the village 'constitution'.

627 A Doko farmer had quarrelled with a neighbour over some trees; people from a village near Mokwa came into Mokwa to borrow masks for the *elo* ritual which they were going to perform, having lost their own masks; a family head in Sakpe accused his sister's son who lived in his house of having stolen rice from his farm; a girl in Laboži denounced two strangers who had been given hospitality by a neighbour and whom she saw stealing their host's clothes; a young man in Jebba accused his wife of adultery; another man in Jebba complained that a certain hunter

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Civil and military officers received no salary. The payment for their services took the form of a share in the booty of slaves, horses, or other property, made in the war by their household troops; of landed property and fiefs bestowed by the king upon his loyal servants; and, finally, of status and exalted social position linked with title and office. Every promotion to a higher rank, as it involved a larger measure of political influence, involved also claims to larger and more lucrative fiefs. 565

The *Ndeji*,' Father of the Town', is the head of the civil nobility. He is in charge of the affairs of Bida, and all reports or complaints are brought to him first. He is closest to the king, always about his person, the most powerful of all the officers of state because he 'has the king's ear'. He and the other civil rank-holders are the *shawraciši nya minin*, the Councillors of the Inner House, so called because they hold their daily *nkó* (council) with the king himself. 565 645

The *ena 'kii*, a creation of the kingdom, has no parallel in the village organization. Service in the war, open to every man in Nupe, nobleman or commoner, is compulsory for this class of professional soldiers. The 'war-ranks' imply tasks for experts, and special responsibility for the execution of these tasks to king and commander of the army. Thus the different titles have specialized meanings: the *Maiyaki* is the General-in-Chief, the *Uban Dawaki* and *Dokoyiringi* are in command of the main body of horsemen, the *Sokyara* is in charge of the mounted vanguard, the *Ejukó* of the archers, the *Sónkali* of the foot-troops, &c. The *ena Maiyaki*, too, holds its daily *nkó*, but not in the presence of the king. They, too, receive reports about the affairs of the town, and also of the country at large; but their main work is the discussion and preparation of military expeditions. 565 701

Only for the four or five highest ranks of the civil and military nobility is the order of precedence really rigid and generally valid. The significance of the remaining ranks changes frequently; bestowed as they are by the king on individuals to whom he owes gratitude or recognition for their services, they may lose their importance under another king, who has other, new men to reward and to distinguish. On pp. 100–1 is a list of the *saraki* ranks which exist in Bida to-day. Where possible I have indicated previous ranks and promotions, and also the first appointment under one or other *Etsu*. 565 554

The *ena manši* derives its name from the fact that the judicial and religious offices which it comprises are bestowed on Mallams, men of learning and scholarship. Profound knowledge of the Mohammedan literature, which is religious and juridical in one, is the only way to these ranks which are, like all other ranks in the kingdom, bestowed by the king. But the specialized training, the very necessity of finding a man of so special an education, limits the number of possible candidates. With knowledge and scholarship the office is handed on from father to son, political influence and power of certain families do the rest, and the result is that the offices of the *Alkali*, Judge, and *Liman*, Head of the Mohammedan clergy, become hereditary almost more rigidly than 565 555 693 743

served in Patigi. Or again, the highest military rank to-day is called by the Hausa name *Maiyaki*, instead of *Somaši*, which is the old Nupe title.

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565 the *sarakí* ranks and offices. Thus the present Chief *Alkali* of Bida as
555 well as his assistant is himself the son of an *Alkali*. The same few families
693 supply to-day the judges for the district courts in Nupe and indeed for
793 many courts outside Nupe country, where the reputation of Bida scholarship has found recognition. And, as a final result of this tendency to make these offices the prerogative of a small group, we find since the time of *Etsu* Mohamadu the two offices of *Liman* and *Alkali* combined in one person.[1]

565 The office of the *Alkali* in Bida, the highest Mohammedan judge of
557 the kingdom, dates back to the first period of Fulani rule. Its impor-
693 tance and distinction is expressed in the fact that Mallam Dendo's eldest son chose for himself the office not of a temporal ruler but of judge of Nupe. Many of the men who held these offices were of great learning and outstanding ability. Some have left behind records of the history of

1. *Ranks of the Ena Ndeji*

Title	*Tribal origin*	*Previous ranks*	*Biographical remarks*
Ndeji	Nupe from Dibo	*Magajin Gari*	Grandfather was *Ndeji*, appointed by *Etsu* Masaba; the father had no title. To-day highest official of the N.A.; head of the Emir's council.
Nyáfyenye	Fulani	*Magajin Gari*	Father and grandfather both *Ndeji*; first appointment under Usman Zaki.
Magajin Gari	Nupe	..	Father was *Nyáfyenye* and later *Ndeji*.
Sonfadakó	,,	*Gadza*	Father had no title; his first appointment was under *Etsu* Maliki, his second under *Etsu* Mamadu.
Gadza	No holder at present, but formerly a very important title.		
Sahiwa	Fulani	..	Father was *Ndeji*, titled under Umaru Majigi.
Mamasii	,,	..	Father held a lower title; he himself was titled under *Etsu* Maliki.
Etsu Basa	Benu-Nupe	..	A hereditary title held in one family.
Etsu Gbari	Nupe	..	Father was *Uban Dawaki*.
Tsadza	Fulani	*Galadiman Gari*	Father and elder brother have held same title.
Ndasii	Hausa	..	Newly introduced title.
Galadiman Gari	Fulani	..	Father was *Gadza*; he himself was appointed under *Etsu* Bello. He became later a 'ward-head' of the modern town-administration.
Kofonkomu	Nupe	..	Father held same title.

[1] There exist two different kinds of *Liman* offices: the *Liman Ratibi*, the minister of the weekday service held in the various mosques of the town, and the *Liman Jemaa*, the minister of the Friday service, which is held in the big city mosque, in the presence of the king. In every part of the town there is a *Liman* of the first kind; but there is only one *Liman Jemaa*. And it is to this highest priestly office that we referred above.

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hereditary hunters in Doko and is performed by the head of that group. The two ceremonials, then, have no special 'priests', being entrusted instead to particular individuals in virtue of some other office or position they hold. In addition, there are two priests in the strict sense of the word, men specifically invested with the religious office and holding no other official position. One has charge of the rituals *žiba* and *fitakũ*, the other of the *gunnu*. Both men must have the status of full adults, that is, must be married, before they can assume the religious duties. In all other respects their qualifications differ fundamentally.

The first priestship is traditionally vested in one of the reigning chief's younger brothers (real or classificatory), who must not be his prospective successor. This division of the two offices, one political, the other religious, also includes the guardianship of the sacred bangles of Tsoede which, in Doko, represent the insignia of the chiefly office; they are kept, not by the chief, but by his priest brother, the chief himself being allowed to wear them only on three ceremonial occasions—at his investiture; when he performs his 'own' ritual, *Dibo Saba*; and when he pays a visit in state to the *Etsu* Nupe. The peculiar relationship of ruler and priest is traced back to the first chief of Doko and represents, for the people, something in the nature of a complementary arrangement, at once uniting and separating secular and religious authority. Logically, the two offices bear analogous names, the chief being called *Žitsú* ('king of the town') and his brother *Žigí* ('priest of the town').[1] The priest is, however, addressed by another, ceremonial name, *Ndákatsa* of uncertain derivation.

The *gunnu* priest is known as *Gunnukó* (Great *gunnu*) or, more specifically, as *Ndazo*, and is addressed by that name. *Ndazo* means the 'rare man' or the 'man difficult to find', which name already indicates the unusual manner of his election. For only an individual born with a tuft of hair on the top of his head can become (and in fact must become) a *gunnu* priest. That this birthmark is rare need not be specially emphasized; during my stay in Nupe only one village in the whole country (actually Doko) had a true *Ndazo*, and he was as yet too young to officiate. In the frequent periods of interregnum the office becomes hereditary in the family of the last *Ndazo* who had the miraculous qualification, his successors cutting their hair so as to imitate the tell-tale tuft. When a true *Ndazo* is born, the man who previously took his place will train the youth in his future responsibilities, take him to all ceremonials even while he is a babe in arms, and eventually surrender the office to him. Should the *Ndazo's* family die out before

[1] The latter name means literally 'One who eats (in the sacrifice) for the town'

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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a new priest is born, the village must temporarily cease to perform the ritual altogether and join instead in the celebrations of a neighbouring, more fortunate, locality. 793

The *gunnu* priest is also in other ways elevated above common mortals. In everyday life there is little to distinguish the *Žigí* or *Ndazo* from the average Nupe peasant. The only visible distinction lies in their manner of dress; for the two priests may only wear a loincloth and a piece of cloth slung across the shoulder, never the more elaborate flowing gown and trousers of Nupe, and must always walk bareheaded. Both the simple dress and the uncovered head are also obligatory for anyone attending the rituals in question (and indeed most rituals), so that the priests are as it were always 'on duty' and constantly display their association with things sacred. In the case of the *Ndazo*, his very life is sacred: he is inviolable, and no one may lay hands on him, even if he committed some serious offence. Also, when the *Ndazo* dies, the usual funerary rites are replaced by a performance of the *gunnu*. Concerning the priestly dress, the usual explanation is that the *Žigí* and *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round the waist' (as they would if they wore trousers); but the people do not speculate further, and the *Ndazo's* birth-mark is taken to mean simply something that is rare and lucky, and attaches to the most vital part of the body, the head. Characteristically, another lucky birth-mark, once more on the head, is linguistically associated with the *gunnu*: children born in a caul are called *Ndagunnu*, 'Father *gunnu*'. [845]

Of the three fixed rituals of Doko the *gunnu* is undoubtedly the most important, representing the peak of ceremonial life and being thought of as harbouring the strongest force of *kuti*. Equally, it is the only ritual bearing so conspicuously the stamp of the miraculous. Somewhat surprisingly, the greater importance of the *gunnu* has not helped to protect it from the impact of cultural change. On the contrary, the *gunnu* is usually the first ritual to disappear or at least to lose its character of a 'fixed' ritual, surviving only as an occasional, 'movable' ceremony. Now several of the villages which abandoned the *gunnu* altogether did so when their 'born' *Ndazo* died or the family of hereditary priests became extinct. Whatever other influences may have tended to weaken the hold of the *gunnu* ritual, the difficulty of finding a successor to this unique priestship must have hastened the process; so that the link with the miraculous, as it helped to raise the cult above all others, also made it more vulnerable. 796x [77]

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

These are quickly described; for they are simple and business-like, devoid both of elaborate proceedings and complicated

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Two different rituals are again in the charge of different officials. 796x 793

Two of these are priests in the strict sense of the word—the *Ndazo* of the *gunnu*, whose office has the same miraculous connotation as elsewhere, and the hereditary priest of the *ketsá* ritual. The priestship of the remaining rituals goes with secular status, that is, with certain ranks vested in family heads and with the appropriate positions on the council of elders. Yet while the large majority of the Jebba ranks (eleven out of thirteen) are non-hereditary, being based on election and promotion, only one of these (a minor rank) entails a religious office, the rank *Ndace*, whose encumbent officiates in the *dzakó* ritual. The two hereditary ranks, on the other hand, *Ejukó* and *Tswanya*, are both linked with duties of priestship. The *Ejukó* is the guardian of the Chain of Tsoede and officiates in the corresponding ritual; he is at the same time an important member of the village council and was formerly its chief 'legal officer' as well, since the Chain of Tsoede figured prominently in the legal machinery of the country. The connection between religious and political office is even more pronounced in the case of the *Tswanya*. In the religious sphere he takes charge of the ritual *mamma*; in the secular sphere it is his privilege and duty to deputize for the (non-hereditary) village chief during an interregnum and to name the successor. In other words, he is an hereditary 'king-maker' who, as I have explained elsewhere, appears in all Nupe communities which are without hereditary chieftainship and whose investiture with a sacred office replaces the religious connotation which otherwise attaches to chieftainship itself.[1] As in Doko, then, religious and secular power are at once united and kept distinct, though in Jebba the separation is the more marked.

If the priestship of several rituals is thus linked with secular ranks, the same kind of link applies to the rituals as such. For two of these, the *gunnu* and *dzakó*, also form part of the funerary ceremonials for titled elders, being added to the rites known as 'Three Days' (after the burial) and 'Forty Days'.[2] Thus the *gunnu* is performed at the death of the chief, the *gunnu* priest, the *Tswanya* and *Ejukó*, and at the death of seven other elders; the *dzakó*, for the *Ndace* and two other elders. Only one rank is left out, that of *Kpotuŋ*, which was introduced relatively recently, having been copied from the hierarchy of ranks in the capital; being an innovation, it is also unconnected with the traditional usage.[3] When thus employed in the funerary ceremonial, the *dzakó* is greatly reduced in scale; the scale of the *gunnu* varies with the importance of the rank held by the deceased; the death of the chief, *Ndazo*, *Tswanya*, and an elder styled *Cece* commands the 796x 766

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 52–3. [2] See below, p. 122.
[3] This rank was not included in the thirteen mentioned above.

CULTS[7]

Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

794 The Ebe have a *ikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the
782 ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konú of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *nádduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsá* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[8]

794 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility, crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in
●793 times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnuhó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[9]

278 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the
789 power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–5; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–5; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[8] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[9] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–62 and *passim*.

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

God, we have come.
God, everybody has come.
This ancient thing of Tsoede
Which is lying on the ground,
It says we should bring beer.
Because of the old saying which we have heard,
Because of that we bring beer and fowl.
Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is
the special aim of the invocation].

A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
643 pous title of *Majī Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe
794 kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their
titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
642 and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated
797 the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an
external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Majī Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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5. COUNTERMEASURES

Neither the evidence which should precede the countermeasures nor these themselves are uniform or rigidly laid down; rather, there are a number of alternative procedures, employed as chance and expediency may dictate. One can, to begin with, rely on the official 'witchfinder', the *Lelu* or *Sagi*. Then there is that incontrovertible 'proof', the naming of the witch by the victim in dream or delirium, which must occur five times to be truly conclusive; but this testimony is not always applicable nor does one always wait for it. Nor yet does proof by ordeal seem indispensable, although the Nupe know two such methods. The first consists in the application of the snake-bite medicine *wasa* mentioned before, which the accused is made to drink, the belief being that a true witch would be killed by a snake. The second ordeal is administered by the masked members of the *ndakó gboyá* society, who would take the suspect woman into the bush and make her scratch the ground with her finger-nails; if after a time (left to the discretion of the inquisitors) blood comes out from under her finger-nails, this proves her to be a witch. No informant could remember a concrete case when the first ordeal was applied; while the second disappeared with the official ban on the *ndakó gboyá*.

A witch convicted by one or the other method might be warned by the village chief, perhaps also fined, and if possible ordered to repair the harm she had done; an unrepentant witch was formerly flogged and driven from the village. Several informants maintained that a witch was never killed, since this would bring the revenge of all other witches upon the community; but according to others a dangerous witch was denounced to the *Etsu* Nupe, who would hand her over to his executioners. Above all, there are various magic means whereby witches are killed or at least frightened and subdued, though several of these have disappeared in most of Nupe country and are today known from hearsay only. One such method appears to have employed the bull-roarer (called *vúgu-vúgu*;[1] another consisted in a dance called *kútúkpa* (a word denoting the clanging noise made by a galloping horse), which is said to have afflicted witches watching it with a swollen throat, so that they could not swallow or eat and must die of hunger.[2] Only

[1] I met with an amusing 'secularized' version of the bull-roarer in Katcha, where the nightwatchman of the Niger Company used it to frighten off burglars.

[2] This method, too, has in a sense been secularized. For the steps and passes of the dance and the fantastic dress worn by the dancers have been preserved in another dance, called *sorogi* (a species of tortoise), which is meant for entertainment only and is frequently performed by groups of young men touring the country after the end of the farming season.

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two deadly weapons against witches have survived. The first is private as well as casual, and consists in the anti-witchcraft *cigbe* which individuals can acquire; the second, public and ritualized, lies in the *ndakó gboyá* cult and in the activities of the society of that name. In Nupe eyes, it is the most powerful weapon of its kind, and since its inception, probably several generations ago, it seems to have overshadowed all other anti-witchcraft measures. 754x 683 794

As we know, the cult has merged with the main ritual of Nupe, the *gunnu*, where the *ndakó gboyá* masks appear during the vigil in the bush, to frighten novices, warn the youths to obey their elders, and whip offenders.[1] If in this context the apparition of *ndakó gboyá* is suggestively called 'the policeman of the *gunnu*', the 'police' duties extend to witchcraft also; for the masks reappear later, during the public phase of the ceremonial, to frighten all women, to discourage would-be witches, and to weaken, by their very presence, the evil powers of witchcraft. If the *ndakó gboyá* is thus thought of as a deterrent and preventive, it may also assume the character of punishment proper; for the masks are expected to drag the suspects into the bush, subject them to the ordeal described before, and kill the 'proved' witch—unless she pays a heavy ransom, which loophole, as we shall see, has far-reaching consequences. 754x 794

But this is only the combination of two distinct cults. It is well understood that the peculiar powers of the *gunnu* do not depend on this addition to its ceremonial, customary though it had become. And as each cult has its own specific aims, so it can, at least on occasion, be performed independently. Nor have the officiants of the *ndakó gboyá* anything to do with the officiants or the priest of the *gunnu*. Normally, in fact, the former are strangers in the village where they perform, being members of a 'secret' society represented only in a few localities and called in specially for the occasion. Furthermore, in the north and east of Nupe, where this society never established its influence, the combination of the two cults is unknown. It is true, however, that in the rest of the country popular opinion, unaware of the esoteric organization of the *ndakó gboyá*, often confuses the two.[2] It is possible that this view was encouraged by the society itself since it kept that organization in the dark. A line in the *gunnu* songs, for example, seems cleverly designed to obscure by its ambiguous meaning the relationship between the two cults. It reads—'*gunnukó u yi Gboyá*', which may mean either 'the *gunnu* priest calls the *Gboyá*'

[1] See above, p. 83.

[2] This applies especially to foreigners. Thus the Yoruba neighbours of the Nupe call the *ndakó gboyá* cult *igunnu*.

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754 (a correct statement of the fact that the secret society is called in by the *gunnu* priest), or 'the Great *gunnu* is the *Gboyá*'.

794 The full name of the cult means 'Grandfather' or 'Ancestor *Gboyá*'; the latter word is neither a personal name nor a word that has any other meaning, though it contains the recognizable root *gbo* 'to be large' (in a physical sense). The expression 'Grandfather' in this connection has no ancestral connotation but merely indicates a show of respect. The masked apparitions also command a special address or salute, namely, *nyentso sagba*, 'One who puts to flight'. The name *ndakó gboyá* is employed for the ritual performance as such, for the masks appearing in it, and for the 'spirit' the masks are thought to represent; the cult members are simply referred to as *ndakó gboyáži*, 'the *Ndakó gboyá*-ones', and their organization is called the 'society' of *ndakó gboyá*.

754 The masks of the *ndakó gboyá* are unlike any other masks used in the cults of Nigerian peoples. They bear no similarity to human
794 or animal features; each mask consists of a long tube made of white
532 cotton cloth, just wide enough for a man to stand inside, which is suspended from a wheel-shaped bamboo frame fixed to the top of a tall pole, about twelve feet in length. The man representing the spirit stands inside the cloth tube which comes down to the ground, holding the pole in his hands. He will move about with varying speed, occasionally jumping and running, and lift and lower the pole or incline it this way or that, making the cloth tube swing and sway: which motions make up the 'dance' of the *ndakó gboyá*. There are two small slits at eye-height in the cloth; but the dancer can see little through them, and depends on the help of assistants (two or four in number and known as the 'servants' or 'interpreters' of the *ndakó gboyá*), who lead him along and clear the way for him, carrying sticks to drive back the onlookers. In large ceremonials up to ten masks may be employed, though normally there will be two or three, or even one only.

754 It is always a strictly kept secret who is inside the mask. Even when you know every member of a local *ndakó gboyá* society (as I
794 did) and therefore know that one of them must be the dancer in the mask, the people will refuse to answer such questions. Nor will they agree to an informal rehearsal merely to show you the technique of the thing; for to step inside the mask is already a magic or mystic action, which requires the appropriate setting and preparations. The performer must first drink and wash himself with the *cigbe* which alone gives him the 'strength' to represent the *ndakó gboyá* and, before this, must sacrifice beer and fowl over the *cigbe* shrine and the cloth masks. Nor does the profane phrase 'to represent the *ndakó gboyá*', do justice to the situation. To begin with, the 'medicine' used by the performer is the *badúfu* kind

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which makes you 'like a witch'; once more, then, the rule holds that it needs Beelzebub to drive out Satan. Furthermore, once the performer is inside the mask he is inseparable from the thing he 'represents'; he *is* the *ndakó gboyá*, the people insist, and no longer so-and-so, whom you know and have talked to. Once during the ceremonial I offered food and drink to the 'man in the mask', suggesting that he must be in need of refreshments after his exhausting performance. My offer was ridiculed and I was told (as I had expected) that 'spirits do not eat'. Any person who has not been initiated into the *ndakó gboyá* society or has omitted the preparatory rites would be killed by the mask as soon as he entered it. The mask, of course, is just cloth, and must be cut and tailored; many masks also show patches and signs of repair. But again, once the sacrifice has been performed over them, they are no longer merely a material object, but the thing itself which they signify.

It is not easy to say what that 'thing' is. I have called the *ndakó gboyá* a spirit, partly for the sake of convenience and partly because this is the popular interpretation. But its nature is more indefinite. It is not one of the numerous *aljenúži* which people the world: it is only 'like an *aljénu*', that is, non-human, powerful in a mystical sense, normally invisible (unless embodied in the dancing mask), endowed with the same kind of voice spirits have—an inarticulate, whining falsetto, sounding 'like the wind'—and a creature of *Sokó*. Now understood like this, the *ndakó gboyá* stands apart from the whole body of Nupe belief. But to say it again, this is only the cruder, popular view. There is another, esoteric explanation, which links the *ndakó gboyá* belief more closely with the conceptual framework of Nupe religion. It is rarely offered in so many words. It was given me by the Master of the *ndakó gboyá* society when he said that the *ndakó gboyá* was not a spirit, but *asiri gboká*—a 'strong secret', that is, a knowledge or skill of a mystical and powerful kind. We remember that the same interpretation is expressed in the two legends about the origin of the *ndakó gboyá*. They do not describe it as a 'spirit', but merely as a 'secret', as something implying 'great strength', and as the knowledge of some mysterious, supernatural way of acting. They equate the *ndakó gboyá* with that principle of a mystical force, capable of being invoked and manipulated by man, which is embodied in the Nupe concept of *kuti*; indeed, in the concluding phrases of the legends it is referred to by that name.

The legends also illustrate certain other features of the *ndakó gboyá*, such as the voice of the apparition and the salute due to it. The iron rod (*sãyi*) mentioned in the second story is one of the paraphernalia of the cult; and the description of the cult in the first story as a '*kuti* of kings' bears on the important link between the

754 794 secret society and Nupe kingship. The legends, however, are silent both about the society itself and the beginnings of its organization, dealing only with the origin of the 'great secret', not with the machinery devised to exploit it. For an account of the latter we must turn to the more prosaic and rational traditions preserved in the family of the Masters of the cult. Oddly enough, in this quarter the legends are unknown; the present Master was unacquainted even with the esoteric version which, according to my informants, was taught to their forefathers when they were initiated into the society. I can only conclude that, with the growth of the purely secular (that is, political) machinery of the secret society, the men at the centre lost interest in these, to them, recondite stories. The present Master did not call them untrue; he thought that they might well be true, referring to events in other parts of the country of which he no longer had any knowledge. This was also the way he thought of the *ndakó gboyá*, as a 'secret' somehow discovered, and later put to organized use by his society: it was this 'later' phase of which he was eager to speak. I must add, finally, that in certain places on the south bank of the Niger the legends are entirely unknown. There the people hold that the *ndakó gboyá* had been among the various magic secrets which Tsoede brought to Nupe. They thus regard the anti-witchcraft cult not only as a 'cult of kings' but as bound up with the very origin of kingship.

The headship of the *ndakó gboyá* society is held in a lineage whose remembered pedigree goes back only four generations, to one Mamako Gana, a hunter of Dibo extraction.[1] He is said to have already possessed the magic of *ndakó gboyá*, to have practised it against witches, and to have taught it to others. His son, Sara Jiya, was a great traveller, and finally settled at Kusogi Danci, a small village on the river. When Masaba, the younger brother of the first Fulani Emir of Nupe, rebelled against his elder brother and founded his rival kingdom south of the Niger (1838), he met Sara Jiya and, so it is said, was greatly impressed by his magic powers. Recognizing the importance and value of the *ndakó gboyá* cult, Masaba made its master his servant and gave him the most appropriate title *Maji Dodo*, 'Master of the Terrible'. After Sara Jiya's death, when Masaba had become *Etsu* Nupe in Bida, he made one of Sara Jiya's pupils the new *Maji Dodo*, a certain Ndasaba, a Bida man and a diviner and barber-doctor by trade. After the latter's death the title reverted to Sara Jiya's sons, whom Masaba called to the capital; four of the six sons obeyed the

[1] The Dibo sub-tribe of Nupe occupies the easternmost district of the country. The descendants of Mamako Gana still wear the facial marks of the Dibo sub-tribe.

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754 794 summons and settled in a hamlet near Bida, which they called Kusogi, in memory of their old home. When the then *Maji Dodo* died, the eldest of the four brothers succeeded to the office, receiving his title at the hands of *Etsu* Abubakari. He was in turn succeeded by his son, Yizufu, the present *Maji Dodo* (and my informant), who was appointed by *Etsu* Bello (d. 1926).[1]

The society itself appears to be only some eighty years old. It was only during Masaba's reign in Bida (1860–73) that the Masters began to accept novices and to train initiates from outside their lineage, thus transforming a kinship-bound observance into a cult society. The membership spread indirectly as well, each man initiated by the Master in turn initiating his own kinsmen and sometimes also strangers from other villages. Each of the groups so founded acts in a body on all ritual occasions, thus forming a local cell or 'lodge' of the society. I listed eight lodges north of the Niger, all founded by men initiated in Kusogi; they are widely dispersed through the country, being found, for example, in Sakpe and Shebe in the centre of Nupe Emirate, in Epa in the extreme west, and in Esã in the north; many more are strung along the south bank of the river. The founders and heads of lodges are lesser Masters, being called the *nũsaẽ* ('elders') of the society while the men whom they have initiated are their *bara* (dependents or servants).

Neither the headship of lodges nor ordinary membership are simply hereditary; the sons or younger brothers of deceased members (the usual heirs) must be specially initiated by the head of the lodge, while his prospective successors must be formally accepted by the Master. Ordinary members, whose initiation was second-hand, are not permitted to make further proselytes. Nor could they do so since the indispensable cult paraphernalia are in the possession only of the Elders, who received them at their own initiation. The distinction between the two grades is somewhat blurred by the factor of kinship; for the sons or brothers of the Elder, who share his house (which contains the paraphernalia) and will one day succeed him, are by these facts placed on a slightly different footing from ordinary initiates, who cannot claim such privileged intimacy. For the Master of the society, however, this

[1] There is a separate branch, under its own Master, at the original Kusogi. It was called into being by the first *Etsu* of Patigi, the small Emirate on the south bank of the Niger which the British Government granted to the dispossessed original Nupe dynasty. The *Etsu* felt that he needed a *Maji Dodo* of his own and appointed one of the two sons of Sara Jiya who had stayed behind when their brothers emigrated to Bida. The male line becoming extinct, the office later went to a sister's son, who had, however, to be initiated by the Bida Master. The latter is, in all other respects as well, regarded as the superior and true head of the cult.

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distinction does not exist; for him, every member of the cult alike is his 'child' or his 'father's child'.

The procedure of initiation was described to me as follows. The candidate presents himself to the Master or Elder, bringing with him a gift of beer and fowls, intended for the sacrifice which will conclude his initiation. He stays for ten days, having 'lessons' every day. He is taught the procedure of the ceremonial, the ways of manipulating the mask, the special dance steps and drum rhythms, and the legend of the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] He also learns a number of ritual rules: that he must not eat snakes, lest his children will 'never walk'; that he must refrain from sexual intercourse for a week before performing the *ndakó gboyá*; and how to use the medicine which is to give him 'strength' for the performance. If the novice is to become an Elder or the founder of a new lodge, he will also be taught the manner of sacrificing beer and fowl over the cult objects and the prayer formula—'Iron rod, do not permit anyone to do evil things. Tsoede, may he give us children. The children we have, and our wives, God may give them health.' The novice is repeatedly examined, and beaten with a twig if he makes mistakes. Should he prove incapable of learning his 'lessons' after ten days, he would be dismissed as a hopeless case. Normally, the period of tuition proper will now be at an end, and the final sacrifice will be performed jointly by master and pupil. For three years afterwards the novice will frequently visit his master, now merely to 'salute' him, bringing a gift of five kolanuts each time. During this period the novice will join in every performance of the *ndakó gboyá* arranged by his master, being lent a mask for the occasion. When the three years are over, the novice becomes a fully fledged member of the society; upon a final payment he receives a mask of his own, and will henceforth be able to perform the *ndakó gboyá* independently, though he would still need the help of his master, who alone owns the required *cigbe*. Only if the novice becomes the founder of a new lodge, will he receive the 'medicine' itself, in its usual decorated earthen vessel, together with two other cult objects, a number of iron rods with small bells on the top (called *sãyi*) and a small iron chain, described as a piece of the 'Chain of Tsoede'. We note this use of the royal emblem; it fittingly appears in a cult protected by royalty, including an invocation of the ancestor king in its ritual, and called a '*kuti* of kings' in the legends describing its origin. Initiation into the society is expensive, especially for the prospective founders of lodges. The grandfather of one of my informants, for example, paid the equivalent of £20 (or twice the customary

[1] In the branches of the society unfamiliar with the legend, this is replaced (quite consistently) by the story of Tsoede (see above, p. 192).

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brideprice). Since few can afford the high fee, the membership, at least in the higher grade, is perforce restricted. 754x

As will have been seen, the organization of the *ndakó gboyá* society shares certain features with that other 'closed society', the order of the *cigbeciži*. I knew of no case, incidentally, in which the same individual belonged to both. But there are certain relevant differences. The *ndakó gboyá* society rests upon a network of lodges and centres of ritual collaboration, not upon a number of scattered individuals; it is much more highly centralized as well as closely knit; and its growth is restricted not only by the high initiation fees but also by the rule, unknown among the medicine-men, that not every member can recruit new ones. It is interesting that no new initiations have taken place in the lifetime of the present generation. My informants could offer no explanation for this. The spread of Islam is certainly not responsible: the various Masters received their rank from Moslem Emirs, and the present incumbents, at least, consider themselves good Mohammedans.[1] Also, the increasing wealth of the country should have made entry into the *ndakó gboyá* easier, not more difficult. I suspect that the Masters of the society, or perhaps their royal protectors, stopped further recruitment precisely in order to prevent the society from growing too large and unwieldy; for as we shall see, its very power, its efficiency under centralized control no less than its financial success, would seem to depend on the smallness of the group which shares in the secret activities. 794

These activities fall into three groups. The first, of more personal character, concerns only the heads of lodges and follows the familiar pattern of ritual observances entailed in the 'ownership' of 'Great *cigbe*' or of a *kuti* priestship. Thus the head of the lodge will perform all his ancestral sacrifices over the *cigbe* vessel and the other cult objects, which are always kept together in a special hut. He performs a similar sacrifice also as a fixed annual rite (in the 7th or 12th month), now on behalf of the local community, to ensure its well-being and the fertility of the womenfolk. On such occasions one mask will also appear and dance in the village, which performance has no bearing on witchcraft or the punishment of witches. The funerary rites for the Elder of the lodge again include this sacrifice and masked dance.

The second group of activities consists in the performance of the masked dance upon request, that is, when the society is called in by some village in the area, either because it is celebrating the annual *gunnu* or because it feels itself threatened by witches. It is on such occasions that the masks will cleanse the village of witchcraft by 'frightening' the women or bringing an individual witch

[1] The tiny hamlet of Kusogi, for example, includes a small mosque.

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to justice. Let me here say a few words about the secrecy of the proceedings. I have called the *ndakó gboyá* organization a 'secret society'. It is clear, however, that the existence of the society is no secret; everyone knows about it, and everyone has at one time or other seen it in action. Nor is there any mystery about the localities which harbour the lodges. But certain weighty secrets remain: the rules and observances of the *ndakó gboyá*; the training of the adepts; the very source of their power; and, above all, the identity of the masked actors. When a village chief or *gunnu* priest summons the members of a lodge he addresses himself only to the head, and does not know whom the latter will choose for the masked dance; the rest of the people may not even know the master of the lodge, and would certainly not know his helpers or 'servants'. This mystery becomes both deeper and more formidable when the masks appear uninvited and unannounced: this is the final group of activities of the cult members, which makes them a 'secret society' in the full sense of the word.

For it seems that the members of a lodge also made a habit of touring all the neighbouring districts, unexpectedly appearing in the various villages, on the pretext that these had to be 'cleansed of witchcraft'. They would scare the women and threaten 'witches', demanding a heavy ransom before they let them go, and a heavier ransom still (up to £100) before they would leave the village. Often, the villagers had to appeal to the *Etsu*, so that he might finally order the *Majī Dodo* to recall his 'children'. No one doubted that both the Master of the society and its royal protector connived in these extortions; equally, they shared in the proceeds, two-thirds of which went to the society and its Master, and one-third to the *Etsu*. Sometimes, too, the *Majī Dodo* would take the initiative, requesting the *Etsu's* authority (never refused) to send his agents to a 'witchcraft infested' district. Or the *Etsu* himself might mobilize this *kuti* of kings, ordering a 'great' *ndakó gboyá*, staged by all the lodges of the country together, with very similar results. Traditionally, it is claimed, these performances by royal request never took place in Bida; nor was there any pretext for it since the *Lelu* or *Sagi* of the city amply protected its people from the threats of witchcraft. Whether this rule was meant to uphold the 'king's peace' in the capital or to protect its wealthy citizens from the greed of the secret society, we cannot decide. However this may be, the rule certainly no longer applied under *Etsu* Bello, under whom the abuses of the *ndakó gboyá* remained altogether unchecked.

My information on this point is supported, not only by official reports, but also by the testimony of the present *Majī Dodo*, who held office then and frankly admitted the whole story, naively

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adding that 'the *ndakó gboyá* people were doing beautifully'. 754X When, in the peace celebrations of 1918, the Nigerian Government 794 encouraged the people throughout the territory to perform their tribal ceremonials and festivities, *Etsu* Bello ordered a 'great' *ndakó gboyá*, with twenty masks, to be staged in Bida. Afterwards, the cult society went 'on tour' through the districts, in the customary way. According to the *Majī Dodo*, every village asked for a visit, a great fear of witchcraft suddenly sweeping the country. Invited or not, the *ndakó gboyá* people continued their tour for a whole year, sucking the country dry and collecting vast sums. A final performance, again ordered by *Etsu* Bello, took place in Bida in 1921; it lasted for a whole day and ended once more in a prolonged and profitable 'tour' of the country. This time the effects were even more disastrous; complaints began to reach the Administration, many villages were unable to pay their tax, while some even emigrated to other parts. At last Government stepped in and banned all further performances.

The proscription of the *ndakó gboyá* only applies to Bida Emirate, not to the Nupe districts south of the Niger which lie in a different Province. There the *ndakó gboyá* society is still active, though it seems to have reformed its character, and a memorable performance, vividly remembered, took place in Ilorin in the Jubilee year 1935. It is remembered especially because it demonstrated the power of the *ndakó gboyá*; a Yoruba man who scoffed at the masks and refused to take off his cap (as all onlookers must do) is said to have at once been 'struck down' and killed. Nor is the prohibition taken literally in the smaller, out-of-the-way villages, where the masked dance is still performed, if without its witch-hunting aspects. Let me here insert the description of such a performance.

6. A NDAKÓ GBOYÁ CEREMONIAL

I saw it in October 1934 (the 7th month in Nupe counting) 794 at Kutigi, where it was staged by men from Shebe, a *ndakó gboyá* lodge a few miles away. The performance represented the annual ceremonial of the Shebe lodge, repeated in Kutigi (where I had been staying) in my honour: or so it was claimed.[1] I need not describe the preparatory sacrifice and the other ritual preparations which took place in Shebe, in the house of the Elder. The public

[1] I later found that this was not quite correct. My presence in Kutigi was regarded merely as a convenient pretext (and protection) for the resumption of the customary 'tours' of the *ndakó gboyá* people. Apart from a perfunctory 'salute' at the beginning of the ceremonial, neither the dancers nor the public took much notice of me, which I for one was glad to observe.

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794 performance began at dawn, when one of the masks suddenly appeared in the streets of Kutigi, making its presence known by its shrill falsetto scream. There were only two masks in this performance; but they were never seen together, one disappearing in the bush before the other appeared from some unexpected quarter, so that this impression of a Nupe onlooker was not so far off the mark—'the masks are numberless: they spring from the ground and are swallowed by the ground'. Later in the morning, people began to appear in the streets and two drummers took their position on the market place. Soon the market place was crowded with men, women, and children. The drummers were drumming and singing, and the mask began to dance, now and again rushing at the crowd, which would disperse with shrieks of fear and sometimes with laughter; but the laughter was forced and nervous, and certainly did not stop the people from running away. The younger women, especially, would escape to the nearest house, to hide in the doorway. The masked dancer always appeared accompanied by two 'servants', who were guiding his steps, made room for him with the help of big sticks they carried, and also acted as his 'interpreters' when, later on, the chief and other notables joined the crowd; the 'servants' would 'translate' the respectful salutes of the newcomers to the 'spirit', and the latter's shrieks and weird noises to the audience. These spirit messages were always the same and pretty nondescript; they assured the people that God would give health to the community and children to the women, and would keep evil from the village.

An hour or two later the gathering assumed a more definite shape, having until then moved this way and that in an irregular and amorphous fashion. Also, more firmly arranged in distinct groups and made to take an active part, the crowd was losing its earlier nervousness and fear. Old men were playing the part of organizers and ushers, forming the onlookers into a large circle, men on one side, women and children on the other, the mask and the drummers in the centre. The younger women were clapping hands, hesitatingly at first, an old woman here and there indicating the rhythm with her hands high in the air. Finally, both men and women started to sing. A number of old women from Shebe formed a prominent group, leading in the singing and shaking gourd rattles in rhythm. Suddenly an old woman, the *Sagi* of Kutigi, stepped into the middle of the circle, and began to dance opposite the mask. She was followed by two of the Shebe women, who were shaking their rattles, singing as though addressing the mask, and occasionally breaking into a long-drawn, high-pitched shriek. The mask continued to dance inside the circle, with varying speed, now calmly, now excitedly. From time to time

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the servants, as though listening to the mask and translating its wishes, would order the drummers to change the rhythm; or the mask, silent until then, would stop and talk some gibberish in a falsetto voice, which meant another 'message' or salute, duly translated by the interpreters. Or finally, the mask would set out on a sudden excursion, breaking through the circle, run down a side-street and temporarily disappear. 794

The mood of the gathering grew more and more excited until, about noon, just when it seemed that the excitement would reach fever pitch, there was a sudden hush. The drumming paused, as did the dancing and singing. The mask stood still, flanked by the 'servants', and a number of old women walked up to it and, on their knees, with bent head, saluted the mask. They handed small gifts of money to the 'servants', which were meant to buy the 'protection of the *ndakó gboyá*'. (This, I was told, was only a token payment: formerly heavy sums were paid in the same fashion.) Soon afterwards the mask disappeared, now without returning, and the pause turned into a midday break, when everyone went home. At about 3 o'clock the mask reappeared on the market place, which soon filled with people, and the proceedings of the morning were resumed. The drumming and dancing went on into the night, to the light of torches and hurricane lamps, uninterrupted even by a gathering thunderstorm. At about 9 o'clock the mask danced out of the circle and disappeared in the dark, not to return. 'You see', a bystander pointed out, 'how it is swallowed up by the ground'.

The crowd of onlookers included not only every soul in Kutigi, among them all the local notables and the Fulani District Head (a 'royal prince' from Bida), the contingent from Shebe, but also many strangers who had learned of the forthcoming performance. The attitude of the crowd was an odd mixture of enjoyment and fear. Of the former there could be no doubt; for a long time afterwards people were talking about the 'nice' and 'beautiful' performance as though they were commenting on an ordinary festivity, and the 'servants' of the mask several times pressed me to say whether the '*ndakó gboyá* had pleased me'. But there was no question either of the fear. It was clearly voiced already in the women's songs; for unlike many ceremonial songs of Nupe, those sung at the *ndakó gboyá* are far from nondescript or ambiguous. 794 781 794 539 781

(1)

One does not call him friend
When he comes to stay in the bush:
A friend (he) is when he leaves.

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(2)

794 We are saying—'A stranger has come (in the night)'
539 He is greater than the chief.
781 We are saying—'being greater than the chief,
May he go away when day comes.'

(3)

We are desiring the cloth (mask)
Which covers the Great One.
God is in front,
He is in the back (i.e. being everywhere and all-powerful, God will protect us).

794 The attitude towards the *ndakó gboyá* could not be better
781 expressed: he is a 'friend' only when he leaves, a powerful 'stranger' whom one wishes to see gone; and while one must invoke the secret of the 'cloth', it is yet so terrifying that the thought of God alone gives comfort. But let me stress that this is not merely the unthinking expression of conventional sentiments; the fear and awe referred to in the songs were clearly visible even in this ceremonial, devoid though it was of the more sinister implications of witch-hunting and punishment. When the old women presented their gifts of a few pennies to the mask, they were acting genuinely and in all humbleness; and any person whom the mask approached, man or woman, was as genuinely terrified. Men whom I knew to be sophisticated and 'enlightened', such as the local dispenser and one of my servants, ran and hid behind a hedge when the mask suddenly towered over them.

794 Nor can there be any doubt but that the people believe in the magic effects of the ceremonial. Even after the mild version I happened to see I heard the remark that the village was now clear of witchcraft. This attitude does not really conflict with the well-known extortions practised by the *ndakó gboyá* society; the admission of the abuses is one thing, and the belief in the anti-witchcraft cult quite another. Thus the Government's ban of the *ndakó gboyá* was thought regrettable if indeed not disastrous; everywhere the people spoke with envy of their cousins in Patigi who had kept their *ndakó gboyá* and hence preserved 'the only sure protection against witchcraft'. Often have I been told that in the rest of Nupe there was now no means of fighting witches, and no protection 'save God', who, as we know, is inscrutable, idle, 'far away'.

To be sure, even the *ndakó gboyá* is not a full protection. Though it may frighten witches and temporarily 'cleanse' a community, it cannot exterminate witchcraft. For not only must the cere-

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monial be repeated, at least year by year, but each performance does no more than restrain the evil machination of witches. When I asked if the *ndakó gboyá* society, given its former power, could suppress witchcraft altogether, the answer was invariably the same: '*u jī táimako*', 'it would help'. As in the belief in the *Lẹlu*, the Nupe expect their anti-witchcraft magic only to keep down witchcraft, 'so that it would not be too bad'. If the Nupe knew our saying about poverty they would no doubt say that witchcraft, like the poor, will always be with us; all man can hope to do is to keep it within reasonable bounds. 794

7. ON THE MEANING OF WITCHCRAFT

The discussion has led us back to a question previously raised—Why should there be this stubborn belief in witchcraft? I am not now referring to the ascription of witchcraft to women or to particular individuals and personalities, but to the notion of witchcraft as such which underlies these specific ascriptions, that is, to the basic premiss that some mystic power of evil is simply given and ultimately ineradicable. As regards the specific ascription of witchcraft in Nupe thought, we explained it as a projection or displacement of hatreds and aggressive desires from the sphere of rational social life into one mystically sanctioned. We may now add that, through such projection and displacement, the doctrine of witchcraft both permits anxieties to become articulate (if in fantasy language) and shows them an outlet, or scapegoat. Other scholars have viewed witchcraft beliefs in much the same light.[1] And they would agree also with this calculation of the 'gain and cost of witchcraft' (to quote Kluckhohn's suggestive phrase). The individual gains inasmuch as he is shown a legitimate outlet for his frustrations and tensions, legitimate since the society has licensed the aggressive talk and action through which the frustration and tension are relieved or 'ab-reacted' (as psychiatrists would say). And society gains inasmuch as the 'ab-reaction' is not random but canalized; indeed, society utilizes the very mode of ab-reaction in turning it into an attack upon behaviour and character traits held undesirable. 754x 182

None of these explanations, however, touches upon that premiss of 'witchcraft as such'. The former concern, essentially, the social canalization of anxieties, frustrations, tensions, hatreds, into variants of the belief in witchcraft. And these will depend on the make-up of the given society or culture: while in Nupe certain features of the social structure seem to be the determinants, in

[1] See C. Kluckhohn and D. Leighton, *The Navaho*, 1946, pp. 172–81.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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it has a number of officials of varying rank) and is constantly enlarged through the inclusion of 'cured' patients and of those 'normal' individuals who have been successful in soliciting the 'spirit possession'.

There is no secrecy about the cult and its dance performances; they are staged at frequent intervals, both in private houses and in public, and are always watched by interested Nupe crowds. But no Nupe will join in the dances or has ever entered the society. Note that the cult thus rejected revolves upon a 'treatment' of mental derangements, of diseases, that is, for which Nupe therapeutic art admits to have no reliable remedy. Yet, though always ready to experiment with new cures, neither the Nupe public nor the medicine experts have been persuaded by the *bori*. Admittedly, the *bori* is not simply another cure or remedy: it involves the wholly strange experience of auto-suggestion and hysterical abandonment or ecstasis. It equally involves, on the intellectual plane, the acceptance of new premisses (the detailed spirit universe). But as we shall see from our next example, a somewhat similar intellectual readjustment did in fact occur in the case of another alien cult and 'cure'.

(ii) *The Sogba Cult*

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This cult occurs among a section of the Gwari who call themselves Gwari-Basa and live near Wushishi, to the north of Nupe, and also in a number of villages belonging to the conquered, Nupeized parts of Gwari country. Its name, *sogba*, means 'lightning', both in Gwari and Nupe. The cult is widely known also in other parts of Nupe country, and is everywhere regarded as alien, in spite of certain obvious 'Nupeisms'.[1] The name for the hereditary priest, for example, is *Žigí*, while the Gwari priests bear different names, and the whole cult is called a *kuti*, which is once more not Gwari nomenclature. In its more elaborate form the *sogba* cult culminates in an annual communal ceremony, fixed for the 2nd or 7th month, at which the men sacrifice a dog in great secrecy and the women sing and dance, carrying iron rods with bells closely resembling the *sāyi* of the *ndakó gboyá*.[2] The cult further includes a small-scale ritual of the movable type, performed by the priest at the request of clients, both fellow villagers and strangers.

These *ad hoc* ministrations are invoked for one of two reasons,

[1] It is not certain that the cult is in fact of Gwari origin; according to some informants it came originally from Yagba (a southern section of the Yoruba), and has been brought to Gwari and Nupe by immigrants from that country.

[2] This annual ritual was absent in the place I visited, Wushishi, its sketchy description being derived from verbal information only. The account that follows, however, is based on direct observation.

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either to procure the fertility of childless women or to bring about the punishment of offenders, especially of thieves, whose identity is unknown. In either event a small payment in kolanuts and money is made to the priest. The ritual involves the use of a special cult object unknown in the rest of Nupe; it consists of a forked wooden post, cut from a certain tree in such a manner that it resembles a 'tree cut in two by lightning' and planted in the ground in the priest's house, either inside a hut or in the open. Around the foot of the post there are a number of flat, black, polished stones which are described as 'thunderbolts' (*sogba* or *sokógba*). Nothing is known about the origin of the stones save that some had been collected by the grandfather of the present priest and others inherited from more distant ancestors. The priest also owns a few of the bell-rods mentioned before and a *cigbe* shrine containing a nameless 'medicine'.

The client is made to sit in a hut away from the scene of the actual rite, which is executed by the priest and two assistants (his sons or brothers). The priest crouches in front of the forked post, his assistants standing on his right and left, each gripping one of the branches of the fork. The priest pours a little beer on the 'thunderbolts' and on the ground, and briefly and informally invokes the *kuti*, explaining the nature of the request. The operative phrase is—'*Sogba*, may the woman bear a child', or—'*Sogba*, may the evil person (for example, the thief) be killed'. If the aim of the rite is to procure childbirth, the priest afterwards goes to the woman, touches her with one of the bell-rods and gives her a little of the *cigbe*, which she must drink daily for four days. The barren woman will then hope to bear a child; and the person who had suffered injury at the hands of an unknown culprit will be assured that the latter will be killed by lightning—not at once or within a definite period, but surely some time in the future. The latter notion bears on a final duty of the *sogba* priest, which is to bury all persons killed by lightning and to perform the appropriate rites for these victims of divine punishment.

The children born after the intercession of the *kuti sogba* are tied to the cult for life. Immediately after the birth of the child the *Žigí* must be informed, so that he may in turn 'inform the *kuti*' by means of another sacrifice. Afterwards the *Žigí* presents the infant with a special charm in the form of a tiny dagger, which the child (and later the grown person) must always wear around the neck. Invariably, the child is given the name *Sogba*, and is generally referred to as *egi sogba*, 'child of *Sogba*'. If such a child falls ill, his parents will seek help, not from some other *kuti* or from professional medicine-men, but again from the *Žigí*, who does not charge for this further assistance: the child thus remains

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the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

N 771 177

So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

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At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

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The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

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24. The appearance of the *ndakó gboyá*

25. *Bori* dance of the Hausa

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28. Mask of the 'Great *elo*'

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29. Dancer at the Bida *salla* with headdress modelled on the *elo* mask

[p. 230 (A)]

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VIII

ISLAM IN NUPE

I. THE CONVERSION TO ISLAM

794 If the pagan religions surrounding Nupe lack the features essential to complete conversion, Islam has them all. It is a proselytizing and super-national creed; it is embodied in a church; it provides for the requisite tuition and for special procedures of admission; also, the conversion to the new, non-tribal, religion went together with a significant restructuring of the society so converted.

794 The historical background of the Islamization of Nupe is fairly clear. According to Nupe tradition, the fifteenth king after the 173 mythical Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned about 1770, was the first to adopt Islam. But the names of even earlier rulers seem to indicate Mohammedan influence (Abdu Waliyi, 1679–1700, Ibrahim, 1713–17, Abubakari Kolo, 1742–6). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, under Etsu Ma'azū, the impact of Islam had gained both in strength and purpose. It was then that Mallam Dendo came to Nupe as an emissary of the Fulani Emir of Gwando, entrusted with the double task of spreading Islam and of paving the way for the Fulani conquest, which was itself a phase in the Holy War that had been raised in the north of Nigeria. Even before Mallam Dendo's arrival, apparently, it had become customary to include mallams among the court officials of the Nupe kings, as diviners, chaplains, and advisers on matters spiritual and secular. Dendo filled this role with great efficiency, so great that he soon became the actual ruler of the kingdom. Aided by other mallams and agents of the new regime, and by a mercenary army officered by Mohammedans, he effected the overthrow of the old dynasty and turned Nupe kingdom into a vassal state of the Fulani Empire whose supreme head, the Emir of Sokoto, styled himself *Sarkin Muslmi*—'King of the Moslems'. From then onwards, Islam became the official religion, not only of royalty, but of the state, spreading through all the channels of bureaucracy, to the craft 794 guilds and merchants, and along the main trade routes of the country. Though its firmest hold is still upon the capital it has

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reached also the peasantry in the districts and some of the riverain population.

From the beginning, then, Islamization in Nupe was bound up with political interests and represented a change 'from above'. During the long-drawn internal wars which accompanied the Fulani rise to power acceptance of Islam meant identifying oneself with the new regime. Even today Islam stands for some such identification, with the powers that be, with the social élite, and implicitly with the culture that grew up in the capital where that power is centred and the élite resides. Islam thus added to the unification of the conquest-state, extending the area of a common culture over a population otherwise unified only by political means. More precisely, it transformed a mere holding-together, ultimately by coercion, into a belonging-together—the conscious belonging-together that goes with a shared creed.

This twin machinery of unification, political and religious, was not an entirely new thing. When the Fulani established their rule over Nupe they did so over a society itself held together essentially by political means. For though the older Nupe kingdom had grown from within the Nupe tribe and largely coincided with it, it did not rest on 'tribal' solidarity or unity alone. Rather, the political unity of the kingdom was superimposed upon heterogeneous tribal sections, autonomous communities, and a population bound to widely diverse religious practices. So that on this level already the state had to create its own religious supports. The emblems of the ancestor king Tsoede and the myths and rituals associated with his person stand in this sense for the kingdom and its overriding unity; much as the 'state church' of Islam stands for Fulani rule. But there are these differences. Islam, of course, is a religion in its own right, and one open to any country or regime; while the religious observances surrounding Nupe kingship derived their sacred import only from this association and have no meaning outside the political or national setting. The 'royal cults' and myths, therefore, specifically buttressed sovereignty and tied the population to the institution of kingship; Islam does so only incidentally and indirectly, through being the faith of sovereign and ruling class. Finally, the royal cults were merely added to the series of rituals peculiar to the various communities and tribal sections; their diverse religious life was left intact, being only made to include some observance expressive of the new 'belonging-together'. Islam supersedes all the diverse beliefs and practices; it makes proselytes, not scattered cult members, and involves complete identification, not merely the acceptance of tokens of identity.

These contrasts reflect both the different potentialities of Islam

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and of the pagan cults, and the different conditions in which the religious unification occurred, here following upon an alien domination, and there buttressing an indigenous kingdom still 'tribal' in many respects. It is difficult to draw any general conclusion from this fortuitous combination of two sets of factors. It may seem suggestive that the alien conquest and the indigenous state employed religion in radically different ways. But then, the particular employment of religion in support of the alien conquest also accorded with the potentialities of the religion professed by the conquerors. In other words, the alien ruling group happened to carry with it a creed which, being proselytizing and non-tribal, seems to have offered precisely the support their regime demanded; and this being so, it is futile to speculate on the kind of situation that would have arisen had the conquerors not professed such a suitable creed. Indeed, without the impetus of Islam the whole conquest would probably not have taken place or taken that particular form. We may point out two things, however.

The Islamization of the country is far from complete, both in that it reached only a portion of the population and in that it often remained superficial. Thus Islam, far from superseding the indigenous ceremonials, often merely furnished new, additional ones. The new ceremonials stand for a common cult, no more; and this in turn stands for a new unity, of the Mohammedan regime and the conquest-state: but it stands for it only as another 'token of identity'. So that the regime based on conquest is still employing the same religious support which characterized the indigenous kingdom. If this means that the potentialities of Islam have not (or not yet) been fully utilized, in other respects they required correction. For Islam points beyond the state which may adopt it for its church; for the Nupe, it means conversion to a creed uniting a vast population in Nigeria and West Africa (though few Nupe would think of Islam as a world religion). Also, as we have said, this creed of a ruling class lacks the explicit reference to sovereignty which the pagan 'royal cults' possessed. Thus, to serve as a buttress of State and Throne', the broad conception of Islam needed some narrowing down and its practice some remodelling. As we shall see this has indeed been achieved.

Let me first say a few words about the motives which induced individuals and whole communities in Nupe to embrace the new faith. The Fulani did not resort to mass conversions imposed by force. But the prestige value implicit in this creed of a ruling class was [illegible]ly one of its inducements. It offered, besides, two more [illegible]ic material advantages. First, conversion to Islam promised safety from slavery; secondly, the patronage of nobility, which peasants and craftsmen would seek for economic reasons as well

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as to secure legal protection, involved accepting the religion of the rulers.[1] The rough and ready conversions which were the result cannot have involved any elaborate rules of spiritual preparation. Indeed, during the early Fulani regime, there were no such rules, though there was a set procedure. A man declaring to his chosen patron, not to any member of the clergy, that he wished to become a Mohammedan, and the gift, in return, of a turban and sword, sealed at once the conversion and the grant of patronage. Today, the procedure is, at least in theory, a little more elaborate and less worldly. The would-be convert is supposed to turn to a mallam for the necessary tuition, which is brief and superficial, consisting only in memorizing a few *surât* of the Qoran. In due course, he will make the declaration of faith (that is, speak the first *surah*) during the service in the mosque, after which he can don a turban, the visible sign of the accomplished conversion. A few older men I met had in fact undergone this procedure. But nowadays most adults as it were slip into Islam; they simply decide to attend the mosque (however irregularly), to perform the prescribed observances (however perfunctorily), and to exchange the indigenous phrygian caps for turbans. They may, however, seek tuition afterwards, many mallams having such 'self-made' Mohammedans among their pupils. The younger people professing Islam have mostly grown up in that faith; many received tuition in a Qoran school in their youth; others merely had parents who, in spite of their own pagan beliefs, arranged for their children a birth and naming ceremony in Mohammedan style.

The observances followed by the Nupe Mohammedans are as simple and liberal as is the procedure of conversion. The five basic duties of Islam—bearing witness to the One God; reciting the five daily prayers (*salât*); giving alms; observing the Fast (Ramadhan); and making the pilgrimage to Mecca—are, for most Nupe, reduced to two. When you ask a Nupe what makes a Mohammedan, the answer is invariably this—*jĩ salla* (i.e., saying the daily prayers) and keeping the Fast. The declaration of faith in One God has slipped into the background of things taken for granted. This is not unnatural; since the traditional belief of the Nupe knows one deity only, as abstract and remote as the God of Islam, the testimony to His uniqueness strikes no one as a point of great importance. Nor are the Nupe greatly exercised over the finer theological distinctions between *Sokó* and *Allah*; mostly they regard them as two names for the same being. The giving of alms (*sádaka*) is, as we know, embodied in numerous institutional occasions; but it is regarded merely as a desirable thing, not as an obligation in its own right, deserving to be listed among the

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 142–3.

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794 'foundations' of the faith. The pilgrimage to Mecca does not even fall under the heading of desirables; at least, it is desirable only in a very abstract and remote sense, the whole notion being, for most Nupe, utterly unreal and impracticable.[1]

The duties just discussed are only as it were minimum obligations, referring to the explicit practical tasks incumbent upon Moslems. In addition, there is the whole body of learning, theological and more general, that goes with this creed the very first steps of which concern scholarship, reading, writing, and knowledge of the 'book'. Furthermore, Islam is a way of life—*sunna*—no less than a doctrine; as such, it bears on kinship rules, the position of women, ethics, and law; on art and forms of recreation; and on the attitude towards other creeds.

2. DAILY WORSHIP

Yet even the basic, 'minimum', duties represent a mode of worship, and hence a 'way of life', utterly novel to people reared in traditional Nupe culture. The prayers in an alien tongue, which must be memorized and repeated in word-perfect fashion, have nothing in common with the variable and informal addresses of the deity typical of the Nupe ceremonials. This is true equally of the whole notion of daily prayers, that is, of a routine of worship pervading workaday life and not restricted to rare festive occasions or times of need and anxiety. The worship inside buildings is similarly unprecedented; and so is the idea of individual worship in the place of group ceremonial. Even the gatherings at the mosque on Fridays or festive days represent only the massed worship of so-and-so many separate individuals, not a collective act, resting on collaboration and a division of tasks, such as the Nupe know. It is true that most Islamic countries possess orders or sects (*tariqa*) whose rules of worship aim at overcoming this separateness of individual devotions. These are turned into a collective response in which inter-stimulation has full play and which may reach a state of frenzy through the endless repetition in unison of prayer formulæ, through prescribed movements of the body, or with the help of music and dancing. But the self-abandonment of these practices (*zikr*) and their aim of achieving a mystic union of worshipper and deity seem alike alien to the mood of Nupe religious ceremonial. Certainly, neither the religious orders nor their collective acts of devotion have influenced Moslem worship in Nupe.

[1] Significantly, among the many hundreds of Nigerians I encountered in the Sudan and on the Red Sea coast, at varying stages of their pilgrimage, I met only two Nupe men. And in the whole of Nupe country, there were, during my stay, only three returned pilgrims, two of whom were of Fulani extraction.

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Finally, the character of the Moslem priesthood has no counterpart in Nupe. Strictly speaking, Islam has no priesthood; any person of sufficient scholarly standing can hold services or administer the religious rites, though it is common for selected individuals to become the officiants (*Imam*, *Liman* in Nupe) in particular mosques and for the head of the clergy to be appointed or confirmed by the sovereign of the country. Often, too, these appointments stay in the same family, if only incidentally. But normally, there is no trace in Mohammedan priestship of rigidly hereditary tenure, nor of a 'miraculous birth' or similar mystical qualifications. Again, in other Islamic countries the widespread cults of holy men, or holy families, descended from saints or from the kin of the Prophet, have superseded the more prosaic, ordinary priestship. These ideas are once more absent in Nupe, though there is one significant exception. For around the historical and political figure of Mallam Dendo something like saint worship has sprung up. A mosque erected over his grave has become almost a place of pilgrimage, at least for the Fulani aristocracy; and stories of a legendary character about his life and exploits are current throughout the country. The Arabic name for such holy leaders, *sayyid*, is unknown to the Nupe; but they have coined a new word for their one saint—*Mankó*, 'Great Mallam'.

These various divergences have to some extent been resolved by Nupe-izing the orthodox Moslem practices. A minor instance are the open-air mosques found in many smaller or half-pagan villages. They consist of a ring of stones laid out in the open usually under a shady tree. This simple arrangement does not reflect only the simple needs of a small congregation, or its rational desire to economize; even a small congregation could build a mud-hut of the usual type and call it a mosque. Rather, the arrangement seems to indicate also some perseverance in the old manner of worship, which disappears only when Islam is more firmly rooted. The mosques, of whatever kind, introduced a novel social feature also in separating the worshippers from different neighbourhoods; for any fair-sized village will contain several mosques, scattered over the locality, so that each *efu* or ward has its own building. In other words, the coincidence of the actual congregation and the community at large, typical of the pagan ceremonials, no longer holds. It is reintroduced, however, on special occasions. In addition to these local mosques, where the daily prayers are said, any populous Nupe village also possesses a large, central mosque for the service on Friday and on feast days, that is, for the worship of a congregation made coextensive with the community.[1]

[1] This does not apply to Bida town, whose tripartite division is reflected in the three main mosques of the town (see *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 43, 89).

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794 The daily prayers (*salla*) spoken in Arabic (which few understand) and the weekly service in the mosque (*aduwa*) have become fully part of Nupe life, and if they lack the stimulus of pressing needs or the thrill that goes with rare occasions, this is not felt or ever commented upon. But the Moslem observances have also been remodelled, partly in a revolutionary fashion. As they exist today, they afford expression to the same pressing anxieties which animate the pagan rites, and do so with the same persuasiveness of a direct, articulate appeal to the deity. Over and above the stereotyped prayers, the Nupe have others which ask for special benefits and are meant to take care of such contingencies as a drought or the threat of an epidemic. These prayers may be said both privately, by any family head for his household, and publicly, in the mosque, by the *Liman* on behalf of the whole community. The special prayers are always said after the regular ones and, most important of all, are spoken in Nupe, not in Arabic. In addition, any household or kin group which faces some deep anxiety or threat will arrange a *walima*, that is, a ceremonial meal at which a fowl is killed and a mallam, specially invited, utters a brief prayer; again, an invocation in Nupe follows the Arabic formula, so that this observance differs only in minor details from the communal meal of the pagan ceremonial.[1]

794 782 Let me here quote four Nupe-Mohammedan prayers, concerned with harvest and rain. They have been recorded in two different places, Bida and Lemu, and show the familiar looseness and variability of phrasing, which no orthodox Moslem prayer ever permits; above all, they invoke *Sokó*, not *Allah*, and thus wholly recapture the content and style of the pagan invocations.

Prayer at Harvest time (*Bida*).

Lord God (*Tsoci*), protect the house from the dangers of the harvest season, such as fire, such as falling ill with fever, such as drought. Give us health, *Amin*.

The same (*Lemu*).

The harvest is cleared: *Sokó*, protect us from fire; *Sokó*, protect us from smallpox; *Sokó* protect us from the heat that dries up everything.

Prayer at the Beginning of the Rains (*Bida*).

Sokó, may he give rain in plenty. May he give food that thrives beautifully. The grain, may it thrive beautifully. *Sokó*, send us

[1] The Nupe would in fact say that *walima* is only the 'Mohammedan name' for the ceremonial which the 'pagans' know as *biki*. (See above, p. 110.)

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water which falls down upon man. And the man who is in a canoe on the water, and the water in the bush, protect them also for all of us.

The same (*Lemu*).

Lord God, protect us from the danger which is in the rain, and the storms, and also the lightning. Protect the house from it. Give us health, *Amin*.

3. CEREMONIALS

We turn to the big religious feasts of Islam which, in their annual recurrence at least, should come closest to, or rival most fully, the fixed pagan ceremonials. Of the seven orthodox Moslem festivals, the Nupe celebrate only three: the Mohammedan New Year, *Muharram*, and the two feasts known in Arabic countries as *Id el Fitr* and *Id el Azha*, the former concluding the month of *Ramadhan*, the latter falling in the 'month of pilgrimage', at the end of the Mohammedan year.[1] The Nupe call the Moslem New Year's feast *navũ* or 'Torches', and name the first month of the year after it; the month of *Ramadhan* is called *etswa azũ*, 'Month of the Fast', and the feast which succeeds it *sallagi* or 'Little Feast' (lit. 'prayer'); the *Id el Azha*, also known in Arabic as *Id el Kibir*, Great Feast, is called *sallakó*, which has the same meaning. The months in which these two feasts fall, the 10th and 12th, respectively, are known by their names.[2] Let us note that in embracing only three of the festivities of Islam the Nupe have retained that 'normal level' of regular ceremonials which we could discern in their traditional religious life.[3]

In all Moslem countries the purely festive aspects of the *Id* tend to outshine the strictly religious ones. These are represented in a religious service held in the open, attended by vast crowds and led by the *Imam*; in the generous giving of alms; and (on the 'Great Feast') in the sacrifice of an 'unblemished animal . . . to commemorate the name of God over the brute beasts which He has

[1] A third, the Birthday of the Prophet, is identified by the Nupe with the *gani* ceremonial, as we have seen, on very little evidence. (See above, p. 217).

[2] These dates correspond to general Moslem practice. But the correspondence is purely nominal since the Nupe calendar operates with the intercalation of a 13th month while the Moslem calendar keeps strictly to the lunar year. In consequence the Nupe feasts always fall roughly in the same season while the orthodox Moslem celebrations correspond in no way to a seasonal calendar.

[3] See pp. 70, 225. This applies only to communities fully Islamized; in a first phase, one of the Mohammedan feasts, the *navũ*, may simply be added to the pagan cycle of rites (see below, p. 244).

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provided' (Qoran, *Surah* XXII). All three features occur in Nupe, the animal being always a fattened ram, killed and eaten in every household that can afford the expense on the third day of the feast. Few Nupe, however, know anything about the meaning of the sacrifice save that it is ordered by the Prophet as a 'sacred occasion'. Much more important is the holiday atmosphere which pervades the three days of the feast. Everybody dresses in his best clothes and visits friends and relations or pays his respects to a noble patron. In Bida, the people throng the streets and gather in the public places to watch the *Etsu* and the 'great ones' of the country ride in resplendent procession from the service to the royal palace. There, outside the palace, a vast crowd is entertained, at the *Etsu's* order and expense, with food for body and eyes; there are equestrian displays, and the performances of professional dancers and musicians, clowns and jugglers.[1]

We note that the two-phase pattern of the pagan ceremonials, in which esoteric and sacred activities always precede the public merry-making, no longer applies: there is nothing esoteric about the religious service, 'merry-making' pervades the whole feast, and one of the 'sacred' activities, the sacrifice of the ram, does not open but concludes the ritual proceedings. Indeed, the *salla* is a spectacle rather than a ritual, at all stages open to all—to men and women, to townsfolk and strangers, and to people of every age. Its main significance lies precisely in this: the *salla* brings together nearly the whole Moslem community, not only symbolically, through being a common observance (or a 'token of identity'), but concretely and physically. At least, it does so potentially. The *salla* is also performed outside Bida, though on a lesser scale, all the larger villages having their own celebrations, when the local District Head, that is, the Emir's representative, plays the part which, in the capital, falls to the sovereign. But the Bida *salla* remains the centre and always attracts visitors from the country, so that at one time or other every Nupe Moslem will attend the celebrations in the capital.

If the *salla* lacks the thrill of secret preparation and esoteric observances, it yet provides others—the thrill of a splendid spectacle and, above all, that of being brought close to the powers that be. Altogether, the emphasis of the *salla* is as much political as religious. It serves as a display of kingship and hence as a buttress of sovereignty no less than as a sacred occasion. In mobilizing the religious community it mobilizes also the population of the Moslem state; so that the religious appeal blends with the confirmation of political allegiance. It is in this fashion, then,

[1] For a fuller description of the 'Great *salla*' in Bida, see *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 143–4.

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that the all-too-broad unity of Islam is (as I put it before) narrowed down to the scope of a national church. 794 796x

The *navū* is to some extent a smaller replica of the *salla*, including, again, the state procession to the mosque, with all its display of royal splendour and evoking the same festive mood of a large city bent on enjoyment. But the royal display occupies only a brief phase, on the morning of New Year's Day; and the enjoyment has a new emphasis, on youth, and on moral licence.

On the eve of New Year, at nightfall, the young people of Bida, both youths and girls, forgather at the three streams that cross the town. The girls come in little groups, while the boys and young men are formed into companies, each composed of an age-grade association under its leader. They sing and dance on the way, and the youths all carry torches, which they swing or throw high up in the air, and sometimes brandish at one another in playful attacks. Arrived at the river the youths remove their gowns and the girls their upper garments, and thus stripped to the waist wade into the water. They splash about, with much shrieking and laughing, try dance steps, jumps and somersaults, and the boys engage in brief wrestling bouts, invariably terminated by a ducking. Now and again this clowning gives way to a mock battle, when the boys will thrust and throw the torches at one another, age-group fighting age-group, not seriously, but keenly and with marked excitement. It needs skill to catch the wildly flying firebrands or to parry those aimed at you. Nor are narrow escapes uncommon, and first-aid treatments for burns are a regular aftermath of the *navū*. The excitement of the fight, moreover, is matched by the openly erotic excitement provoked by the occasion. This is indeed unique; at no other time will Nupe girls disrobe in the presence of men or show themselves with bare breasts. The girls will keep to the dark side of the river; but the youths throw torches in their direction to surprise a girl while she is undressing or bathing. There is cruder horseplay, too, the boys trying to seize the girls or to bump into them as though unwittingly; while in the shadows and under the bridge couples pursue their amorous play unseen. But though there is plenty of teasing and joking, the language is never obscene. About midnight the bathing breaks up and the young people return to their homes. 786 794 796x 883

This prelude to the *navū* was not always so tame. Until fairly recently the mock battle of torches was meant quite seriously.[1] The three different bathing places are chosen in accordance with the threefold dynastic division of the city, and are visited by the age-grade associations in the respective local division. The diverse

[1] The word 'battle' has been chosen advisedly. All informants describing the usage emphasized that it was 'like a war'.

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786 loyalties which govern the town hold their sway over youth as well as adults; and on the occasion of the *navũ* the factional jealousies, 794 never fully submerged, were allowed to come into the open. Thus x796 the torch processions invariably led to organized and heated fights 883 between the three groups; on the way back from the river, especially, one would ambush the other or try to invade the rival territory. The battle is said to have lasted the whole night, being fought with torches, sticks, stones, and any handy weapons. Injuries (some say, even death) inflicted in the course of the *navũ* went unpunished; for on this one night the law of the land was suspended. Eventually, in 1920 or thereabouts, the excesses of this all-too realistic play forced the Government to intervene and to forbid this phase of the *navũ*.

In spite of its realism, however, the mock battle not only legitimized factional hostility but also diverted it into relatively harmless channels. For though the boys and youths would give vent to sentiments commonly felt, they themselves were still outside serious politics and not yet genuinely caught up in factional strife. They would still be play-acting, however realistically, much as their whole age-grade life, with its imitation of adult ranks and ambitions, is play-acting and a make-believe copy of 'real life'. For the population of the city, whose sons and brothers took part in the 'battle of youth', this was in the nature of a vicarious and controlled catharsis of tensions grown over the year; for the young fighters, it was the climax of age-grade life and a seal set to this 'education for citizenship'. Needless to say, the practice is still vividly remembered. And it is not only the older people who talk nostalgically about their more exciting youth; the young people today have preserved at least the idea of the thing. Small boys with whom I talked before the *navũ* explained to me with great glee all that they and their age mates were going to do to their 'enemies'. In the end, of course, they did nothing; so that today the 'battle of youth' has moved a further stage towards mere make-believe.[1]

794 The licensed aggression of the torch festival reappears on the next day in a new context, that of kinship. For the *navũ* is also 602 an occasion for *ma dzo*, for 'joking', that is, for the licensed liberties x796 commonly referred to as 'joking relationship'. Though much less formalized than in other African societies, the institution of joking relationship plays a clearly defined part in Nupe social life. The individuals standing in this relationship are called *dzomanci*, 'playmates', the relationship itself being derived mainly from kinship position. Thus the joking relationship obtains between grandparents and grandchildren of the opposite sex; between cross

[1] See also *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 396–7.

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cousins; between a man and his elder brothers' wives; between a man and his mother's brother's wives; between a man and his wife's *dzomanci*; and between a woman and her father-in-law and her mother-in-law's sister's sons. The relevance of this arrangement for Nupe kinship organization does not concern us here; nor need we consider the joking relationship as it affects everyday life. Let me only stress that the active partners in this relationship, that is, the individuals entitled to take the liberties, are always young people; older persons cease to engage in the joking relationship or become engaged in it only as passive partners, as the victims exposed to the liberties. In practice, then, the joking relationship is asymmetrical, amounting to liberties taken by children or youths with their elders and, in the majority of cases, by one sex with the other.[1] The liberties themselves take this form. Whenever an 'active' partner in the relationship meets his playmate he would lightly beat him or her with a stick until the victim appeases the assailant with a small gift of money. Or boys and young men would visit the home of a playmate, tie his (her) hands and feet with a grass rope, until once more a small ransom is handed over. Throughout the *navũ* this play goes on. Everywhere you see boys armed with sticks or carrying grass ropes handy; and whole bands of them will swagger along the streets looking for their 'playmates' among the girls and women, shouting at them, brandishing their sticks, and trying to seize them, with unequal success. For the 'passive' partner is allowed to evade the punishment, to retaliate, and even to cheat. Quite a few of the older men when they are caught by their young assailants do not pay the required ransom, but merely press their fingers into their playmates' hands as though handing over a coin, and escape by this ruse. And the women and girls on the market sit behind their wares with a stick or grass rope ready in case a 'playmate' tried his extortions on them. There is no serious note in all this: it is fun, and nothing else, taken in good part by everyone. Throughout this play another *motif* is also visible. The *dzomanci* will often be aided by his friends, and during *navũ* you will everywhere see youths walking in pairs and holding hands, two friends facing together the adventures of the day. Thus the *navũ* becomes a multiple occasion for mobilizing and demonstrating the main social relationships governing Nupe life—age-grade solidarity; political allegiance; kinship bonds; and friendship.

It is difficult to define precisely the Islamic kernel in the Nupe celebrations of the *Muharram*, mainly because the character of

[1] Joking relationship also occurs outside the kindred, between certain Nupe sections and other tribes, or within Nupe communities between occupational groups. As these relationships play no part in the *navũ*, they are here disregarded.

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794 the feast varies widely in Moslem countries. The bathing in the river is a common feature of the *Muharram*; but it does not con-
x 796 cern the young particularly. Now in Nupe, the older people, too, perform the prescribed New Year's ablutions; but they do so at home, in water fetched by the women from the river; the bathing in the river, then, with its erotic suggestiveness, is an instance of Nupe-ization. Again, the play with fire, in the form of bonfires or torches, is fairly common; and in Shiite countries especially, the celebrations also include mock violence and battles. But these have a specific religious emphasis, being a commemoration of the last battle and martyrdom of Husain: of which association no Nupe is aware. Indeed, no Nupe knows or has any theory about the meaning of the 'torches'. Whatever the origin of the feature, the fact that it has come to serve political motives and the organization of adolescence, is plain evidence of its remodelling by Nupe hands.

The *navũ* has spread widely through Nupe Emirate, and today occurs even in villages almost entirely pagan, such as Doko, Sakpe, and Jebba Island, where it is simply added to the cycle of traditional rituals. The public service in the mosque, of course, disappears, as does also the realistic 'battle', that is, the political emphasis peculiar to the situation in the city. Each locality performs the ceremonial independently, and no one thinks of visiting the capital to watch or join in the celebrations there. Yet though there are these numerous independent congregations, the *navũ* is understood to be an identical ceremonial and one which each community shares with the capital and royalty. Its specifically Moslem character is entirely obscured; but no Nupe links the origin of the *navũ* to pre-Mohammedan or pre-Fulani times. Rather it is always thought of as a new ceremonial, bound up with the new regime and as such added to the diverse observances of the country. Thus, though it has become part and parcel of the separate life of villages, it is also identified with the kingdom that embraces them all. So that a rite of Islam is again 'narrowed down' to the concerns of the state and employed in the manner of the older 'royal cults', as a mere 'token of identity'.

4. THE MOSLEM WAY OF LIFE

794 Our attempt to assess the influence of Islam on the Nupe way of life is rendered difficult by the fact that we do not know precisely in what shape or form the new creed reached Nupe country. Indeed, even in 'typical' Moslem countries the observances of Islam vary extremely widely. And though this difficulty is somewhat less serious in the case of the strictly religious aspects, since these are, at least in their fundamentals, embodied in a written

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doctrine and uniformly transmitted through the teaching of the Qoran, even this teaching can vary within wide limits; above all, it can be reinforced or belied by the models of practical conduct exhibited by the teachers. Thus we shall presently speak of the confused notions of the Nupe on Moslem cosmology and hagiology, and of their lack of interest in the historical background of Islam. But how far this attitude reflects the Nupe reaction towards the new creed or merely their faithful acceptance of a creed loosely and confusedly taught, it is obviously difficult to say. Quite probably the latter is the true picture; for there is no reason to assume that the first emissaries of Islam were more erudite or theologically-minded than the majority of mallams today. According to some accounts, in fact, the famous Mallam Dendo was little better than a peddler of Mohammedan charms. However this may be, when it comes to the general moral precepts or codes of conduct that go with Islam, we are more uncertain still. Islam reached Nupe through many hands and by many stages, and in a form probably considerably affected by the modes of life of the Sudanese and West African societies where it first took root. Furthermore, many of these are closely akin to Nupe. If then, we find Moslem practices more or less closely attuned to Nupe traditional culture, this may only represent some previous 'remodelling' and, from Nupe point of view, a fortuitous correspondence, not any effort on their part to render the new creed more 'congenial'. 794

Let me illustrate this by one example, the position of women in Moslem-Nupe society. In orthodox Islam the woman is man's inferior by the will of God, and made to obey him (*Surah* IV). Though women may be as true believers, they are permitted no share in religious activities and rarely given the chance of religious tuition. Legally and socially they are subjected to various disabilities; women (not men) must 'observe continence and not display their ornaments' (that is, must be veiled before strangers—*Surah* XXV, 31); and Mohammedans marrying 'infidel' women must not let 'them go back to the infidels', being responsible for their spiritual welfare (*Surah* LX, 10). None of these tenets applies to Nupe Islam. Women are as free as men and legally as fully qualified; the veiling of the women is unknown; and though the Nupe do not admit women to the mosque or other religious observances, girls of the upper classes are often taught the Qoran. Is this, then, an adjustment of Islam to traditional Nupe notions? Hardly that, for this contrast is true only in comparison with Moslem practices, say in India or the urban society of Arabia and the Eastern Sudan. It disappears when we compare Nupe with the nomadic Moslem tribes in the Sudan or with the Mohammedan Emirates in the north of Nigeria. The Fulani invaders of Nupe, 794 562

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794 who started the great wave of Islamization, were probably as liberal or unorthodox in their attitude to women. So that the 562 Nupe would have received their new creed already remodelled by the donors, and the true contrast would be, not between orthodox Islam and the Nupe version, but between the former and African Islam.

794 To turn to the other aspects of the Moslem 'way of life', first, to the high value placed on scholarship. Even the most humble 875 follower of Islam is aware of it. Tuition in the creed and *jĩ katũ* (reading, book-knowledge in general) are to him almost one and the same thing; and greater religious perfection coincides with wider learning. The title mallam, 'scholar', freely accorded to the pious, already indicates the trend of thought. One mallam friend of mine expressed it aptly when he spoke of the *ciŋwa katũ*, the 'greatness of learning', which makes any Mohammedan scholar equal to the other great ones in the country—rankholders, noblemen, or wealthy landowners. Not that the mallam is necessarily poor or a commoner; many mallams are wealthy, and many members of the titled aristocracy pride themselves on being scholars as well. But the professional scholar does not require the badge or rank nor the backing of wealth to be granted the privileges of high status. His learning makes him the companion of the 'great ones'; his ministration at naming ceremonies, weddings or burials opens him their houses; and even a poor mallam can marry into rich or noble families if his scholarly repute is high; for in this case the bride's father will defray the costs of the brideprice, counting this expenditure as a pious gift of alms.[1]

There are, of course, degrees of learning, and hence distinctions in the status of mallams. In largely pagan villages anyone who has learned to recite a few *surat* of the Qoran and performs his daily prayers is called a mallam; in the Mohammedan capital the name is reserved for those who also teach the Qoran, though the adepts in the art of sand-divining and the sellers of charms are equally included in that class. Mostly a further distinction is drawn between the simple, humble mallam, who knows only the Qoran (or, more often, only small portions of it) and the true scholar, who must have studied *litafi* (books) or *kpikpe* (knowledge) as well. Men of the latter class read eagerly and widely, and acquire books where they can or copy out rare manuscripts. Ignoring, however, the few mallams who practice as judges and have studied the various relevant legal digests and commentaries, the reading of these 'learned men' tends to be indiscriminate and their 'know-

[1] The social position of the mallams and the whole question of Moslem learning and tuition has been fully discussed in *A Black Byzantium*; see especially pp. 102, 378–83.

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ledge' a miscellany of incongruous items. Often the 'books' they get hold of are merely odd assortments of bits of literature, the same volume perhaps containing an extract on marriage law, a page or two on astrology, a treatise on the human body, and a fragment of some Hausa chronicle. Nor does the specific knowledge of Moslem theology fare any better. Again it is a medley of incongruous bits of information and in no way approaches the orthodox teaching of Islam. 794 875

The further down you pass in the scale of Nupe Mohammedan scholarship, the more confused and fragmentary becomes this knowledge. Take this summary account of creation and the powers of God which was given to me by one of the 'simple' mallams: 'Mohammed was the first man on earth; the devil (*Sheitan*) sends illness and misfortunes; after death, the good people become kindly spirits (*aljénu*), while evil persons are turned into dust'. Which last statement was the only reference to the ethical sanctions of Islam I encountered in Nupe; for hell or heaven or the last judgment are never mentioned. The notion, incidentally, that Mohammed was the first man is widespread; but otherwise the ideas about creation and the universe are far from uniform. Here is a different and fuller account, recorded from another mallam of this class: Formerly, when all the people lived together in the same place, there existed 'little gods' (*sokó tetengi*), whom God (*Allah*) sent down to earth to take away the souls (*rayi*) of the persons whose life was nearing its end. But the people grew frightened at this mysterious and unannounced demise and tried to evade it by scattering over the earth. So God introduced a new kind of death, heralded by illness, or overcoming man suddenly, through lightning or other natural disasters. These 'little gods' are the *malaika* (the Arabic *mal'ak*, 'angels'). In addition to the messengers of death there exist also *malaika* who bring rain, cause the crops to grow, and watch over man; the chief one amongst them is Jibelelu (Gabriel); others are Mikailu, Ismailu, Ibrahimu, though my informant did not pretend to know them all. [775]

The knowledge possessed by the 'true' mallam is hardly less unorthodox, even though it is fuller and more ambitious. The following text was dictated to me by a gifted pupil of the most famous mallam of Bida and fully conformed to the master's teaching. 794 773

'In the beginning there were Adama and Mother Adā. They had three daughters, Mureamu [Miriam, Mary], Fatima [daughter of Mohammed], and Barkisa [Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba], and numerous sons. These were all prophets. God then divided the world into pagans and Moslems. The greatest king of the pagans

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794 773 was Firauna [Firaun, Arabic for Pharaoh], who conquered the whole earth and had immense wealth. He had seven houses, in each of which a fire was eternally burning; criminals were thrown into these houses, to be burned to death. He also had seven houses filled with wonderful things and a hundred beautiful women in each. Good people were rewarded by being admitted to these houses and being made free of the things they contained. Once there happened to be a great drought and famine; but Firauna prayed to God, and rain fell. Thereupon Firauna said to the people: "Have I not sent rain? I am your God." Thus he claimed that he himself was God, and all who denied him, the Mohammedans among them, were fettered and left lying in the sun until they perished. Firauna decided to make war on God in the sky. He called all his men together and made them build a huge tower. This lasted sixty years. When the tower reached up to the sky, Firauna ordered his soldiers to shoot at the sky with bows and arrows, for two years. But God destroyed the tower and innumerable people perished. Then God called his prophet Musa [Moses] and ordered him to rise against Firauna. Thus Musa called together an army; but it was much weaker than Firauna's, so that the true believers, led by Musa, were turned to flight. Pursued by Firauna they reached a river as wide as the Niger; God caused the water to dry up so that they could cross, but when Firauna's army followed, it was swallowed up by the river. Now Musa ruled over the world and established the reign of God. When he died, he was succeeded by the other prophets, Abraham, Yisa, Haruna, Idirisu, and finally Mohammed.'

794 There is no need to point out the motley nature of this account. Yet the people uncritically accept these crude narratives as evidence of 'learning' as they similarly accept the lists of 'angels' and the string of names with which diviners bolster up their 'astrology'.[1] Since the traditional Nupe beliefs possess little or nothing of this kind, it might be thought that Mohammedan lore fills some pre-existing lacunae. But this is not really so. The average Nupe Moslem is no more interested in the pseudo-Mohammedan cosmology or hagiology than is the pagan Nupe in myths of this kind.[2] But the former remains 'book-knowledge', which goes with the new religion and is expected of its teachers; so that a great many topics

[1] See above, p. 59n.

[2] The experiences of Christian evangelists offer interesting corroboration. The theological cosmology of Christian teaching evokes no interest among the Nupe. An evangelist told me about his abortive attempts in this direction, when his converts-to-be frankly admitted that they 'knew nothing' about the creation of the world but could not be convinced of the value of knowing more.

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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events. 794

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed. [532] [583 304 262 582]

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to 794 582

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

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794 Islam. In all these cases the result has been an odd compromise. In Bida, the Moslem type of marriage is now more frequent than
582 the traditional type; while among the Mohammedans outside the former is absent and the latter still fully in force. The observance of the levirate is somewhat puzzling. Islam permits the marriage with a brother's widow whether the brother is senior or junior to the deceased; in pagan Nupe, marriage with an elder brother's widow is forbidden, but marriage with a younger brother's widow greatly encouraged. Now, in the villages these rules still obtain; in Bida, however, the first kind of marriage is practised, though not very frequently, while the second never occurs. It seems, then, that in the type of marriage which Islam permits but the indigenous custom disallows, the hold of the latter is still sufficiently strong to prevent any widespread adoption of the novel practice; while the type of marriage both permitted by Islam and strongly pressed by local custom has been abandoned by the more 'orthodox' Moslems. This instance contradicts our previous argument as to the fortuitous fit and hence ready acceptance of certain Moslem customs. Rather, we must admit that such a given fit may, paradoxically, entail the rejection of the custom in question. Has it been rejected so as to prevent any blurring of the division between Moslems and non-Moslems, and thus to emphasize the new, different 'way of life'? It would seem to be so; but since this is the only instance of the kind I can only suggest the possibility. The strong hold of the indigenous practice is finally shown in a type of marriage as definitely forbidden by Islam as it is encouraged by Nupe custom, namely, the nominal marriage of a boy with his paternal grandfather's widow. This *yawó suna* ('marriage in name') is practised both in Mohammedan Bida and in the pagan districts. It is clearly bound up with the idea of reincarnation and with the corresponding practice of naming a grandson after his father's father: identical in name and 'soul', the grandson also assumes the nominal status of his *alter ego*. And as the traditional belief remained unassailed by Moslem doctrine, so the practice rooted in it withstood the impact of the new usages.

794 The most serious divergence between indigenous custom and Moslem ideas occurs in inheritance. The Moslem law of inheritance
428 implies, briefly, the division of a man's property among all his offspring (both male and female) as well as his wives, their respective shares varying in amount.[1] Nupe custom, on the other hand,

[1] The inheritance of women's property can be disregarded. Women in Nupe own only personal belongings and money, and can dispose of them more or less as they like—to sons, daughters, or their husband. Though the Nupe practice is more fluid than the Mohammedan usage, the two do not clash; nor has the former changed under Moslem influence.

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makes a younger brother or, in the absence of surviving brothers, the eldest brother's son the main heir, excluding wives and daughters. It must be borne in mind that the main property in rural Nupe is land, worked co-operatively by a 'house', that is, by the male members of the extended family—a man, his younger brothers, and his and their sons.[1] The traditional rules of inheritance thus prevent the fragmentation of land and keep intact the large labour team bound to it; for the land descends together with the headship of the family group, and thus with the command over the 'house' and labour team.[2] The acceptance of the Islamic rules of inheritance would change all this: the land would be progressively fragmented, the labour team broken up, and the headship of large families would disappear. But the Nupe have not turned to the new system in summary fashion; they still exclude wives and daughters from inheritance and largely kept intact the succession to the titular headship of the 'house'. But that most critical innovation, the division of landed property among sons, has steadily been gaining ground. It is important to note, however, that this is not simply a result of the pressure of Islam. I have shown elsewhere how the political and economic changes which began with the Fulani conquest and continue to the present day encouraged individual as against family enterprise and deprived the productive organization of the large family group of its former economic advantages.[3] My point now is that the 'individualistic' type of inheritance exemplified in Islam was also the type the new situation demanded, so that the changed outlook which happened to coincide with the impact of Islam provided additional motives for its acceptance, or for the acceptance of the way of life it represents.

In a wider sense the mere presence of the new religion in such circumstances answered the 'demand of the situation'. The political and economic events which were disrupting family co-operation also assailed the whole authority of family heads and their hold over the younger generation. In consequence the latter, sons or younger brothers of men still pagan, were turning away from the traditional cults (and are doing so even today), not for any particular benefits they were expecting of Islam, but because there was logic in the mere 'turning-away'; for this meant abandoning religious practices which, more or less openly, stood for the *status quo*, for parental authority and an outmoded family structure. The great appeal of the *navũ*, which concedes greater freedom to

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, chap. III.

[2] This situation is somewhat modified among the craftsmen in the town (see op. cit., chap. XIV). The conclusions drawn further on, however, apply to the labour teams of craftsmen as much as of peasants.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 124, 374–6.

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794 [178] youth, or of the *salla*, which is silent on issues of family authority, is the obverse of this picture.

Here I am repeating facts mentioned previously, though the emphasis is now not on the 'vulnerability' of the older cults in the face of change, but on their dislodgment by the new religion in the country.[1] Islam, as we have seen, proved the stronger mainly because these other changes had prepared the ground; it was a beneficiary of the social upheaval as much as a cause contributing to it. Differently expressed, Islam acted in the manner of a new model, inviting to be followed since it happened to appear at a critical moment, when older norms were breaking down. To be sure, it was a model doubly inviting; it both typified upper-class behaviour and offered alternatives for usages no longer satisfactory, and hence placed a premium on non-conformism. Without it, the dissatisfactions might not have crystallized so easily and the process of change would have been more erratic. As it happened, they found a ready focus or 'model'.

794 186 We turn to the final aspect of the Moslem 'way of life', the attitude of the believer towards other creeds. I have called Nupe religion tolerant. Islam, as we know it from other parts of the world, is the exact opposite. It has all the self-righteousness and intransigence of a fervently proselytizing creed; and it lays claim not only to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth but also to an ultimate ascendancy over all other religions—to the 'inheritance of the earth', promised to the believers and meant to be secured by secular domination and 'victory in the field'.[2] In Africa, where Islam now faces pagan peoples as it did in its early history, this claim to supremacy must stand in a literal sense, meaning the superiority of believers over utter unbelievers, of people who have seen the light over mere barbarians, and of Lords and Masters over some lower species of humanity. In the Sudan, for example, this attitude is well marked. But in Nupe there is, by and large, little trace of it.

Undoubtedly, all Moslems pride themselves on being true believers and many, more or less contemptuously, look down upon the pagans. But as I mentioned before, scholarly mallams will yet frankly admit their interest in the pagan cults; few would consider it incongruous or invidious to discuss, in a purely academic spirit, the beliefs and practices of the 'unbelievers'; and the average Nupe Moslem views them as tolerantly. Nor would a Mohammedan bar all social intimacy with pagans (as I have seen it done in half-Mohammedanized parts of the Sudan) or decline to visit them in their houses or receive their visits in his. Even friendship occurs

[1] See above, pp. 97–114.
[2] See D. S. Margulies, *Mohammed*, 1939, pp. 67–8.

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across the barrier of religion. The following comments by the chief of Pichi illustrate perhaps the extreme of Nupe tolerance, 'There are three benefits', he said, 'Islam, Christianity, and the *kuti*. Some of us have chosen one, others the other. One may be stronger than the rest: but this we do not know.' To be sure, this tolerance cuts both ways; and indeed, this Nupe version of Lessing's Nathan saw nothing strange in 'making *salla*' and attending the *gunnu* as well. But then, he was only a self-professed Moslem, whom others considered a pagan at heart.

Yet, though his attitude may not be typical of the Nupe Moslems, it is typical of the outlook of the people among whom Islam finds its converts. The final step of conversion changes it but little; indeed, it can hardly be otherwise since conversion is so loose an affair and not a real 'step' at all. But in so far as the outlook of the confirmed Moslem is changed, carrying with it that pride and awareness of superiority, the pride and superiority are social rather than specifically religious. What counts is, first and foremost, the assimilation to upper-class culture, and only secondarily the deliverance from unbelief.

5. CONTACT AND INTEGRATION

In this chapter we were dealing with instances of a much-discussed social process, 'culture contact' or 'acculturation'. The wider theoretical issues involved are beyond our present scope; but no discussion of this kind can avoid touching upon one such general problem, namely, the relationship between the cultures brought into 'contact' and the 'resultant' culture emerging from it. Now, this is a question of end-states, of the final outcome of these processes of change and contact; and logically, we should start with their analysis.

The physical model of 'contact', of a 'clash of cultures', or of their 'impact' upon one another, is more misleading than helpful when picturing these processes. We revert, therefore, to our paradigm, a group possessed of given modes of behaviour, habit patterns if you like, which comes to face new models of behaviour of such-and-such pull or attractiveness. That the reactions are likely to be complex and intricate no one will deny; more importantly, they are progressive, that is, take the form of chain reactions. It is clearly not so that the new models are simply accepted, rejected, or exchanged for the habitual ways of acting as it were once and for all, after which no further readjustment will occur. The religious conversion of a people certainly is not a simple all-or-none affair, but a process of many stages in which an initial acceptance may spread further, be deepened or changed in

CULTS[7]

794 Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

782 The Ebe have a *šikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konú of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *nddduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsú* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[8]

794 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility, crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in 793 times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnukó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[9]

278 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the 789 power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–8; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–5; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[8] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[9] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–62 and *passim*.

[Information on the Mallam schools where Koranic learning is taught has been placed in category 874. -- Analyst]

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III

RITUAL

I. PRELIMINARIES

*796 On the grounds of time and occasion the Nupe rituals fall into two sharply distinct groups. On one side we have rituals occupying a regular, fixed place in the calendar of the country; on the other, rituals which, as the Nupe say, 'have no month', that is, whose performance is contingent upon the variable needs of the moment. A few 'fixed' rituals which can also be performed out of season and others which, originally 'fixed', have become 'movable' represent intermediate or transitional forms. But even here the twofold division is not obscured. For in the case of rituals performed both regularly and contingently, the latter performance is clearly marked off as an adaptation to particular circumstances; it is on a much smaller scale and lacks the festive features which accompany the regular ceremony, being as it were only concerned with the business in hand.

*796 Surveying Nupe country as a whole the number of different rituals is strikingly large and their geographical distribution 184 irregular; the chart on p. 69 lists a number of them by name and 795 locality, and also shows their varying times of performance. Only one ritual, *gunnu*, occurs everywhere; others are common to one or two tribal sections only or even to a few villages, where special local conditions appear to justify the special cult. In the extreme case a particular ritual may be restricted to a single village community. We met already with instances, such as the Mokwa ritual of the sacred crocodile, the rituals called *ketsá* and 'Father Niger' in the riverain area, and the worship, once more on the river, of the sacred bronze figures associated with Tsoede. Let me add some further examples: in the kolanut-growing district of Labozhi we find the special cult of an ancestress reputed to have introduced the planting of kolanut; a somewhat similar cult, concerned with the cultivation of the oilpalm, occurs in the village Kutiwengi, in the 'oilpalm belt' to the north; Jebba Island possesses a special ritual, unique in Nupe country, which is meant to ward off smallpox; while Mokwa and a few villages in the neighbourhood practise the similarly unique masked dance *elo*.

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CHART OF NUPE RITUALS

	Month	LOCALITIES—INLAND								LOCALITIES—RIVER			
		Doho	*Sakpe*	*Kutigi*	*Etsu*	*Labozhi*	*Ewugi*	*Wuna*	*Mokwa*	*Jebba*	*Leaba*	*Gbajibo*	*Bele*
'Fixed' Rituals	1(13)	[navũ]	gunnu [navũ]	[navũ]					[navũ]				
	2												
	3			gani	lugba*								
	4												
	5	žiba					gbara		gunnu				
	6	sakó											
	7					gunnu	sara				gunnu	elo	
	8							dakunu			mamma		
	9	žiba					gunnu*	gunnu*	elo	mamma; dzakó; ndá-duma		gunnu	gunnu
	10			[sallagi]		nnakógba			sara; bukpe		ndáduma	mamma	žiba; ndáduma
	11	gunnu	mamma		gunnu			fufobo		gunnu			
	12			[sallakó]									
'Movable' Rituals		Dibo Saba; fitakũ	sara; žikinta	gunnu; žikinta	tídzana	gunnu	dzanavu; žikinta	žicigbã	sara; bukpe	tídzana; žikinta; ketsá; ndáduma	žikinta	sara; žikinta; ndáduma	žikinta

Note : Names in square brackets indicate Moslem observances (see chap VIII). Rituals marked by a star are performed triennially; as these are isolated cases they are disregarded in the text.

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With so much variety it is impossible to select a particular community whose rituals would be 'typical' of Nupe practice; rather, each village cycle of rituals is typical (or atypical) in its own way. Yet neither is it possible to describe every variety of Nupe ritual (several of which I only knew from hearsay or from informants' reports). What seems more important is to examine some such cycle of rituals within the setting in which it operates, that is, within the corporate life of the community for which it is primarily valid or, in Nupe parlance, by which it is 'owned'.[1] As regards the question, which particular cycle of rituals to select, I propose to resolve it by taking two instances, one from Doko and the other from Jebba Island. This compromise seems the most expedient both since I have actually observed the majority of rituals in these two places and since these represent an interesting contrast, Doko being a 'typical' inland village, with hereditary chieftainship, and Jebba Island a riverain community where chiefs are elected. Let me add that, from other points of view, both communities are also 'atypical'; Jebba, because it is one of the two villages possessing major 'relics' of Tsoede; and Doko, because it formerly belonged to a federation of villages (or 'towns' as the Nupe would say), which type of political organization is unique in Nupe country. As regards the two communities themselves, a full description has been given elsewhere and need not be repeated.[2]

One further point of more general import may be anticipated. In spite of the great variety of local cults the number of rituals performed and their place in the year's cycle do not differ greatly in the different communities. Usually there are one or two movable rituals, rarely more, and two or three fixed rituals, only a few villages having four or five; and though the dates of the fixed rituals vary somewhat from place to place, they fall more frequently in certain months (e.g. the 9th and 11th) than in others (e.g. the 3rd or 5th).[3] The corresponding months in our calendar, incidentally, can only be calculated approximately since the Nupe reckon in lunar months, the year beginning with the onset of the rains, and insert a 13th month every five years. In other years the 1st month is usually also called the 13th, especially when the rains are late, which not infrequently leads to confusion, some localities being temporarily a month out in their reckoning.[4]

[1] I am here using the phrase 'primarily valid' since certain rituals imply an additional, wider validity (or 'ownership') which extends to the whole sub-tribe or even tribe. This point will be examined later (see below, p. 103).

[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 19, 25, 35. [3] See the chart on p. 69.

[4] In 1934, for example, the 1st month was taken to have begun on March 15th in the eastern part of Nupe, but at the end of April I found that the people of Mokwa, in the west, had just started with their 1st month. For a fuller description of the Nupe calendar, see *A Black Byzantium*, Appendix V.

796 X
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8. Scene from *gunnu* dance in Jebba

[415]

9. *Dzabó* sacrifice
[p. 70 (A)]

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× 796
● 795
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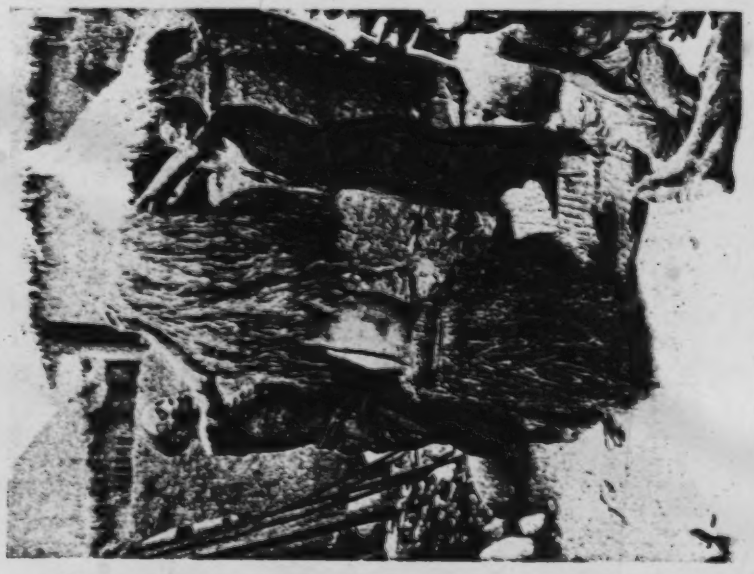
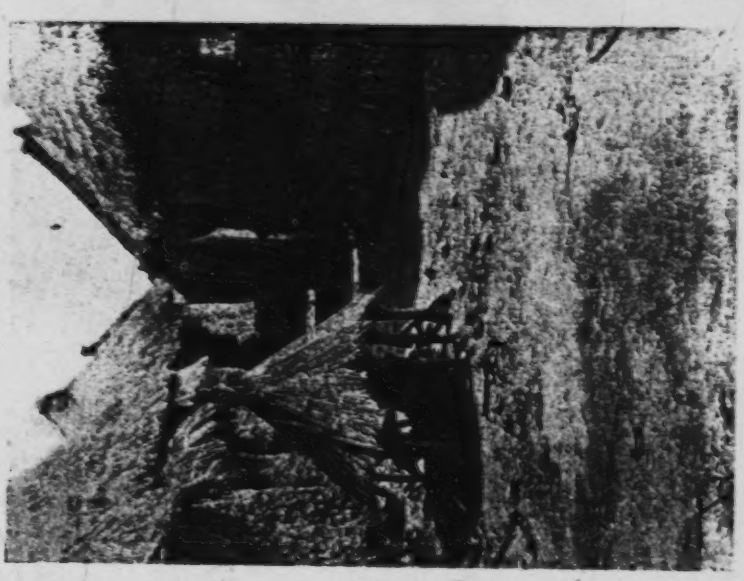


11. Dressing the *mamma* masks

[778]



10. The *zumucika* medicine shrine in Jebba

[p. 70(2)]

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This roughly uniform timing of the fixed rituals might suggest that they are bound up with important seasonal events, farming activities and the like, which are similarly uniform throughout the country. The 9th month, which is so regularly accompanied by rituals, in fact represents a crucial phase in the life of a farming people, coinciding with the end of the rains and the time of the sorghum harvest, the staple crop of the country. But the 11th month, which falls in the middle of the dry season, coincides only with a minor agricultural activity, the harvesting of the last bean crop. Conversely, an important agricultural phase, the 1st (or 13th) month, when rains and planting begin, is infrequently accompanied by ceremonials. Other dates marked by rituals in different communities coincide with the first millet harvest (5th month), with the first yam harvest (7th month), or fall in the early rains (3rd month), when nothing in particular happens. 796x 795

The Nupe rituals are thus neither firmly linked with important agricultural activities nor yet concentrated in the season when farmwork is at a standstill, when the granaries are full, and when the people have both food and time to spare. But there is a nexus of a more general kind; for the Nupe rituals tend to be associated with the reaping of the crops more than with the planting, with 'ends' more than with 'beginnings', bearing upon the renewal of the fertility of which one has just received a token rather than upon attempts to secure it at the outset. The subsequent discussion will bear out this view. Here we must note that the ceremonials which happen to coincide with this or that harvest are in no way strict first-fruit rites, meant to signal the proper time for reaping or to control the first consumption of the new food; nor yet are they special feasts of thanksgiving. Rather is their religious import more unspecific, bearing on fertility, the thriving of crops, and health in general, irrespective of the particular occasion.

2. THE INLAND VILLAGE

(i) *Priestship*

The list of Doko rituals is brief. There are two movable ones —*fitakū* ('The Stone drinks') and *Dibo Saba* (named after an ancestor chief),—and three fixed rituals: *ḱiba*, which is performed twice, in the 5th and 9th month; *sakó*, performed one month after the first *ḱiba*; and *gunnu*, performed in the 11th month.[1] 796x

The ceremonials are in the charge of different officiants. The ritual *Dibo Saba*, addressed to an ancestor chief, is also performed by the chief. The ritual *sakó* concerns only the small group of [769 622]

[1] In our calendar the 5th month corresponds roughly to July–August, the 9th to December, the 11th to February.

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of the same territory; political autonomy; and numerous norms of behaviour and types of relationship.

With all this the next chapter will deal. Let me here only explain an apparent omission; if this discussion made no mention of that other religion demanding complete conversion, Christianity, the reason is, simply, the unimportance of Christianity in Nupe life. The number of converts is extremely small and the progress of Christianity insignificant. The Nupe generally are not hostile to those who have become Christians; they do not subject them to special disabilities; nor do they despise them; only mallams will sometimes call Christians, contemptuously, *káfiri*, 'unbelievers'. Here, too, the general attitude is one of tolerance, though it is more pronounced among pagans than among Moslems. The former (including nominal Moslems) quite often send their children to mission schools, and most Nupe keep on friendly terms with missionaries or African evangelists. But this tolerance always goes with the conviction that Christian missionizing will remain ineffectual; friendliness with Christians is unobjectionable only because it is of no consequence. Nor do the Nupe ever commit themselves by their association with Christians. They do not intermarry with Christian converts; they do not ask them to their family feasts; and the converts never come from solid, stable families, but from among unattached individuals—old people without relations, young orphans, or the children of strangers. Even among these, I was told, apostasy often occurs in later life. And here it is not the pagan religion which is the greatest rival of Christianity, but the steadily encroaching Islam.

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more solid bond of political protection embodied in clientship. Attachment to the ruling group thus fused with conversion to its religion. In the early days of Fulani rule hundreds of pagans are said to have flocked into the capital to seek out an important person as their patron and to declare to him—and not to the religious officers of Islam—their readiness to embrace Mohammedanism. They received their turban and sword, insignia of clientship and new creed in one. Of such men the Nupe say not 'they become Mohammedans' but '*a ze goiźi*'—'they become Fulani'.

Whatever the true essence of Mohammedan faith may be in Nupe, and however sparsely Mohammedanism has so far spread, Fulani rulership did create, and is creating, another 'mythical charter' of the kingdom. It tries again, with its new means, to mould the religious elements into the intensive unit almost of a State Church.[1] The effect of Islam as a 'binding force' of the precarious political system that the Fulani had erected cannot be doubted. A striking example is that under *Etsu* Umaru the whole Trans-Kaduna revolted, refused to pay the tribute, and finally made war on Bida. The rebellious peasants crossed the Kaduna river, marched against Bida and almost reached it, being defeated at a place called Bidakoko, a few miles outside.[2] The whole Trans-Kaduna, that is, with the exception of one town—the strongly Mohammedanized Dabbã, the same town where Mallam Dendo started his proselytizing work in Nupe, and which now refused to join in the war against the rulers with whom they shared their creed.

The identification of State and Church is demonstrated in the annual Mohammedan festival, the *Sallah*, which is as much a pageant of the might and splendour of the kingdom as a religious feast. There are two *Sallah* feasts, the Small *Sallah* and the Great *Sallah*, separated by a two months' interval.[3] Their celebration may be called the climax of the whole year's cycle: the two feasts give the months in which they fall their names—*etswa salagi* and *etswa salakó*, 'month of the Small *Sallah*' and 'month of the Great *Sallah*'; and to these the people look forward and look back, in the long-drawn preparations and anticipation, and in recollections and memories. The *Sallah* feast is like a Friday celebration on an immensely enlarged scale. On the first day the king on horseback under the state umbrella and surrounded by his noblemen and state officials, leads the vast procession to the praying-ground outside the town, where the *Liman* holds the service. After the service the procession returns to the royal residence. Here a great display of horsemanship takes place, at which the bodyguard of the king, his police, and officers of state parade before him and his guests of honour—the foremost among whom are the District Officer and all the Europeans living

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in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.[1]

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

[1] It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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602 592 182 establish them socially as full members of the community, i.e. as married men, and, indirectly, to assure the continuity of the family group. We have seen that even if the family head is unable to produce the necessary amount himself, and the young men have themselves to contribute, the family head would keep and save the money for them. The young men, left to themselves, are tempted to squander money on things which appear to them to be of greater urgency, and to disregard, to their own detriment as well as to the detriment of the group, the more distant necessity of marriage. As in the case of the Bida labourers, their money 'goes at once', and they remain unmarried even a considerable time after having reached marriageable age. In the extreme case a family head would even pawn the labour and liberty of a younger family member who is less essential to the group for the sake of keeping in freedom the elder, more important family member, or enabling him to found a family. We can go even farther than this. Older men, tending to uphold tradition, will plan labour and expenditure so that there should be money, food, as well as time available for family feasts or communal religious ceremonies. Their efforts thus serve (unconsciously) the interests of group integration at large, which the younger generation, not so fully steeped in traditional ways of thinking, may hesitate to put before more immediate attractions. Finally, by submitting to the authority of the older men in productive co-operation, the labour-unit also sustains their position of authority in a wider sense, as leaders of the community. We can say, then, that the large labour-unit is committed to the maintenance of the structure and the traditional values of the society, and that with its dissolution an important agency of social integration and continuity disappears.

796 602 182 The changes which the *gunnu* ritual has undergone recently are a convincing instance of this kind. In its traditional form the *gunnu* contained a certain most stirring scene which took place on the eve of the ritual, and which concerned the young men of the village especially. They were herded together in a certain place in the uninhabited bush, where they had to spend the night; they were to wait for a terrifying apparition, the spirit of the *ndakó gboyá*, who would question them about their moral conduct in the preceding year. If they were found guilty of having behaved disrespectfully towards their elders, they were flogged by their comrades at the command of the spirit. I have quoted already the article in which I described in detail the ritual and its effectiveness as a mechanism of social integration in the family group as well as the community.[1] But even from this short description we can gather the psychological importance of a ritual which uses such impressive stimuli to press home moral teaching, and to bind together periodically, in a common experience, the growing generation. Now, although the *gunnu* is still performed, the 'bush night' has been abandoned in many villages, and the explanation given was everywhere that the young men had refused to be subjected to the ordeal of this inquisition and punishment. The young men themselves were outspoken about the reasons of their refusal: 'We are now working as independently as the old men, we are paying tax for ourselves—why should we be flogged and threatened as if

[1] See pp. 25, 63.

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we were small boys?' In their own words they confirm my argument that the weakening of productive co-operation entails a weakening also of other forms and bonds of group unity.

We may for the moment reflect on the fact that this progressive weakening of group integration occurs in a society with decreasing population. Partly this development underlines the strength and urgency of the forces which are working for the dissolution of the large labour-unit, and which here foster the tendency to split and reduce in size a working-unit which is already, as it were, automatically declining. But it also reveals the significant fact that a loosening integration and progressive subdivision of units is not invariably correlated with an increase in the size of groups, and the inherent difficulty of maintaining cohesion.[1]

The present discussion has transcended the domain of economics. Where previously we have attempted to demonstrate the effects of changes in the structure of the labour-unit within the range of economic relations, i.e. on productive organization and the stability of the economic system, we are now studying the significance of these changes for the organization and stability of the social group. We can trace the influence of the changing economic organization upon social structure through wider and wider circles. Take the institution of the Nupe market. We have seen that the peasant attendance of the local village markets coincides with a local group characterized by regular social contacts, intermarriage and 'common living' in general. The market meeting mobilizes the local community, adds to the common interests, and forms an important focus for these contacts and forms of intercourse. Like the labour-unit on a smaller scale, it contributes essentially to social integration. This is no longer true of professional trade, which is carried on across community boundaries, and remains independent of established group-ties. Like the modern labour-unit, professional trade accepts solely the dictate of the impersonal profit motive.

Expanding trade connexions of this kind are only possible in a social system which provides safety and protection outside the narrow boundaries of the local community. They depend, in other words, on the large-scale political organization of the state. Like the economic relations which take place within its confines, the integrative mechanism of the state is essentially impersonal, and based on abstract principles rather than forms of co-adaptation growing from 'common living'. The transformation in the group substratum of economic relations is thus determined by the same concepts which also determine the transformation of the largest group unit, from community to state. Technically, the expansion of trade and commerce, production and exchange, would have been impossible without the corresponding expansion of political control. It would, perhaps, be going too far to say that spiritually also the former would have been impossible without the latter—without the conceptual framework which the latter provided. But we are justified in saying that the two forms of expansion reflect, materially as well as spiritually, two aspects of the same social process.

[1] This latter view was expressed, in the form of a 'social law', by Professor Radcliffe-Brown.

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pas de deux of leaps and cart-wheels which, when executed skilfully, will be greeted with applause or, when less successful, with good-natured laughter and banter. There are special drum-signals for every higher *ena* rank which are sounded when the young men take the scene and join in the dance. Rich age-grade associations, or certain high rank-holders in the association, even have special dances and songs composed for them, which are played, not only at these meetings of the *ena*, but also whenever the *ena* members appear elsewhere at a public gathering. Drummers and woman dancer would walk up to the young man, and the dancer would recite the song which she composed in his honour.

> Moonlight makes all things good to look at.
> The *maba* bids the townsfolk farewell for the night.
> Give us of thy knowledge,
> Ibrahim Ganleyi,
> Thou grandson of wealth.[1]

Drum-signals and songs are not the only symbols of age-grade status. At every such festivity one of the drummers or some self-appointed 'master of ceremonies' will assume the role of an announcer. He is called *maba*; announcer and jester in one, he must be witty and have the gift of the gab. He collects the small gifts of money which guests make to drummers and dancers; he announces the name and rank of the donor and recites the virtues of his ancestors and famous relations (impressiveness counting more than truthfulness), adding such praises or witticisms as seem appropriate to the rank of the donor and the amount of the gift. We see again how closely Bida age-grade etiquette follows its model—the Nupe nobility; it copies every detail of its symbols of status and wealth, even such features as the specific interpretation of dignity forbidding persons of high rank to join in the common dance.

It is easily understood that in the village, along with the model, the copy must be absent also. At the gatherings of the village *ena* professional dancers and musicians are rarely summoned. There is no *maba* and no extolling the feats and virtues of celebrated ancestors. Age-grades and age-grade ranks 'own' their special drum-signals and dances; but they are associated with the group, and not with certain individuals who can afford to pay for the distinction.

The religious events in which age-grade associations participate concern all grades. In the pagan ceremony especially the different grades are allotted different tasks, which imply in varying measure admission to the esoteric ritual activities. The main religious ceremony of pagan Nupe, the *gunnu*, makes the *ena* members the protagonists of its ritual drama and dances. Another ceremony, which occurs only in the Benu

[1] This song, which was composed by the *sanoro* group of dancers (see p. 302), in the honour of the young man called Ibrahim Ganleyi, was recorded at an age-grade feast in the house of a well-known Bida Mallam. It begins in the fashion of all Nupe songs with the quotation of a well-known proverb. The term *maba* which occurs in the second line is explained in the description that follows.

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561 sub-tribe of Kutigi, Enagi, and Dabbā, the *gani* even dramatizes the age-
796 grade structure itself, its system of ranks, and the promotion from grade to grade. The *gani* assigns different ceremonial duties to the different grades, and involves certain symbolic tests of manhood of progressive severity which the different age-grades, one after the other, must undergo. The ceremony can, in fact, be regarded as a ritual of age-grade initiation. However, I must leave the description of this ceremony, closely associated though it is with the conception of age-grades, for a future occasion.

Let us turn to the Mohammedan religious ceremonies. At the celebration of the *Sallah* the age-grade associations play a much less specific role. They arrange a small festivity in the house of their group captains on the eve of the *Sallah*, at which—as in all houses of Bida and Mohammedan Nupe on that evening—a ram is killed and eaten. On the following morning the various *ena* of the town meet in the market to join the thousands of people who will follow the royal procession to the mosque and round the town walls, and gather later in front of the Emir's house, listening to drummers and musicians, and watching the display of the horsemen and the coming and going of the royal guests.

The celebration of the Mohammedan New Year, on the other hand, called *navũ* in Nupe (lit. torches), represents the climax of the public appearances of the Bida *ena*. The *navũ* is essentially a festival of youth. Its ritual acts, which appear to express, symbolically, the death and renewal of the year, are carried out by the young folk of Bida. On the eve of the New Year, at sunset, all the age-grade associations meet in the houses of their captains, and then march to the market of their town quarter, where all the associations of the *ekpã* forgather. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands, and are clad in simple, scanty garments. Three long processions, one in each *ekpã*, move slowly through the streets of Bida, down to the arm of the river flowing through that part of the town. The boys sing and dance while they walk, and throw their torches high up in the air, catching them as they fall. Arrived at the river, they take off their garments, and, clad only in a loincloth, wade into the water. There is no atmosphere of ritual or ceremony about it; they splash and play in the water, dance, wrestle, sing, and laugh at the clumsiness of those who drop and extinguish their torches. All the time the torch-play goes on; they play with the torches like balls, throwing and catching them. It is a dangerous game: I saw many lucky escapes, and quite a few incidents not so lucky.

561 Girls and young women, too, go to the river to bathe on the *navũ*,
796 and the sexual attraction adds its stimulus to the general excitement. The *navũ* is, in fact, the only occasion on which I have seen the Nupe
786 indulge in open, undisguised, sexual play. Torches are thrown into the water to light up the spot where girls are bathing almost naked; boys
579 accost girls in the water, and couples disappear in the dark of the river-banks. But the *navũ* is in more than one respect a period of licence. Indeed, more important than this amorous play is the licence which was extended till about fifteen years ago to all acts of violence and assault that might occur on *navũ* night. And such liberty of action was not

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the 561
torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably 786
led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the
three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one 796
ena would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight 579
would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age- 561
grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the in- 602
dividual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events
with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All 574
members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which 561

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[For information on organized ceremonial, see category 116, pp. 68-115, and 239-244. --Analyst]

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182 the present head of the *ndakó gboyá* society, was invested with the pom-
643 pous title of *Maji Dodo*, Master of the Monster, and with this royal
794 recognition the organization of the society was made subservient to Nupe kingship. One after the other the heads of the society received their titles from the *Etsu* Nupe. Villages and districts which sought the help of the *ndakó gboyá* against witches had to apply first to the king. This new royal prerogative also entailed a considerable economic benefit: for the king shared in the income of the order which was derived from the gifts collected in the villages which had called in the *ndakó gboyá*.[1] But besides tapping a new source of income the co-operation between *Etsu* and anti-witchcraft society meant adding to the centralized temporal jurisdiction the power of spiritual, mystic jurisdiction over the supernatural enemies of society. This powerful prerogative of the king was, in fact, maintained by the Mohammedan Fulani Emirs till very recently.[2]

182 Every performance of these various rituals and cults in the villages
642 and towns of Nupe—and many are still performed every year, long
797 after the disappearance of the Tsoede dynasty—revived and perpetuated the consciousness of this unity which has grown into far more than an external bond of political unification. With the Islamization of the country many of these factors lost their power. The Fulani rulers could use the secret organization of the *ndakó gboyá*; they could seize by force, as they actually did, the royal insignia from the last Nupe king. They could not transfer the authority of the former 'mythical charter' to their own alien rulership. But they could introduce another, younger, and perhaps more powerful uniting force, Islam—Islam as creed and Islam as education. Mosques, a *Liman* and Mallams in every village, these are the instruments of propaganda.[3] And in every religious service, in every babbling little Mallam school this propaganda is enacted. Teaching Islam means teaching the holy cause which sent the conquerors down to this country. Praying to Allah means praying to the God of the powerful and sharing with them, if not their power, their beliefs. But Mohammedanism even becomes a real means of social approach between rulers and ruled. In a country still to a large extent pagan the adoption of Mohammedanism creates something like an intermediary social stratum, placed nearer to the rulers than the rest of the population. Formerly it involved—at least in theory—certain concrete benefits: an increased measure of security, above all, immunity from slave-raids (as the Koran forbids the enslaving of Mohammedans). This rule, however, was never strictly obeyed—unless the religious qualification was supported by the

[661] [1] The *ndakó gboyá* society soon became a means of ruthless exploitation. The king and the members of the society were extorting money from the peasants all over the country on the grounds of ridding their villages of witches. This became so intolerable that eventually the Administration of Bida Emirate had to forbid all performances of the *ndakó gboyá*. (For a fuller description see *Africa*, 1935, 4.)

[2] It is interesting to note that when the independent Emirate of Patigi was created by the Government this new Nupe ruler appointed a second *Maji Dodo* for his country.

[3] Mokwa, a village of 2,000 inhabitants, possesses eight mosques, one of them built in 1934 during my stay in the village.

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more solid bond of political protection embodied in clientship. Attachment to the ruling group thus fused with conversion to its religion. In the early days of Fulani rule hundreds of pagans are said to have flocked into the capital to seek out an important person as their patron and to declare to him—and not to the religious officers of Islam—their readiness to embrace Mohammedanism. They received their turban and sword, insignia of clientship and new creed in one. Of such men the Nupe say not 'they become Mohammedans' but '*a ze goiži*'—'they become Fulani'.

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their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen. 852 304

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests. 585 [292] [302]

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step. 585 797

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585 Afterwards the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, accompanied by her girl friends, her father's younger sister, her mother's brother, as well as some drummers and musicians. If the marriage is between families living in the same village or town, the procession will start after nightfall since it is 'shameful' for the bride to be seen on this occasion (her veil notwithstanding). If the marriage is between villages too far apart for a short walk after dark, the procession starts at daybreak the next morning. Should the bride be then seen by others, which can hardly be avoided, she must kneel down and sob realistically to show 'how ashamed she is'. In Bida, it is now customary for the bride to ride on a more or less beautifully caparisoned horse to her [797] new home—another Mohammedan innovation and another chance for displaying wealth and status.

In the next phase the scene shifts to the bridegroom's house. The bride is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her sleeping hut, which has been decorated and painted. Here she will stay in seclusion, in the company of her aunt, her girl friends and a married woman from the bridegroom's family (usually his mother's younger sister). The women and girls take no share in the 'merry-making' which will presently start in the other parts of the house, but pass their time chatting and singing womens' songs. On the morning after the bride's arrival the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice to the *kuci*, which is an exact replica of the one previously performed in the bride's house and is again attended by an envoy from the other family (now the bride's mother's brother). This ritual is clearly meant to affirm the acceptance of the bride into the new family and lineage and, in duplicating the previous sacrifice in the bride's house, to 'tie', or complete in tying, the marriage bond. It is not surprising that the Mohammedan cere- [797] monial includes no counterpart to this double ritual; for there can be no need to 'tie the marriage' again; while the public announcement of the marriage by the mallam, coupling as it does the names of the spouses as well as the names of their fathers and grandfathers, also obviates the need for a separate ceremonial of 'acceptance'.

On the same day the festivities begin, to which all the friends and relatives of the bridegroom's family are invited. Neither this nor the concluding phase of the wedding feast include any specifically religious features. During the 'merry-making' the emphasis is on the male participants, among whom the bridegroom's age mates figure prominently, typical men's songs and dances being alone performed. The bridegroom himself, in his finery, sits stiffly among the guests without joining in the general fun. The festivities end on the ninth day, and with them ends the segregation of the bride. On

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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpă* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

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We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu* and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults. The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos ceremonials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Paradoxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their traditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

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623 economic control which he exercises, by granting him access to special
554 economic resources (above all, fruit-bearing trees) unattainable to the other members of his group. Thus supported, the titled family head is qualified to assume his double role, as official agent of the community at large and as representative of his group *vis-à-vis* the village community.

The relation between the two roles and their relative preponderance varies with the rank which an elder may attain. For the *nūsa* ranks are not of equal order. They are defined by strict order of precedence, and there is never any doubt which title ranks higher or lower. The measure of political responsibility closely corresponds to the place in the scale of village ranks. In some villages we even find a formal distinction between the 'great' and 'small' ranks, the former three or (more often) four in number, forming as it were the 'inner council'. Where the village is arranged in a number of separate large clusters of compounds (as in Doko, Kutigi, or Sakpe), the distinction between 'great' and 'small' ranks also implies a distinction between headship over the whole cluster of compounds, the *efu*, and headship over single compounds or 'houses' only.[1] The professional ranks of blacksmiths and drummers are always at the bottom of the list of village ranks. The political importance of the rank of the Head of the Hunters and of the ranks which are combined with priestly offices differs in different communities.

623 It would be wrong to think of the village council of elders as of an elaborate, rigidly formalized, instrument of government. The full council is rarely summoned except on important occasions, such as the election of a chief, or the visit of the *Etsu* and his delegates or the District Officer. The normal routine work of village government is carried on by the chief and his 'inner council' of two or three elders of highest rank. And here again we have no formal appointed assembly, but rather casual meetings in the houses of the chief or of one of the elders, at which current questions are discussed and the necessary decisions taken. If more elders have to be consulted or instructed, a messenger will be sent to their houses, or they will call individually at the house of the chief or the head *nūsa*. If in the case of the *nūsaži* of high rank their position of authority transcends the component groups to the headship of which they have risen in virtue of their kinship position, this latter aspect preponderates in the case of the *nūsaži* of lesser rank who are excluded from the 'inner council'. They are executive organs of the village in the indirect sense of intermediaries through whom decisions of the chief and the leading elders reach the various kinship and local groups, and through whom, in turn, these groups can voice claims and interests so far as they call for action on the part of the community.

623 The graded scale of village ranks does not command an unequivocal
554 corresponding system of appointment and succession. Succession to the lowest, professional, ranks is invariably hereditary. So is succession to
184 the priestly ranks or the ranks linked with a priestly office: the secret

[801] [1] In eastern Nupe, especially among Dibo and Beni, the number four plays an important part in the arrangement of *efu* as well as in the order of ranks. We find four *efu* and four ranks, or four head ranks and four secondary ranks, or four ranks plus the chief's rank.

discussed elsewhere.[1] Let us, then, turn back to Nupe religion and summarize its character or 'type' on the lines of our list of competences.

2. *Weltbild*: MORALITY

Nupe religion offers practically no cosmological knowledge; what there is of it is conveyed only by the doctrine and not, symbolically, by ritual. There is no interest in any far-flung picture of the universe such as a detailed mythology might present, nor in any closely reasoned account, the 'supplements' of rational knowledge being restricted to positing a remote, vague creator and enumerating a few of his creations. And here speculation stops at the phenomena intimately affecting human life (health and disease, procreation and death, dreams, certain features of inanimate nature). The rest is simply tacitly accepted. Nor are there attempts to interpret the world in anthropomorphous terms and so bring it nearer to human comprehension. The only link between man and this featureless transcendental world, apart from the supernatural controls somehow placed at his command, is vouchsafed by the belief in reincarnation and in an eternally active life principle. The humanly appealing theme of an other-worldly life is left untouched.

The language in which all this is conveyed is the familiar language of everyday life, simple and intentionally clear. Where the vagueness of the subject precludes satisfactory precision, there is recourse either to a simple 'we don't know' or to attempts at exploring linguistic meanings. The former does not imply any suggestion of a relevant mystery behind the visible world, but merely the placid admission of things unknowable. The latter betrays the conviction that the knowledge about the world, such as it is, is meant to be clear and can be clarified if the workaday tool of language is only carefully examined. This aimed-at clarity is further suggested by the predilection for parables and analogies, for juxtaposition or opposition, and by the many enumerations by twos and fours which pervade the doctrine.

This schematicism is essentially abstract, involving no visual or similarly palpable aids, such as an alignment with colours or spatial orientations. Nor are these invested with symbolic meaning save in a few isolated instances (when black stands for secrecy and evilness, red for prosperity, and right and left for male and female respectively). Enumeration again serves only to order things schematically and clearly, the symbolic potentialities of numbers being ignored: thus there are no lucky or unlucky numbers, no numbers in any other way meaningful (save, in a crude form, in divination).

[1] See my *Foundations*, pp. 256–7 *et seq.*

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Cowrie-shells are a clumsy currency: you have to carry them about in bagfuls, and to count in thousands and tens of thousands. The numerical system of Nupe is fully equal to this task. Its elaboration and lucidity is not the least contribution to the efficiency of the exchange system of the country. Its scope is practically unlimited. A figure like 3,600,000 is expressed by this comparatively simple symbol: *gba kpotwani* (lit. two thousand times eighteen hundred, or, in more detail, two thousand times two hundred times nine). This facility in forming large numbers is due to the existence of a number of simple root words and multiples which are easy to handle. Omitting here the simpler figures 1–9, we find root words for 100, 200, and 2,000, multiples of 100 and 1,000 being formed by a simple multiplication of the root figures. For example, 400 is 200 . 2, i.e. *kpa gúba*, contracted to *kpoba*; 600 is 200 . 3, i.e. *kpa gúta*, contracted to *kpota*; 4,000 is 2,000 . 2, i.e. *gba gúba*, contracted to *gboba*; 6,000 is 2,000 . 3, i.e. *gba gúta*, contracted to *gbaotá*; 10,000 is 2,000 . 5, i.e. *gba gútsũ*, contracted to *gbotsũ*; and so on. A new unit is introduced as an alternative symbol for 20,000 cowries in the form of the *gura*, which is the name for the grass bags in which cowries were formerly packed. Thus 200,000 cowries (the traditional bride-price) make 10 *gura*; 400,000 20 *gura*, and so on. 436 802 [415]

The exchange rate between cowries and British money appears to have undergone some change. The original exchange rate, which I ascertained from the account of bride-price and tribute paid formerly, was 8*d*. for 2,000 cowries. Later the exchange value of cowries rose to 1*s*. for 2,000 cowries. This exchange rate is applied to-day when figures are quoted in cowries. Although cowrie-shells represented a currency in the strict sense of the word, they were used also for certain other purposes beside exchange, and had, above all, a certain value as ornaments. Gourds, bags, and musical instruments were formerly ornamented with cowries; but this practice has fallen into disuse. 436

To this elaborate system of units of exchange corresponds an almost as well-defined system of measures applied to commodities. We have spoken already of the *kpere*, the 'arm-length', a standard length used in measuring cloth; 10 *kpere* give, as we have seen, one full-length cloth. The measures used in selling agricultural produce are even more interesting, as quantities of these commodities do not lend themselves easily to simple forms of standardization. The unit for unthreshed grain is the bundle, *epa* (from *pa*, to tie up) or load, *kara*. It weighs very nearly 60 lb., but its size and weight vary a little according to the quality of the grain: of poorer grain there would be a larger quantity in the bundle, of better-class grain a proportionately smaller quantity, the main point being the equality in the value. Threshed grain is sold in large or small gourds, for which to-day tin bowls and basins are usually substituted. A large basinful of grain, *evo* (lit. gourd), contains twelve small bowls, *kpanu* (the latter taking a little over one pound). One bundle of unthreshed grain is reckoned to correspond to one *evo* of threshed grain. With maize five to six cobs are reckoned to give one small bowl of maize-flour. Rice is sold in large gourds (*evo*) or, more frequently, in small bowls, ten of which as a rule give one gourd. Beans are calculated in 804

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when 'keen' farmers prepare the yam plots for the next year, and re-hoe the yam mounds into ridges to be ready for next year's planting. 241

The harvest of late millet, which falls in November, is the signal that the last 'rush-period' of the year has begun. Let me first describe the harvesting of millet—the method is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. The millet and sorghum varieties cultivated in Nupe grow to a height of 6–8 feet. To reap the corn, the stalks are broken and cut close to the ground, and then laid in bundles in the furrows, where they are left for from five to seven days to dry in the sun (an exception is bulrush-millet, which may have to be dried artificially). Afterwards the heads of the plants are cut off with the bush-knife and carried home in large bundles, 50–60 lb. in weight, while the stalks are left on the fields. These bundles, called *epa*, are the Nupe unit of reckoning for calculating the yield, and also the standard 'load' (*kara*) used in the marketing of unthreshed grain. [804]

The harvesting of late millet almost coincides with the beginning of the second ground-nut harvest. A fortnight or so later sorghum is brought in. Then follows in rapid succession, frequently overlapping, the picking of red pepper, cotton, and beans, while the ground-nut harvest is still going on. Lastly, grass on fallow farms is cut; when the last batches of ground-nuts are dug out, at the end of January, the agricultural cycle is completed.

Let us return for a moment to the harvesting of millet and sorghum. I have mentioned above that the dead stalks of millet and sorghum are left on the farms. Some of the stalks are retrieved after a fortnight, and used for mat-making (see p. 239). The rest, however, is left lying in the fields, till they are destroyed later in the 'burning of the farms'. The same applies to the stalks of maize, the cut-off vines of yam, and the leaves or stems of other plants. Thus the dead plants are allowed to rot on the fields, and fertilizing substance is washed into the soil by the rains which may fall in the weeks or months between the harvesting and the following dry season. This is the native system of 'green manuring' to which I have referred before. The Nupe are well aware of this effect, and say that these stalks and leaves *ẓe taki*, 'become dung'.

The time-factor in reaping and harvesting is less sharply defined than in sowing and planting. Harvesting activities are spread more irregularly over a longer space of time. Certain crops, e.g. yam, cotton, sweet potatoes, and rice, are harvested in stages as the individual plants or batches of plants mature. During the (first) yam harvest, for example, I saw the farmer open two mounds only to close them again, having discovered that the fruit inside was not yet ripe. Again, the picking of certain crops, e.g. ground-nuts, cotton, red pepper, and beans, is a very long-drawn-out operation. But it may be speeded up—and a quick harvest of the 'cash crops' (cotton and ground-nuts) may be an urgent necessity in times of financial stringency—if outside help can be enlisted. The picking of beans, which involves no such motives, is often left till the very last, and carried out leisurely by the family after all the other crops have been brought in.

The harvesting that falls in the middle of the agricultural season, on the other hand, must be carefully fitted into this schedule of farm-work.

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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

326 467 [804]

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

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288 thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family
592 numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker [427] pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d*. in every 3*s*. which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became [357] servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and 286 there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven [804] to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except 443 Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

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804 baskets (*kasa*); fruits and ground-nuts in *kasa* or *kara* (loads). The calculation is fairly precise, one 'load' of shea-nuts, for example, being [435] reckoned to bring 2*s*., or one load of locust-beans 3*d*.

435 These examples suffice to illustrate the clear conception which the Nupe have of measures and marketable quantities. Combined with the universal use of money they result in a well-defined system of market prices. The calculation of market prices in Nupe corresponds closely to variations in supply and demand, above all, to seasonal fluctuations. We have already given instances. I will add here a few more which refer to the staple produce of the country.[1] In April and May 1936 one bundle of unthreshed sorghum was sold for 6*d*., in August and September for 9*d*. to 10*d*., and in certain places even for 1*s*. During the same time the price of bulrush-millet rose from 6*d*. to 1*s*. 6*d*. In April ten yams were sold for 6*d*.; at the beginning of June the price rose to 10*d*., and in July, shortly before the yam harvest, to 1*s*. 8*d*., to fall again in August to 6*d*. In the case of bulrush-millet and yam, the cultivation of which is restricted to certain districts, the fluctuations of price are markedly greater than in the case of the universal food-crop, sorghum. For rice, on the other hand, an expensive foodstuff for which there is only limited demand, and new supplies of which appear on the market three times a year, the price remained unchanged at 2*d*. for a small bowl.

These prices refer to village markets. Prices in Bida are always higher. When grain in the country sells for 6*d*. a bundle, the Bida price is 8*d*.; when the highest price in the country is 10*d*., it will reach in Bida 1*s*. and 2*s*. When yams are sold ten for 6*d*. in the country, the Bida price is ten for 9*d*., and so forth. Industrial products manufactured in Bida, on the other hand, are dearer in the districts, as the middlemen add a certain amount to the original price (between 1*d*. and 2*d*. in the shilling). Goods produced in the country which pass through the hands of the Bida trader on their way to Bida market or to markets abroad become markedly more expensive: thus Kutigi mats produced locally for 11*d*. are sold in Bida for 1*s*. or 1*s*. 2*d*., and abroad, for example in Lokoja, for 1*s*. 6*d*.

These regular variations and fluctuations in price must, to some extent at least, be based on a systematic common knowledge of the conditions which determine supply and demand in the country and which can thus sustain definite expectations of price developments at a given moment. Such a body of common knowledge indeed exists in Nupe. It is embodied in the universal experience that certain commodities are always plentiful in the dry season and get more and more scarce towards the close of the rains. It is also reflected in the generally accepted fact that prices are higher in the capital, which has to import a large proportion of its food-supplies, and which is also wealthier and possessed of a higher standard of living than the rest of the country. These considerations imply a further important fact viz. that distance between area of production and market, and the additional labour and loss of time involved in

[1] Certain fluctuations are determined by increased consumption during the festival season. Thus one sheep fetched 5*s*. in January and 10*s*. to 15*s*. in March, i.e. shortly before the Great Sallah, to fall again to 5*s*. during the rains (see p. 203, n. 1).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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241 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[805] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [825] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you w" see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [241] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from [482] the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [857] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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APPENDIX V

NOTES ON THE NUPE CALENDAR

THE calendar of the Nupe peasant is an agricultural calendar. It is based on lunar months, and starts with the first rains, i.e. roughly in April. From the beginning of the rains the people count twelve, thirteen, and sometimes fourteen months until the new rains break. The last month of the old year (i.e. the 13th or 14th month) is then identified with the first month of the new year. The year is divided into six seasons, each comprising two months, as follows: 805

gbama first rains
zuzūká rainy season
maliká (cf. the Hausa *marka*)—heavy rains
sabaká time of growth
gbāfere cold season
banagū hot season, or small-pox season.

Frequently, however, the Nupe peasant refers to the different months of the year by their number only, speaking of 'first month', or 'second month', and so on. The name *zuzūká* is also used to denote the whole rainy season, and the whole dry season is called *yikére*, which means, literally, harvest.

This calendar is the pre-Islamic, original, Nupe calendar, which is rapidly going out of use, specially in Bida and the larger, semi-Mohammedan, villages, being superseded by a Nupe adaptation of the Mohammedan calendar. The latter, also operating with twelve lunar months, may coincide with the Nupe peasant calendar in the years when the Mohammedan New Year falls in the neighbourhood of April. But when the two do not coincide, and differ by a month or more, the time reckoning of the peasants in the semi-Mohammedan districts is thrown into serious confusion.[1] The Mohammedans, incidentally, unlike the pagan peasants, use the names of the months rather than the numbers. The Nupe-Mohammedan names of the months are as below. It will be seen that the idea of the original Nupe calendar, with its twin months grouped in six seasons, has been preserved in the new nomenclature: 805 184

1. *Etswa navū*—month of the torches (so called after the custom of throwing fire-brands during the celebration of the Mohammedan New Year).
2. *Etswa bawa gani*—month preceding the *gani* (a Nupe ceremony).
3. *Etswa gani*—month of the *gani*.
4. *Etswa togaya*—'twin month' (taken over from Hausa).
5. *Etswa togaya guba*—second twin month. These two months are believed to be unlucky, and no important events, such as a wedding or naming-ceremony, will be celebrated during them.
6. *Etswa bawa azū za gbakó*—month preceding the fast of the old men (i.e. first part of Ramadan).

[1] In June 1936, travelling from Kutigi to Jebba, I found that the Mohammedanized people of Kutigi were counting the second month, while the pagan Jebba Islanders maintained that it was the fourth.

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7. *Etswa azū za gbakó*—month of the fast of the old men.
8. *Etswa bawa azū*—month preceding the (general) fast (i.e. Ramadan).
9. *Etswa azū*—month of the (general) fast.
10. *Etswa Salagi*—month of the small 'Sallah' (the first Mohammedan *Id* festival).
11. *Etswa bawa Salakó*—month preceding the great 'Sallah'.
12. *Etswa Salakó*—month of the great 'Sallah' (the second *Id* festival).

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With so much variety it is impossible to select a particular community whose rituals would be 'typical' of Nupe practice; rather, each village cycle of rituals is typical (or atypical) in its own way. Yet neither is it possible to describe every variety of Nupe ritual (several of which I only knew from hearsay or from informants' reports). What seems more important is to examine some such cycle of rituals within the setting in which it operates, that is, within the corporate life of the community for which it is primarily valid or, in Nupe parlance, by which it is 'owned'.[1] As regards the question, which particular cycle of rituals to select, I propose to resolve it by taking two instances, one from Doko and the other from Jebba Island. This compromise seems the most expedient both since I have actually observed the majority of rituals in these two places and since these represent an interesting contrast, Doko being a 'typical' inland village, with hereditary chieftainship, and Jebba Island a riverain community where chiefs are elected. Let me add that, from other points of view, both communities are also 'atypical'; Jebba, because it is one of the two villages possessing major 'relics' of Tsoede; and Doko, because it formerly belonged to a federation of villages (or 'towns' as the Nupe would say), which type of political organization is unique in Nupe country. As regards the two communities themselves, a full description has been given elsewhere and need not be repeated.[2]

One further point of more general import may be anticipated. In spite of the great variety of local cults the number of rituals performed and their place in the year's cycle do not differ greatly in the different communities. Usually there are one or two movable rituals, rarely more, and two or three fixed rituals, only a few villages having four or five; and though the dates of the fixed rituals vary somewhat from place to place, they fall more frequently in certain months (e.g. the 9th and 11th) than in others (e.g. the 3rd or 5th).[3] The corresponding months in our calendar, incidentally, can only be calculated approximately since the Nupe reckon in lunar months, the year beginning with the onset of the rains, and insert a 13th month every five years. In other years the 1st month is usually also called the 13th, especially when the rains are late, which not infrequently leads to confusion, some localities being temporarily a month out in their reckoning.[4]

[1] I am here using the phrase 'primarily valid' since certain rituals imply an additional, wider validity (or 'ownership') which extends to the whole sub-tribe or even tribe. This point will be examined later (see below, p. 103).

[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 19, 25, 35. [3] See the chart on p. 69.

[4] In 1934, for example, the 1st month was taken to have begun on March 15th in the eastern part of Nupe, but at the end of April I found that the people of Mokwa, in the west, had just started with their 1st month. For a fuller description of the Nupe calendar, see *A Black Byzantium*, Appendix V.

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Nupe religion is 'national', not 'universal'. Where the group equals the village community, the coincidence of validity and group is no longer entirely true. More precisely, the validity of the ritual holds on two different planes, both coinciding with and extending beyond the group boundaries. Thus every ritual is valid for the community which actually performs it, promising its various benefits to that congregation; and every ritual is further valid for the wider or widest group of which the congregation forms a part. This wider validity may again be of two kinds. First, the group performing the ritual may regard it as a task (a privileged task) apportioned to it within the embracing social unit, so that each performance is understood to contribute to the welfare of that unit and also affirms its existence; as we have seen, this is true of several rituals in the river area and, on the widest plane, of the rituals associated with Tsoede and the kingdom of Nupe.[1] Secondly, the community performing the ritual may merely know that other villages in the tribe or perhaps sub-tribe 'own' an identical observance; so that every performance will recall and confirm the existence of a larger human aggregate of like customs and beliefs. In the first case, then, the single village community sees itself as belonging to an embracing association in which it has a part to play; in the second, as belonging to a particular species of humanity. In either case the purely religious aims merge with notions of group existence and relationships.

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2. THE PROMISE OF RITUAL

The discussion of the validity of rituals, which is bound up with the promises they hold out, leads us at once to the crucial questions—how do rituals fulfil their promise? and how do they convey the hope, or perhaps certainty, that their professed aims will in fact come true?

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Consider that the rituals are being performed incessantly through the generations and have undoubtedly, at times at least, been followed by the desired results; thus there must be in existence a body of knowledge, empirical if misconstrued, bearing out the believed-in efficacy. Consider further that the fixed rituals are concerned mainly with 'ends' and 'new beginnings', that is, with the overall repetitiveness of natural life—with the cycles of the seasons, with birth, with the growing of crops, with the rise and fall of the river. This repetitiveness is well known empirically, independently of any belief in supernatural agencies. The

[1] We note the same principle of 'delegation' which also underlies Nupe priestship, though the 'privileged task' now falls, not to individuals, but to sections of the society at large or to groups within groups.

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*796 traditional Nupe calendar shows this clearly, naming as it does the various parts of the year 'First rain', 'Nothing-but-rain', 'Growing-time', 'Hot time', 'Cold time'. If the rituals are meant to ensure that life goes on being what it has always been, they merely aim at preserving a normality which one knows to be such. In other words, if you accept that there should be such rituals, then you will find that their aims come true. Purely practically, the rituals would seem to be supererogatory efforts; yet just because they are so supererogatory they are also self-confirming. But the question of supererogation does not really arise; for the Nupe, like all people, are capable of thinking on different planes. On one plane, there is an empirical 'normality', valid for all ordinary intents and purposes. On another, this normality is part of divine creation, which includes, with the natural order of things, also that mystic order of which ritual is an item. It is not a question of one conditioning the other or being necessary for the other; the two belong together and to the same design; both exist, and fit. And from this fit, so conceived that it demonstrates itself in the familiar regularities of life, one derives, not merely hope or confidence, but certainty.

*796 This is still an incomplete view both of the universe as the Nupe picture it and of the efficacy of their rituals. The former also contains accidents, and the latter are meant to secure also benefits beyond those vouched for by some summary 'normality'. This is true especially of the movable rituals which deal with unforseen contingencies; but the fixed rituals, too, aim at such things as freedom from illness, prolific childbirth, prosperity, the disappearance of evil, that is, at the control of uncertainties. Here the ritual efforts, no longer self-confirming, can only convey a hope or strengthen confidence.

The nature of ritual as the Nupe conceive it betrays the same wavering between hope and certainty. As we know, it is a procedure, a rule of acting, which actuates a portion of cosmic force. In this sense, then, it is a machine, set in motion and working towards predetermined results. At the same time the procedure belies its own efficacy; for part of it is a *prayer*, not an automatically effective spell, that is, an invocation and appeal. One begs God to bring about what the performance of the ritual acts are themselves trusted to bring about. I do not think that I have misread the paradox in this situation. The *mamma* ritual would seem to express it most clearly. For there one employs a 'medicine' which is in itself automatically powerful and masks which are equally charged with some autonomous force; yet one also prays—'May God cause . . .' Nor can this ambiguity be reduced by calling the prayer a request for divine blessing, without which the ritual

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the tenth day she will for the first time sweep the hut, having until 585
then been waited upon by her companions, and join the other women of the house in the routine of household work. But she may not yet leave the women's part of the house and hence still remains separated from her husband. The same evening she sits down outside her hut, where she is visited by all the relatives and friends of her new family, receiving a small gift of money or kolanuts from each. This custom is called the 'buying of shame', since the bride will no longer need to feel ashamed when meeting the strangers among whom she is to live. On the twelfth day the concluding observance takes place. In the morning the bridegroom sends two fowls, one cock and one hen, to the bride's mother or, if she lives in another village, to his bride's aunt who has come with her. This woman will cook the fowls, adding various spices, and take them at midday back to the bridegroom. The hen is then sent to the bride, who will offer a small portion to her mother-in-law and eat the rest together with her companions. The cock is cut in two, the bridegroom and his best friend eating one portion, while the other is eaten by his father, alone in his hut. Afterwards the bride's companions finally depart, leaving her by herself in her new home. Now, as the Nupe put it, the 'path is open at last', that is, the marriage will be consummated the same night.

No religious significance is attributed to the observance just described, which pagans and Mohammedans alike perform; it is merely taken to express or affirm, in the manner of an obvious gesture, the new, friendly relationships which are henceforth to obtain between the husband and his wife's family, and between the bride and her in-laws. In this sense the observance represents the last step in the circuitous traditional procedure of 'tying the marriage'. That this exchange of food includes both a male and a female animal would seem to throw into relief the crucial nature of the occasion, the union of man and woman. But the fact that men eat the cock and women the hen appears to harbour also a [812] further meaning, namely, an expression of that sharp dualism of male and female which pervades the whole of Nupe philosophy.

(iii) *Death*

Of the three 'crises of life' death is most heavily weighted with 764
ceremonial. This seems consistent with the trend of Nupe religion, to emphasize 'ends' rather than 'beginnings'. But it does not reflect the more sinister nature of the event, doubly sinister, it might be thought among a people ignorant of after-life and knowing only the vague chance of reincarnation. For though death itself is always felt to be uncanny and disturbing, the ritual elaboration is heaviest at the death of old people, in which one

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We must now ask—to what extent is this knowledge empirically sound and the skill rationally employed? It can obviously not be entirely so since the non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, credited as it is with remote effects upon objects or human actions, reveals at first sight already its non-empirical, miraculous nature. Yet the twofold use of medicine, therapeutic as well as non-therapeutic, suggests the corresponding distinction between rational practices and others irrational or 'magical'. To some extent this will prove a valid distinction, though one far less clear-cut or consistent; and this in turn is partly due to the ambiguity of the concept of rationality when it is applied to the practices of a primitive people. For they may act with rational intent but insufficient or faulty knowledge, so that their would-be empirical practices will conflict with our scientific knowledge, and hence strike us as irrational or 'magical'; while in a sense the converse case may equally occur.

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I spoke of this before and need here only state the four possibilities entailed in these considerations. First, a procedure 'subjectively' rational, involving for the people the application of ordinary learned skills, may also be 'objectively' rational, that is, appropriate to the ends for which it is employed. Secondly, a subjectively rational procedure may prove futile and incongruous when assessed by 'objective' standards. Thirdly, a procedure professedly supernatural or mystical may yet prove appropriate, concealing some valid empirical principle. Lastly, a professedly mystical procedure may be such also from our point of view, that is, empirically false and incapable of achieving the ends for which it is employed.

Before examining each possibility in turn we must restate our criteria for assessing the mystical as against the professedly rational intent behind *cigbe* practice. In a very general sense, every *cigbe* procedure implies both kinds of intent. For even though Nupe medicine is, by definition, 'knowledge', which is usually purely technical as well as transferable through tuition or purchase, it is also given a mythical pedigree and related to the remoteness of God.[1] But these mystical associations are left almost entirely unemphasized, furnishing only a vague and ineffectual background, and can thus be disregarded. If, then, we are to credit certain procedures with mystical intent, they must exhibit it in a more pronounced and specific fashion. In the most obvious case the manufacture or application of *cigbe* will involve invocations of the deity and sacrifices proper, that is, open appeals for supernatural intervention. Where these are absent, we may yet search for that other evidence, of awe, fear, and a sense of the extraordinary or miraculous, which would set the procedure apart from pursuits

[1] See above, p. 18.

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755 and interests of a profane kind. The 'sense of the extraordinary'
757 if it is not vouchsafed by verbal expressions, is clearly the most
813 difficult to identify. But it is at least likely to go together with uncommon procedures and with rigid rules, barring even minute departures from a given course of action, that is, with ritualization. In sum I would list these criteria of professedly mystical as against professedly rational intent: the degree of ritualization implied in the preparation or application of medicines; their secrecy or otherwise; their commercial or non-commercial, public or private character; the diverse ways in which the knowledge of *cigbe* is transmitted; and the different kinds of faith placed in it.

If previously we described 'ritual' behaviour as behaviour exhibiting a degree of rigidity not accounted for by its professed aim, we may now say, of the 'ritualized' procedure of *cigbe*, that its rigidity is not accounted for by the rational intent. For the Nupe, the latter lies in the application of material substances which as such possess a given efficacy. But often we find additional and incongruous rules such as these: certain medicines may only be prepared in certain months of the year; in certain treatments a particular procedure must be repeated three times; in the operation of setting a broken limb four splints (no more and no less) must be used. Here, then, the Nupe no longer rely on the empirical or pseudo-empirical knowledge of 'ingredients'; rather, they abandon their own 'scientific' principles, diluting them with rules of a different order—with ritual, and hence with 'mystic' observances.

Again, certain medicines, their preparation and disposal, are cloaked in rigorous secrecy, while others are not secret or no more secret than the skills or tricks of a particular trade. The latter kind is usually freely bought and sold, while the secret medicines can be given away only with special formalities or not at all, being accessible only to the relatives or perhaps friends of the 'owner'; so that some medicines are available to the public, like any commercial commodity, and others are unalterably 'private'. As we know, the knowledge of *cigbe* is mostly transmitted through
[428] ordinary teaching, and is such as any clever, observant, or widely-travelled person can acquire; but occasionally it is hereditary, the ultimate provenance of the knowledge remaining unexplained. Finally, while no one would assume that ordinary remedies, administered without ceremonial, are infallible, precisely this faith is put in the other, 'miraculous', medicines, even if they involve no explicit appeals to the deity.

These features, however, occur with varying degrees of definiteness; and, though they all hang together logically, they do not always appear together in practice. But considered singly, they

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offer only ambiguous criteria. Ritualization, for example, especially when it is slight, may represent only an item of 'knowledge', empirically futile and 'superstitious', but for all that entirely profane. And secrecy may attach to medicines, not because they are sacred or credited with miraculous efficacy, but because they are morally reprehensible. Our assessment of 'mystical' and 'rational' intent will therefore sometimes be uncertain and admit of borderline cases. Even so, it enables us to examine *cigbe* practice in the terms of the four 'possibilities' mentioned before.

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(i) It is clear that this possibility can apply only to the therapeutic medicines. But only very few even of these satisfy our two conditions of rational intent and objective appropriateness. For several of the therapeutic medicines require the accompaniment of invocations or sacrifices, or otherwise exhibit at least an admixture of mystical intent; and those which do not, often fail on the second count. It is clear, however, that in this relatively backward society we must not assess the appropriateness or otherwise of remedies by too exacting a standard. Thus, if they do not conflict in principle with our scientific ideas and are such that their efficacy might at least conceivably be of the alleged kind, their actual worthlessness may be ignored; at least, it does not make them 'mystical', but only shows them to be crude, inadequate, or ill-chosen. This would be true of such remedies as herbal potions used for intestinal troubles, of salves or powders rubbed into snake-bites, or of certain simple surgical treatments. Few of these betray any true medical lore; the surgical operations are rarely applied and have little merit; most potions or salves prove on chemical analysis to have no positive value, though I found none that was actually harmful and a few that had a slight medicinal property, such as the absorptive or laxative effect of charred vegetable matter. Even so, these practices are at least of the right kind or resemble the right kind of treatment, and will for this reason be included in our first category.

Many more treatments are without even this semblance of appropriateness, suggesting merely blundering attempts, unguided even by faulty knowledge. Lunacy, for example, is treated by means of inhalations; smallpox is prevented by burning herbs in the entrance hut; pregnancy, by the wearing of a 'magic' belt; and for rheumatic pains one has this abstruse cure: the patient stands inside a hut, pressing the aching part of his body against the wall; the doctor stands outside and holds the 'medicine' with his foot against the wall, opposite the place where, on the inside, the patient's body touches the wall; the doctor then slowly drags the medicine to the ground, thus 'drawing the pain from the body'. Though this treatment seems to imply some crude

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755 reasoning from analogy, it clearly belongs, with all the other treat-
757 ments just mentioned, to our second category, of practices utterly incongruous and not even conceivably capable of the alleged effects.

● 813 We must add, further, that a great many therapeutic remedies are ascribed so multifarious an efficacy that their 'rational' application to one kind of ailment is belied by the other, extravagant claims. The same substance will serve as an antidote for snake-bite, as a cure for headaches, and as a potion applied in ordeals; and a herbal concoction for intestinal troubles will also be used to cure rheumatic pains in the fantastic manner just described. Thus the borderline between rational and pseudo-rational treatments is once more blurred, and the province of the former narrowed further. And here we may note that in a sense the Nupe wish to keep it narrow. For the one version of medicine which comes nearest to satisfying our two conditions of rational intent and empirical (if crude) appropriateness, that practised by the barber-doctors, is also criticized for this very reason. The barber-doctors
[759] are entirely profane practitioners, whose skill is a matter of cleverness and learning, involves no secrecy, and is at the disposal of all who can pay for their services. But their practice is largely restricted to the capital and the more sophisticated large villages, and little known or little thought of elsewhere. Indeed, the country people simply laugh when you suggest that the barbers have a knowledge of *cigbe*; 'barbers', I was always told, 'know no *cigbe*; all they can do is to cure headache'. Now some of my informants certainly knew that this was incorrect; furthermore, several village *cigbe* of the secret and mystical kind were also supposed to cope with headache. It was therefore not the efficacy of the remedies which the people held in ridicule but their purely profane character; and in denying that the barbers possessed any worthwhile knowledge of medicine, they really denied that their knowledge deserved the name of medicine. We note, then, a bias towards excluding from the genus *cigbe* those remedies which combine all the characteristics of a rational practice. The true *cigbe*, the people seem to feel, must at least in some respects bear the mark of the extraordinary or 'magical'. But this is no more than a bias since even in the villages where the art of the barber-doctors was so de-
[369] rided there exist purely profane, would-be rational remedies.[1] Their number, however, is strikingly small; so that in the peasant culture of Nupe, unlike the urban culture of the capital, the non-mystical or non-'magical' *cigbe* represents an exception from the rule.

[1] Also, this 'bias' is being obliterated by the modern usage of the word *cigbe* for all European drugs and medical appliances, in which the Nupe see nothing transcendental or magical, but the application of 'knowledge' proper.

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(ii) We have already mentioned the therapeutic medicines which fall in this category in virtue of their fantastic nature or of the extravagant claims made for them. We need only add that there are no non-therapeutic *cigbe*, that is, medicines at first sight already 'miraculous' and irrational, which are handled in a would-be rational manner; all also imply at least some expression of mystical intent. 755 757 813

(iii) Strictly speaking, this possibility of professedly mystical but unwittingly appropriate practices does not apply to Nupe medicine. Trance possession attributed to spirits, magic dances meant to cure mental disorders, and similar treatments which might conceal a psycho-therapeutic efficacy under the mystical trappings are altogether absent. But the combination of invocations and sacrifices with remedies which are 'of the right kind' constitutes a borderline case since the people would attribute the success of the remedy (such as it is) as much to supernatural intervention as to the inherent properties of the ingredients employed. In a sense even the most absurd therapeutic remedies have a share of such a concealed empirical efficacy. In calling them absurd and worthless we were considering only their intrinsic inappropriateness to the effects ascribed to them; we cannot deny that the patient's trust in the efficacy of the medicine or the repute of the doctor may well produce at least an apparent relief. Which means, further, that the practitioner's medical notions will repeatedly receive some empirical support, whose spuriousness he is unable to judge.

(iv) Our last category comprises all the non-therapeutic medicines and a considerable number of therapeutic ones. Their objective irrationality cannot be mistaken. When a potion is said to make a person invisible, a salve to secure invulnerability, a herbal concoction kept in the village to keep away smallpox, or a powder applied to a hoe to double the farm output, there can clearly be no question but that only a miracle could make these 'medicines' effective. Nor is the mystical intent any less certain, being visible in the prescribed invocations, sacrifices, forms of ritualism, and so forth. It is interesting to note that several of these practices are based upon the principle 'like causes like'; by itself, this spurious 'theory would not establish the mystical intent since for the people it represents only one more item of would-be scientific knowledge. The same principle, in fact, also underlies a few therapeutic and strictly profane cures. But it seems significant that it is employed on a large scale only in the fully irrational practices, that is, in situations where success is vouchsafed also by mystical procedures. In other words, false knowledge tends to go together with transcendental guarantees (though more sound knowledge does not necessarily discard them).

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755 Let me summarize. By our criteria of rational and mystical
757 intent the whole range of non-therapeutic *cigbe* together with a
813 good portion of the therapeutic ones would fall in the category of transcendental practices (religious or 'magical'); while only the rest of the cures proper, good, bad, and indifferent, would belong on the side of reason or near-reason. And since a great many of the cures in the former category are 'objectively' as futile or absurd as the non-therapeutic variety, it may be said that the Nupe tend to treat as 'magical' what is, by all standards, magical and to aim at miraculous effects by means openly designed for miracles.

2. PHARMACOPOEIA NUPEANA

757 It seems convenient to insert here a fuller description of Nupe
278 medicines and medical (or pseudo-medical) treatments. Their
759 therapeutic or non-therapeutic character will become clear from the description, as will also the share of 'irrational' or mystical observances. We must, however, anticipate the various classes of medicine experts and briefly state their respective specialities. First, we have the guild of barber doctors, who are all Mohammedans and whose craft is entirely therapeutic and would-be empirical; a few minor instances of 'ritualization' do not contradict the generally rational intent. Secondly, there is the corresponding and predominantly pagan order of *cigbeciži* or *bociži* ('medicine-men'), whose practice, both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, invariably betrays mystical intent. Thirdly, there are a few individual experts who belong to neither organization and may employ any kind of *cigbe*. Lastly, we shall meet with the owners of hereditary medicines, vested in the lineage or (in Nupe parlance) 'house'; these are both therapeutic and non-therapeutic, and always conspicuously mystical. In one isolated case a conspicuously 'mystical' medicine is owned by a whole community. Let me also recall that some medical practitioners are diviners at the same time, though there is no firmer link between the two professions.

757 These are some of the remedies known to the barber-doctors of
278 Bida. Stomach trouble is treated by means of various potions: one consists of the infusion of a certain swamp plant; another, of the infusion of the charred bark of the oil-palm, sheanut tree or locust-bean tree, mixed with natron;[1] a third, of the pounded roots of a certain tree, mixed with powdered eggshell, dried in the sun and then taken with water. Light headache is cured by burning a certain common plant and making the patient inhale the fumes,

[1] The 'natron' is natural carbonate of soda from Lake Chad which is on sale in all Nupe markets.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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173 the kingdom, and its common knowledge constitutes the first and foremost of these common beliefs and forms of cultural 'commonness' which supply the background of political unity. I have found the consciousness of this tradition developed most strongly in the river area and among the Beni, that is, in the area that marks what I have called the 'core' of the expanding kingdom. It is totally absent to-day, and most probably has always been absent, among the Dibo, who have never formed part of the old kingdom, and among some of the Nupe-ized groups (such as the 'Gbari slaves') which, absorbed into Nupe in more recent times, have remained culturally 'Outside Peoples'. The distribution of the 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom and the boundaries of the kingdom itself coincide.

To go on with the tradition of Tsoede. For sixty years he reigned in Gbara; he died, 120 years old, on one of his military expeditions to the north, near Gbagede. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and his sword, are still kept as almost sacred treasure by the people of Gbagede (who are Kamberi, not Nupe). At the time of Tsoede's death the kingdom of Nupe was expanding towards the north, and his four sons who succeeded him as kings of Nupe, one after the other, are said to have founded Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, as their temporary capital. Another of his descendants, Abdu Waliyi, founded the capital Jima, on the Kaduna opposite Gbara.[1] The fifteenth king after Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned according to Nupe genealogies about 1770, was the first Nupe king to become Mohammedan. He was deposed by his son and died in exile, in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen. Under *Etsu* Ma'azû, the nineteenth king of Nupe, Nupe kingdom reached its greatest power. During his reign, about 1810, Mallam Dendo, also called Manko, 'Great Mallam', a Fulani from Kebbi who was destined to change the whole fate of Nupe kingdom, is said to have first appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and seller of charms. With *Etsu* Ma'azû we also reach, for the first time, in this account, the plane of 'objective history'; his death is recorded by one of the first European visitors to Nupe as having occurred in 1818.[2]

THE FULANI CONQUEST

175 [814] We enter now a period of Nupe history which is illuminated by the light of 'real' history. It is described with many details in the written records of Nupe court historians, the earliest of whom was a certain Abduramani, a Mohammedan scholar who seems to have lived in Rabá in the early days of Fulani rule. It was during this period, too, that European travellers first penetrated into Nupe.[3]

[1] In addition to the historical capitals of the kingdom, Gbara, Mokwa, Jima, and finally Rabá (see below), the Nupe records also mention certain other places at which the Nupe kings are said to have resided temporarily at various times, viz. Etsù, Jengi, and Yeti.

[2] Journal of Rev. J. F. Schoen and Samuel Crowther, *Expedition up the Niger*, 1842, p. 191.

[3] I owe to the kindness of the Administration the opportunity of having been able to consult unpublished Government records, compiled by the first officers who were serving in this area; I must acknowledge specially the very complete 'Notes on Nupe History', by Major Burdon (1902).

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CHAPTER XXII
EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

871 AS education in the widest sense must be described all efforts, organized or otherwise, which tend to impart to individuals habitual forms of acting and thinking. Understood in this sense, every social institution involves educational activities by means of which individuals are led to acquire the behaviour-patterns that make up the institution. Thus our description of economic life has involved the description of certain educational techniques—the training in productive methods, the imparting of economic knowledge, or of concepts of property and wealth. But most societies also operate with more formalized methods of education, specific educational institutions which make it their business to train the rising generation in forms of acting and thinking regarded as essential by the society. We shall deal in this chapter with these formalized educational institutions, of which there are two in Nupe: the institution of the Koran school, concerned with Mohammedan religious teaching, and the institution of age-grade associations. The shortest definition of an educational institution is by the 'type' which it is meant to produce. In this sense we can say that Mohammedan religious education produces the Mallam, the Mohammedan scholar, and the age-grade associations the *zoon politikon* as understood in Nupe. We shall see that in certain respects both types of education can be identified with motives and aims underlying the political system, and thus with institutions devoted to what I have called in the heading of this chapter 'Education for Citizenship'.

MALLAM SCHOOLS

814 There are many degrees and varieties of Mohammedan learning. The
875 title 'Mallam'—*mân* in Nupe—which one encounters so often among the
554 Nupe, is by no means a safe guide. For the man who has gone through a few years' study of the Koran, having learned by heart a few *sura*; the sand-diviner or charm-seller who writes out verses from the Koran and sells them as amulets; the man who has acquired real learning and scholarship, and who can read and write in Arabic and possibly in Hausa—they all are called Mallam. Though the title is used indiscriminately, no Nupe ignores the essential difference between scholarship and the thin veneer of semi-learning. The Nupe distinguish two grades of learning: the lower grade is the study of the Koran (*kurani*), which consists mostly in the memorizing of prayers and whole pages and chapters from the Koran; the higher grade is called *kpikpe*, knowledge, or *litafi* (Hausa), book, and consists in the study of Arabic and the careful reading of the Koran and the better-known commentaries. The most advanced scholars would study, in addition to these books, also the historical records of the Nigerian Emirates which have been compiled (in Hausa, written in Arabic script) by scholars of former days. Only a student of 'knowledge' can claim to be a 'real' Mallam. While there are

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hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaka*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katũ*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe.

The Mallams are, above all, teachers. They teach both children and adults, the former the Koran and the latter 'knowledge'. Every Mallam may, besides, be called in to perform a marriage ceremony or to officiate at a funeral—services for which they are remunerated according to their status and reputation. A few are well-to-do and own land, which is worked by their sons and pupils or, in some cases, by wage-labour. But most Mallams practise, in addition to teaching, some other occupation, which may or may not be associated with their scholarly profession, to supplement the meagre income of a Koran teacher. Some write out and illuminate pages of the Koran, or copy Arabic manuscripts, for sale. You can buy a sheet of this sort, very beautifully illuminated, for 5*d*. on the Bida market; more ambitious scribes would sell a whole copy of the Koran and receive for it—the work of five months—£1. Students of 'knowledge' eagerly buy these copies and use them in their studies. Other Mallams, again, embroider gowns, make straw hats or saddle-cloths, or do tailoring.

The size and standard of the Koran schools varies as widely as the status and standard of learning of the Mallams. You find 'schools' with two little boys for pupils, and these close relations of the teacher; and you find others—the schools of famous Bida scholars—the classrooms of which (as a rule the *katamba* in the Mallam's house) are crowded with pupils. The teachers are very jealous of the reputation of their school. When I was a regular visitor to Bida Koran schools the Mallam of one which I had not yet visited came to me complaining that I had left out his school, and quoted as reference a Bida Mallam of very high standing who was a special friend of mine. In the large Koran schools the Mallam himself teaches only the adult students of 'knowledge', while the elementary teaching is carried out by his sons or certain advanced pupils.

[1] Bida learning has a great reputation even outside Nupe; Mallams from Bida have been given important posts in other countries, and several Bida Koran teachers have established flourishing schools in Ilorin.

[2] One aspect of this spiritual advice is divining, which, as we have seen, plays an important part even in such political activities as the election of a high officer of state or the preparation for war.

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[814]

without the sphere of religion we may say of the latter that it is an expression (among others) of the basic intellectual orientation of the people. There is one exception, however. In the secular sphere the Nupe are keen historians, always interested in tracing things back to their past. In their religious conceptions this interest is almost entirely absent; so far as it exists, it ceases to be religious, being satisfied with summary references to extraneous, political-historical events, such as the introduction of a cult by Tsoede or the origin of some religious practice in the reign of a particular king. At this point the attitudes towards things sacred and profane diverge; only the latter require a precise time perspective; the former are simply given, or adequately explained by that timeless *ultima causa*, the deity.

To return for a moment to the Nupe bias for dualistic conceptions. Though we have grouped it with the other 'intellectual orientations', with predilection for enumerations, parables, and so forth, it clearly betrays more than this kind of predisposition, serving also to articulate the sharply felt and emotionally weighted antagonism of the sexes, as in witchcraft fantasies and in the belief in the deadly female 'germ' of the 'diseases of God'. And since the awareness of this antagonism springs from unconscious sources, it would seem to be of a different and more fundamental order than the other expressions of the dualistic bias. Shall we, then, hold the two apart? Even so, there remains the uniformly dualistic *Weltbild*, whether it expresses the unconscious sexual anxieties of men or their dispassionate intellectual efforts to order the phenomena of the world. Or shall we assume some play of cause and effect between the two, taking the awareness of sex antagonism to be at the root of the intellectual bias, in the sense that it shaped a predisposition towards finding dichotomies also in all other areas of experience? Clearly, we might equally assume the opposite, that is, that the conception of sex antagonism in witchcraft and elsewhere would not have crystallized had it not been facilitated by a congenial intellectual predisposition. There is, I think, no answer to these questions. The dualistic viewpoint is simply one of the cardinal possibilities upon which the human intellect can seize in structuring the world of experience; and the antagonism of male and female represents once more one of very few possibilities available to societies, or to man in society, in their efforts to structure the universe of human relationships. All we can legitimately say is that the two emerged together, in mutual consistency.

The witchcraft belief simply that other dichotomy, of 'good' and 'evil', as does the belief in spirits and in the character of humans inscrutably fashioned by God. But this dichotomy is formulated only on this cosmic scale, referring to the 'things that are in the

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N G 771 177 794 the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

N 771 177 So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

N [766] At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which N [821] have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

N 771 177 842 The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

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It is easy enough for the diviner to guess the status and background of his clients, and hence their likely interests, even if they are strangers to him. For dress and general behaviour reveal a good deal in Nupe; and the questions put to a diviner are usually sufficiently specific to give him such clues as he may need. Well-known personages, incidentally, such as members of the high nobility, never consult a diviner in person; they send messengers who are not supposed to divulge the names of their employers. But these messengers are usually servants or retainers of the nobleman in question, and as well known as he. 787

Generally speaking, the Nupe diviner tends to be optimistic; if some trouble is forecast, the suggestion of a ready remedy or some warning easily observed would accompany the prophecy. I have, in fact, not met with any prophecy which was outright disastrous. Nor is the Nupe diviner given to cryptic statements; ambiguous though his technical vocabulary may be, his communications to clients are clear and straightforward. Occasionally he makes use of symbolic allusions, which are, however, readily understood; thus the mention of 'dark' or 'black' things means that the prospect is bleak or frightening; 'white' means luck and good prospects, while 'red' indicates wealth, ampleness, prosperity. [822]

In order to gain a clear picture of the variety of problems on which diviners are usually consulted, I employed a crude statistical technique. I supplied four diviners with sheets of paper on which I drew rough pictures representing certain expected topics and instructed them to mark, underneath, their visitors, day by day for one month—a stroke for a man and a circle for a woman. Cross-strokes were meant to indicate repeated visits, while space was left for additional topics. It must be noted that all four men had a high reputation in their locality so that the size of their clientele, which proved to differ widely, did not reflect their unequal renown. Rather surprisingly, the largest and most regular clientele was that of a diviner in Bida, where I should have expected the competition of sand-divining to have spoiled the market for the pagan variety. The next best clientele was that of a diviner in Saci, a small hamlet near Bida, while the custom of two diviners in the heart of the country, in Kutigi and Jebba, was markedly smaller. The season of the year, incidentally, did not seem to affect the diviner's business.

The Bida diviner had thirty-seven male and twelve female visitors in a month (in March); of these five men had come twice, and one man three times. The diviner knew personally only one of his clients, who was his brother-in-law and came from Doko. The diviner in Saci was consulted twenty-eight times by men and twice by women (in January); three men had come twice, four men

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the freshly cut grain eaten in certain sacrifices points to subsistence and the continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to secure. The meaning of all these symbols is fairly obvious and in a sense 'natural', being based on a commonly known nexus between the sign and the thing signified. Symbols of a more artificial kind, resting on some specific and perhaps esoteric convention, are rare in Nupe ritual. The only clear instance is the symbolism of right and left in the *dzakó*, which, as I have said, has no parallel in any other Nupe cult. The sacrifice of fish in one version of the *gunnu* is a more doubtful case; for though fish are associated with fertility (in dream interpretation) and welcome gifts (in divining), that knowledge is far from general. The use of tortoise shells in the same ceremonial reminds the congregation of the Father Tortoise stories, but does no more. The rule that the *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round his waist' evokes no association, say, with constraint inimical to growth and fertility. And though it may be tempting to speculate on the rule of calling the sacrificial beer 'water', that is, by the name of the fluid which (as rain or semen) is linked with the fertility of nature and man, the Nupe attach no ulterior meaning to this metaphor.

Whether these and other details of the ritual procedure do not perhaps involve symbolisms of a more subtle and unconscious nature, I will not discuss. In my view uncomprehended 'symbols have no part in social enquiry; their social effectiveness lies in their capacity to indicate, and if they indicate nothing to the actors, they are, from our point of view, irrelevant and indeed no longer symbols (whatever their significance for the psychologist or psycho-analyst). But let us note that certain modes of acting may be significant for the actors without constituting symbols, merely because they represent a rule, a formalism of acting, that is, a *ritual*, and not accidental or random behaviour. This is true, for example, of the choice of the sacrificial animals. To begin with, they are in every case 'ordinary' animals, without sacred associations and neither rare nor avoided in workaday life. Though most rituals prescribe the sex of the sacrificial beast, males and females are chosen in random manner, suggestive of no symbolic link with the purpose of the ritual. The *ketsá* is perhaps the clearest example; the legend, as we remember, mentions the sacrifice of a cow; yet the actual ritual, when performed at the request of the Kede chief, requires the killing of a bull. In other rituals the sex as well as the species of the animal simply depend on the outcome of divination. It might seem that at least the specification of white or black animals, which is fairly common, must have a symbolic significance since black colour is generally associated with secrecy and evil things, and white colour with

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gourd or his straw hat, keeping a ready supply in his left hand. In his right he carries the light hoe used for planting. With it he scratches the top or flank of the mound, while with his left, almost simultaneously, he throws the seeds into the newly made hole. The hole is then flattened out with the back of the hoe. Thus the farmer proceeds from mound to mound and row to row, working with amazing speed and ease: one man [illegible]e to sow about one acre in from five to six hours, with hardly any [illegible]. This is the method used for sowing on mounds; sowing on ridges is even easier and quicker. No hoe is used, and the farmer can make use of both hands for the sowing, the seeds being pressed into the soft soil with the heel. The distance kept between two plants is a little over 2 feet. The sowing of one field with millet or sorghum is invariably done in a day or two, and is nearly always carried out single-handed. Where normally a larger group would be working together—brothers or a father and sons—the rest of the team would be occupied on another field, carrying out ridging, i.e. work for which co-operation is more urgently required. But when for one reason or another a farmer falls behindhand with his planting, ridging and sowing may have to be done at the same time. Once I saw a man and his two sons of 10 or 11 years carrying out this combined and hurried work: the boys were hoeing, preparing the ridges; the father followed in their tracks, sowing. After every ridge they had completed the boys waited for the man to catch up with the sowing. The ridges were crooked, irregular. 243 [857]

In these first days of the planting season the Nupe keep short days: they start comparatively late, about 8 a.m., and rarely return later than 2 or 3 o'clock. As the season wears on their working day extends. They start at daybreak and often do not return till 5 or 6 in the afternoon. They have their midday meal out on the farm, some bringing their own food, others having it brought out to them by their wives or daughters. At that time of the year, when fresh leaves and herbs are plentiful on the farms, the men rarely return home without a fair supply of various kinds: broad leaves which the Nupe women like for wrapping food in, or a special kind of aromatic leaf which the women use for their bath, or occasionally medicinal herbs used for various purposes. The men tie the leaves round their straw hats, and thus pleasantly and ornately attired wander home. A bath, a change of clothes, and afterwards the evening meal concludes their day. 243 512 [824]

To return to sowing. A day or two after bulrush-millet has been sown, maize is planted in very much the same fashion, again mostly in one day. Then one has to wait for another heavy rainfall before the next crops on the list, late millet and sorghum, can be sown. As a rule all four crops are sown within a week or ten days. These voluntary or involuntary waiting periods have their use: for often it becomes necessary to get one's tools repaired, perhaps a new blade fixed to the hoe, or to find new tools for the young boys who will, this year, join their fathers for the first time in the farm-work. By the time sorghum is planted the rains fall fairly regularly, and there is no need for further waiting. 243

The farmer turns directly to the planting of ground-nuts, which is reckoned to take from five to ten days. Ground-nuts must be planted on 244

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52
Bida

(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :—

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge. 323 531

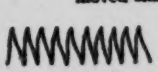

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(iii) The sharp end of a (! snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests. 323

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323 531

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [386] [304]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]

(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

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244 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[245] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [825] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [241] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, [482] food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [857] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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indifference which the Nupe ascribe to divine creation. Yet since the world contains both things, *kuti*, which is good, and *cigbe*, which is both good and evil, the good would seem on balance to preponderate. As we shall see, various other religious thoughts confirm this impression of a cynicism tempered with optimism. 779

(iv) *Body and Soul*

We turn to the other 'things in the world' and first to the animate beings. Each of these possesses, to begin with, a body, *nakã*. The Nupe word means precisely what we mean by 'body'— the flesh and blood of living creatures, resulting from procreation, parturition, and natural growth, and decomposing after death. The biological processes of procreation and parturition are fairly well understood, though this empirical knowledge is not free from fallacies. Thus no one misunderstands the connection between coitus and conception; one understands, too, that both women and men can be infertile, and that abortion can be brought about by strong laxatives or overstrain. At the same time the Nupe also use certain purely 'magical' cures for barrenness and charms or magic belts to prevent conception. More surprisingly, the Nupe fail to distinguish between semen and male urine, or have to borrow a word from Hausa to describe the former. Nor finally is the precise length of pregnancy known. To quote one of my informants, a diviner and knowledgeable old man: 'It all depends; it may take anything between seven months and a year; a strong and fit child will be born after eleven months or so, a weak one after a shorter period.' 779 842 843 826

The biological processes as such, one believes, produce only a lifeless body, as death in turn leaves the body lifeless but still physically intact. The living being thus has further attributes, of soul-like nature, which are three in number: *rayi* or 'anima'; *fifingi* or 'shadow soul'; and *kuci* or 'personal soul'. 779 774

The word *rayi* is used generally to denote the living state; the pulse, for example, is called *rayigi*, 'little life'. Everything animate possesses *rayi*, while stones, pieces of wood, and similar inanimate objects are without *rayi*; growing trees and plants, however, are counted among the animate things. Life comes from God and exists with God, in the sky, when it is not incarnate. At death 'God takes it away'; at birth it is sent down by God, more precisely, it appears already when the child first moves in the womb. The new life is thus at first tied to the life of the mother, and in a sense remains so tied for a period even after birth. For the mother who has borne one child must not risk another conception before the child can walk and is 'sufficiently strong', lest it would never grow up; so that its *rayi* would seem to be diminished by the other life 842

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that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifíngi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifíngi*.

Fifíngi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifíngi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifíngi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifíngi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

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insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'. 779 773

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds. 779 774

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses. 779 774 753 828

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of 779 774

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falls lamentably short of the absolute assurance the Nupe place in these *cigbe*. 755

The answer to our question can only lie in the rigid secrecy which surrounds these magic medicines. No one using them will talk about it; indeed if he did, the efficacy of the magic would be gone. Thus, though I might use the wonderful farming *cigbe*, my neighbours may, for all I know, also use it, or even a stronger version; and though I could make myself invulnerable, my enemies might have *cigbe* to make their guns infallible. If in these instances the belief in *cigbe* is such that it protects itself from being disproved, this is even more so in the case of the *cigbe* protecting you from witchcraft. For this is clearly itself an imaginary threat whose defeat by an imaginary weapon is altogether outside empirical considerations. To some extent the efficacy of the medicines said to procure invisibility equally belongs to the realm of imaginary happenings. Two of the many informants with whom I discussed this point supplied the clue. The first, who himself owned this medicine and maintained that I too could use it with the desired effect, added this odd instruction: the medicine must be taken at night, before going to sleep. He meant by this that the medicine affected, not the physical body of a person awake, but the *fifíngi*, the disembodied shadow soul, of persons asleep. The second informant was even more explicit. He explained that the person drinking the medicine was able, in *fifíngi* shape, to wander about at night when all were asleep, to enter their houses unseen, to touch the bodies of the other sleepers, give them nightmares, and even to kill them if they struggled or hit out: to which extreme, however, no 'good' man would resort, save perhaps against enemies. 755 828

If we should consider invisibility achieved under such conditions to be hardly worth the trouble, let alone to prove the wonderful powers of the medicine, this is not so for the Nupe. For them, the medicine does two things one cannot 'normally' do; it enables you to control the movements of your *fifíngi*, which otherwise wanders about at will, in the random fashion exemplified by dreams; and it causes the *fifíngi* to be hidden from the people it visits, while ordinarily it would appear to them in their dreams. Furthermore, precisely such willed and hidden nightly visits are thought to be peculiar to witches, so that the *cigbe* makes you their equal. I must add, however, that the rest of my informants did not describe the efficacy of the invisibility *cigbe* in such mystic terms. They spoke of it as being concretely effective and hiding your body from the eyes of others when you meet them, say, in the street. But they would emphasize, as in the case of the other miraculous *cigbe* mentioned before, that this medicine must be used in utter secrecy

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755 lest it lose its power. And here, it seems to me, we have the re-
828 quired loophole; for 'utter secrecy' I take to mean that the medicine may only be used at night, when you cannot be seen, or among strangers, when at least you cannot be recognized, that is, in situations when no one can prove anything. My informants refused to commit themselves on this point. But exactly this kind of argument was brought up in connection with another, similar, medicine not previously mentioned, namely, a *cigbe* said to enable a man to feign death and to arise from the grave unharmed and invisible; thus magically equipped he can disappear from his village unbeknown to all, to reappear, now in visible shape, in foreign parts. This seems to be the only advantage offered by this *cigbe*. Now this advantage, my informants assured me, was past, thanks to railways and motor-cars of all things; for nowadays the person using the *cigbe* could reach the strange place no more quickly than would others, using the modern means of transport. But it is not merely the utility of the *cigbe* which has disappeared, but its virtue. Since other people, travelling non-magically, might well arrive together with and run into the person who did so magically, the secrecy of the proceedings has been lost, and with it the efficacy of a *cigbe*. If this argument seems less compelling to us than to the Nupe, it yet confirms the point made before, that this notion of miraculous medicines protects itself from proof or disproof.

755 Let us return to the *emisa* which accompany various *cigbe* pro-
789 cedures. Clearly, they must have some share in fostering or confirming the faith which the people put in their mystical medicines. I have so far treated these formulæ mainly as evidence for 'mystical intent'; but they would seem to define a particular species of this intent and one particularly reassuring. For the *emisa* comes closest to a magic spell, having the same rigidity and being similarly indispensable for the desired effects; if so, it would turn the whole *cigbe* practice into a strictly magical procedure, that is, a procedure resting on the mechanical manipulation of substances and words rather than on appeals to some transcendental intelligence.

Neither conclusion, however, is quite correct. The names and addresses of *cigbe*, the Nupe insist, carry no power in themselves; this lies in the 'ingredients' alone. If the *emisa* is indispensable it is so only in the sense in which the titles and formal greetings of men of rank are indispensable, being meant to acknowledge or indicate the power that lies in the rank but adding nothing to it. Furthermore, the *emisa* of medicines is meant to acknowledge also the ultimate source of their power, that is, the presence and will of God. If the wording of the *cigbe* greetings hardly reveals that

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779 rather, they mostly represent alternatives and overlap for the same phenomena. And since each explanatory conception entails a different notion as to the controls or remedies applicable to the phenomenon in question, the multiplication of the former means also a multiplication of the latter. In other words, you have several strings to your bow. Indeed, this is doubly true. For as we know, the overlap in explanatory conceptions is matched by the overlap in the supernatural aids themselves; like the appeal to the *kuci*, which has 'no domain', ritual and even certain forms of medicine have a wide and multifarious efficacy. The lack of economy of thought thus means first, that the map of the universe is drawn in greater detail, and second, that in coping with its forces one has the chance of several trials.

779 Now, the 'details' in the universe are not multiplied at random. Rather are they ordered in the sense of two principles. The first 829 reflects the organization of human society as the Nupe see it. Thus there is the sphere of the fate of communities, governed by influences irreducible beyond the givenness of creation and anonymous beyond their ultimate origin in God, which influences are controllable by the collective efforts of *kuti*. Then there is the sphere of individual fate, governed by the specifically named agencies of life soul, shadow soul, witchcraft, and spirits (personal or otherwise), and controllable by *cigbe* and individual sacrifices. There is, further, the sphere of kinship fate, governed by the agency of *kuci* and controlled by sacrifices to ancestors and twins. And there is, finally, the sphere of the kingdom and political fate, with its special rituals of Tsoede. Admittedly, these various spheres are not as neatly separated, the social appropriateness of supernatural aids like the social import of supernatural influences overlapping at many points. Certain nature spirits also affect the fate of communities and hence call for the effort of ritual, while a drought, though it threatens the community, can also be dealt with by an invocation of *kuci*. Certain medicines are owned by kin groups, and certain *kuti* can be invoked by individuals; the twin sacrifices are addressed to God, like the *kuti*; witchcraft, though it attacks individuals, may be treated as a threat to the community or state; and the 'royal' cults of Tsoede also serve to meet the needs of individuals. If there were no such overlap, the chance of 'several trials' would not be as great as it is. But neither is it unlimited, being subject to that hierarchy of social appropriateness, which is only a little blurred by these ambiguities.

779 The second principle is purely theological and integrates the speculations about the 'details' of the universe with the basic dichotomy of God and the World; for this is carried even into the realm of things found in the world. Thus certain things come

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only among the Beni) the burial of lepers is the responsibility of the *gunnu* priests; and leprosy, as we know, is considered a 'disease of God', as the *gunnu* is a '*kuti* of God.' In their speculations about the meaning of the myth the Nupe indeed seize upon this last point. But they would only enlarge upon the terrifying aspects of leprosy and its divine preordainedness, being content to draw the parallel with a *kuti* equally powerful, dangerous, and divinely preordained. Their interest does not go further; none of my informants, for example, referred to the male-female principle believed to govern leprosy (and unrepresented in the ritual); nor did they attempt to relate the name *gunnu* to the name for leprosy, *Sokó 'gũ*, an etymological speculation which, from my knowledge of the Nupe ways of thinking, I should have expected. The Nupe, in brief, do not feel the need for any closely argued 'mythical charter' of their religious practices; and indeed, as I have stressed, the *gunnu* myth is altogether an exception. 796x [766]

A few informants offered me their theories about the derivation of the name *gunnu*. According to one the ritual was so called because of *egũ na dã mini 'nu õ na*, because of the 'red earth that is inside (the furrows) of hoeing'; according to another the reason was that, in the ritual, 'one reaches the end of the wandering, it is accomplished', *àgũ̃ 'nu mã, nwa dà zo*; in a third interpretation *gunnu* was taken to be the word *nugũ̃* ('boundary', 'limits'), reversed.[1] The first version would merely bring out the character of the *gunnu* as a farmer's ritual; the other two versions go more deeply, alluding to the characteristic concern of the ritual with the completion of a phase, and with 'end' and 'renewal'. Even so, the arguments are specious ones, ignoring, for example, the tone structure of Nupe language. Let us call them what they are, a play upon words and mere speculation. 796x 829

To turn to the ceremonial itself. It lasts for three to five days, according to the amount of food and drink which the people are able to accumulate. The celebration I observed in Doko started on the 17th of February and lasted until the 19th.[2] Like the *žiba*, the *gunnu* has an esoteric part, performed outside the village, in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'bà* ('*gunnu* place'), and a public one, performed on the village dancing ground. The congregation of the esoteric rite includes both older men and youths, the youngest being about 15. The *gunnu* place looks much like the places of 796x

[1] Such reversals of bisyllabic nouns occur quite often in Nupe language; they turn the noun into the corresponding verb, so that *nugũ̃*, 'limit', would become *gũ̃(e)-nu* 'reaching the limit', 'accomplish'. [193]

[2] The date is not inflexible; in the same year the nearby village of Pichi celebrated the *gunnu* almost a month later, since the people had no 'leisure' before that, being kept busy by the collection of tax arrears.

In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found
595 the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more
565 attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would
586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying
[832] age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphrodisiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and
837 the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral concepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which
831 legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution. !

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-professional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every
837 status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The
837 obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men
586 cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d.* and 1*s.*

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Men who have to uphold their prestige and social position would never risk the publicity and ridicule of divorce proceedings in which they would have to appear in the role of the wronged husband.[1] The amorous affairs of Bida noblemen supply, in fact, an ever-welcome topic for the town gossips. When some years ago two popular noblemen quarrelled, everyone knew that it was about a girl and had the details at their finger-tips. Only the men of very great wealth and highest status are in a position to restrain or threaten their unfaithful wives. For one thing, they can afford to forfeit more than one bride-price, and can thus divorce their wives (according to Nupe Mohammedan law) without invoking elaborate public proceedings. Besides, wives and paramours would hesitate to provoke the enmity of these powerful personages. It is not unnatural, then, that (as my informants said) the wives of these men supply the only example of unimpaired marital fidelity in Bida—another no less striking instance of 'double morality'. 837 586 565

If the older married men are either resigned or complacent, the younger men see in illegitimate adventures only an exciting and tempting aspect of Bida life. We shall meet later with their ideal, the dashing young man 'about town' who can 'have' all the women he wants and can boast of his conquests. The women who avails herself of the loosened marriage ties may be talked about and called (behind her back) a 'bad woman'—*nyizagi banza*, a 'worthless woman'. But in their ordinary behaviour towards these women, when meeting them in the street or in the house of a mutual friend, the men will never fail in their respect towards them or betray by a sign their moral prejudices. This ambiguous attitude is symptomatic of a society which, though still conscious of its traditional dogmatic appreciation of chastity, is yet adapting itself to a spreading laxity of morals. 562 837 831

There is indeed evidence to show that sexual licence has been greatly increasing in the last generation or two. But there is also evidence of the fact that sexual licence on a smaller scale and within strictly defined limits enjoyed a legitimate existence in traditional Nupe society. The anomaly of public morals which would condemn sexual licence yet at the same time sanction it in a certain well-defined social domain is familiar to the student of society. In Nupe as in all other societies this qualified admission of sexual licence is due to various social causes. A first cause lies in the nature of sex itself, namely, in the reaction to the restraint on all pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations which characterizes the traditional sex morality of the people. Another cause is the large floating population in Bida, composed of traders, warriors (formerly), labourers (to-day), that is, men who come to Bida without their wives and depend on prostitution for the satisfaction of their sexual appetite. A third cause is embodied in the institution of female trade. We shall see later that women's trade involves a loosening of matrimonial and family ties and tends to become identified with licentious living. In female trade Nupe society thus has grasped a ready occupational framework for that domain of sanctioned 837 831 562

[1] Clear evidence of this is the scarcity of divorce cases, which form two-thirds of all court cases in Bida, from the houses of the nobility.

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562 837 831 sexual licence towards which the other social forces appear to be driving. The result is the close association between professional female trade and semi-professional licensed prostitution which we can observe to-day.

562 837 831 842 Yet admission into this 'domain' was in turn made dependent upon a certain qualification, namely childlessness. Here we can add a final, ideological motive to the social causes behind the moral development. It is embodied in the Nupe conception of barrenness as a state outside conventional morality, and its contribution is twofold: it helps to define more narrowly the group in which sexual licence shall be sanctioned, by making sterility of the women a criterion of admission; and it provides at the same time the spiritual framework for such social sanction, by linking it with certain religious or quasi-religious beliefs. To some extent the ideological association between barrenness and sexual licence can be reduced to certain obvious rational motives, which are, in fact, present in the minds of the people: childlessness is of great advantage in the life of the women traders whose profession involves constant travelling and long absence from home; moreover, the sexual indiscretions of sterile women are socially of less consequence than those of other women, being comparatively safe from discovery and precluding the more disturbing legal complications (i.e. birth of illegitimate children). But the social interpretation of barrenness also expresses certain more deeply [581] rooted beliefs. To the Nupe marriage has no real meaning without progeny. Barrenness is regarded as a great curse and misfortune, and many cults and forms of magic are designed to secure fertility of the women or to cure barrenness. Traditional religious beliefs place barren women in a category apart and exclude them from participation in the most important annual cult of the country, the *gunnu*.[1] As the barren woman fails by the common standard of marriage and womanhood, she is also exempted from the standards of common morality. Adultery and unchastity count less in her than in other women. And although the stigma of immorality would still attach to the unchaste barren woman (she would still be called a 'worthless woman'), it would be, as it were, overshadowed by and fused with the other paramount stigma of barrenness itself.

The growth of sexual licence far beyond its traditionally sanctioned limits is again due to various causes, economic, political, and religious. The primary cause appears to be economic and will be discussed in that context. Its effectiveness, however, is greatly strengthened by the political and social factors which foster what I have termed the 'double morality' in Nupe society. We can also see that the Nupe conception of barrenness must itself indirectly aid these tendencies and defeat the limitations which it was meant to uphold. For in a country with spreading sterility and even birth restriction, a religion which withholds its sanctions of matrimonial morality in the case of childless women can prove but a weak bulwark against the tide of sexual licence. Mohammedanism in Nupe, committed as it is to that 'double morality', undermines rather than supplies forces of moral restraint.

[1] For a description of this aspect of barrenness see *J.R.A.I.* 1937, p. iii.

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A comparison between sex morality in the town and in the villages will bring the final proof of our interpretation of the social causes of moral laxity and publicly condoned sexual licence. For in the villages, where the political and economic factors to which we have attributed this development are much less conspicuous than in Bida, sexual licence in this sense is absent also. The same informants who declared that there were no 'good women' left in Bida maintained that the opposite was true of the country. Within limits, this is correct. Semi-professional prostitution is absent and adultery is far less frequent than in Bida. Above all, it is not glossed over for fear of publicity and ridicule: it leads to quarrels and frequently to divorce. Nor are illegitimate amorous adventures applauded and bandied about. The more closely knit village life renders sexual promiscuity both more difficult and more risky, and the danger of provoking serious conflicts forces it into the sphere of clandestine and disreputable activities. The ideal of the Bida Lothario is absent in the Nupe village.

It is largely true to say that among the peasant women also the Bida ideal of the glamorous 'fast' woman finds no following. Or, more correctly, it finds no following among the peasant's wives and daughters who have chosen village life. For especially in the larger trading-places there is a certain (increasing) minority of women who leave the village to join the army of 'loose' women traders. However, they do not introduce their ways into village life itself. To quote again from my informants: 'Peasant women are on the whole better wives than our women in Bida. You see it when you come to a village: you will not find women with whom you can sleep. But who would want to sleep with them? They are badly dressed, they do not wash, use no scent, and smell of sweat. There are a few exceptions, though, for example the women in the house of the chief of K.'—referring to a village in which the chief's family was in many ways emulating the standards of Bida life. There is good sense in these cynical (though not cynically meant) remarks. Hard work, lack of leisure, the inability to afford nice dresses or the help of cosmetics, make the peasant woman comparatively unattractive; she ages more quickly than her more fortunate sister in town. It is not surprising that she should come short of the sophisticated urban standards of taste. If the peasant woman thus succumbs less to temptation, it is also true that less temptation comes her way. Having chosen peasant life she can but choose peasant morality also. The different sexual morality in town and village is thus essentially an expression of differences in economic conditions and of inequality of wealth and status.

It is tempting to dwell on this relation between economic and political factors and the attitude of the society towards the problems of sex and morality. There has been the tendency in recent anthropological writings to regard the elaboration of the sex theme in different cultures, the temperamental and personality traits which, in a society, appear associated with sex, as the expression of some ultimate quality in culture itself —the genius or *ethos* of a culture. That women in one society are 'gentle' and 'aggressive' in another, that one culture regards them as masculine workers and another as feminine mothers or partners in love,

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586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphro-
[832] disiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and
837 the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral con-
831 cepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-profes-
837 sional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The
837 obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men
586 cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d.* and 1*s.*

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757 means of a potion. For the inhalation one uses leaf-tips of the oil-
278 palm, hair of a she-goat, and the pulverized genitals of a he-goat, all burned together in a pot; the potion is made of the sap of a certain 'male' shrub (that is, the fruitless variety, called *darabagi*, 'male *dara*'), the charred bark of another, mixed with natron. The patient, having been treated in this fashion, is said to calm down and eventually to recover, though the cure can never be certain. For violent and dangerous attacks there is no agreed cure. The barber-doctors, in fact, do not treat this form of insanity at all, but other people sometimes know a treatment, though it is always said to be difficult and uncertain. Thus one informant suggested that the patients must be made to fast until they calm down; and another recommended flogging (a treatment apparently widely applied in Yoruba country).[1]

757 A final group of medicines bears on conception and virility.
278 Dried cocoyam, the charred bark of the *savi* tree, and onions,
842 pounded and taken in water, are said to constitute a powerful
[832] aphrodisiac. Fertility of women is ensured by a potion, drunk the morning before cohabitation, made of an infusion of leaves of the tamarind tree mixed with natron. Delivery is facilitated by rubbing the womb with three herbs after they have been soaked in water for a night. There are also two 'contraceptive' medicines, one having a temporary effect only, the other believed to cause permanent barrenness. The former consists of two powdered herbs, mixed with bits of grass from a termite mound, and taken with water; the latter, of the charred stalk and leaves of a young cassava plant, mixed with henna root and natron, boiled in water, and drunk. The knowledge, incidentally, of the permanent 'contraceptive' is claimed to be purely platonic; the Bida practitioner at least has no chance of applying it in practice, not because he is reluctant to do so or because the Bida women avoid these shameful practices, but because they would not risk their reputation by thus openly consulting a 'doctor' in the town. Instead, my informants assured me, they go to 'medicine-men' in the villages, where they are unknown and their secret will be safe. A secret in fact it is; and here we meet with a first, though fairly mild, instance of reprehensible medicines, employed for immoral ends.

757 This list is far from complete, omitting, especially, the many
759 variants of the same kind of cure.[2] The barber-doctors do not believe in specifics in the strict sense of the word; rather, there are several treatments for each ailment, and different practitioners

[1] The informant in question came, in fact, from Shari, a village on the border of Nupe and Yoruba.

[2] I recorded altogether thirty-four remedies known to barber-doctors, which number is probably fairly exhaustive.

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x 796 The dance frequently rises to feverish excitement, when the youths
881 will suddenly resume using their whips, violently and against anyone. The flogging now has a purpose: when directed against male adolescents it is thought to promote growth and maturity; when directed against women, fertility. But there are also phases of calm as well as humorous episodes, acclaimed by general laughter. One episode, in particular, may be mentioned: now and again, the young men will imitate, with comic exaggeration, a typical women's dance or caricature the walk and gestures of women.

I will not describe the dance further: it fills the rest of the *gunnu* festivities, being interrupted only for a brief night's rest, and ends when all the beer is exhausted and everyone too tired to carry on. I will only note these important and partly unique features. Some
x 796 time during the dance the young men form themselves into a
842 procession led by the *Ndazo* and march and dance through the village, still singing the *gunnu* songs, to give the 'salute' in front of
881 the houses of high-ranking elders. On the way they also visit the childless women of the village; for these are strictly forbidden to watch the *gunnu* dance and must hide in their huts until the ceremonial is over. These women may be unhappily barren; or they may be suspected of avoiding childbearing and family duties so that they might lead the immoral life of female traders and prostitutes (which, in Nupe, means one and the same thing). In either case the *Ndazo* will enter their house and encourage or admonish them, as the case may be; the woman, kneeling before him, will receive two lashes with the *gunnu* whip, administered by one of the young men, which is both a punishment and a promise of fertility. Women who have no taste for either will have to leave the village or hide in some other house during the critical period, as indeed quite a few are doing.

[535] Again, few other Nupe rituals include a mixed dance of the sexes; in the *gunnu*, this is not only permitted but considered a
x 796 relevant part of the celebration, as is the whole excited and aban-
881 doned tone of the dance. Always, when describing the *gunnu*, the Nupe will use some such phrase—'we make merry, we drink, we dance, men and women together without order, until we talk without sense'. This excitement is in no small measure sexual; not only is the attention of the young men constantly drawn to the other sex (even by the fact that they wear an item of women's dress), but the week preceding the *gunnu* and the whole period of the
● 834 celebration are also marked by a severe prohibition of all sexual
786 intercourse, lest death visit the community. Only when the dance
x 796 is ended and everyone has bathed, the men in a nearby stream, the women at home, is the rule of chastity lifted; the same night
881 men and women will again sleep together, matrimonially or promiscuously — NO ONE CARES.

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 796x

risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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852 of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers
553 and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gather-
[305] ing and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests, will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptu-
553 ous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered
619 to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem
304 to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal
[619] throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several
[834] other puzzling features. It is called *zũ 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-
[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

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This interdependence of bride-price and level of production also explains the limited success, among the more prosperous sections of the population, of the attempts of the Administration to fix the bride-price at a lower and, as it were, arbitrary figure. 511 583

Indeed the development of bride-price under the economic stress of the last decade shows how firmly the new 'want' of higher bride-price had struck root. The solution which the people themselves worked out left the 'indemnification' and the 'economic' aspect of the bride-price intact; it achieved the necessary adjustment by reassessing the 'sociological' or kinship aspect. The contribution of the family to the bride-price of its junior members was reduced to the symbolic transaction of the family head acting on behalf of the bridegroom who must himself provide the bride-price; above all, the new rules allowed a reduction in the bride-price in family marriages, i.e. marriages in which the marriage ties do not establish new, but utilize already existing kinship bonds.

We may mention here certain marriage rules customary among the upper classes of Nupe in which an outwardly similar result is achieved by a somewhat different process of reasoning. We have learned that bride-price is kept low in class endogamous marriages among the nobility; a man of status may also marry his daughter to one of his *bara*, and himself put up the bride-price, so that in effect no exchange of wealth takes place; and there is, finally, the custom among the upper classes to marry their daughters with a very low, nominal, bride-price to Mallams—the remission of the bride-price being regarded as a pious act. In these cases the bride-price is kept artificially low in order to ensure that the women of the aristocracy should all be married to men of the same class, or should marry certain men whom they would be unable to marry if the bride-price were high: the political and religious gain balances the material sacrifice.

The institution of bride-price in Nupe gives us an exceptionally clear picture of the multitudinous structure of institutions. It also illustrates the discriminating action of economic evaluation, which, out of the number of social purposes subserved in the institution, fastens upon certain specific purposes for transformation into concrete economic wants. Yet those that are not thus transformed need not be purposes which have lost their significance entirely, but may reveal it indirectly, in the form of 'theoretical values'. We recall the disintegration of the institution of bride-price in present-day Bida, in the case of those young labourers who spend their money among other things on 'women' instead of saving it for bride-price. Let us realize that in a society like Nupe, in which traditional morality forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse, the 'indemnification' aspect of bride-price also implies the purchase of legitimate sexual satisfaction. Now, these young labourers have discovered that to-day sexual satisfaction can be bought more cheaply, and without incurring the obligation of marriage. Short-sightedly, they perceive only this one need and disregard the other aspects of marriage and bride-price—the need of founding a family, of establishing new kinship bonds, and of ensuring continuity of the group. They admit these other needs—in theory; yet these needs are present, concretely, in 511 583 836

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gumu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found
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Men who have to uphold their prestige and social position would never risk the publicity and ridicule of divorce proceedings in which they would have to appear in the role of the wronged husband.[1] The amorous affairs of Bida noblemen supply, in fact, an ever-welcome topic for the town gossips. When some years ago two popular noblemen quarrelled, everyone knew that it was about a girl and had the details at their finger-tips. Only the men of very great wealth and highest status are in a position to restrain or threaten their unfaithful wives. For one thing, they can afford to forfeit more than one bride-price, and can thus divorce their wives (according to Nupe Mohammedan law) without invoking elaborate public proceedings. Besides, wives and paramours would hesitate to provoke the enmity of these powerful personages. It is not unnatural, then, that (as my informants said) the wives of these men supply the only example of unimpaired marital fidelity in Bida—another no less striking instance of 'double morality'.

If the older married men are either resigned or complacent, the younger men see in illegitimate adventures only an exciting and tempting aspect of Bida life. We shall meet later with their ideal, the dashing young man 'about town' who can 'have' all the women he wants and can boast of his conquests. The women who avails herself of the loosened marriage ties may be talked about and called (behind her back) a 'bad woman'—*nyizagi banza*, a 'worthless woman'. But in their ordinary behaviour towards these women, when meeting them in the street or in the house of a mutual friend, the men will never fail in their respect towards them or betray by a sign their moral prejudices. This ambiguous attitude is symptomatic of a society which, though still conscious of its traditional dogmatic appreciation of chastity, is yet adapting itself to a spreading laxity of morals.

There is indeed evidence to show that sexual licence has been greatly increasing in the last generation or two. But there is also evidence of the fact that sexual licence on a smaller scale and within strictly defined limits enjoyed a legitimate existence in traditional Nupe society. The anomaly of public morals which would condemn sexual licence yet at the same time sanction it in a certain well-defined social domain is familiar to the student of society. In Nupe as in all other societies this qualified admission of sexual licence is due to various social causes. A first cause lies in the nature of sex itself, namely, in the reaction to the restraint on all pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations which characterizes the traditional sex morality of the people. Another cause is the large floating population in Bida, composed of traders, warriors (formerly), labourers (to-day), that is, men who come to Bida without their wives and depend on prostitution for the satisfaction of their sexual appetite. A third cause is embodied in the institution of female trade. We shall see later that women's trade involves a loosening of matrimonial and family ties and tends to become identified with licentious living. In female trade Nupe society thus has grasped a ready occupational framework for that domain of sanctioned

[1] Clear evidence of this is the scarcity of divorce cases, which form two-thirds of all court cases in Bida, from the houses of the nobility.

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562 837 831 sexual licence towards which the other social forces appear to be driving. The result is the close association between professional female trade and semi-professional licensed prostitution which we can observe to-day.

Yet admission into this 'domain' was in turn made dependent upon 562 a certain qualification, namely childlessness. Here we can add a final, 837 ideological motive to the social causes behind the moral development. It is embodied in the Nupe conception of barrenness as a state outside 831 conventional morality, and its contribution is twofold: it helps to define more narrowly the group in which sexual licence shall be sanctioned, by 842 making sterility of the women a criterion of admission; and it provides at the same time the spiritual framework for such social sanction, by linking it with certain religious or quasi-religious beliefs. To some extent the ideological association between barrenness and sexual licence can be reduced to certain obvious rational motives, which are, in fact, present in the minds of the people: childlessness is of great advantage in the life of the women traders whose profession involves constant travelling and long absence from home; moreover, the sexual indiscretions of sterile women are socially of less consequence than those of other women, being comparatively safe from discovery and precluding the more disturbing legal complications (i.e. birth of illegitimate children). But the social interpretation of barrenness also expresses certain more deeply [581] rooted beliefs. To the Nupe marriage has no real meaning without progeny. Barrenness is regarded as a great curse and misfortune, and many cults and forms of magic are designed to secure fertility of the women or to cure barrenness. Traditional religious beliefs place barren women in a category apart and exclude them from participation in the most important annual cult of the country, the *gunnu*.[1] As the barren woman fails by the common standard of marriage and womanhood, she is also exempted from the standards of common morality. Adultery and unchastity count less in her than in other women. And although the stigma of immorality would still attach to the unchaste barren woman (she would still be called a 'worthless woman'), it would be, as it were, overshadowed by and fused with the other paramount stigma of barrenness itself.

The growth of sexual licence far beyond its traditionally sanctioned limits is again due to various causes, economic, political, and religious. The primary cause appears to be economic and will be discussed in that context. Its effectiveness, however, is greatly strengthened by the political and social factors which foster what I have termed the 'double morality' in Nupe society. We can also see that the Nupe conception of barrenness must itself indirectly aid these tendencies and defeat the limitations which it was meant to uphold. For in a country with spreading sterility and even birth restriction, a religion which withholds its sanctions of matrimonial morality in the case of childless women can prove but a weak bulwark against the tide of sexual licence. Mohammedanism in Nupe, committed as it is to that 'double morality', undermines rather than supplies forces of moral restraint.

[1] For a description of this aspect of barrenness see *J.R.A.I.* 1937, p. iii.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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A comparison between sex morality in the town and in the villages will bring the final proof of our interpretation of the social causes of moral laxity and publicly condoned sexual licence. For in the villages, where the political and economic factors to which we have attributed this development are much less conspicuous than in Bida, sexual licence in this sense is absent also. The same informants who declared that there were no 'good women' left in Bida maintained that the opposite was true of the country. Within limits, this is correct. Semi-professional prostitution is absent and adultery is far less frequent than in Bida. Above all, it is not glossed over for fear of publicity and ridicule: it leads to quarrels and frequently to divorce. Nor are illegitimate amorous adventures applauded and bandied about. The more closely knit village life renders sexual promiscuity both more difficult and more risky, and the danger of provoking serious conflicts forces it into the sphere of clandestine and disreputable activities. The ideal of the Bida Lothario is absent in the Nupe village.

It is largely true to say that among the peasant women also the Bida ideal of the glamorous 'fast' woman finds no following. Or, more correctly, it finds no following among the peasant's wives and daughters who have chosen village life. For especially in the larger trading-places there is a certain (increasing) minority of women who leave the village to join the army of 'loose' women traders. However, they do not introduce their ways into village life itself. To quote again from my informants: 'Peasant women are on the whole better wives than our women in Bida. You see it when you come to a village: you will not find women with whom you can sleep. But who would want to sleep with them? They are badly dressed, they do not wash, use no scent, and smell of sweat. There are a few exceptions, though, for example the women in the house of the chief of K.'—referring to a village in which the chief's family was in many ways emulating the standards of Bida life. There is good sense in these cynical (though not cynically meant) remarks. Hard work, lack of leisure, the inability to afford nice dresses or the help of cosmetics, make the peasant woman comparatively unattractive; she ages more quickly than her more fortunate sister in town. It is not surprising that she should come short of the sophisticated urban standards of taste. If the peasant woman thus succumbs less to temptation, it is also true that less temptation comes her way. Having chosen peasant life she can but choose peasant morality also. The different sexual morality in town and village is thus essentially an expression of differences in economic conditions and of inequality of wealth and status.

It is tempting to dwell on this relation between economic and political factors and the attitude of the society towards the problems of sex and morality. There has been the tendency in recent anthropological writings to regard the elaboration of the sex theme in different cultures, the temperamental and personality traits which, in a society, appear associated with sex, as the expression of some ultimate quality in culture itself —the genius or *ethos* of a culture. That women in one society are 'gentle' and 'aggressive' in another, that one culture regards them as masculine workers and another as feminine mothers or partners in love,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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561 lays down the rules of behaviour for *ena* members, and which is again valid for life. These rules demand friendliness towards one another, and avoidance of all quarrels; mutual assistance in work (though not with regard to loans); respect towards one's superiors in the group; and respect also for the sanctity of marriage among all fellow members. The significance of this last rule, which applies to brides as well as wives, in age-grade associations the lifetime of which comprises the years when the adolescents first awake to the reality of sex, when they court and finally marry, need not be emphasized especially. Yet only in the village can the rule be regarded as tending to eliminate quarrels and feuds which must disrupt the community. In Bida it is in effect abetting matrimonial laxity outside the small group to which this code applies. The narrow political and class loyalty of the Bida *ena* has thus its counterpart in the no less narrow *esprit de corps* with its qualified respect for matrimonial rights.

In the case of a breach of the age-grade code the culprit is summoned before the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu*, who have the right to punish him. A first, light offence may entail only a warning. Repeated offences will be punished more severely. If a young man shows himself lazy in *egbe* work or reluctant to fulfil the obligations of collective farm-work, it is regarded as sufficient punishment to order him to work in the back row, among the youngest and most inexperienced *ena* members. In the case of more serious offences the penalty may take the form of social ostracism: the *Etsu* and *Ndakotsu* would rule that no member of the *ena* must attend festivities in the house of the offender. This sentence, I was told, soon brings the culprit to heel; he will kneel down in front of the *Etsu* and ask him for forgiveness, protesting that he would henceforth mend his ways. In certain age-grade associations, especially in Bida, fines are inflicted in the case of graver offences against the *ena* code. Expulsion is never practised, not even as a penalty of the gravest of all age-grade offences—misconduct with the bride or wife of a comrade. However, my inquiries into the occurrence of this offence were invariably answered with a blunt denial. Whether or not it was founded on fact I have no means of deciding. Quite possibly the *esprit de corps* of the *ena* forbade admission of so shameful a charge. The rather too sweeping denial with which my questions were met makes it appear not unlikely: 'We are like brothers,' many of my informants said, 'who would steal a brother's wife?'

In one respect, at least, this statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration. Age-grade comrades are not 'like brothers'. The intimate relation between age-grade comrades which this simile suggests is not true to facts. The relationship existing between friends, on the other hand, is often likened to the relationship between brothers, and does in certain respects resemble it. But age-grade comradeship as all informants agreed, is sharply distinguished from friendship, and the mutual obligations of friendship in no way coincide with those implied in *ena* membership. The subject is worth pursuing.

A man (or woman) will never have more than one friend. The friend may come from a different locality, a different profession, even a differ-

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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education. Let me make it clear that the mother is always expected to do the best for her children, and to pamper them in small matters, by giving them sweets, tasty tit-bits, and occasional presents. Nor is her more consequential economic help strictly unexpected and against the rule: but it is a rule of *faute de mieux*, whose coming into play inevitably connotes the failure of the more basic rule, that it is the father's role to meet the economic requirements of the household. Here, as in the instance mentioned before, the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men. 754x 562 593

There is a further point, already touched upon in a previous context. In Nupe, the women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes. This is true even of the many women who only visit the market in the town, the Bida night market being a recognized place of assignation. All this is bad enough in the case of childless women; but in their case such immoral conduct is condoned, if with a shrug of the shoulders. As proverbial, however, as the moral laxity of the women traders is their desire to avoid having children. It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'. They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness. 754x 562 593 842 837

Whether the woman exceeds the proper role of a wife and mother or rejects it, in part or entirely, she has successfully set aside a believed-in social norm. Now, this is no longer an instance of social abnormality, rather the opposite, if by 'normality' we mean all that is common, usual, expected: but it is a normality one hates and regrets, and contrasts with a desired state of affairs unhappily uncommon. This is borne out in every conversation; in the many quarrels between husbands and wives; in the many divorces and separations (and equally in the resigned attitude of husbands); in the comments of the medicine experts which we quoted before; in nostalgic talks of the men about a happier past when 'women knew their place'; and in the exclusion of unchaste and childless women from religious ceremonials. 754x 562 593

This, then, is a clash between ideal and reality. But it is in no sense seen as fortuitous or transitory, as the result of some unfortunate maladjustment which could have been avoided and can conceivably be set right if one only made the effort. The harking-back to 'the good old days' is merely an escape from a reality which one is helpless to alter. For no one speaks about a future when everything should be better than it is now; and though the 754x 562 593 183

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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ance to women, they often, once more like Nupe, take back with one hand what they give with the other, that is, punish the permitted presumption by producing some belief in female witchery (whether taken literally or not). 754x 154 562

But the male standpoint does not hold throughout; for the Nupe condemnation of voluntary sterility represents the women's judgment as much as the men's. From earliest youth the women accept child-bearing as the mission of their sex. If later in life they deny it, they deny what they know to be 'human nature': hence their furtive dealings with the medicine-man abortionist and the admitted shamefulness of this traffic. Let me stress that this means more than an attempt to evade the moral judgments of others. The Nupe woman has her lovers openly, and as openly flaunts her wealth and independence, the adverse moral judgments of the men notwithstanding. So that, in hiding the shame of not wanting children she hides a shame of which she is aware and a guilt which she accepts. This guilt is probably shared much more widely; for every woman who takes concrete steps to avoid child-bearing there must be another who at least harbours the secret desire. However this may be, like the frustration of the men, the guilt of the women, open or secret, is projected into the picture of the female witch. For the women equally accept this picture. Though they may not have created the witchcraft beliefs, they yet have a hand in transmitting them and keeping them alive; at least, they share in gossip of this kind, if less openly than the men, and fabricate such stories. Whenever they do, they speak as accusers, vehemently denying that the role of the witch could apply to them. Even so, they accuse their own sex and, circuitously, themselves.[1] [837]

The men, then, in the witchcraft fantasies, condemn an antagonist; the women, in the same vicarious fashion, condemn their own guilt. In the concrete punishment, however, which witches are expected to suffer the male standpoint once more emerges paramount. It is the men alone who battle with witches, defeat and chastise them, through the male society of *ndakó gboyá*, as it is also the men who, in the legends about witchcraft, are credited with the discovery of this weapon; and this, as we shall see, is employed, not only to trace and punish the culprits, but also to threaten and to subdue the womenfolk at large.

There is a certain twist to this picture of male vengeance. In the legends the men, in the person of the diviner and the 'old man', are straightforward destroyers of witches. But general

[1] Margaret Mead has drawn attention to the nexus between witchcraft beliefs and willed female sterility (see *Male and Female*, 1949, pp. 232–3). Her views, stated in a broader context, bear out much of what I have tried to say.

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

DIVORCE

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige 837] to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

BURIAL

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual "owned" by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the "eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the "eight days" feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the "eight days" and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak 184 or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a "pious offering" to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found
595 the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more
565 attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would
586 be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying
[832] age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphrodisiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

595 This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and
837 the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral con-
831 cepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution. !

548 Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-profes-
837 sional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The
837 obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men
586 cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part
565 of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[838] [1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d.* and 1*s.*

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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To substantiate this hypothesis I may be allowed to digress a little. It is, I think, true to say that man surrenders to woman his virility in the sex-act and his independence and self-containedness in the love relationship; the fulfilment of his desires is thus bought with the sacrifice of Ego-completeness. If we take this sacrifice to be unconsciously hateful, as I think we must, and accept this ambivalence of love-hatred as the source of an inescapable antagonism having no normal or legitimate outlet, then the belief in female witches (of the Nupe or any other people) represents a 'displacement' and licensed expression of the repressed hatred. The phrase 'having no normal outlet' requires some comment. Different cultures fashion the normal social relationship between the sexes in widely diverse ways, as has been amply demonstrated in the work of Margaret Mead. But few societies can by this means fully resolve the conflict of sex antagonism. If the society makes the men the socially dominant sex, it is able to compensate for the surrender of virility but fails to express the importance of the woman as sexual partner and procreatrix, and hence invites male fears of female revenge; and if the social dominance of men is reduced, either by design (as in some societies) or in consequence of uncontrollable social processes (as in Nupe), this produces the kind of situation we have been discussing. There is some evidence that a carefully balanced relationship between the sexes can avoid this impasse.[1] But where it does not, the psychological mechanism of projection, with its offer of vicarious or fantasy hatreds, comes into play.

Now this is only a bare formula, couched in terms of universal validity. Let me fill it in with details from Nupe society. To begin with, the 'surrender' and loss of 'completeness' on the part of the men may be felt more strongly in some societies than in others, that is, reach consciousness to a different degree. The Nupe men, certainly, make much of the physically weakening effects of sexual intercourse, and teach the younger generation to husband their strength; they also, as we know, readily employ aphrodisiacs and so betray their fear of the loss of potency. At the same time, they will comment on the sexual voraciousness of the women, who never seem to have enough lovers. The Nupe, incidentally, do not conceive of erotic relationships that could avoid this threat to their virility: homosexuality among the men does not seem to occur and is thought absurd as well as repulsive. Yet again, homosexuality does occur among the women, which fact is well known to the men.[2] For the Nupe, then, the woman is more 'complete'

[1] See my chapter on 'Dual Descent in the Nuba Hills', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, pp. 354 ff.
[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 152.

The royal houses of Nupe, like every nobleman's house, had their host of slaves: slaves for menial work—in the house and on the land—as well as the titled slaves of respected position. At the court this latter group of slaves formed the *ena wuši*, the Order of Court Slaves, a distinguished slave *élite* into which only few selected slaves could ever hope to be admitted. From the slaves captured in war those of high birth and status, chiefs or distinguished warriors, were selected for the court. These, too, were given ranks and titles, and could rise high in the service of the king. Theirs was the specialized service of officials and trusted royal agents. There were those who looked after the king's vast household; those who were in charge of the *Etsu* Nupe's no less imposing harem—both offices formerly entrusted to eunuchs.[1] Other slaves formed the king's bodyguard and police force; they were provincial delegates, tax collectors, trusted messengers, 'liaison officers' between the king's palace and the houses of his noblemen, and between the king and the army in the field. These slaves, like the other rank-holders, owned land and held fiefs. The Nupe kings in Rabá are said to have had only four titled court slaves; the slave ranks that existed at the court of Bida some thirty years ago (and the ranks still exist, although their holders are no longer slaves) were more than three times that number. Under *Etsu* Maliki, one of the last independent kings of Nupe, the most responsible state offices were taken from royal princes and *sarakiži* and entrusted to slaves. The position of the slaves as officers of state thus seems to have overshadowed more and more all other state ranks. Slave ranks were ranks bestowed *ad personam*, and ranks bestowed by the king personally, independent of the council of princes and ministers; and this gives us the explanation for their rise in importance. The offices linked with civil and military rank also depended to some extent on the personal favour of the king. But once appointed, these men stayed on, servants of the kingdom rather than of the king. They had behind them the claims of powerful families, they were exponents of political factions, and could play on that 'balance of power' between the dynasties. The slaves were personal servants in the full sense of the word. They were brought into office, not by family claims or promotion or a rigid rule of succession, but by personal appointment, selection, and trial. They were bound to the king's service generation after generation, by the strongest bond: their position of unfree men. It frequently happened that a new *Etsu* took over the slaves who had served his predecessor and left them their ranks and possessions. The rise of the slave officials at the Fulani court is the counterpart of the rise of a powerful, dangerously independent feudal nobility.

The following is a list of slave ranks held to-day, not by slaves, but by former slaves or descendants of slaves at the court of the *Etsu* Nupe. I have again tried to indicate in what manner they received their title, and also in certain cases the office which some of them are holding to-day in the Bida Town Administration. That so many of these former slaves

[1] In the pre-Fulani kingdom the court is said to have employed only a few slaves—all eunuchs. All slave ranks which have a *nda* in their title, meaning 'father' (ranks that are still in use—see attached chart), were originally ranks reserved for eunuchs.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

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[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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121 tion movement are to some extent methodologically of the same order. Both represent in certain respects 'data', given facts—factors external to the field of social phenomena which we investigate. Moreover, population movement and environmental conditions are inseparable from one another. Population movement reflects the effects of a complex of heterogeneous factors of which physical environment is one of the most important. It bears on possibilities and means of production, on nutrition, health, and livelihood in general.

But we shall also encounter the effects of other factors upon population movement, namely, specific 'cultural' factors—social and economic conditions, 'standards of living', moral concepts—and certain historical events which have influenced the distribution of population in Nupe country.

Birth-rate and Fertility

163 The Nigerian Census places Nupe birth- and fertility-rate at the bottom of the scale.[1] The proportion of live children per mother among 842 the Nupe is 1·8 (the Yoruba are the only other tribe with an equally low rate), as against an average for all tribes of 2·6, and a fertility-rate of 2·4 in the tribe with the next lowest figure. Fifty-eight per cent. of Nupe women in the age group 30–39 are sterile, as against the total average for Nigeria of 22·7, and the next highest sterility rate of 27·1 among the Yoruba. These figures contain certain inconsistencies, and leave certain relevant questions unanswered. Thus the rate of live children per mother is equal among Nupe and Yoruba, while the proportion of sterile women among the Nupe is exactly twice the corresponding figure among the Yoruba. This would imply that infant mortality among the Yoruba is twice as large as among the Nupe—which seems hardly probable. Moreover, the proportion of live children per mother does not indicate to what extent the low figure is due to still-birth, infant mortality, constitutional sterility or, possibly, birth restriction. Finally, the statistics ignore the sociologically most important distinction between rural and urban areas.

The last point can to some extent be answered indirectly. The following figures give the birth-rate of three Nupe towns and one district (Kontagora) which has a very large proportion of Nupe among its inhabitants. Though only approximate these figures are well worth quoting in this connexion as they refer to localities representing different degrees of urbanization: the purely urban area of Bida town side by side with the much less urbanized village-capitals of Agaie and Lapai Emirates.

TABLE III

	Birth-rate per 1,000
Bida town	12
Agaie town	36
Lapai town	27
Kontagora Division	26

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, i, p. 55.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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In the course of our investigation my wife and I attempted to ascertain further statistical data which could throw light on these points. They were obtained by the method of house-to-house investigation in three selected localities, in the villages Kutigi and Jebba Island, and in one town ward of Bida. The scale of this statistical research, carried out single-handed, was of necessity very limited. Nevertheless, certain significant facts could be ascertained (Tables IV and V). 163 842

TABLE IV

	Mothers (age group 30–40)	*Total children born*	*Children alive*	*Children dead*	*Births per mother*	*Live children per mother*
Villages	101	206	108	98	2	1·06
Town	144	230	126	104	1·5	0·8

TABLE V 165

	Mothers	*Children died at age of*					*Total*
		Birth	*1–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–15*	
Villages	101	29	25	27	8	9	98
Town	41	21	15	27	7	4	74

Table V shows, first, the distribution of infant mortality over different age groups. Infant mortality in the villages seems, on the whole, considerably lower than in the town, remarkably so at, or shortly after, birth and in the first five years of the infant's life. This seems in the main due to the spread of venereal infection in the town, and also to the effects of abortion and artificial birth restriction which, as we shall see presently, is practised in Bida. The highest mortality, both in urban and rural districts, occurs at the age of 3–5. This peak of mortality seems due primarily to malaria, which is especially fatal at this age.[1]

Table IV (examining a larger group from the urban area) attempts to establish a comparative birth-rate for urban and rural areas. For the low fertility-rate of the Nupe women in general two physiological explanations suggest themselves: first, reduced fertility may be the result of certain endemic or widespread diseases, such as sleeping sickness and gonorrhoea; or second, it may be the result of prenatal deficiency of vitamin E (a vitamin contained, for example, in palm-oil). The effectiveness of these two physiological factors cannot be denied.[2] However, the striking difference in the birth-rate of town and villages demands a different interpretation. The distribution of venereal diseases, definitely higher in the town than in the rural area, would fit into the picture. But of sleeping sickness rather the opposite is true; and the vitamin deficiency 163 842 164 [146] 163 842

[1] For this information, as for the other medical information in this chapter, I am indebted to Dr. M. Ellis, of the Nigerian Medical Service, who at the time was in charge of Bida N.A. Hospital.

[2] A study of diet among the Nupe has shown that the women's share of the daily meals (i.e. the meals cooked with palm-oil) is only about one-fourth of the men's share.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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163 should be less marked in the town, where rich food is the rule. Physio-
842 logical factors are thus not sufficient to explain the low fertility-rate in Nupe. This is confirmed by the data of Table IV. For in the context of this table, which refers only to women who have had children and excludes sterile women, the difference in birth-rate precludes to some extent the explanation on the ground of constitutional sterility and suggests instead the influence of another factor: the existence of birth restriction in the town, in other words, the effects of *social* motives.

842 Nupe religion and morality, as we shall see later, emphasize very strongly the idea of progeny. Nevertheless, in the higher social strata, especially in Bida town, the women often prefer childlessness, or at least do not want more than one child. Childlessness opens to them certain economic opportunities of which women with children, or many children, cannot avail themselves as easily. The Bida women know how to bring about abortion, and even know the use of contraceptives—or rather of certain practices and drugs which are believed to work as contraceptives. Many of them are clearly mere superstitions and the expression of magical beliefs; whether certain drugs which one can buy (in the greatest secrecy) from medicine-men and barber-doctors are more effective, I am unable to say.[1] However this may be, sterility of the Bida women is, to speak with Durkheim, a typical 'social fact'. In our own terminology, it represents a typical case of that 'indirect' influence of environment which determines population movement, working through considerations of economic benefit and standard of living. And this influence becomes evident in our case not only as an abstract social trend, derived from statistical correlations, but still more in the form of conscious and tangible behaviour.

Sex Ratio

162 Statistical figures show a surprising fact: a marked preponderance of females among the adult population, but hardly any preponderance of females—indeed, in Bida town, the reverse relation—in the sex ratio of non-adults.

TABLE VI[2]

	Adults		*Non-adults*		*Females per head of male population*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Adult*	*Non-adult*
Bida Emirate	57,759	66,546	22,949	24,204	1·15	1·1
Agaie-Lapai Emirate	20,148	23,915	6,139	5,938	1·1	0·9
Bida town	7,714	11,602	3,240	2,675	1·5	0·8
Bida Emirate excl. of Bida town	50,045	54,944	19,709	21,529	1·1	1·1

[1] The Nupe 'doctors' know two kinds of contraceptives: temporary contraceptives of a magical nature (e.g. a magical belt), and permanent contraceptives—powders which are taken internally. These drugs are considered 'evil', immoral medicines, but are made and sold all the same.

[2] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, pp. 176 et seq.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpā, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpā and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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562 837 831 sexual licence towards which the other social forces appear to be driving. The result is the close association between professional female trade and semi-professional licensed prostitution which we can observe to-day.

Yet admission into this 'domain' was in turn made dependent upon 562 a certain qualification, namely childlessness. Here we can add a final, 837 ideological motive to the social causes behind the moral development. It is embodied in the Nupe conception of barrenness as a state outside 831 conventional morality, and its contribution is twofold: it helps to define more narrowly the group in which sexual licence shall be sanctioned, by ● 842 making sterility of the women a criterion of admission; and it provides at the same time the spiritual framework for such social sanction, by linking it with certain religious or quasi-religious beliefs. To some extent the ideological association between barrenness and sexual licence can be reduced to certain obvious rational motives, which are, in fact, present in the minds of the people: childlessness is of great advantage in the life of the women traders whose profession involves constant travelling and long absence from home; moreover, the sexual indiscretions of sterile women are socially of less consequence than those of other women, being comparatively safe from discovery and precluding the more disturbing legal complications (i.e. birth of illegitimate children). But the social interpretation of barrenness also expresses certain more deeply [581] rooted beliefs. To the Nupe marriage has no real meaning without progeny. Barrenness is regarded as a great curse and misfortune, and many cults and forms of magic are designed to secure fertility of the women or to cure barrenness. Traditional religious beliefs place barren women in a category apart and exclude them from participation in the most important annual cult of the country, the *gunnu*.[1] As the barren woman fails by the common standard of marriage and womanhood, she is also exempted from the standards of common morality. Adultery and unchastity count less in her than in other women. And although the stigma of immorality would still attach to the unchaste barren woman (she would still be called a 'worthless woman'), it would be, as it were, overshadowed by and fused with the other paramount stigma of barrenness itself.

The growth of sexual licence far beyond its traditionally sanctioned limits is again due to various causes, economic, political, and religious. The primary cause appears to be economic and will be discussed in that context. Its effectiveness, however, is greatly strengthened by the political and social factors which foster what I have termed the 'double morality' in Nupe society. We can also see that the Nupe conception of barrenness must itself indirectly aid these tendencies and defeat the limitations which it was meant to uphold. For in a country with spreading sterility and even birth restriction, a religion which withholds its sanctions of matrimonial morality in the case of childless women can prove but a weak bulwark against the tide of sexual licence. Mohammedanism in Nupe, committed as it is to that 'double morality', undermines rather than supplies forces of moral restraint.

[1] For a description of this aspect of barrenness see *J.R.A.I.* 1937, p. iii.

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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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indifference which the Nupe ascribe to divine creation. Yet since the world contains both things, *kuti*, which is good, and *cigbe*, which is both good and evil, the good would seem on balance to preponderate. As we shall see, various other religious thoughts confirm this impression of a cynicism tempered with optimism. 779

(iv) *Body and Soul*

We turn to the other 'things in the world' and first to the animate beings. Each of these possesses, to begin with, a body, *nakã*. The Nupe word means precisely what we mean by 'body'—the flesh and blood of living creatures, resulting from procreation, parturition, and natural growth, and decomposing after death. The biological processes of procreation and parturition are fairly well understood, though this empirical knowledge is not free from fallacies. Thus no one misunderstands the connection between coitus and conception; one understands, too, that both women and men can be infertile, and that abortion can be brought about by strong laxatives or overstrain. At the same time the Nupe also use certain purely 'magical' cures for barrenness and charms or magic belts to prevent conception. More surprisingly, the Nupe fail to distinguish between semen and male urine, or have to borrow a word from Hausa to describe the former. Nor finally is the precise length of pregnancy known. To quote one of my informants, a diviner and knowledgeable old man: 'It all depends; it may take anything between seven months and a year; a strong and fit child will be born after eleven months or so, a weak one after a shorter period.' 779 842 843 826

The biological processes as such, one believes, produce only a lifeless body, as death in turn leaves the body lifeless but still physically intact. The living being thus has further attributes, of soul-like nature, which are three in number: *rayi* or 'anima'; *fifingi* or 'shadow soul'; and *kuci* or 'personal soul'. 779 774

The word *rayi* is used generally to denote the living state; the pulse, for example, is called *rayigi*, 'little life'. Everything animate possesses *rayi*, while stones, pieces of wood, and similar inanimate objects are without *rayi*; growing trees and plants, however, are counted among the animate things. Life comes from God and exists with God, in the sky, when it is not incarnate. At death 'God takes it away'; at birth it is sent down by God, more precisely, it appears already when the child first moves in the womb. The new life is thus at first tied to the life of the mother, and in a sense remains so tied for a period even after birth. For the mother who has borne one child must not risk another conception before the child can walk and is 'sufficiently strong', lest it would never grow up; so that its *rayi* would seem to be diminished by the other life 842

2; Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifíngi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifíngi*.

Fifíngi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifíngi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifíngi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifíngi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

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x 796 The dance frequently rises to feverish excitement, when the youths
881 will suddenly resume using their whips, violently and against any-one. The flogging now has a purpose: when directed against male adolescents it is thought to promote growth and maturity; when directed against women, fertility. But there are also phases of calm as well as humorous episodes, acclaimed by general laughter. One episode, in particular, may be mentioned: now and again, the young men will imitate, with comic exaggeration, a typical women's dance or caricature the walk and gestures of women.

I will not describe the dance further: it fills the rest of the *gunnu* festivities, being interrupted only for a brief night's rest, and ends when all the beer is exhausted and everyone too tired to carry on. I will only note these important and partly unique features. Some
x 796 time during the dance the young men form themselves into a
● 842 procession led by the *Ndazo* and march and dance through the
881 village, still singing the *gunnu* songs, to give the 'salute' in front of the houses of high-ranking elders. On the way they also visit the childless women of the village; for these are strictly forbidden to watch the *gunnu* dance and must hide in their huts until the ceremonial is over. These women may be unhappily barren; or they may be suspected of avoiding childbearing and family duties so that they might lead the immoral life of female traders and prostitutes (which, in Nupe, means one and the same thing). In either case the *Ndazo* will enter their house and encourage or admonish them, as the case may be; the woman, kneeling before him, will receive two lashes with the *gunnu* whip, administered by one of the young men, which is both a punishment and a promise of fertility. Women who have no taste for either will have to leave the village or hide in some other house during the critical period, as indeed quite a few are doing.

[535] Again, few other Nupe rituals include a mixed dance of the sexes; in the *gunnu*, this is not only permitted but considered a
x 796 relevant part of the celebration, as is the whole excited and aban-
881 doned tone of the dance. Always, when describing the *gunnu*, the Nupe will use some such phrase—'we make merry, we drink, we dance, men and women together without order, until we talk without sense'. This excitement is in no small measure sexual; not only is the attention of the young men constantly drawn to the other sex (even by the fact that they wear an item of women's dress), but the week preceding the *gunnu* and the whole period of the
834 celebration are also marked by a severe prohibition of all sexual
786 intercourse, lest death visit the community. Only when the dance is ended and everyone has bathed, the men in a nearby stream,
x 796 the women at home, is the rule of chastity lifted; the same night
881 men and women will again sleep together, matrimonially or promiscuously – No one cares.

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occurring in the course of the ceremonial. In Nupe, this is the case only in the *gunnu*. We remember the exclusion of barren women from the public celebrations: this attitude is not merely left to emerge from the procedural rules but is also laid down in the form of an explicit warning voiced by the *gunnu* priest. Similarly the general obligation of respect towards elders and, especially, of sons towards their fathers is put into words, during the vigil in the bush, when the *ndakó gboyá* catechises the adolescents. Thus the Nupe can rightly say (in one of the *gunnu* songs) that the '*gunnu* teaches men', though in a more indirect fashion this would be true of all their rituals.

Furthermore, the 'desirable and important ways of acting' demonstrated in the ritual, implicitly or explicitly, may be held up as desirable and important in the ritual alone, not having the same weight in everyday life or not appearing in it at all. The ritual would then present, not a duplication or model, but something else—an ideal rarely met with in practice or even a reversal of the practice. This is true in varying degree of four features of the Nupe ritual, all concerned with the relationship of the sexes. There is, first, the rigid exclusion of women from the esoteric rites, which sometimes goes together with intimidation and threats. Yet women play an important part in Nupe social life, in many ways equal to that of the men; many women are influential and wealthy, and ranks and titles are open to them.[1] In no sense are they the 'weaker' or more timid sex. If, then, it is 'important' in the ritual that women should be kept in their place and forcibly reminded of their inferiority, this seems to imply a redress of balance, a compensation for the loss of male prominence, and something in the nature of a wish-fulfilment. The issue seems conspicuously summarized in the *mamma* ritual, which admits the power of women (since the 'medicine' employed is a woman's gift) yet is also meant to subdue and terrify them. The sex antagonism here apparent has a much wider bearing and will occupy us again in the discussion of witchcraft.

Secondly, the ostracism of the childless woman in the *gunnu*, though it does not contradict the norms valid in 'real' life, greatly exaggerates them. The Nupe men will always moralize about the impropriety of contraception and the shameful conduct of mothers who behave as though they had no children, becoming professional traders and, incidentally, prostitutes; equally, everybody will decry the misfortune of barrenness. But the fact remains that a great many women, childless or not, happily live in this 'shameful' state and are able to choose it without necessarily incurring the

[1] For a fuller account of the position of the women, especially in the economic sphere, see *A Black Byzantium*, chap. IX.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796 x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842 •

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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757 means of a potion. For the inhalation one uses leaf-tips of the oil-
palm, hair of a she-goat, and the pulverized genitals of a he-goat,
278 all burned together in a pot; the potion is made of the sap of a
certain 'male' shrub (that is, the fruitless variety, called *darabagi*,
'male *dara*'), the charred bark of another, mixed with natron. The
patient, having been treated in this fashion, is said to calm down
and eventually to recover, though the cure can never be certain.
For violent and dangerous attacks there is no agreed cure. The
barber-doctors, in fact, do not treat this form of insanity at all,
but other people sometimes know a treatment, though it is always
said to be difficult and uncertain. Thus one informant suggested
that the patients must be made to fast until they calm down; and
another recommended flogging (a treatment apparently widely
applied in Yoruba country).[1]

757 A final group of medicines bears on conception and virility.
278 Dried cocoyam, the charred bark of the *savi* tree, and onions,
842 pounded and taken in water, are said to constitute a powerful
[832] aphrodisiac. Fertility of women is ensured by a potion, drunk the
morning before cohabitation, made of an infusion of leaves of the
tamarind tree mixed with natron. Delivery is facilitated by rub-
bing the womb with three herbs after they have been soaked in
water for a night. There are also two 'contraceptive' medicines,
one having a temporary effect only, the other believed to cause
permanent barrenness. The former consists of two powdered herbs,
mixed with bits of grass from a termite mound, and taken with
water; the latter, of the charred stalk and leaves of a young cassava
plant, mixed with henna root and natron, boiled in water, and
drunk. The knowledge, incidentally, of the permanent 'contracep-
tive' is claimed to be purely platonic; the Bida practitioner at
least has no chance of applying it in practice, not because he is
reluctant to do so or because the Bida women avoid these shameful
practices, but because they would not risk their reputation by thus
openly consulting a 'doctor' in the town. Instead, my informants
assured me, they go to 'medicine-men' in the villages, where they
are unknown and their secret will be safe. A secret in fact it is;
and here we meet with a first, though fairly mild, instance of
reprehensible medicines, employed for immoral ends.

757 This list is far from complete, omitting, especially, the many
759 variants of the same kind of cure.[2] The barber-doctors do not be-
lieve in specifics in the strict sense of the word; rather, there are
several treatments for each ailment, and different practitioners

[1] The informant in question came, in fact, from Shari, a village on the border of Nupe and Yoruba.

[2] I recorded altogether thirty-four remedies known to barber-doctors, which number is probably fairly exhaustive.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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757 278 possible application of the principle 'like cures like', no one today is aware of this notion. Nor are there any 'theories' as regards such abstruse ingredients as eggshells, the excreta of fowls, twigs from the nest of vultures, or grass from inside an ant-heap. Yet it is also difficult to see how the precept, 'experiment with the help of God', can have led to these peculiar discoveries. If they are 'superstitions', they are not, like other superstitions, the degraded offspring of more elaborate mystic or cosmological speculations. The treatment of lunacy, with its 'male' and 'female' ingredients, seems to suggest something of the kind; but there is no clear link between this cure and that other idea, that lunacy is a residue of 'male' sleeping sickness.[1] And in all the other fantastic remedies their intellectual antecedents are simply not traceable, not even to legends or folk-tales. Perhaps the remedies have been adopted, more or less blindly, from other groups and countries, on some of those informative travels of which the barber-doctors boast. As they stand, they are merely crude and absurd attempts at 'empirical' treatment, instances of that 'blundering' I spoke of before.

278 755 [759] Any of the medicines just described might equally be the product of the *cigbeci*, and a number are in fact identical. But unlike the barber-doctors, the *cigbeciži* also employ the fully irrational, non-therapeutic version of *cigbe*, and even their remedies proper, salves, potions, and the like, are much more often based on recipes of an incongruous and abstruse kind.[2] Thus a 'strong' potion taken for intestinal troubles includes the fluid extracted from the gall-bladder of snakes, a potion alleged to cure smallpox contains a boiled lizard tail, and an ointment for rheumatic pains is composed, among other things, of powdered potsherds which must be obtained from old pots found lying about with the broken side up, any other position rendering the remedy worthless.

While these recipes seem as random and arbitrary as the more abstruse examples of the barber-doctors' art, others betray some underlying 'theory', some vague and often uncertain reasoning from analogy or from the principle 'like cures like'. Thus one [842] expert had a cure for impotence consisting of a potion whose ingredients included, besides various roots and two kinds of pepper, also the powdered genitals of a he-goat.[3] A contraceptive credited with lasting effect is concocted from the roots of the

[1] See above, p. 37.

[2] Of the twenty-two *cigbeci* medicines I recorded fifteen belonged to that category, while the corresponding proportion in the case of the barbers' remedies was six in thirty-four.

[3] I have this incongruous evidence for the efficacy of the treatment. My servant, who was with me when I visited the expert, at once bought and drunk the potion to increase his virility. The next day I had to doctor him for severe indigestion.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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tamarind tree, leaves of baobab, sorghum stalks, and the skin of a fish said to 'die at once when you hold it in your hand', the last ingredient being the most important. Another, temporary, contraceptive is prepared with grass taken from an ant-heap which must have three round mounds and must be broken open with the heel. The magic belt mentioned before, said to prevent pregnancy, is made of leather into which these two ingredients are sewn—hair from the tail of a mule and seeds from locust-beans 'forgotten' (i.e. overlooked) at the harvest. The reasoning from analogy is fairly obvious in the recipe for impotence and in the last appliance. In the lasting contraceptive the underlying 'theory' seems to rest upon this argument: since a freshly caught fish stands for fertility (in dream interpretation), a fish that 'dies at once' might plausibly be identified with its destruction. And of ants, which figure in the temporary contraceptive, it is said that 'one does not know their father and mother'; so that a medicine derived from ants would seem to promise precisely what its users desire. The former 'theory' is my own inference, while the latter, as we shall see, is explicitly mentioned. But it is incomplete apart from being abstruse; for it fails to account for the three mounds that are required and for the peculiar method of opening the ant-heap; nor yet does it state why grass taken from an ant-heap should, in other remedies, serve quite a different purpose.

The moral attitude of the *cigbeciži* towards such dubious practices as facilitating contraception and sterility differs considerably from that of the barber-doctors. While the latter simply claim that they have no chance of dispensing these remedies and shift the blame on their pagan colleagues, these both admit dealing in them and try to justify their actions. They maintain that they dispense these medicines only rarely and in deserving cases. At least, this is true of the medicine alleged to procure permanent sterility; the expert in question assured me that he had given it only once, out of pity, to a woman whose husband was forcing her to sleep with him while her first-born had not yet been weaned. In the case of the temporary expedients the conscience of the *cigbeciži* is more easily satisfied; they merely put up the price for frivolous clients, that is, for 'rich people who do not want children'. As a corrollary, the medicine for impotence is similarly expensive (costing as much as ten shillings), not only because it is difficult to prepare, but because it is something of a luxury; for the expert argued that since this remedy did not 'save people from death' but afforded them 'enjoyment' it was worth paying for. He was fairminded enough to add that he would lower the price in the case of poor clients.

As regards the non-therapeutic medicines, they are credited

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

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education. Let me make it clear that the mother is always expected to do the best for her children, and to pamper them in small matters, by giving them sweets, tasty tit-bits, and occasional presents. Nor is her more consequential economic help strictly unexpected and against the rule: but it is a rule of *faute de mieux*, whose coming into play inevitably connotes the failure of the more basic rule, that it is the father's role to meet the economic requirements of the household. Here, as in the instance mentioned before, the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men. 754x 562 593

There is a further point, already touched upon in a previous context. In Nupe, the women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes. This is true even of the many women who only visit the market in the town, the Bida night market being a recognized place of assignation. All this is bad enough in the case of childless women; but in their case such immoral conduct is condoned, if with a shrug of the shoulders. As proverbial, however, as the moral laxity of the women traders is their desire to avoid having children. It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'. They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness. 754x 562 593 842 837

Whether the woman exceeds the proper role of a wife and mother or rejects it, in part or entirely, she has successfully set aside a believed-in social norm. Now, this is no longer an instance of social abnormality, rather the opposite, if by 'normality' we mean all that is common, usual, expected: but it is a normality one hates and regrets, and contrasts with a desired state of affairs unhappily uncommon. This is borne out in every conversation; in the many quarrels between husbands and wives; in the many divorces and separations (and equally in the resigned attitude of husbands); in the comments of the medicine experts which we quoted before; in nostalgic talks of the men about a happier past when 'women knew their place'; and in the exclusion of unchaste and childless women from religious ceremonials. 754x 562 593

This, then, is a clash between ideal and reality. But it is in no sense seen as fortuitous or transitory, as the result of some unfortunate maladjustment which could have been avoided and can conceivably be set right if one only made the effort. The harking-back to 'the good old days' is merely an escape from a reality which one is helpless to alter. For no one speaks about a future when everything should be better than it is now; and though the 754x 562 593 183

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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N G 771 177 794

the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

N 771 177

So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

N [766]

At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

N [821] N 771 177 842

The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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communities all over the country, have made the pilgrimage to the nearest shrine and priest, and numerous persons, both young and old, bear the tell-tale name *Sogba*. The degree to which the alien cult has taken root is best seen from a text on the practices surrounding childbirth which I recorded in Bida long before I knew anything about the *sogba* cult, and which contains this straightforward statement:

'If a woman has no child and she is a pagan, she would go and visit the place of *sogba*, she would go and pray for a child. The pagans have a hut with a *kuti* inside. The priest will translate (talk to the *kuti*) on behalf of the woman or man who come to visit the *sogba*. The priest receives money from the person who comes. If God agrees and that person has a child, it will be named *Sogba*. It will wear a charm round his neck, everybody seeing that person will know that he is a child of *sogba*.'

The traditional religious or quasi-religious practices of Nupe certainly do not lack 'cures' of sterility. If here a further magic treatment has been added to the numerous existing ones, this would seem to bear out the ever-visible desire for children. Nor do the religious conceptions of the people, which so readily allow for alternative practices and several trials, conflict with the desire behind this addition. But let us note this. Though the Nupe make use only of one particular feature or benefit of the alien cult and disregard its wider context (of which, in fact, they are mostly ignorant), this piecemeal adoption yet commits them to a radically changed outlook. For they accept, with the miraculous powers of *sogba*, also the tie forged between these powers and the beneficiary. And this whole idea, that an ordinary person can for life be dedicated to a *kuti* and stand under its protection, has no parallel in Nupe religion. The practical consequences of this dedication are neither burdensome nor very important; even so, they clash with the conventional way of looking at 'medicines' or *ad hoc* rituals as at so many expedients, solicited when one needs them, paid for, and then forgotten.

(iii) *Yoruba Influences*

Yoruba religion, the third on our list, has hardly touched Nupe. The elaborate cosmology of the Yoruba, their pantheon, and their effigies or idols had no influence upon the beliefs and practices of the Nupe. Nor has the *gugu* cult of the Yoruba settlers in Nupe found any response other than detached or amused interest.

There seem to be two exceptions. The first is exemplified in the bronze figures on Jebba Island which have been accepted as sacred

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52

They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 583
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 856
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

indifference which the Nupe ascribe to divine creation. Yet since 779
the world contains both things, *kuti*, which is good, and *cigbe*, which is both good and evil, the good would seem on balance to preponderate. As we shall see, various other religious thoughts confirm this impression of a cynicism tempered with optimism.

(iv) *Body and Soul*

We turn to the other 'things in the world' and first to the 779
animate beings. Each of these possesses, to begin with, a body, *nahã*. The Nupe word means precisely what we mean by 'body'— 842
the flesh and blood of living creatures, resulting from procreation, 843
parturition, and natural growth, and decomposing after death. The biological processes of procreation and parturition are fairly well understood, though this empirical knowledge is not free from fallacies. Thus no one misunderstands the connection between coitus and conception; one understands, too, that both women and men can be infertile, and that abortion can be brought about by strong laxatives or overstrain. At the same time the Nupe also use certain purely 'magical' cures for barrenness and charms or magic belts to prevent conception. More surprisingly, the Nupe [826]
fail to distinguish between semen and male urine, or have to borrow a word from Hausa to describe the former. Nor finally is the precise length of pregnancy known. To quote one of my informants, a diviner and knowledgeable old man: 'It all depends; it may take anything between seven months and a year; a strong and fit child will be born after eleven months or so, a weak one after a shorter period.'

The biological processes as such, one believes, produce only a 779
lifeless body, as death in turn leaves the body lifeless but still 774
physically intact. The living being thus has further attributes, of soul-like nature, which are three in number: *rayi* or 'anima'; *fifingi* or 'shadow soul'; and *kuci* or 'personal soul'.

The word *rayi* is used generally to denote the living state; the pulse, for example, is called *rayigi*, 'little life'. Everything animate possesses *rayi*, while stones, pieces of wood, and similar inanimate objects are without *rayi*; growing trees and plants, however, are counted among the animate things. Life comes from God and exists with God, in the sky, when it is not incarnate. At death 'God takes it away'; at birth it is sent down by God, more precisely, it appears already when the child first moves in the womb. The new life is thus at first tied to the life of the mother, and in a sense remains so tied for a period even after birth. For the mother who [842]
has borne one child must not risk another conception before the child can walk and is 'sufficiently strong', lest it would never grow up; so that its *rayi* would seem to be diminished by the other life

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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4. SOLEMNIZATIONS

We now turn to ceremonials which do not stand on their own, as so many efforts to wield supernatural power for particular ends, but which surround or merge with certain critical mundane events, birth, death, and marriage. For the Nupe, these ceremonials do not represent *kuti*, rituals proper: they do not move the force that is in the universe; nor do they belong to the tools which God granted man for this purpose. The ceremonials of birth, death, or marriage are merely observances, customary ways of dealing with the events in question or, as the Nupe say, 'ways of doing things'. If we call them 'rituals' or 'rites', we are applying our own nomenclature for such procedures. Even so, these 'ways of doing things' involve appeals to God and some link with the whole system of religious ideas; that is, they are *solemnizations* of mundane acts. 796 x

(i) *Birth*

The observances bearing on childbirth begin already with conception and culminate, some time after the actual birth, in the naming ceremonial, so that the event of birth is treated, not as a climax, but as one in a series of events or stages. This concern with pre- and post-natal phases corresponds closely to the Nupe conceptions of life and of body and soul; several of the respective observances, however, are neither specifically 'religious' nor explicitly fitted into the 'natural philosophy' of the people, belonging rather to the more indefinite range of notions we commonly call superstitions. 842

Thus the most auspicious time for conception is laid down, in typical Nupe manner, by numbering the day in question, which should be the fifth after the mother's menses. The night should be young, for a child conceived in the dark of the night, when spirits and witches are abroad, might easily be born misshapen. As soon as the pregnancy is noticeable (in the third month, as the Nupe calculate, or at the latest in the fifth), the parents must discontinue sexual relations; the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits as well as certain kinds of food which might harm the child: honey would give it adenoids, and a certain fish cause it to have six fingers on one hand. I have already mentioned that the avoidance of cohabitation continues for about three years after the birth of the child, since a new conception and pregnancy might stop the growth of the infant. In addition to these general rules and avoidances, which everyone knows, there may be special ones, ordered by the diviner, whom the expectant father will at once consult. [777 787] 843 [784 262]

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He will consult the diviner again at the beginning of the confinement and before the child is named. The father will also buy 'medicines' to facilitate the birth and buy or collect herbs with which to prepare the new-born's first food. During the delivery itself the father keeps away, leaving the scene to his elder sister, mother or aunt, and to his father or father's brother, who is called in to cut the umbilical cord and dispose of the afterbirth (which is buried outside the hut). Even afterwards the infant's grandfather plays a more conspicuous part than does the father; while the latter goes quietly about his business, the grandfather loudly announces to all friends and visitors that a grandchild has been born to him, and it is to him that all congratulations are addressed. The delivery and the treatment of the new-born represent essentially practical procedures devoid of ceremonial. We may mention only that for four days the infant is fed on a boiled infusion of the herbs which the father has collected and given the mother's milk only on the fifth. On the same day the father sends gifts of kolanuts to all relatives and friends, with the announcement that the naming ceremony, meanwhile fixed, will take place on such-and-such a day.

This ceremony, known as *suna* ('name'), usually takes place eight days after the birth, and is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be re-born in the child. The ceremonial is brief and takes place in privacy, usually in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor lies buried, being attended only by the child's father and his nearest male relations. The father kneels down, a gourd with beer in his hand, and speaks this prayer (to quote a concrete instance):

'I am praying to *Sokó*. The child that has entered, Lord God, it is Landu returned (the grandfather's name). *Kuci*, hold him (the child) securely, do not permit that he falls sick. May he live, cause him to grow old'.

The ceremonial ends when beer is poured on the ground and the rest drunk in silence by the men present. As this brief ritual summarizes the whole conception of reincarnation, so it also betrays its ambiguity; for the *kuci* which is believed to have returned to the living is yet asked to take care of the living; and though one sacrifices to a particular ancestor, one yet invokes God.

The naming ceremony itself makes no further mention of these mystic notions, being concerned exclusively with formally announcing the name and identity of the new-born. This is done before a gathering of guests as large as the host can make it. The guests are relatives, friends, neighbours, and such important personages as the child's father may happen to know; they are expected to bring small gifts and will in turn be furnished with

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Physical Characteristics: Tribal Marks: Dress

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

Birth

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a maliam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

Circumcision

304 Circumcision (*zuŋ'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–18.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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779 absorb the appeals to ancestors. This is only another aspect of their
769 lack of a special 'domain'. And even where *kuci* worship does not lose its independence so completely, it yet has little autonomy; for the kind of supernatural aid it promises can equally be procured by other forms of worship or sacrifice. But of this, too, we shall speak later.

769 Let me conclude the present account with the brief mention of a further ambiguous practice, a form of sacrifice which stands half-
777 way between an appeal to *Sokó* and the appeal to *kuci*. It is per-
779 formed by families in which there are or have been twins and is known by that name, *bakomba*. Such houses will possess a special
845 shrine, consisting of a number of small earthenware pots built into the outside wall of a hut, which the women will regularly fill with beer and porridge. Once a year, on the birthday of the twins, the family head will bring a sacrifice of beer and blood of fowl. Now, twins are lucky and a sign of divine benevolence; equally, they represent a special incarnation, a concentration as it were of the 'kinship soul'. In this sacrifice, then, one addresses *Sokó* as well as (an anonymous) *kuci*; and the people who have such a twin shrine will perform all their sacrifices to *kuci* there, and not over the grave of an individual ancestor.

(v) *Spirit Beings*

776 In the preceding discussion we touched upon certain beliefs in
779 spirits—in 'ancestral spirits', which are an aspect of the personal soul, and in 'ghosts', which are transmutations of the shadow soul. But when the Nupe mention 'spirits' among the things that make up the world they do not mean either of these; they mean immaterial beings which exist in their own right and are not derived from humans, although they have some quasi-human attributes and inhabit the same earth. It is possible that this belief is not an original tenet of Nupe creed; for the Nupe call these spirit beings by a Hausa–Arabic name, *aljénu* (pl. *aljenúži*), and may well have borrowed certain of their aspects from Islam. However this may be, the Nupe do not regard this belief as in any way alien or 'borrowed'. And whether the name for spirits is Nupe or Arabic, it is a name, sharply distinguishing this class of beings from all others.

Though circumstantial and readily expressed, the spirit beliefs are fluid and far from uniform. The most varied opinions will not be thought unorthodox, but will be taken as evidence for the multifariousness of the spirit world. A first group of spirits, vaguely anthropomorphous but without distinct individualities, is said to inhabit the inanimate parts of nature, hills, trees, watercourses, the bush, and so forth. These spirits have sex, and according to

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a new priest is born, the village must temporarily cease to perform the ritual altogether and join instead in the celebrations of a neighbouring, more fortunate, locality. 793

The *gunnu* priest is also in other ways elevated above common mortals. In everyday life there is little to distinguish the *Žigí* or *Ndazo* from the average Nupe peasant. The only visible distinction lies in their manner of dress; for the two priests may only wear a loincloth and a piece of cloth slung across the shoulder, never the more elaborate flowing gown and trousers of Nupe, and must always walk bareheaded. Both the simple dress and the uncovered head are also obligatory for anyone attending the rituals in question (and indeed most rituals), so that the priests are as it were always 'on duty' and constantly display their association with things sacred. In the case of the *Ndazo*, his very life is sacred: he is inviolable, and no one may lay hands on him, even if he committed some serious offence. Also, when the *Ndazo* dies, the usual funerary rites are replaced by a performance of the *gunnu*. Concerning the priestly dress, the usual explanation is that the *Žigí* and *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round the waist' (as they would if they wore trousers); but the people do not speculate further, and the *Ndazo's* birth-mark is taken to mean simply something that is rare and lucky, and attaches to the most vital part of the body, the head. Characteristically, another lucky birth-mark, once more on the head, is linguistically associated with the *gunnu*: children born in a caul are called *Ndagunnu*, 'Father *gunnu*'. [845]

Of the three fixed rituals of Doko the *gunnu* is undoubtedly the most important, representing the peak of ceremonial life and being thought of as harbouring the strongest force of *kuti*. Equally, it is the only ritual bearing so conspicuously the stamp of the miraculous. Somewhat surprisingly, the greater importance of the *gunnu* has not helped to protect it from the impact of cultural change. On the contrary, the *gunnu* is usually the first ritual to disappear or at least to lose its character of a 'fixed' ritual, surviving only as an occasional, 'movable' ceremony. Now several of the villages which abandoned the *gunnu* altogether did so when their 'born' *Ndazo* died or the family of hereditary priests became extinct. Whatever other influences may have tended to weaken the hold of the *gunnu* ritual, the difficulty of finding a successor to this unique priestship must have hastened the process; so that the link with the miraculous, as it helped to raise the cult above all others, also made it more vulnerable. 796x [177]

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

These are quickly described; for they are simple and business-like, devoid both of elaborate proceedings and complicated

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sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and 762
decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child 348 428
inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled 261
villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the 178
village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on 425
the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" 776
is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, 782
their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called 776
"Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when 626
a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

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an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich 585
man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once.

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen 582
and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen 184
or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when 584
it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family 184
and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort 184
him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk; but she sits 585
silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house.

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage. 588

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious 557
custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 551
425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

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557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 * A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman's 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

515 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
[554] the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have
[272] "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable, (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Duff.

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 583
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

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on the list to another, while the list as a whole remains unchanged. Sometimes, however, the lists themselves differ; though these differences are few, they bear relevantly on the social background of the diviner and the interests current in his setting. Thus the diviners in the villages interpret shell pattern 3 as meaning, on occasion, a 'good hunt', which interpretation does not occur at all in the list of the diviners in or near Bida town, where there is no hunting. Again, in the villages shell pattern 8 is sometimes taken to mean 'a council in the house of the chief'; the connection with the 'important people' mentioned in our version is clear; but in that version, coming as it does from the capital where there are no councils of elders or chiefs, the reference to a 'council in the house of the chief' would clearly be out of place. Conversely, shell pattern 1 reversed has in Bida a meaning which hardly affects the life in villages remote from the political difficulties and tensions of the capital; characteristically, in the villages the same pattern reads 'rain will fall', a prophecy which in turn has less importance for the townspeople. In one instance at least—the transposed pattern 2 in 'house' 1—the diviner's key allows for both these interests. I need not point out especially that it allows also for modern conditions and problems of a thoroughly topical kind. 787

Let me finally quote two examples of complete divinations. The first was performed for a canoe-man who was about to set out on a trip up the river. The cords fell as follows: 787

Cords . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Shell patterns	6	2 rev.	4	7	3	4	2 rev.	1
Prophecies .	The people will forgather	Refers to evening	A pleasant trip	Good trading	The women will pick quarrels	The men will be pleasant	Gifts for the chief	The *huti* is friendly

The advice to the client was to be of good cheer: he should start out in the evening, take along gifts for the chief, and be careful in his dealings with women; he would return, after a successful trip, in four or five days (which last prophecy was nowhere indicated in the cords). The second divination was concerned with identifying the *huci* of a boy just born to the client (a man). Here the diviner was interested only in the first two 'houses', the first referring to 'God', the second to 'House', that is, to the client's position of a family head. After several throws the diviner obtained this combination: 775 787 852

Cords	1	2
Shell patterns	4	6

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775 whereupon he announced: 'The grandfather who begot your
father—his name is that of the child.' The diviner would not ex-
787 plain his reasoning more precisely beyond saying that pattern 4
in 'house' 1, meaning 'many deaths', must relate to a *kuci* five
852 'deaths', i.e. generations, removed, while pattern 2 in 'house' 6
indicated the male sex of the *kuci*. Since the Nupe usually regard
a great-grandfather as the most remote ancestor likely to be
reincarnated, the diviner's reference to an additional generation
would seem to be a plausible interpretation of a throw meaning
'many deaths'.

4. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

787 The names of the 'houses' and the meanings attached to the
various throws, even in the simple key series, clearly illustrate
the close connection between divination and social life. Among
the names and meanings we find represented, not only the univer-
sal problems of men and communities (death, birth, rain, illness)
or particular religious notions (*Sokó*, *kuti*, performance of sacri-
fices), but also the mundane interests typical of Nupe society.
Events on the high roads and travel and trade; the ever-present
social issue of 'greatness', that is, of success in the struggle for
rank and status; and the equally ubiquitous interest in matters
politic, chieftainship, councils of elders, the actions of the ruling
class—all these have their place in the scheme of divining and
partly even in its basic vocabulary. Similarly, each relevant social
grouping is explicitly referred to: the 'house', that is, the large
extended family under a family head (*emi*); the 'town' or village
(*ežì*); the 'whole country', that is, the kingdom of Nupe; and the
class of the 'great men' and nobility. As we have seen, the diverse
social settings of the capital and of the villages are reflected in
certain variants in the rules of divination. These affect the indi-
vidual case as well; for a diviner would interpret the prophecies
referring to 'gifts' or 'greatness' differently when dealing with a
talaka (a commoner or peasant) than when dealing with a member
of the aristocracy. In the former case 'gifts' mean bowls of food
and 'greatness' the favours of a nobleman; in the latter case the
gifts turn into more valuable presents, and 'greatness' bears on
promotion in rank and title. We have seen, too, that the rules of
787 divination are far from static, having been successfully adapted
177 even to recent conditions and to political problems only some
forty years old. We can even point to a typical, transitional phase
in this process; for the choice mentioned before, of interpreting
the same throw as meaning either 'rain' or 'friendly relations with
the White Man', means nothing else.

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[535]

12. *Dzakó* dance

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[852]
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13. Cutting of tribal marks

[p. 86 (A)]

He will consult the diviner again at the beginning of the confinement and before the child is named. The father will also buy 'medicines' to facilitate the birth and buy or collect herbs with which to prepare the new-born's first food. During the delivery itself the father keeps away, leaving the scene to his elder sister, mother or aunt, and to his father or father's brother, who is called in to cut the umbilical cord and dispose of the afterbirth (which is buried outside the hut). Even afterwards the infant's grandfather plays a more conspicuous part than does the father; while the latter goes quietly about his business, the grandfather loudly announces to all friends and visitors that a grandchild has been born to him, and it is to him that all congratulations are addressed. The delivery and the treatment of the new-born represent essentially practical procedures devoid of ceremonial. We may mention only that for four days the infant is fed on a boiled infusion of the herbs which the father has collected and given the mother's milk only on the fifth. On the same day the father sends gifts of kolanuts to all relatives and friends, with the announcement that the naming ceremony, meanwhile fixed, will take place on such-and-such a day.

This ceremony, known as *suna* ('name'), usually takes place eight days after the birth, and is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be re-born in the child. The ceremonial is brief and takes place in privacy, usually in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor lies buried, being attended only by the child's father and his nearest male relations. The father kneels down, a gourd with beer in his hand, and speaks this prayer (to quote a concrete instance):

'I am praying to *Sokó*. The child that has entered, Lord God, it is Landu returned (the grandfather's name). *Kuci*, hold him (the child) securely, do not permit that he falls sick. May he live, cause him to grow old'.

The ceremonial ends when beer is poured on the ground and the rest drunk in silence by the men present. As this brief ritual summarizes the whole conception of reincarnation, so it also betrays its ambiguity; for the *kuci* which is believed to have returned to the living is yet asked to take care of the living; and though one sacrifices to a particular ancestor, one yet invokes God.

The naming ceremony itself makes no further mention of these mystic notions, being concerned exclusively with formally announcing the name and identity of the new-born. This is done before a gathering of guests as large as the host can make it. The guests are relatives, friends, neighbours, and such important personages as the child's father may happen to know; they are expected to bring small gifts and will in turn be furnished with

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food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization.

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services

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852 553 [305] of a famous barber-doctor. In wealthy households, too, drummers and professional musicians will be engaged to entertain the gathering and a women's dance, executed by the younger female guests, will conclude the festivities. Some of the food left over will be sent to relatives and friends who were unable to come; the father may also make gifts to the blind or the poor, or to the children of the town, if the diviners so advise him.

852 553 619 In the pagan ceremonial and in the *suna* of the poor the sumptuous feast is replaced by a modest meal of meat-and-gruel offered to friends and relations, without the added attractions of music and dancing. The shaving of the infant's head and the cutting of the tribal marks is the same in either case. We note, then, that the ceremony establishing the individual and kinship identity of the new-born also demonstrates his social identity in a wider sense, that is, the membership of tribe and sub-tribe into which the child is born and whose physical marks he will bear for life.

852 304 [619] A similar idea, though more ambiguously expressed, would seem to underlie also male circumcision. This custom is universal throughout Nupe, so that having been circumcised must be considered a mark of tribal membership. Yet circumcision is never quoted when one enumerates the things that 'make a Nupe'; indeed, one knows that other tribes do the same and that circumcision is also typical of Islam. The observance presents several [834] other puzzling features. It is called *zũ 'ba*, 'cutting the penis', which open reference to private parts is strikingly uncommon. Nor is the performance of the operation any less realistic and business-[305] like. It is once more in the hands of the barbers, especially hired and paid sixpence or a shilling for their work, and is accompanied by no ceremonial; the only rule affecting everyday family life is that the women must be out of the house on this occasion. The operation coincides neither with birth nor with puberty, that is, with an obviously important event or phase of life. It is performed at the age of eight to eleven and individually for every family, whenever the father thinks fit. The operation is, incidentally, even more repugnant to watch than the cutting of the tribal marks. The boys are terribly afraid; they have to be held down by the barber and his assistant, and severely feel the pain. Yet this shock experience seems again to serve no purpose; it is certainly not linked with any other experience that might be impressed upon the victims after or in consequence of their ordeal: they are neither segregated from the community nor made to feel that they have now passed a vital crisis and acquired some relevant qualification. Nor yet will the operation ever be referred to again. Through it, the boys have been made like other men of the tribe—that is all; but it is difficult to see why it should take place at this time of

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16. Circumcision operation

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17. A bridal procession

[p. 118 (A)]

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their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen. 852 304

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests. 585 [292] [302]

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step. 585 797

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: TRIBAL MARKS: DRESS

142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.

181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.

634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-
304 tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.

291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
565 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.[1]

BIRTH

843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immedi-
844 ately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony. The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.

553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.[2]

845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.[3]

CIRCUMCISION

304 Circumcision (*zuy'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.[4]

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

[1] Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405–6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, I, 1925, pp. 28–9; Line, 1947.
[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115–18.
[3] Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.
[4] Nadel, op cit., p. 116.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe, FF52

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in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
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and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[843] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
955 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

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FF52 Nupe FF52

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They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[843] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
955 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

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874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpā* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s*. to 5*s*. But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbecifi* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbecifi* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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241 This reluctance must be regarded as one of the main factors responsible for the growth of the institution of 'borrowing land', which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sowing and Planting

[185] The Nupe, possessing an elaborate calendar system which works with six seasons and twelve lunar months, have no difficulty in determining the coming of the rainy season. Besides, they regard the appearance (in [225] April) of a small red insect, which is significantly called *gbama*, 'early rains', as a sign of the approaching rains. The first light showers, which as a rule are accompanied by thunderstorms, are ignored. After the first heavy rain, which may last for several hours or a whole night, has thoroughly softened the soil, village and town spring into activity. In the morning after the rain you will see the people wandering out to their fields. They walk in groups, neighbours or families together, fathers with their boys. Dogs trot behind their masters, and often a man or boy will lead a goat which will then feed on leaves and shrubs on the field. [241] The men wear working dress: a loin-cloth and, if it is cold, a heavier cloth slung round the shoulders, and a straw hat as protection from [242] the sun. They carry their hoe over the shoulder, and gourds with water, food and seeds, over the arm. In many parts farmers carry their bows and arrows with them when they go out to their fields as 'protection from wild beasts'—a habit which is dying out but slowly, although there is hardly any need for it to-day. I have never seen these weapons used.

The nature of the first farming activity depends on whether or not the farmer has done what 'good' farmers are expected to do, namely, planted his yams already in the rains, immediately after the harvest. If he has not done so he will now at once start preparing his yam field; if he has, he is free to turn his attention to the planting of bulrush-millet and maize. Of five farmers whose daily activities I was recording in Mokwa, three had planted yam in the rainy season and two (who both had to work single-handed) waited until the beginning of the new farming season. With the 'good' farmer, we will start with the planting of millet.

243 Again there are certain variations. Where millet and sorghum are planted as successive crops no hoeing or re-hoeing as a rule precedes the planting; as we shall see later the plots are normally prepared during the previous season. Where millet and sorghum are planted after other first-year crops or on a new plot, ridging, occupying the first few days of the new season, precedes the sowing. The technique of planting, moreover, varies slightly according to whether one plants on mounds or ridges, but is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. I will now describe the scene one will meet on the Nupe fields when planting is in progress. The farmer has divested himself of his superfluous clothing, his food and water gourds, and has placed his things out of the way, under a shady tree. Perhaps he has his small boys with him, whom [257] he lets play by themselves in a corner of the field while he goes on with his work. Tied to his left arm the planter carries the seeds in a small

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gourd or his straw hat, keeping a ready supply in his left hand. In his right he carries the light hoe used for planting. With it he scratches the top or flank of the mound, while with his left, almost simultaneously, he throws the seeds into the newly made hole. The hole is then flattened out with the back of the hoe. Thus the farmer proceeds from mound to mound and row to row, working with amazing speed and ease: one man is able to sow about one acre in from five to six hours, with hardly any rest. This is the method used for sowing on mounds; sowing on ridges is even easier and quicker. No hoe is used, and the farmer can make use of both hands for the sowing, the seeds being pressed into the soft soil with the heel. The distance kept between two plants is a little over 2 feet. The sowing of one field with millet or sorghum is invariably done in a day or two, and is nearly always carried out single-handed. Where normally a larger group would be working together—brothers or a father and sons—the rest of the team would be occupied on another field, carrying out ridging, i.e. work for which co-operation is more urgently required. But when for one reason or another a farmer falls behindhand with his planting, ridging and sowing may have to be done at the same time. Once I saw a man and his two sons of 10 or 11 years carrying out this combined and hurried work: the boys were hoeing, preparing the ridges; the father followed in their tracks, sowing. After every ridge they had completed the boys waited for the man to catch up with the sowing. The ridges were crooked, irregular. 243 [857]

In these first days of the planting season the Nupe keep short days: they start comparatively late, about 8 a.m., and rarely return later than 2 or 3 o'clock. As the season wears on their working day extends. They start at daybreak and often do not return till 5 or 6 in the afternoon. They have their midday meal out on the farm, some bringing their own food, others having it brought out to them by their wives or daughters. At that time of the year, when fresh leaves and herbs are plentiful on the farms, the men rarely return home without a fair supply of various kinds: broad leaves which the Nupe women like for wrapping food in, or a special kind of aromatic leaf which the women use for their bath, or occasionally medicinal herbs used for various purposes. The men tie the leaves round their straw hats, and thus pleasantly and ornately attired wander home. A bath, a change of clothes, and afterwards the evening meal concludes their day. 243 512 [824]

To return to sowing. A day or two after bulrush-millet has been sown, maize is planted in very much the same fashion, again mostly in one day. Then one has to wait for another heavy rainfall before the next crops on the list, late millet and sorghum, can be sown. As a rule all four crops are sown within a week or ten days. These voluntary or involuntary waiting periods have their use: for often it becomes necessary to get one's tools repaired, perhaps a new blade fixed to the hoe, or to find new tools for the young boys who will, this year, join their fathers for the first time in the farm-work. By the time sorghum is planted the rains fall fairly regularly, and there is no need for further waiting. 243

The farmer turns directly to the planting of ground-nuts, which is reckoned to take from five to ten days. Ground-nuts must be planted on 244

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the *egbe*: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing—the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs (no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contributions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work. 325

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit. 326 467 592

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out. 326 592 [857]

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

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The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the 264
women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such [271]
as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and
water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were [262]
never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., 512
observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay 574
each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till 572
about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, [605]
but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for 527
great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls 527
are made on all persons of importance. On their return from 857
prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and 857
king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

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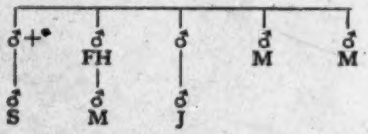
membership is about 30. It is interesting to note that the fact of marriage is of no significance—the highest grade comprises both married and unmarried men. The sign that a man is past the age of membership of 'young men societies' is the appearance of the external symptom of manhood, a beard—*za na de nũkpayi na da ena be à*, 'a man who has a beard no longer joins the association'. In certain small communities the age-grade system may be limited to the two higher grades; in other communities a fourth, junior, grade is added, called *ena wawagiži*, Association of the Small Children. This lowest grade is not taken seriously: it is regarded as mere *dzodzo*, play—of the children-playing-at-adults type—and shares with the other grades only their superficial external characteristics. The junior, third, grade is also in some measure regarded as less serious and significant than the higher grades, and as essentially a preparatory stage. Certain important activities of the higher grades are, as we shall see, of necessity excluded, or reduced to insignificant proportions, in associations which are composed of young boys. In one respect, however, the junior age-grade makes its own specific contribution to the age-grade system; it is the only one which has its counterpart also in the other sex. The highest age-grade, too, possesses certain specific features, in the form of certain age-grade ranks which are not bestowed on members of junior groups.

As *ena* membership is defined by age, and not by generation, it happens occasionally that, in large families, the young men of different generations but of approximately equal age belong to the same *ena*, and that young men of the same generation are members of different age-grade associations. The following genealogical diagram will illustrate a typical case. The letters S, M, and J indicate membership of the senior, middle, and junior age-grade, respectively; FH means family head, and a cross a deceased family member.



The separation from family and homelife is indeed one of the most characteristic features of the *ena gbarúfuži*. The people attach considerable weight to the fact that the bonds and forms of obligation which are implied in the *ena* are of an entirely different, and specific, nature. Even small boys, the youngest members of the junior *ena*, will tell you with an air of importance that the *ena* has nothing to do with family, home, or parents. The father? 'Yes, we tell him, and we ask him sometimes to help out with money or food for a feast which we arrange. But he has no say in our *ena*.' Fathers will confirm this. In Kutigi parents were quite surprised, and laughed uproariously, when I told them about the titles which had just been distributed in a newly started junior grade; the boys had gone with the times and introduced titles which did not exist in the days of their fathers' *ena*. But for my information the parents

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 856
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
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561 of the girls' *ena*. So much for the interpretation of the *ena nyentsuglši* on
571 the lines of the Nupe argument.

561 But if for women the age-grade career comes to an end with marriage, while for men marriage represents neither a limit nor even a conspicuous grade in the age-grade career, this reflects also the different sociological significance that marriage has for women and men. For women, it is the end of one life and the beginning of another. It means change of home and family bonds, and initiation into new aims and duties. For men, marriage—a first marriage—does not even coincide with the periodical readjustments in the labour-unit, i.e. the release from the *efakó* group which, as we have seen, takes place as a rule when a man has two wives or grown-up children. The social career of the men—achievement of economic independence, promotion to office, and responsible position in the community—only begins to fulfil itself long after their first marriage; that of the women is meant to enter its last phase in marriage. Indeed we have seen that when the woman claims the right of an independent, continued, social career, she must buy it with the sacrifice of the marriage union.

561 As regards the institution of the parallel age-grades its practical value
864 seems to be that it prepares the ground for the first experiences of sex relations. Or rather, it aims at circumventing, and dulling, this unsettling first experience. Enabling the sexes to meet in the critical age, between 13 and 16, as it were on neutral ground, openly and respectably, it tends to remove some of the secrecy and unhealthy curiosity that is part of the mental transition from the self-contained existence of early youth to the new awareness of the polarity of sex. Our study of adult sex morality has left no doubt about the restricted effectiveness of this native 'co-educational' scheme. It must fail because it is, like all faulty education, in the nature of a palliative. It breaks the adolescent, we might say, gently, to the moral code of adulthood, but it adopts this code in all its dangerous narrowness and its rigid exclusion of amorous experiments and pre-marital sex relations. If age-grade discipline paves the way for adult sex morality, it does so also with respect to its repressions and inhibitions, and that final sweeping reaction against conventional morality which we could study in the adult life of the Nupe people.

561 To summarize. The age-grade associations include the adolescent male (and to lesser extent female) population of Nupe from early youth up to the threshold of adulthood. The most vital years in individual development are thus brought under the influence of this institution. We have studied the decisive part which it plays in moulding the personality of its members and in defining their attitude towards tasks and problems which they are to face in adult life. The essence of the institution of age-grades is, then, preparation—a twofold preparation. Its first aspect is the fashioning in the framework of the age-grades of sentiments of solidarity which are to bind the group at large.

182 This involves an important theoretical problem which has greatly
561 engaged the attention of modern sociologists and social psychologists, namely, the possibility of transferring co-operation and solidarity

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CHAPTER XVIII

WEALTH

THE examination of the problem of labour may be fittingly concluded with a discussion of the role played by wealth, free capital, in Nupe economy. It is in keeping with Nupe production in general, with its emphasis on individual property and money profits, that the concept of wealth should be clearly pronounced. The principle of accumulation of wealth as free capital pervades Nupe economics and, in particular, serves to define the economic (and, indirectly, social) stratification of the society. 556

MONEY CAPITAL

The appreciation of wealth figures prominently in the educational conceptions of the people. Young boys of 8 or 10, when they are given a separate *bucá* plot to farm, are at the same time taught the value of money income and money capital. Mothers will help them to market their small produce for money, or will buy their produce directly from them. And fathers and mothers, as we have seen, equip their children with a first diminutive working capital, a penny or two, to start a profitable trade (see pp. 286–7, 331). These profits enable boys and girls to defray the expenses of the social obligations incumbent upon this tender age, namely, contributions to the costs of the age-grade associations of which they are members. Money expenses, partly involving the accumulation of reserves, accompany Nupe men and women all through their lives: money to meet the costs of kinship rituals—birth, weddings, and funerals—money for the maintenance of labour, the purchase of tools, &c., or for personal wants and the luxuries of life. Money also frequently forms part of the inheritance left by men or women. 556 867

Farm produce or gifts in kind in general cannot fully replace money expenditure. This is shown clearly in the nature of the universal gift in Nupe—kola-nuts. Gifts of kola-nuts are more or less regularly exchanged between friends and relations; a gift of kola-nuts serves as the traditional announcement, and invitation at the same time, extended to kinsfolk at the occasion of forthcoming kinship ceremonies. Gifts of kola-nuts also represent the traditional expression of political allegiance. And, with the insignificant exception of the kola-nut growers, the donor of the gift has to buy the kola-nuts on the market for money. The largest single expenditure of Nupe economy, finally, bride-price, is paid entirely in money (see the discussion of bride-price in Chap. XX). It involves, moreover, accumulation of money reserve, or, if the bride-price is paid in instalments, as it frequently is, careful planning of money expenditure over a considerable period. 431 437

Although none of the larger forms of traditional money expenditure were ever replaceable by gifts or contributions in kind, it is also true that the practice of money expenditure has been increasing with the spreading of cultural influences from the town. It is natural that Bida society,

[p. 309]

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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.[1] Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

The second aspect of the preparation embodied in the age-grade system is the training of the adolescent, through discipline and certain concrete activities, in the tasks and duties which await him in adult life, and in the values and incentives which he will have to make his own. In the village this preparation represents a first step towards a final social career; in Bida it mostly implants in the mind of the adolescent values and incentives, as it were, *in abstracto*, without promising equally their fulfilment in later life. It teaches people who will never share in directing the fate of their country to appreciate, and make their own, the motives and values which govern the conduct of those who do. It imparts, if not claims to responsible citizenship, yet its spirit.

THE MEANING OF NUPE LIFE

If we compare Nupe religious teaching with the teaching implied in the age-grade system we find that the two educational institutions supplement each other in many respects and that, between them, they take in the whole field of 'education for citizenship'. The Mallam school offers promotion to one social plane; the age-grade association practises promotion in the framework of a complex scale of steps and grades. The promotion afforded by religious education is 'real', in the sense that it involves social privileges in adult life; that practised in the age-grades is fictitious, even vicarious, and concerns mental readiness rather than concrete achievements. Religious education, finally, creates a loosely organized professional group and at the same time fosters a much wider psychological unity, which embraces the whole of Nupe society, across tribal and class boundaries. The age-grades create an intensive solidarity, but only in a very narrow framework, and give tribal and class boundaries a wide berth. Common to both religious education and the age-grades is the social upward trend, the motive of rise and promotion. This upward trend appears indeed as the paramount motive in Nupe cultural life. If it is possible to reduce a whole culture to a single formula, to a fundamental unitary *ethos*, we find it in this *leitmotif* of

[1] Cf. F. C. Bartlett, in *The Study of Society*, 1939, p. 43: 'A specially interesting question is: if cooperation is established in one respect, when and how far does this help individual members of the groups concerned to cooperate in other respects?'

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24-2 communities rulings on agricultural technique and the organization of agricultural labour appear in the guise of magic devices and rituals, there is none of this in Nupe agriculture, which remains matter-of-fact and consciously based on empirical knowledge.[1]

In a productive organization of this kind special emphasis must be laid on the position of authority of the old and experienced farmer. It can be studied in action whenever groups comprising both older and younger men co-operate in farm-work. In family work as well as in non-family co-operation the older men always lead the work or supervise the work of the younger men; they point out mistakes to them and teach them the important rules of farm-work. I have frequently seen men scold boys for damaging a plant when weeding, or for planting seeds too close. Boys are made to work on the farms from the age of 6 or 7, first with toy-like light tools, later with the real heavy hoe, in order to learn through practice and under constant supervision. In Nupe farming very little is left to chance. I have, for example, never heard of anyone starting farm-work too early or too late in the season and thus wasting the seeds—a mistake not uncommon among more primitive agriculturalists. The quasi-scientific aspect of Nupe agriculture is made most evident in the 'theoretical' rulings which the people themselves are always ready to lay down. Thus informants formulated the following rule: there exist two kinds of rice, one taking 90 days, the other 180 days to mature; or this: the latest date for the planting of ground-nuts is the beginning of the third month (counted from the beginning of the planting season). Not all such rules are fully convincing to the European agriculturist—we remember the rule about planting yams before the dry season in order to make them grow bigger. But, on the other hand, there is plenty of evidence to show that the existing body of native farm-knowledge admits of experiment, and is constantly assimilating newly gained experiences. There is, for example, the new 'rule' about cotton and red pepper being excellent first crops before millet and sorghum. Experiment has besides been forced upon the native cultivator by the introduction of modern crops or varieties. Thus the people have tried with varying success to grow cotton on different kinds of soil; cotton-growing has also caused new difficulties with regard to the distribution of agricultural work, which can be solved ultimately only by experiment.[2]

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Long experimenting, however, which does not lead to the incorporation of the new experiences into that solid body of farming-knowledge

[1] The one exception is the magic linked with the cultivation of kola-nut trees, which itself represents an exceptional form of cultivation. Apart from this magic there exist only the annual fertility cults which set the spiritual framework for farming activities in general, and certain varying, unsystematic forms of magic—charms applied to hoes, or a specific magic performed over a field—which are to ensure success in individual cases.

[2] In 1936 the Agricultural Officer of Bida Division travelled round the district to instruct personally the cotton-growers in the more important centres about the proper date for planting cotton—information which, coming many years after cotton-growing had been introduced in this area, only confirmed a point of technique which the people had already discovered for themselves.

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The co-operative organization of efakó work also enables the group to

train its adolescents and to bring them gradually into the system of co-operation. Young boys are employed first in easy auxiliary work, such as working the bellows in blacksmith and glass-work, or the spooling of cotton thread in weaving; sitting all day long in the workshop they learn a good deal from watching; when they are old enough they are given more serious work, which they carry out under the guidance and tuition of the *efakó* head till, eventually, they become fully fledged members of the labour-unit. In most cases the *efakó* work is supplemented by special individual, *bucá*, work. The relation between the two varies widely, with the specific nature of the craft and its productive technique.

BLACKSMITH WORK

The blacksmiths are called *tswata* in Nupe, or sometimes *tswata gbagba*, 'heavy smiths', to distinguish them from the *tswata muku*, the brass- and silversmiths. Nearly every village in Nupe possesses at least one or two blacksmith workshops. In Bida we find three groups of blacksmiths, whole blacksmith 'wards' in fact, each with its cluster of workshops, and each situated in a different *ekpã* of the town. According to tradition the three blacksmith groups are of different origin. One, in the old centre of Bida, *ba nîn*, claims descent from the original group of blacksmiths which was established in Bida when it was still a Beni village. At that time the head of this group, the *Majī Tswata*, the Master of the Blacksmiths, is said to have held authority over all the blacksmiths of Beni country. The blacksmiths living in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter, the smallest of the three groups, came to Bida comparatively late, from Trans-Kaduna. The largest blacksmith group in Bida, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, traces its descent to the blacksmiths of Rabá, the former capital of the kingdom. They came to Bida together with the king and court when Bida became the new capital of Fulani Nupe. As we shall see later, this last group has established itself as the supreme guild authority over the blacksmiths of Bida and all Nupe. The craftsmen of this group call themselves *dokodzaži*, after their head, who bears the title *Dokodza*.[1]

Technology

The blacksmith wards of Bida are of very different size; the smallest contains two workshops, the largest seven. In some cases the entrance-hall of the compound in which the families of the craftsmen are living serves also as workshop or forge. But usually the forge is in a separate hut which stands by itself a small distance from the compound; with its three or four wide doors, and the many small window-holes let into the wall to serve as passage for the smoke from the forge, the workshops can be easily identified. Inside are two furnaces, each screened in by an angular mud wall, about 3 feet high. On the inner side of the screen, facing the open fire, sits the blacksmith himself; on the other side of the

[1] It is interesting to note that the modern Emirate of Patigi, where the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty are reigning to-day, also possesses its group of 'royal blacksmiths', under another *Dokodza*. They came to Patigi together with the family of the present rulers, from Gbara, the ancient residence of this branch of the Nupe dynasty.

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CHAPTER XV

INDUSTRIES (*continued*)

INDIVIDUAL CRAFTS

463 467 THE guild-organized crafts represent, as we have seen, a specific social group or class—the class of skilled artisans—which only occasionally enlarges its membership by adopting individuals from other professional or social groups. The individual crafts, on the other hand, present a vaguely defined and ever fluid group which recruits itself from every stratum of Nupe society, the peasant class as well as the 'intelligentsia', slaves and clients as well as members of the nobility. We shall see presently that men of the titled classes who have lost their former sources of income frequently adopt an individual craft as a new means of livelihood. The technical conditions which contribute to make the guild-organized crafts into 'closed groups', organized on the lines of more or less intensive co-operation, are absent in the industries which are carried out as 'free professions'. Tailors, straw-hat makers, or mat-weavers need no workshops; they can work anywhere, in any part of the house, in sleeping-huts as well as in a corner of the *katamba*. Some craftsmen even wander from place to place and practise their work wherever there is a prospect of trade. Many Bida tailors, for example, have made a practice of visiting neighbouring villages on the market days or at the time of the annual ceremonies and festivals, when they can be sure of finding plenty of work. Nor does their work involve co-operation, or necessitate the use of expensive tools. Mat-weavers work with their hands, straw-hat makers use a block of clay or wood (called *ekugi*) over which they shape the crown of the head, a tool which they can easily make themselves. Tailors, embroiderers, or leather-workers need, in addition to the material, only needle and thread.

463 Although there exist, specially in Bida, experts in these crafts who practise them as their only profession, the technique itself is simple enough to be learned by anyone in a very short time. We remember the farmers who carry out a handicraft as *bucá* work in their spare time. People in the town similarly practise these handicrafts as leisure-time occupations, in addition to other work, or as a lucrative pastime. Many learned men and students of the Koran do a little tailoring beside. Embroidery, a more delicate work, involving taste and a certain skill, has become the pastime occupation of many members of the 'intelligentsia'. Of hat-making, on the other hand, the Nupe say that it is the ideal occupation for 'lazy people', who can do nothing else, meaning particularly those impoverished 'people of quality' who are neither skilled nor resourceful enough to find other means of livelihood.

463 868 The varied demands of the Nupe markets have also called into being various other, minor, handicrafts, some of which are so easy that young boys of 10 or 11 are encouraged to take them up as a first *bucá* occupa-

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dve is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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pays a small amount of money at regular intervals; the fund is administered by the guild-head; he deducts from it money for possible common expenses, and pays out the rest in full to every member of the guild section in turn, after every pay-day. This financial arrangement is fairly common in Nupe, specially among traders and labourers, and we shall discuss it in more detail later. The barbers, however, are the only professional group which has embodied it in its professional organization and utilizes it as a system of mutual financial assistance vested in the craft-guild.

The guild organization is restricted to Bida town. In the villages, even in the larger places, one or two barbers are sufficient to meet the normal demand. Besides, the medicine-man of the pagan districts would constitute a serious competition to the Bida doctors. But so far as barbers and barber-doctors are wanted in the country, the organization in the capital supplies them, either permanently or temporarily. Certain Bida barbers, for example, have settled in villages; others tour the country regularly, stopping in this or that place for longer or shorter periods. Even in these tours of the country districts round Bida, the barbers keep to the territory of 'their' royal house, i.e. the royal house on whose land in Bida their home stands. Although it clearly cannot be said of the barber-doctors that they 'serve the state' in the same way as blacksmiths or leather-workers, this arrangement is a striking evidence of the fact that their association with the political structure of the country is as strongly marked, and that they, again, are in certain respects the 'king's craftsmen'.

DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

The drummers in Bida, true to the more 'advanced' urban conception of art, are individualists; in the village, where the art of drumming belongs not only to the recreational side of social life, but also forms part of the organization of ritual and ceremony as well as production (we remember the part drumming plays in the farming *egbe*), it is less an 'art' in the modern sense of the word than a 'craft', working for well-defined institutionalized demands, and charged with responsibilities of a graver order. Drumming in the village thus moves in the framework of a close organization on guild lines. In every larger Nupe village we find a special group of drummers and musicians who, though belonging to different families and houses, yet recognize the authority of a common head, the *Etsu Dzã*, the King of the Drummers. Certain other, subordinate titles, are distributed, in guild fashion, among the other members of the craft. The art of drumming remains in the family and is handed on from father to son. You may see small boys practising drumming on little toy-like instruments under the eye of the father. They will go with him wherever he is called to perform, watching him and, when they are sufficiently advanced, accompanying him on their own drums. Sometimes boys from other families desire to become drummers. Their father will then get in touch with the head of the drummers, and give him his son as apprentice. The young apprentice will visit the drummer's house every day for his lesson. In the beginning

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462 441 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts, although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 441 868 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up [576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d.*, and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her [428 562] earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 562 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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CHAPTER XXII
EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

871 As education in the widest sense must be described all efforts, organized or otherwise, which tend to impart to individuals habitual forms of acting and thinking. Understood in this sense, every social institution involves educational activities by means of which individuals are led to acquire the behaviour-patterns that make up the institution. Thus our description of economic life has involved the description of certain educational techniques—the training in productive methods, the imparting of economic knowledge, or of concepts of property and wealth. But most societies also operate with more formalized methods of education, specific educational institutions which make it their business to train the rising generation in forms of acting and thinking regarded as essential by the society. We shall deal in this chapter with these formalized educational institutions, of which there are two in Nupe: the institution of the Koran school, concerned with Mohammedan religious teaching, and the institution of age-grade associations. The shortest definition of an educational institution is by the 'type' which it is meant to produce. In this sense we can say that Mohammedan religious education produces the Mallam, the Mohammedan scholar, and the age-grade associations the *zoon politikon* as understood in Nupe. We shall see that in certain respects both types of education can be identified with motives and aims underlying the political system, and thus with institutions devoted to what I have called in the heading of this chapter 'Education for Citizenship'.

MALLAM SCHOOLS

814 There are many degrees and varieties of Mohammedan learning. The
875 title 'Mallam'—*mân* in Nupe—which one encounters so often among the
554 Nupe, is by no means a safe guide. For the man who has gone through a few years' study of the Koran, having learned by heart a few *sura*; the sand-diviner or charm-seller who writes out verses from the Koran and sells them as amulets; the man who has acquired real learning and scholarship, and who can read and write in Arabic and possibly in Hausa—they all are called Mallam. Though the title is used indiscriminately, no Nupe ignores the essential difference between scholarship and the thin veneer of semi-learning. The Nupe distinguish two grades of learning: the lower grade is the study of the Koran (*kurani*), which consists mostly in the memorizing of prayers and whole pages and chapters from the Koran; the higher grade is called *kpikpe*, knowledge, or *litafi* (Hausa), book, and consists in the study of Arabic and the careful reading of the Koran and the better-known commentaries. The most advanced scholars would study, in addition to these books, also the historical records of the Nigerian Emirates which have been compiled (in Hausa, written in Arabic script) by scholars of former days. Only a student of 'knowledge' can claim to be a 'real' Mallam. While there are

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achieved in one context of social life to other social contexts.[1] Our data allow us to make the following observation on this point: co-operation and solidarity fashioned in the age-grades appear capable of being transferred to other social contexts because of two conditions which they satisfy. Co-operation and solidarity are not left to grow at random and, as it were, unconsciously; rather they are of a specific, *ad hoc*, type; they clearly formulate their purpose and operate in the sphere of distinct awareness. Moreover, age-grade co-operation is actuated in circumstances of psychologically impressive nature, i.e. in the context of religious experiences. But age-grade integration also admits its own limitation in that it avoids attempting to bridge over the deepest existing social gulfs, of local community and social class.

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Nupe education. No aspect of culture affords closer access to the paramount cultural motives and values. For education not only teaches openly the specific aims and conceptions of life accepted by the society, but reveals them also indirectly, in the motives and conceptions which it utilizes to call forth the desired response.

Is, then, the reverse equally true? is behaviour that does not conform to this conception of life met with public disapproval? One might indeed ask if Nupe culture did not reserve some legitimate place within its framework for individuals to whom its dominant trend was uncongenial, and who represent what some anthropologists have called 'deviants' from the type of personality which the society regards as so highly desirable.[1] I must admit that I have found no conspicuous instances of such 'deviant' types. But we can guess the public response towards such social or cultural 'failures' from certain occasional incidents: for an attitude that belies the upward trend, and this dynamic aspect of self-advancement, is indeed regarded as a 'failure'; such individuals would be dismissed by the people with a mental shrug—'*u de kokari à*', 'he makes no effort'. As the Nupe state undertakes to govern the moral life of the people and to co-ordinate rigidly their conceptions of right and wrong, so its education attempts a complete unification of types of personality.

Yet successful suppression in normal life may only mean that the 'deviant' type is forced into abnormality and will reveal itself in psycho-pathological cases. I have admitted in the first chapter the scantiness of data concerning mental disorders among the Nupe. But so far as they exist they seem to bear out the view that mental disorders in Nupe are largely symptoms of the failure of individuals to adjust themselves to the demands of the social environment. I have mentioned that the large majority of psycho-pathological cases that came to my notice presented the clinical picture of paranoid schizophrenia, with marked delusions and persecution-mania. Now modern psychiatry has shown that schizophrenia is essentially the result of inadequacy to a social environment. Indeed, in the few cases which I could examine more closely features of the social environment conspicuously entered the clinical picture. One man was under the delusion that he had been persecuted by a person of very high rank and robbed, through his intrigues, of his home and family; another maintained that intrigues against him at the court had cost him his land; a third case was that of an old man who was under the delusion that his younger brother (whom he admitted to be the more clever and successful of the two) was out to kill him. In creating these very specific delusions the psycho-pathological individual escapes from the consciousness of his own inadequacy. Though distorted and purely negative, the fears and anxieties which make up the delusion are the same fears and anxieties that accompany the successful mental adjustment to the *ethos* of Nupe life—the anxiety to 'get on' in the world, not to be left behind in the race for rank and position or the fear to lose the support of the 'powers that be', on whose influence one's career and safety depend. The border-line between normality and abnormality is that between

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, and Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament*.

41:Nadel P,E-5 (1934-1936) 1937
FF62 Yoruba FF62
Nupe FF52

The present study can only claim to be a first attempt in field experiments of this kind, carried out under conditions which did not allow a more extensive investigation. Yet the question could be raised how far the evidence obtained in experiments which were carried out on so small a scale and in so special a setting can be considered significant and representative of the culture at large. In order to secure a representative group I selected for my experimental subjects students who came from a great many different places in Nupe and Yoruba respectively. The two experimental groups were matched as closely as possible with regard to age, school standard and the surroundings from which they came. In Nupe I was able to work with larger groups: with 60 boys of the age of 12–18 who were taken from every school form, i.e. who had been students of the Middle School for periods varying from 1 to 5 years. Now, as I shall show later, the experiments admit to a certain extent of statistical interpretation, i.e. the responses to certain essential features in the story or the pictures can be classified and treated quantitatively. This statistical evidence allows us to gauge the extent to which the 20 Yoruba subjects can be considered a significant and representative sample. I found that the means for the various responses calculated for the small group correspond very closely to the means arrived at for the large group; in other words, there exist no unequally distributed marked individual differences which would invalidate the results obtained among the small group. Since school standard and age do not correspond very closely in Nigerian schools, the statistical evidence can moreover be used to check independently the influence of age and educational standard. As regards the age factor, we find a slight rise in the appreciation of factors of reasoning and emotional facts corresponding to age; a fairly unchanged appreciation of situational facts; and a fall in the appreciation of moral ideas from the age of 13–15. More important for this investigation is the educational factor; here the statistical evidence proves conclusively that the difference in educational standard has no influence on the psychological responses and attitudes examined in these experiments.

Y N 124 Y N 128 Y N [871]

III. THE CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Before going into details I must say a few words about the two cultures and the nature of their diversity. The two groups speak different languages which, however, belong to the same linguistic group (of so-called *Sudanic* languages). Their economic system and their general social organization are similar. Yet other aspects of their culture, aspects which may be held to express more specifically psychological trends or tendencies,[1] reveal a fundamental difference. The religion of the Yoruba is characterized by an elaborate and rationalized hierarchical system of deities, each of which has its specific, specialized duty and function. The Nupe have no such system; their religious beliefs centre round a concept of magic of the 'mana' type, i.e. vague, abstract, impersonal power. In the rich, highly developed realistic art of the Yoruba the main *motif* of pictures, plastics and wooden images is the human figure; religious and mythical emblems of this kind play an important part in their life. Again,

Y N 105 171

[1] See my article on "The Typological Approach to Culture" (4).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaka*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katū*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe.

The Mallams are, above all, teachers. They teach both children and adults, the former the Koran and the latter 'knowledge'. Every Mallam may, besides, be called in to perform a marriage ceremony or to officiate at a funeral—services for which they are remunerated according to their status and reputation. A few are well-to-do and own land, which is worked by their sons and pupils or, in some cases, by wage-labour. But most Mallams practise, in addition to teaching, some other occupation, which may or may not be associated with their scholarly profession, to supplement the meagre income of a Koran teacher. Some write out and illuminate pages of the Koran, or copy Arabic manuscripts, for sale. You can buy a sheet of this sort, very beautifully illuminated, for 5*d.* on the Bida market; more ambitious scribes would sell a whole copy of the Koran and receive for it—the work of five months—£1. Students of 'knowledge' eagerly buy these copies and use them in their studies. Other Mallams, again, embroider gowns, make straw hats or saddle-cloths, or do tailoring.

The size and standard of the Koran schools varies as widely as the status and standard of learning of the Mallams. You find 'schools' with two little boys for pupils, and these close relations of the teacher; and you find others—the schools of famous Bida scholars—the classrooms of which (as a rule the *katamba* in the Mallam's house) are crowded with pupils. The teachers are very jealous of the reputation of their school. When I was a regular visitor to Bida Koran schools the Mallam of one which I had not yet visited came to me complaining that I had left out his school, and quoted as reference a Bida Mallam of very high standing who was a special friend of mine. In the large Koran schools the Mallam himself teaches only the adult students of 'knowledge', while the elementary teaching is carried out by his sons or certain advanced pupils.

[1] Bida learning has a great reputation even outside Nupe; Mallams from Bida have been given important posts in other countries, and several Bida Koran teachers have established flourishing schools in Ilorin.

[2] One aspect of this spiritual advice is divining, which, as we have seen, plays an important part even in such political activities as the election of a high officer of state or the preparation for war.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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874 Certain progressive Bida Mallams include the teaching of Hausa and elementary arithmetic in their syllabus, and many adults, traders and other native business men, attend their classes to acquire knowledge so invaluable to their trade.[1] In certain Bida schools you will find young girls being taught together with boys. They come from the families of the nobility, which, conscientious Mohammedans, insist on elementary [562] religious instruction being extended also to women. Girls, however, are only taught the Koran, and do not study 'knowledge'.

Adult students, specially those who study the Koran or 'knowledge' for their edification, following another profession besides, visit the house of the teacher only for their lessons, which take place mostly in the evenings, once or twice a week, or even at longer intervals, according to the leisure which their occupation allows them.[2] Young pupils who live in the neighbourhood attend their classes daily while living with their family. Pupils whose family live some distance away will stay in the house of the teacher as members of his household.

875 The teacher of the Koran may not demand special payment for the tuition; according to Mohammedan principles religious instruction must 874 be free—*ebo albarka*, 'for the sake of blessing'. The wealthy Mallam, in fact, scorns all such payments as contrary to the spirit of religion. The poorer Mallam depends on what the family of the pupil offers him as *sádaha*, alms: a penny or twopence every two months, or a bundle of grain (worth 9*d*. or 1*s*.) once a year. Even these small gifts are very irregular; in the school of a Bida Mallam of good reputation, whose pupils numbered thirteen, half of the parents had sent nothing for over a year. Sometimes it happens that a boy's father dies while the boy is still studying, and his relations are unwilling to pay for his education. In this case the Mallam will continue to teach the orphan, let him live in his house and give him food and clothing, again *ebo albarka* only. Koran teachers in the country are worse off than their colleagues in Bida. In Kacha a Mallam who taught Hausa and arithmetic in addition to the Koran and 'knowledge', and who had eight young and fifteen adult students, received no payment from his students except an occasional gift of kola-nuts. If he asked for money, the students would indignantly threaten to leave and to seek another teacher. But both poor and wealthy Mallams receive a final gift from the parents of the student who has completed his studies, either money (in Bida), between 5*s*. and 10*s*., or (in the village) grain or a goat. The teachers can also obtain a certain indirect remuneration by letting their pupils work for them. School-work does not take up the whole day, nor every day in the week. In their

[1] The Education Department in Bida has arranged special evening classes for these enterprising Koran school-teachers, and gives them also certain practical assistance, for example, by supplying them with blackboards. This scheme of adult education is of considerable value in the spreading of elementary education among that section of the population which has not had the advantage of education in the Government schools.

[2] Students in a Koran school in Kacha, who were canoe-men by profession, [605] attended the school whenever they returned to Kacha from their voyages, interrupting their classes for weeks and months at a time when they were out on a canoe expedition.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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 875

spare time the boys will help in the house or on the farm, or sometimes 874
in the handicrafts which their teachers practise.

The students of 'knowledge' pay nothing for the tuition. But they 874
have studied the Koran with the same Mallam under whom they are now studying 'knowledge'; and they will send their children again to his school, or to the school of his sons. Thus reputations are built up and firm links established between families of Koran teachers and families which patronize their school. There are Mallam families in Bida which have been teaching three generations of the same families. For the sons of famous Mallams will follow the profession of their father. Many also intermarry with other Mallam families. They carry on the reputation for scholarship won by their fathers and families, and thus help to build up the dynasties of Mallams, of which there are many in Bida and Nupe.

As teaching implies so meagre and irregular an income one might ask 875
how it happens that certain Mallams become well-to-do, and even join the wealthy landowning class. These Mallams do not come from the families of the hereditary or office nobility. Although many men of this class study the Koran and 'knowledge', and proudly call themselves Mallams, they do not adopt the teaching profession, but remain amateurs, noble *dilettanti*. Sometimes a Mallam who in the past attained one of the official positions open to Mohammedan scholars has laid the foundation of the wealth of the family. Another has benefited from the close association as the 'guide, philosopher, and friend' of an influential personage—a clientship of more exalted order—and received land and wealth through the help of his patron. It is, for example, customary for all marriage services in the royal family—a most lucrative office—to be held by the Mallam who is attached to the house of the *Shaba*; or at all funeral services of the royal house the *Liman*, the head of the Mohammedan clergy, will officiate. However, wealthy Mallams are rare. Most Mohammedan scholars are poor, or at least unable to maintain themselves by their religious and educational work alone. But poverty is no impediment to scholarly reputation; nor does it detract from the honour of the profession. In fact, ordinary people will never call in a titled or even wealthy Mallam to perform a marriage or funeral service; they invariably prefer a Mallam of the *tálaka* class. A 'great Mallam is too weighty', they explain; they want a man whom they can offer a small *sádaka* as fee.

Among the Mallams of the town a certain loose economic co-operation exists, which comes into play at all such ceremonial occasions. At large marriage ceremonies or funerals several Mallams may be called in to assist the Mallam who is officiating. They will also divide part of the money which they receive for their services among their other colleagues in the same town quarter. Or the family which celebrates the ceremony will send *sádaka* to all the Mallams in the neighbourhood. This practice of communal benefits does not involve any closer or more formalized co-operation among the Mallams. The wide diversity between them with regard to social status, wealth, and standard of learning forbids any more strongly pronounced appreciation of their commonness beyond that fluid unity embodied in the fact that they all work with

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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815 their brains, and represent, in a society of peasants, craftsmen, and traders, the intelligentsia. This will become even clearer when we examine the motley rising generation of Mallams.

Koran teaching begins as a rule in early youth, when the child is 6 or 814 even 5 years old. The teaching of the Koran itself is reckoned to take five to ten years. Some pupils learn quicker than others, and in one school I found a boy of 13 already studying 'knowledge', while one of 17 was still worrying his way through the Koran. But on the whole this elementary stage is considered mere routine work which most students can master in the given time. The teaching of 'knowledge', on the other hand, depends entirely on talent and individual inclination. Pupils may be eager enough to try, but will give up later when they discover that 'they have no head for it' (a literal translation of the Nupe phrase). Nor can the time taken by these higher studies be fixed precisely. Ten to fifteen years is an average estimate—at least, after fifteen years' study one is reckoned to have become 'fully a Mallam'. But only prospective teachers will take this advanced course systematically, and continue their study year after year. The *dilettanti* pursue their studies much more irregularly and leisurely, and students of 35 or more may often be seen in the schools of the teachers of 'knowledge'.

The Mallam schools receive pupils from every class and every walk of 814 life. I have compiled some figures to illustrate the social origin of the 565 pupils of Bida Koran schools:

Father's profession	*Mallams*	*Traders*	*Farmers*	*Guild-craftsmen*	*Individual craftsmen*	*Nobility*	*Clerks, messengers, &c.*	*Total*
Studying: Koran	49	16	30	6	20	22	8	151
'Knowledge'	28	4	2	..	20	8	10	72

That the sons of Mallams are in a majority is not surprising, nor that individual craftsmen and members of the nobility should come next in number. Of the twenty-eight sons of Mallams who were studying 'knowledge' six were going to adopt a different profession (of messengers, clerks, labourers, or servants to Europeans). Of the forty-four other students of 'knowledge' sixteen were going to become Koran teachers either in Bida or in the villages. These sixteen prospective Mallams included, incidentally, the two farmers' sons. None of the sons of guild-craftsmen took up teaching as a profession: a proof of the strong organization of these 'closed professions'. The large number of farmers who send their boys to Bida Koran schools may appear surprising; and even more so that a certain number of them should take up the study of the Koran professionally (for among the boys who are at present studying the Koran a few are likely to become Koran teachers). One example may serve: a boy of 13, the only son of a farmer, was studying to become a Mallam. He was well aware that at the death of his father the land would be lost to his family. Nevertheless he would not return to farm-work. His father had made him a Mallam, and that was all there was to it. Again and again, in similar cases, I was told: 'We are no longer strong enough to work on the land', or 'After all, is the profession of a Mallam

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working 565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran 555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan 815 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarúfuži*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[863] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER XXII

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

871 AS education in the widest sense must be described all efforts, organized or otherwise, which tend to impart to individuals habitual forms of acting and thinking. Understood in this sense, every social institution involves educational activities by means of which individuals are led to acquire the behaviour-patterns that make up the institution. Thus our description of economic life has involved the description of certain educational techniques—the training in productive methods, the imparting of economic knowledge, or of concepts of property and wealth. But most societies also operate with more formalized methods of education, specific educational institutions which make it their business to train the rising generation in forms of acting and thinking regarded as essential by the society. We shall deal in this chapter with these formalized educational institutions, of which there are two in Nupe: the institution of the Koran school, concerned with Mohammedan religious teaching, and the institution of age-grade associations. The shortest definition of an educational institution is by the 'type' which it is meant to produce. In this sense we can say that Mohammedan religious education produces the Mallam, the Mohammedan scholar, and the age-grade associations the *zoon politikon* as understood in Nupe. We shall see that in certain respects both types of education can be identified with motives and aims underlying the political system, and thus with institutions devoted to what I have called in the heading of this chapter 'Education for Citizenship'.

MALLAM SCHOOLS

814 There are many degrees and varieties of Mohammedan learning. The title 'Mallam'—*mân* in Nupe—which one encounters so often among the
875 Nupe, is by no means a safe guide. For the man who has gone through a few years' study of the Koran, having learned by heart a few *sura*; the
554 sand-diviner or charm-seller who writes out verses from the Koran and sells them as amulets; the man who has acquired real learning and scholarship, and who can read and write in Arabic and possibly in Hausa—they all are called Mallam. Though the title is used indiscriminately, no Nupe ignores the essential difference between scholarship and the thin veneer of semi-learning. The Nupe distinguish two grades of learning: the lower grade is the study of the Koran (*kurani*), which consists mostly in the memorizing of prayers and whole pages and chapters from the Koran; the higher grade is called *kpikpe*, knowledge, or *litafi* (Hausa), book, and consists in the study of Arabic and the careful reading of the Koran and the better-known commentaries. The most advanced scholars would study, in addition to these books, also the historical records of the Nigerian Emirates which have been compiled (in Hausa, written in Arabic script) by scholars of former days. Only a student of 'knowledge' can claim to be a 'real' Mallam. While there are

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hundreds of Mallams of the lower grade, there are few real scholars, and they are well known and highly esteemed. These scholars will occupy that most influential position which a Mohammedan culture accords to the men of learning.[1] Their advice will be sought by friends and strangers, in matters spiritual or profane.[2] The important political and religious offices of judge, scribe, and Imam at the town mosque are open to them. Some become attached to a noble household as 'private chaplain'. Royal princes and noblemen will seek their friendship, give them their daughters in marriage without bride-price, regarding marriage with a Mallam as *sádaka*, pious alms. Such is, the Nupe say, the *cinwa katū*, the Greatness of Learning. To some extent, however, the high reputation of the learned profession is reflected also in the persons of lesser erudition. Learning is, after all, relative. And a Mallam of very inferior scholarship judged by Bida standards, may be revered as a fount of knowledge in a small half-pagan village. These Mallams in the villages are frequently supported by the people and receive annual gifts of crops as *dzanká*, tithe. 814 815 554

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Adult students, specially those who study the Koran or 'knowledge' for their edification, following another profession besides, visit the house of the teacher only for their lessons, which take place mostly in the evenings, once or twice a week, or even at longer intervals, according to the leisure which their occupation allows them.[2] Young pupils who live in the neighbourhood attend their classes daily while living with their family. Pupils whose family live some distance away will stay in the house of the teacher as members of his household.

815 The teacher of the Koran may not demand special payment for the tuition; according to Mohammedan principles religious instruction must 814 be free—*ebo albarka*, 'for the sake of blessing'. The wealthy Mallam, in fact, scorns all such payments as contrary to the spirit of religion. The poorer Mallam depends on what the family of the pupil offers him as *sádaka*, alms: a penny or twopence every two months, or a bundle of grain (worth 9*d*. or 1*s*.) once a year. Even these small gifts are very irregular; in the school of a Bida Mallam of good reputation, whose pupils numbered thirteen, half of the parents had sent nothing for over a year. Sometimes it happens that a boy's father dies while the boy is still studying, and his relations are unwilling to pay for his education. In this case the Mallam will continue to teach the orphan, let him live in his house and give him food and clothing, again *ebo albarka* only. Koran teachers in the country are worse off than their colleagues in Bida. In Kacha a Mallam who taught Hausa and arithmetic in addition to the Koran and 'knowledge', and who had eight young and fifteen adult students, received no payment from his students except an occasional gift of kola-nuts. If he asked for money, the students would indignantly threaten to leave and to seek another teacher. But both poor and wealthy Mallams receive a final gift from the parents of the student who has completed his studies, either money (in Bida), between 5*s*. and 10*s*., or (in the village) grain or a goat. The teachers can also obtain a certain indirect remuneration by letting their pupils work for them. School-work does not take up the whole day, nor every day in the week. In their

[1] The Education Department in Bida has arranged special evening classes for these enterprising Koran school teachers, and gives them also certain practical assistance, for example, by supplying them with blackboards. This scheme of adult education is of considerable value in the spreading of elementary education among that section of the population which has not had the advantage of education in the Government schools.

[2] Students in a Koran school in Kacha, who were canoe-men by profession, [605] attended the school whenever they returned to Kacha from their voyages, interrupting their classes for weeks and months at a time when they were out on a canoe expedition.

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spare time the boys will help in the house or on the farm, or sometimes 874
in the handicrafts which their teachers practise.

The students of 'knowledge' pay nothing for the tuition. But they 874
have studied the Koran with the same Mallam under whom they are now studying 'knowledge'; and they will send their children again to his school, or to the school of his sons. Thus reputations are built up and firm links established between families of Koran teachers and families which patronize their school. There are Mallam families in Bida which have been teaching three generations of the same families. For the sons of famous Mallams will follow the profession of their father. Many also intermarry with other Mallam families. They carry on the reputation for scholarship won by their fathers and families, and thus help to build up the dynasties of Mallams, of which there are many in Bida and Nupe.

As teaching implies so meagre and irregular an income one might ask 875
how it happens that certain Mallams become well-to-do, and even join the wealthy landowning class. These Mallams do not come from the families of the hereditary or office nobility. Although many men of this class study the Koran and 'knowledge', and proudly call themselves Mallams, they do not adopt the teaching profession, but remain amateurs, noble *dilettanti*. Sometimes a Mallam who in the past attained one of the official positions open to Mohammedan scholars has laid the foundation of the wealth of the family. Another has benefited from the close association as the 'guide, philosopher, and friend' of an influential personage—a clientship of more exalted order—and received land and wealth through the help of his patron. It is, for example, customary for all marriage services in the royal family—a most lucrative office—to be held by the Mallam who is attached to the house of the *Shaba*; or at all funeral services of the royal house the *Liman*, the head of the Mohammedan clergy, will officiate. However, wealthy Mallams are rare. Most Mohammedan scholars are poor, or at least unable to maintain themselves by their religious and educational work alone. But poverty is no impediment to scholarly reputation; nor does it detract from the honour of the profession. In fact, ordinary people will never call in a titled or even wealthy Mallam to perform a marriage or funeral service; they invariably prefer a Mallam of the *tálaka* class. A 'great Mallam is too weighty', they explain; they want a man whom they can offer a small *sádaka* as fee.

Among the Mallams of the town a certain loose economic co-operation exists, which comes into play at all such ceremonial occasions. At large marriage ceremonies or funerals several Mallams may be called in to assist the Mallam who is officiating. They will also divide part of the money which they receive for their services among their other colleagues in the same town quarter. Or the family which celebrates the ceremony will send *sádaka* to all the Mallams in the neighbourhood. This practice of communal benefits does not involve any closer or more formalized co-operation among the Mallams. The wide diversity between them with regard to social status, wealth, and standard of learning forbids any more strongly pronounced appreciation of their commonness beyond that fluid unity embodied in the fact that they all work with

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875 their brains, and represent, in a society of peasants, craftsmen, and traders, the intelligentsia. This will become even clearer when we examine the motley rising generation of Mallams.

874 Koran teaching begins as a rule in early youth, when the child is 6 or even 5 years old. The teaching of the Koran itself is reckoned to take five to ten years. Some pupils learn quicker than others, and in one school I found a boy of 13 already studying 'knowledge', while one of 17 was still worrying his way through the Koran. But on the whole this elementary stage is considered mere routine work which most students can master in the given time. The teaching of 'knowledge', on the other hand, depends entirely on talent and individual inclination. Pupils may be eager enough to try, but will give up later when they discover that 'they have no head for it' (a literal translation of the Nupe phrase). Nor can the time taken by these higher studies be fixed precisely. Ten to fifteen years is an average estimate—at least, after fifteen years' study one is reckoned to have become 'fully a Mallam'. But only prospective teachers will take this advanced course systematically, and continue their study year after year. The *dilettanti* pursue their studies much more irregularly and leisurely, and students of 35 or more may often be seen in the schools of the teachers of 'knowledge'.

874 565 The Mallam schools receive pupils from every class and every walk of life. I have compiled some figures to illustrate the social origin of the pupils of Bida Koran schools:

Father's profession	*Mallams*	*Traders*	*Farmers*	*Guild-craftsmen*	*Individual craftsmen*	*Nobility*	*Clerks, messengers, &c.*	*Total*
Studying: Koran	40	16	30	6	20	22	8	151
'Knowledge'	28	4	2	..	20	8	10	72

That the sons of Mallams are in a majority is not surprising, nor that individual craftsmen and members of the nobility should come next in number. Of the twenty-eight sons of Mallams who were studying 'knowledge' six were going to adopt a different profession (of messengers, clerks, labourers, or servants to Europeans). Of the forty-four other students of 'knowledge' sixteen were going to become Koran teachers either in Bida or in the villages. These sixteen prospective Mallams included, incidentally, the two farmers' sons. None of the sons of guild-craftsmen took up teaching as a profession: a proof of the strong organization of these 'closed professions'. The large number of farmers who send their boys to Bida Koran schools may appear surprising; and even more so that a certain number of them should take up the study of the Koran professionally (for among the boys who are at present studying the Koran a few are likely to become Koran teachers). One example may serve: a boy of 13, the only son of a farmer, was studying to become a Mallam. He was well aware that at the death of his father the land would be lost to his family. Nevertheless he would not return to farm-work. His father had made him a Mallam, and that was all there was to it. Again and again, in similar cases, I was told: 'We are no longer strong enough to work on the land', or 'After all, is the profession of a Mallam

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874 not as good as that of a farmer?' There is no evidence, incidentally, that physical disability, an ailment which might impair their working
565 capacity, is a reason for sending boys to Mallam schools. The choice of the Mallam profession is, in the full sense of the word, a free choice of profession.[1]

874 The Mallam schools both in Bida and in the peasant districts are steadily increasing. The Nigerian Census mentions over 1,000 Koran
555 schools in Niger Province, most of which are found in Nupe Emirate. I have estimated that Bida town possesses over 100 Koran schools, with over 1,000 pupils (out of a population of 24,000, with 5,000 male children). Kacha has fifteen Koran schools, Kutigi, a much more primitive and semi-pagan village, six, of which two already give higher instruction. This spreading of Mohammedan education leaves no doubt that parents increasingly desire their children to receive the benefits of Mohammedan learning. We have to accept this as a general trend in modern Nupe society, not so much towards true education—which few of the boys will ever attain—as towards the higher social status—the status of a leisured-class intelligentsia—which the position of a Mallam, rightly or wrongly, suggests.

554 Earlier in this book I have referred to the profession of Mallams as one of the mechanisms of social mobility. I have also called Mohammedan
875 education, by means of which the religion and, indirectly, the whole spiritual background of the ruling classes is diffused throughout the country, one of the 'binding forces' of the Nupe state. Here we have found concrete evidence to support these statements. Let me summarize the main conclusions which we can draw from the present discussion. First, the profession of Mallams comprises contrasts of wealth and rank, which occur nowhere else in the framework of a single profession. The only common feature is that of a life without manual work, and of a certain social status raised above that of the ordinary commoner. Secondly, the Mallam profession is the only profession which we discovered in Nupe which is not ruled by the motive of material gains. On the contrary, people will sacrifice even the security of work on the land for the meagre and insecure income that goes with the rise in status and the attainment of the life of the leisured class.

AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATIONS

561 The Nupe name for age-grade association is *ena gbarúfuzi*, lit. 'society' or 'association of the young men'.[2] Although nearly every Nupe boy or

[1] I had wondered whether there was any relation between the professional choice and the size of the family, whether perhaps in large families a son would be more likely to study for Mallam than in small families, where every member would be needed for farm-work. Then again, I thought it possible that in these days of the breaking-up of the family-unit orphans would be placed more readily in Mallam schools. Neither correlation, however, is true—as is shown in these figures: of 32 students of farming stock 9 were only sons, 10 were one of two sons, 9 had brothers who also studied the Koran, and 4 were orphans.

[2] Informants who have picked up a few words of pidgin-English translated *ena* as 'company'.

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who started the great wave of Islamization, were probably as liberal or unorthodox in their attitude to women. So that the Nupe would have received their new creed already remodelled by the donors, and the true contrast would be, not between orthodox Islam and the Nupe version, but between the former and African Islam.

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To turn to the other aspects of the Moslem 'way of life', first, to the high value placed on scholarship. Even the most humble follower of Islam is aware of it. Tuition in the creed and *jī katū* (reading, book-knowledge in general) are to him almost one and the same thing; and greater religious perfection coincides with wider learning. The title mallam, 'scholar', freely accorded to the pious, already indicates the trend of thought. One mallam friend of mine expressed it aptly when he spoke of the *ciywa katū*, the 'greatness of learning', which makes any Mohammedan scholar equal to the other great ones in the country—rankholders, noblemen, or wealthy landowners. Not that the mallam is necessarily poor or a commoner; many mallams are wealthy, and many members of the titled aristocracy pride themselves on being scholars as well. But the professional scholar does not require the badge or rank nor the backing of wealth to be granted the privileges of high status. His learning makes him the companion of the 'great ones'; his ministration at naming ceremonies, weddings or burials opens him their houses; and even a poor mallam can marry into rich or noble families if his scholarly repute is high; for in this case the bride's father will defray the costs of the brideprice, counting this expenditure as a pious gift of alms.[1]

There are, of course, degrees of learning, and hence distinctions in the status of mallams. In largely pagan villages anyone who has learned to recite a few *surat* of the Qoran and performs his daily prayers is called a mallam; in the Mohammedan capital the name is reserved for those who also teach the Qoran, though the adepts in the art of sand-divining and the sellers of charms are equally included in that class. Mostly a further distinction is drawn between the simple, humble mallam, who knows only the Qoran (or, more often, only small portions of it) and the true scholar, who must have studied *litafi* (books) or *kpikpe* (knowledge) as well. Men of the latter class read eagerly and widely, and acquire books where they can or copy out rare manuscripts. Ignoring, however, the few mallams who practice as judges and have studied the various relevant legal digests and commentaries, the reading of these 'learned men' tends to be indiscriminate and their 'know-

[1] The social position of the mallams and the whole question of Moslem learning and tuition has been fully discussed in *A Black Byzantium*; see especially pp. 102, 378–83.

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ledge' a miscellany of incongruous items. Often the 'books' they get hold of are merely odd assortments of bits of literature, the same volume perhaps containing an extract on marriage law, a page or two on astrology, a treatise on the human body, and a fragment of some Hausa chronicle. Nor does the specific knowledge of Moslem theology fare any better. Again it is a medley of incongruous bits of information and in no way approaches the orthodox teaching of Islam. 794 875

The further down you pass in the scale of Nupe Mohammedan scholarship, the more confused and fragmentary becomes this knowledge. Take this summary account of creation and the powers of God which was given to me by one of the 'simple' mallams: 'Mohammed was the first man on earth; the devil (*Sheitan*) sends illness and misfortunes; after death, the good people become kindly spirits (*aljénu*), while evil persons are turned into dust'. Which last statement was the only reference to the ethical sanctions of Islam I encountered in Nupe; for hell or heaven or the last judgment are never mentioned. The notion, incidentally, that Mohammed was the first man is widespread; but otherwise the ideas about creation and the universe are far from uniform. Here is a different and fuller account, recorded from another mallam of this class: Formerly, when all the people lived together in the same place, there existed 'little gods' (*sokó letengi*), whom God (*Allah*) sent down to earth to take away the souls (*rayi*) of the persons whose life was nearing its end. But the people grew frightened at this mysterious and unannounced demise and tried to evade it by scattering over the earth. So God introduced a new kind of death, heralded by illness, or overcoming man suddenly, through lightning or other natural disasters. These 'little gods' are the *malaika* (the Arabic *mal'ak*, 'angels'). In addition to the messengers of death there exist also *malaika* who bring rain, cause the crops to grow, and watch over man; the chief one amongst them is Jibelelu (Gabriel); others are Mikailu, Ismailu, Ibrahimu, though my informant did not pretend to know them all. [775]

The knowledge possessed by the 'true' mallam is hardly less unorthodox, even though it is fuller and more ambitious. The following text was dictated to me by a gifted pupil of the most famous mallam of Bida and fully conformed to the master's teaching. 794 773

'In the beginning there were Adama and Mother Adā. They had three daughters, Mureamu [Miriam, Mary], Fatima [daughter of Mohammed], and Barkisa [Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba], and numerous sons. These were all prophets. God then divided the world into pagans and Moslems. The greatest king of the pagans

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853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[847] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
855 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[873] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
855 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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He may go out to war himself, but more often puts the 701
operations under the War-Chief, Sarkin Yaki, who is himself 562
advised by the Wari-Yaki, a man chosen by the Mallamai for this purpose, and often of so humble a position that the warriors do not know who he is. The Sarkin Yaki, however, obeys him invariably, and indeed it is the Mallamai who direct when and where an attack should be delivered or a retreat made. If the 726
Sarkin Yaki should be killed in war, the army retires to await 562
another appointment by the Emir. It was the custom for the two eldest daughters of the Sarkin Nupe to go to war, each arrayed in two thick rigas, a cummerbund, and carrying a sword and spear. They had large followings, for they gave a big proportion of the spoils to their retinue, but they followed the direction of the Sarkin Yaki. No woman was allowed to accompany them into battle, but many of the sex were discontented with the restriction, and, in consequence, the practice became unpopular amongst the Nupe men. The general feeling became so strong that on the death of the Chief, Umoru Majigi, in 1884, these ladies were no longer allowed to go out to war. Their names were Atiba and Wodiko, names invariably given to the Chief's two eldest daughters. In other respects they lived ordinarily, and were married, but their husbands would never fight in the same war with their wives. Each Chieftain brings his following, and there are bodies of horsemen and footmen, the former armed with spears, the latter with bows and arrows. A war-camp is formed some seven to ten miles from where hostilities are expected to take place, and here the stores and women are left. The Mallamai and a large number of civilian hangers-on advance to the verge of the fight, and wait till success is attained, when they dash in to secure a share of the spoil, the Mallamai giving the word when it is safe to do so. Needless to say their presence is often resented. Envoys may be sent from one army to another in perfect safety, protected by the waving of a white flag, or of green branches; they generally dress in white for additional surety.

Before any campaign is undertaken the Emir consults a [721]
Mallam gifted with the power of prophecy, and he says whether the 875
results would be good or bad. A hundred years ago the advent 787
of a fair race from the west was foretold by the prophets in a MS. still extant, and the resistance to their arms was forbidden. That was why the present Emir of Bida and his family, together with all the Mallamai, refused to come out against the British. There are some prophets who are above worldly interest and desire, and others who give advice for 1,000 cowries, or perhaps sixpence. It is a special art in which they receive instruction as youths, and there are books on the subject. The Mallams are consulted on such questions as marriage, trade ventures, and sickness. They look on the ground for about ten minutes and

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875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[55] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

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X796 sacrifice previously described; again, there is a big tree in the middle, this time adorned with a strip of white cloth, which is renewed at each ceremonial; if the village has a 'born' *Ndazo*, he will wear the new cloth round his waist while officiating, and put it back on the tree afterwards. Also tied to the tree are two tortoise shells, which will serve as drinking vessels during the sacrifice and afterwards as musical instruments, being beaten with small sticks. The other musical instruments used in the *gunnu* are as [534] unusual and are employed on no other occasion; they consist in two large and two small pot drums (of Gwari manufacture), and a raft-zither made of reed. During the year they are stored in the house of the *Žigi*, who has, however, no other function in the *gunnu*.

X796 On the day of the *gunnu*, before dawn, the *gunnu* drums begin to play. This is the signal for the boys and young men to leave ● 881 their homes and to go to some secret place in the bush, led by the *Ndazo* and the *Ndakotsu* (the appointed leader of their age grades). Arrived in the bush, where they may only talk in whispers, they remove their caps and everyday clothes and dress in *gunnu* fashion, that is, in a loincloth of striped cloth such as the women wear round the waist. They break off twigs of the *nūbeci* tree, which will later serve as the 'whips of the *gunnu*'.[1] Then the novices are taught the deportment required of them at the ceremonial—to keep their heads bent, eyes on the ground, as one does in the presence of superiors; equally they are taught the *gunnu* salute, which consists in a fierce yell, accompanied by the throwing-up of both arms and a rhythmical stamping on the ground. During these proceedings the novices at least are visibly frightened, while the older boys try to show their unconcern. Finally, they leave the bush, walking in single file, the tallest first, to the place of the sacrifice; throughout the ceremonial the young men will move thus, in a long file, 'whips' in hand, led or sometimes driven by the priest and the *Ndakotsu*.

At the *gunnu* place they join the older men who have meanwhile assembled. The musicians sit under the tree and have started drumming and singing. Everyone is stripped to the waist and sits on leaves or branches, since it is sacrilege to sit on the bare ground of the *gunnu 'ba*. The older men form a circle round the place of the sacrifice; the youths sit some distance apart, though they will from time to time jump up to 'salute' late-comers or to drive away strangers who might trespass on the secret site. Soon the sacrifice follows, which varies from year to year, according to the advice of

[789] [1] This tree has no further ceremonial significance, though its twigs are sometimes stuck into the ground outside a house as a charm against thieves.

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the diviner; in the ritual I observed it consisted of fish-and-porridge and the ubiquitous libation of beer. The *Ndazo*, on his knees and using one of the tortoise shells for a vessel, pours some beer on the ground, speaking thus:

'Lord God, take this. The *Etsu Daži* (chief) ordered us to make *gunnu*. *Gunnu*, may the town have health. The food of the soil, may it thrive greatly. The women, God give them children. May the town have health. Rain may fall, yam may thrive, corn may thrive. God may cause that everything shall prosper.'

Then the priest drinks, and more beer is handed round in gourds, first to the old men in order of age and rank, then to the musicians, and lastly to the young men. The sacrifice and invocation are repeated, now with a dish of food. Throughout the proceedings the *Ndazo's* younger brother acts as his assistant. At the end of the meal everyone washes his hands, in the same order of seniority, and the gourds which served as dishes are broken in pieces and left on the ground.

The sacrifice over, dancing begins, still in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'ba*. The older men dance singly, the young men in a group, the novices being taught and shown the dance steps by others who are more experienced. But while the older men can pause whenever they are tired, the youths must dance without a break, and are driven on to greater and greater exertions by their leaders. The excitement is visibly mounting, and may indeed go too far, for the young dancers will suddenly start using their 'whips' on one another. Though flogging with the whips of the *gunnu* has its place in the ritual, its premature introduction, at the place of the sacrifice, is a serious breach of discipline, and the culprits are made to kneel before the *Ndazo* and beg forgiveness. The incident is taken as a sign that the dance had lasted too long already (it had lasted about three hours); silence is ordered once again, the dance stops, and the congregation moves in a long procession to the village.

The secret part of the *gunnu* is now over; what follows is done publicly and before a crowd of onlookers. The youths race each other to the village, half running half dancing. They will beat anyone standing in their way, and this liberal use of the whips continues when they all arrive at the village. They lash out at each other and at strangers or women, although both strangers and most women are allowed to watch this stage of the ceremonial. This episode does not last long, however, and gives way to a general dance begun by the *Ndazo* in slow, dignified fashion. He is followed by other old men and the chief himself, who only now joins in the proceedings. Eventually everybody joins in, congregation and onlookers, men as well as women, and all join also in the singing.

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x 796 The dance frequently rises to feverish excitement, when the youths will suddenly resume using their whips, violently and against any-
● 881 one. The flogging now has a purpose: when directed against male adolescents it is thought to promote growth and maturity; when directed against women, fertility. But there are also phases of calm as well as humorous episodes, acclaimed by general laughter. One episode, in particular, may be mentioned: now and again, the young men will imitate, with comic exaggeration, a typical women's dance or caricature the walk and gestures of women.

I will not describe the dance further: it fills the rest of the *gunnu* festivities, being interrupted only for a brief night's rest, and ends when all the beer is exhausted and everyone too tired to carry on. I will only note these important and partly unique features. Some
x 796 time during the dance the young men form themselves into a
842 procession led by the *Ndazo* and march and dance through the village, still singing the *gunnu* songs, to give the 'salute' in front of
881 the houses of high-ranking elders. On the way they also visit the childless women of the village; for these are strictly forbidden to watch the *gunnu* dance and must hide in their huts until the ceremonial is over. These women may be unhappily barren; or they may be suspected of avoiding childbearing and family duties so that they might lead the immoral life of female traders and prostitutes (which, in Nupe, means one and the same thing). In either case the *Ndazo* will enter their house and encourage or admonish them, as the case may be; the woman, kneeling before him, will receive two lashes with the *gunnu* whip, administered by one of the young men, which is both a punishment and a promise of fertility. Women who have no taste for either will have to leave the village or hide in some other house during the critical period, as indeed quite a few are doing.

[535] Again, few other Nupe rituals include a mixed dance of the sexes; in the *gunnu*, this is not only permitted but considered a
x 796 relevant part of the celebration, as is the whole excited and aban-
881 doned tone of the dance. Always, when describing the *gunnu*, the Nupe will use some such phrase—'we make merry, we drink, we dance, men and women together without order, until we talk without sense'. This excitement is in no small measure sexual; not only is the attention of the young men constantly drawn to the other sex (even by the fact that they wear an item of women's dress), but the week preceding the *gunnu* and the whole period of the
834 celebration are also marked by a severe prohibition of all sexual
786 intercourse, lest death visit the community. Only when the dance is ended and everyone has bathed, the men in a nearby stream,
x 796 the women at home, is the rule of chastity lifted; the same night
881 men and women will again sleep together, matrimonially or promiscuously - no one cares.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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miscuously—no one cares. Which final aspect of the *gunnu* is once more emphasized in all statements.

The ceremonial is thus full of allusions to procreation and fertility. But we noticed also the emphasis on male adolescence, more precisely, on the role of the age grades, on the respect relationship between youth and old age, and on the teaching or initiation of the novices. In the ritual I described this last aspect was only lightly touched upon. But in a fuller version of the *gunnu*, which disappeared in Doko some ten or twenty years ago, the emphasis on initiation was much stronger. The short prelude in the bush was then expanded to a full night; and the youths were made to dress up in elaborate fashion and to paint their bodies red and white, so that everybody should see that they were '*gunnu* men'. All through the night the novices were kept in a state of nervous excitement and fear by tales of the spirits that haunt the bush; often the dreaded apparition of the *ndakó gboyá* would materialize to punish any youth who had, in the preceding year, offended against this or that rule of custom, and especially against the rules of filial respect. We shall hear more of the *ndakó gboyá* later on; let me say here that its part is acted by a member of the secret society of that name, and that it is also referred to as the 'policeman of the *gunnu*', which epithet aptly summarizes its functions.

Today this episode has fallen in abeyance in Doko as elsewhere. The reasons are not the same in all places. In Kutigi, a relatively recent and pseudo-Moslem ceremonial has absorbed the initiation aspect of the *gunnu*, so that the more elaborate version of the ritual came to lose its particular appeal.[1] In Mokwa, the vigil in the bush fell in disfavour with the young men, who refused to suffer any longer the threats and punishments that go with that episode; the remonstrations of parents and elders were met by the argument that even young men were nowadays earning money and paying taxes, and had hence become the equals of their seniors. In Beni country, the attractions of Bida town were seducing more and more adolescents away from the 'crude' village celebrations, so that eventually the greatly reduced attendance made the whole initiation rite seem futile. About that time, too, the Government suppressed the *ndakó gboyá* secret society, the drama in the bush thus losing its main actors. These varied causes reflect the multifarious changes assailing traditional Nupe life, in the political and economic sphere, in family relations, and in recreation as well as in religious belief. That the changes were so effective in truncating the *gunnu* (while falling more lightly or tardily upon other ceremonials) is not due only to the force behind the new influences; rather is it in large measure due to a factor touched upon before,

[1] See my article *The Gani ritual of Nupe*, Africa, 1949, vol. XIX, p. 183.

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the greater vulnerability of the *gunnu* ceremonial. For the very ambitiouness of its scope exposes it, on too many sides at once, to the impact of change.

3. THE RIVER

(i) *Ritual Calendar: Priestship*

X796

In Jebba Island I recorded the fullest repertoire of rituals anywhere in Nupe country, including three movable and five 'fixed' rituals, one of the latter being also performed 'without a month', whenever the need arises. Not all, however, are still in use, so that the ritual calendar of the island now approximates more closely to that of other communities. Though the people quote specific rational reasons for the discontinuation of the respective rituals, I suspect that the 'repertoire' itself proved too large and simply became unworkable under modern conditions. Jebba Island owes its rich list of ceremonials essentially to two facts; first, to its double livelihood, derived from the land as well as from the river, and reflected in the religious institutions; and secondly, to the possession of the sacred emblems of Tsoede, which are scattered mainly along the old highway of the Kingdom—the river valley.

Today, the Jebba people perform two movable and two fixed rituals, one which serves both purposes and one which, formerly fixed, has now become 'movable'. The movable rituals proper are the *ketsá*, previously mentioned, and the *tídzana*, a sacrifice to the sacred 'Chain of Tsoede'. The fixed ceremonials comprise the rituals *mamma* and *dzakó*, both performed in the 9th month (November–December). The *gunnu*, traditionally performed in the same month, is nowadays celebrated as a movable rite, though in a different sense it still retains its compulsory character. The ritual *ndáduma*, finally, is performed both as a fixed rite, again in the 9th month, and as a movable ritual. Another movable ritual, the *žikinta*, concerned mainly with success in hunting and fishing but also with childbirth and health, is now hardly practised; and a fixed ritual, *sokokó*, was discontinued some twenty years ago. To some extent the observance of the ritual *mamma* has also been affected by the changed conditions; for most of the grass masks worn in the ceremonial were destroyed in a fire some years ago and have not been replaced; the people now husband their two remaining masks and perform the ritual only in years when there is a special reason. Even so, the ceremonial cannot be moved to another date, and has for this reason been included among the 'fixed' rituals.

The different rituals are again in the charge of different officiants.

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risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual 182
alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren 183
women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in 796x
reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted
or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is 182
severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go 183
together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. 834
Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the 786
whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may
call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve,
a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly,
it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only
improper but unthinkable.

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly 796x
different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as 182
girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that 183
happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this 881 ●
aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in [839]
the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and carica-
ture female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men
are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time
when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or
seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form
themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine),
the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ
sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all
kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, [838]
is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The excep-
tional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic
significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary
change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who
are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the
very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status.
Before that they were something else—children, still looked after
by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with
women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position
will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admis-
sion to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex
on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through con-
centrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be
confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before
this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

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x796 like them; and after the first admission to the *gunnu* there will be
182 repetitions of the same ceremonial and masquerade. The *gunnu*
183 thus exaggerates the change of roles and presents it in a manner
● 881 not exactly true to life; but just because it does so it becomes a
means of dramatizing a crucial crisis of life which, in reality, is
neither as conspicuous nor as dramatic. So that the *gunnu*,
through this part of its procedure, assumes the relevance of a *rite de passage*.

x796 To summarize. By its professed content, the ritual applies and
182 partly affirms the system of religious ideas; and by its form, it
183 becomes part of the machinery which maintains the efficient
working of a society of a given structure. By its form, too, the
ritual 'accumulates' further aims and ideas, bearing on codes of
conduct, on social roles, and hence on the values of 'good' and
'bad'. Surveying all the various Nupe rituals we find that the
gunnu, as it is considered the paramount ritual, so it is also the
richest in 'cumulative' content. There is practically no manner of
acting which is not referred to and evaluated in its procedure;
furthermore, the *gunnu* alone goes beyond implicit references and
contains also express pronouncements upon these 'additional'
aims.

As I previously tried to show, it is not paradoxical that a cult of such far-reaching importance should be the first to disappear or to be truncated under the pressure of change; rather, its very ambitiousness exposes it 'on too many sides' to disruptive influences. Let me rephrase this assertion in terms of the 'content' and 'form' of rituals. The disappearance or radical alteration of the ritual clearly implies some weakening of its appeal. The professed content of the ritual would lose its appeal only if the whole conceptual framework of the religion were disrupted, as it would be by the impact of another religion, in this case Islam. Yet this was certainly not true (or not yet true) of the many Nupe communities where the *gunnu* alone of all the various rituals had disappeared or broken down. The form of the ritual, however, since it absorbs so many of the general norms of social life, would be weakened by any change affecting the latter, by any remodelling of the relationship between the generations, by any new attractions seducing the younger people, and by all changes in moral or educational standards. It is precisely dislocations of this kind which have spread most widely through Nupe country; and it is thus the *gunnu* carrying within its 'form' a mirror of the traditional way of life, lost its appeal and indeed its very relevance as its picture ceased to be true.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live 566
in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection 556
in return for whatever work is required of them. There are 736
dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to
spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in
much the same manner, and children born in captivity were
accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New 842
Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in 787
that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a
medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo,
between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce
fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are
guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the 853
leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven
to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed
"dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It
is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's
milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk
of any animal. After seven days the child is named, 553
and both boys and girls are called after their father and after 851
his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom
called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat
different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth
day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain
roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some
is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family
then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine
to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The
guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the
usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, 304
after which they commence working on the farms. When they 852
approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, 882
and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; 593
they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. 855
They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," 858
and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's
parents come and live with her for three months to see that she
fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with
them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-
born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather 853
always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not 787
suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Sapke and Mokwa.

1: Mair E-5 (1931-1932)1934
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started a native teaching sisterhood. But this does not account for all the educated girls, small as is their number relatively to the total, and various schemes have been set on foot to train them for other occupations. Lady Cook, who, as Mrs. Katharine Cook, inaugurated the training of native midwives, has now started a domestic science course at her own house, where some dozen girls are learning European cooking and housework. Another plan which, if it succeeds, should bring more direct benefit to the girls themselves is to give a training in infant welfare which will first qualify them for employment as nurses to European children—women are already so employed, but these are usually older women, and are said to be very unsatisfactory—and will later enable them to bring up their own children on more hygienic lines. In so far as this training concentrates on improvements which would be practicable in a native home it should be very valuable; but the scheme is not yet in operation and, in any case, will for some years to come be confined to a single school with a very small number of pupils.

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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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that the all-too-broad unity of Islam is (as I put it before) narrowed down to the scope of a national church. 794

The *navũ* is to some extent a smaller replica of the *salla*, including, again, the state procession to the mosque, with all its display of royal splendour and evoking the same festive mood of a large city bent on enjoyment. But the royal display occupies only a brief phase, on the morning of New Year's Day; and the enjoyment has a new emphasis, on youth, and on moral licence. 796x

On the eve of New Year, at nightfall, the young people of Bida, both youths and girls, forgather at the three streams that cross the town. The girls come in little groups, while the boys and young men are formed into companies, each composed of an age-grade association under its leader. They sing and dance on the way, and the youths all carry torches, which they swing or throw high up in the air, and sometimes brandish at one another in playful attacks. Arrived at the river the youths remove their gowns and the girls their upper garments, and thus stripped to the waist wade into the water. They splash about, with much shrieking and laughing, try dance steps, jumps and somersaults, and the boys engage in brief wrestling bouts, invariably terminated by a ducking. Now and again this clowning gives way to a mock battle, when the boys will thrust and throw the torches at one another, age-group fighting age-group, not seriously, but keenly and with marked excitement. It needs skill to catch the wildly flying firebrands or to parry those aimed at you. Nor are narrow escapes uncommon, and first-aid treatments for burns are a regular aftermath of the *navũ*. The excitement of the fight, moreover, is matched by the openly erotic excitement provoked by the occasion. This is indeed unique; at no other time will Nupe girls disrobe in the presence of men or show themselves with bare breasts. The girls will keep to the dark side of the river; but the youths throw torches in their direction to surprise a girl while she is undressing or bathing. There is cruder horseplay, too, the boys trying to seize the girls or to bump into them as though unwittingly; while in the shadows and under the bridge couples pursue their amorous play unseen. But though there is plenty of teasing and joking, the language is never obscene. About midnight the bathing breaks up and the young people return to their homes. 786 799 796x 883

This prelude to the *navũ* was not always so tame. Until fairly recently the mock battle of torches was meant quite seriously.[1] The three different bathing places are chosen in accordance with the threefold dynastic division of the city, and are visited by the age-grade associations in the respective local division. The diverse

[1] The word 'battle' has been chosen advisedly. All informants describing the usage emphasized that it was 'like a war'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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786 loyalties which govern the town hold their sway over youth as well
794 as adults; and on the occasion of the *navũ* the factional jealousies,
x796 never fully submerged, were allowed to come into the open. Thus the torch processions invariably led to organized and heated fights
883 between the three groups; on the way back from the river, especially, one would ambush the other or try to invade the rival territory. The battle is said to have lasted the whole night, being fought with torches, sticks, stones, and any handy weapons. Injuries (some say, even death) inflicted in the course of the *navũ* went unpunished; for on this one night the law of the land was suspended. Eventually, in 1920 or thereabouts, the excesses of this all-too realistic play forced the Government to intervene and to forbid this phase of the *navũ*.

In spite of its realism, however, the mock battle not only legitimized factional hostility but also diverted it into relatively harmless channels. For though the boys and youths would give vent to sentiments commonly felt, they themselves were still outside serious politics and not yet genuinely caught up in factional strife. They would still be play-acting, however realistically, much as their whole age-grade life, with its imitation of adult ranks and ambitions, is play-acting and a make-believe copy of 'real life'. For the population of the city, whose sons and brothers took part in the 'battle of youth', this was in the nature of a vicarious and controlled catharsis of tensions grown over the year; for the young fighters, it was the climax of age-grade life and a seal set to this 'education for citizenship'. Needless to say, the practice is still vividly remembered. And it is not only the older people who talk nostalgically about their more exciting youth; the young people today have preserved at least the idea of the thing. Small boys with whom I talked before the *navũ* explained to me with great glee all that they and their age mates were going to do to their 'enemies'. In the end, of course, they did nothing; so that today the 'battle of youth' has moved a further stage towards mere make-believe.[1]

794 The licensed aggression of the torch festival reappears on the next day in a new context, that of kinship. For the *navũ* is also
602 an occasion for *ma dzo*, for 'joking', that is, for the licensed liberties
x796 commonly referred to as 'joking relationship'. Though much less formalized than in other African societies, the institution of joking relationship plays a clearly defined part in Nupe social life. The individuals standing in this relationship are called *dzomanci*, 'playmates', the relationship itself being derived mainly from kinship position. Thus the joking relationship obtains between grandparents and grandchildren of the opposite sex; between cross

[1] See also *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 396–7.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each 643
of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion.

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir 671
of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic 696
law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not [984
considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but 672]
were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women.

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered 685
no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more [935
were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any 683
term up to four years.

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried 696
the bodies, unless the families sent for them. [66]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment 684
inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), [662]
from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for 586
divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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467 latter, narrower, group co-operation. We shall see that it varies widely in scope and closeness, owing partly to the different nature of the productive technique and the varying demands upon co-operation which it entails, and partly also to extraneous factors, not involved in productive technique. The labour-unit in craft-work is called *efakó*, i.e. by the same name as the labour-unit in farm-work, to which, in fact, it corresponds in all essentials. Again we find a section of the family group working together under a senior relative who, as the common head, directs group co-operation, supplies the means of production (tools and raw material), and disposes of the proceeds from the group work. He also undertakes the other *efakó* obligations of paying tax for his co-workers, providing them with food, clothing, and bride-price. At the death of the *efakó* head the group member next in seniority takes his place. If old age disables the *efakó* head for active work he can retire from the labour-unit without giving up his position as the head of the group, i.e. without abandoning his control over the group income. Old men who have not reached the position of an *efakó* head when they are forced to retire
467 will be supported by the labour-unit. The old men of the group are, moreover, often allotted a little farm-work close to the house, which
● 888 allows them to make their contribution, even in old age, to the group income. We can see already that the ability of the group to 'pension off' their old men and late leaders depends essentially on the size of the labour-unit; a very small labour-unit is clearly incapable of making the necessary provisions, and we shall find that in the case of these labour-units the support of the old men is undertaken, rather irregularly in fact, by their family as a family obligation, and no longer forms part of the regular services of the labour-unit towards its members or ex-members.

467 With regard to the junior *efakó* members we find, again, the practice of releasing from the *efakó*-unit adult workers who desire to make themselves independent and to set up a separate labour-unit. The question always entailed in the release from the labour-unit, namely, of the acquisition of new means of production, is complicated in craft-work by the fact that here the means of production are to some extent immovable (e.g. the blacksmith's furnace and anvil, the glass-maker's furnace, the weaver's loom, &c.). It appears to be due to this difficulty that the release from the labour-unit in craft-work does not invariably involve withdrawal also from the workshop in which these means of production are fixed, but that, on the contrary, there is the tendency to stay on and share workshops, furnaces, and so forth, with the ex-fellow-workers. Only if the workshop is overcrowded will the worker or workers who are leaving the *efakó*-unit look round for another place, for example, a vacant furnace in another workshop, or the entrance hut of a compound, or (more rarely) build themselves a new workshop, with the assistance of family and fellow craftsmen. The withdrawing workers will be allowed to take with them the (movable) tools which they had been using, and will also be supplied as a rule, by the old *efakó* head, with raw material for the start. This setting-up of independent workers is in craft-work as in farm-work the last act of the functioning *efakó*.

The co-operative organization of *efakó* work also enables the group to